**Contemplation and Conversation: 7th Sunday of Easter, May 16, 2021**

**Scripture:** Psalm 1<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%201&version=NIV>

**Contemplation and Conversation*:*** *How does your faith and the church make a difference in your life?*

**From Rev. Heather Leffler:**

Hear the stream ripple as it passes by. Breathe in the sweet-smelling fragrance and see the beautiful blossoms. Anticipate biting into the ripe, juicy fruit and tasting its goodness. This is what it is to belong to God through Jesus and know the Holy Spirit’s presence in our lives.

Being a part of a church family is indeed a blessing. It doesn’t make us perfect, rather it opens us to the fullness of life in God. We can learn from our mistakes and short comings while being held by a caring community. Meditating on God’s law means accepting God’s forgiveness as we forgive others, gratefully receiving the love and grace that are ours through Jesus and responding to the Holy Spirit by loving all God’s people and caring for the earth.

May you savor God’s blessings and be a blessing to each person you meet.

*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**

Diane Matheson-Jimenez, our Minister, Social Justice, offered these Holy Manners to help the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council have respectful, faith-filled conversations on important topics at their Annual Meeting. The Council committed to being brave by …

B eing accountable for the impact of both our words and our silence

R eflecting on and naming our own biases

A ctively listening

V ocalizing questions that arise from our learning

E ncountering new ideas with curiosity and wonder

These practices will open us to affirming all people we meet are children of God.

**United Church of Canada**

Thanks to Liz Guthrie for representing Stone and Sarah Leffler for representing Rockwood with Heather Leffler at the Western Ontario Waterways Annual Meeting.

*Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council* [*https://wowrcucc.ca/*](https://wowrcucc.ca/) *is a decision-making body responsible to serve and support Communities of Faith within its bounds and to provide necessary oversight. The purpose statement of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council is ‘Connecting, Supporting, Transforming’.*

*The WOWRC is composed of all ministry personnel within its geographic bounds; ministers of denominations within mutual recognition agreements while under appointment or call; and lay members elected by the Communities of Faith, respecting the balance of lay and ministry personnel where possible.*

*The WOWRC includes the counties of Bruce, Grey, Huron, Perth and Wellington along with the western portion of Simcoe County and the Regional Municipality of Kitchener-Waterloo and is pleased to serve alongside the Indigenous ministries of Cape Croker United Church and Wesley United Church, Saugeen.*

*Click the link to see the directory of communities of faith in Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council. Get in touch with your region!*

[*https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1eHTzwrMei9fpxeyoT5S4Gq1niwgbh6zA&ll=44.21076805755596%2C-80.25718309753637&z=6*](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1eHTzwrMei9fpxeyoT5S4Gq1niwgbh6zA&ll=44.21076805755596%2C-80.25718309753637&z=6)

*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.*