**Contemplation and Conversation: 1st Sunday of Advent, November 29, 2020**

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 NRSV <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%201%3A3-9&version=NRSV>

**Contemplation and Conversation*:*** *What blessings have you received today?*

**From Rev. Heather Leffler:**

Today’s photo was taken by my Austrian ‘sister’ Friedrun from Museum der Moderne in Salzburg looking out over the city. The managing director, Friedrun’s work focuses on the museums’ finances. For me, her photo is art worthy of a place in the museum. It touched my heart and transported me back to her beautiful city.

After our worship today, John and I met two of our grandsons, niece, nephew and their moms in Bechtel Park in Waterloo where my father grew up. Throwing sticks in the water, searching out my grandparents’ grave markers, sharing family stories and making new memories on this beautiful day was another blessing.

On the drive home, I enjoyed the beautiful music of a live stream of the “Marriage of Figaro” from Vienna, watching for Marie – Friedrun’s brother’s girlfriend – in the cast. Technology that is keeping us connected in this time of pandemic is opening possibilities we never imagined.

I am filled with gratitude for this beautiful day, the time with our church family, our family and the connection with our Austrian ‘family’. May the blessings of this day lift your spirit and give you hope.

*Whether you are at home trying to help slow the spread of the virus,
working to help care for those who are impacted most by COVID-19
or working to keep some normalcy in this time,
may you know God’s deep and abiding love in your life.
Know you are a valued part of our Rockwood and Stone United Church families.*

**Further Conversation** … Would you like to talk more about today’s reflection? Email Heather at hleffler@rogers.com. Following worship next Sunday, she will invite others to join you in a Zoom break out room to share in further conversation.

**From our Rockwood Stone Affirming Discernment Circle**

Adele Halliday is the Anti-Racism and Equity Officer with The United Church of Canada. Her blog Speaking of Darkness in Advent invites us to reflect on how our ingrained notions of black/white and darkness/light as inherently good and evil can guide how we treat each other. Go to <https://www.united-church.ca/blogs/round-table/speaking-darkness-advent> to read Adele’s blog.

**United Church of Canada**

For Moderator Richard Bott’s Advent Message go to https://united-church.ca/news/moderators-advent-message-2020 .

*A gift of belonging to a church is that the practice of gathering together for worship … to pray, sing, listen to scripture and share how God touches our lives – helps us grow in deeper relationship to God and each other. With COVID-19 keeping us at home and physically distant from our Stone or Rockwood families, we are missing each other. We are offering this practice of sharing beyond Sunday morning to deepen our connection. Each week you will be offered a picture, a scripture and a question for contemplation, as well as a short reflection for you to contemplate, have conversation with people in your life and/or join an online conversation on our Rockwood Stone Facebook page.*