



Rockwood Stone News

*Rockwood-Stone Pastoral Charge, The United Church of Canada
Grounded in God, inspired by Jesus, and guided by the Holy Spirit.*

Visit our website at www.rockwoodstoneunitedchurches.com



Rockwood United Church
119 Harris St.
Rockwood, ON NOB 2K0

November 2024

Minister: Rev. Heather Leffler

hleffler@rogers.com

call or text 519-573-9642

Office:

rockwoodstoneuc@gmail.com

519-856-4160

Messages are monitored virtually
on Thursdays



Stone United Church
5370 Fourth Line
Rockwood, ON NOB 2K0



Connect with us on Facebook at **Rockwood-Stone** for Contemplation and Conversation, updates and reminders about upcoming events.

Join us for...

Worship on Sundays at 9:45 am at **Stone** and on **Zoom Worship** and at 11:15 am at **Rockwood** and on **Zoom** or watch on **YouTube**.

To join **Zoom** for **Worship and Meetings** click on the link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6995074926?pwd=eTk1T1d0V2NXVVNxazlEcGpuL3JpUT09> . To join by phone, dial +1-647-374-4685 or +1-647-558-0588 and enter **Meeting ID: 699 507 4926** and **Password: 20120701**.

If you are having trouble connecting to Zoom, contact Heather Leffler at 519-573-9642.

To receive
the **Announcements** on Thursdays,
and/or **Contemplation and Conversation**
on Sundays each week, contact the office.

If you don't have email,
we are happy to provide printed copies.

For pastoral concerns, to share ideas
about our activities, outreach or worship,
or just to talk, contact Rev. Heather Leffler at
519-573-9642 or hleffler@rogers.com.

If you would like a copy of the worship slides
each Sunday, you can also email Heather.

Congregational Packages for Advent and Christmas

Packages will be available **December 1**. If you would like to bake Christmas cookies for **November 30**, submit a winter picture for our Christmas cards by **November 23**, write a reflection or help assemble the packs on **November 30** at **11:30 am** at **Stone** please contact Heather at hleffler@rogers.com or 519-573-9642.



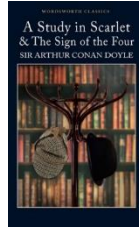
Tuesday, November 19 join us for
Bible Study
at 7:30 pm on Zoom.

Ask questions, share ideas and make connections between the **Parables of Jesus** and our lives.

Wednesday, November 20
Genesis Book Club

at 7:30 pm, at **Stone** or on **Zoom**

Join us for a lively conversation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's **A Study in Scarlet and The Sign of Four**.



Sunday, November 24
plan to visit Outreach's

3rd Annual Christmas Market
from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm at **Rockwood**
The Silent Auction will close at **1 pm**.



Back by popular demand in the **Auction** is a sausage making workshop, as well as a framed art print and gift baskets in the auction.

In the **market** we will be selling frozen chicken pot pies, Christmas fruit cakes, shortbread, peanut butter balls, almond bark, three different types of butter tarts, caramel popcorn, assorted jams, lemon curd, pickled beets, red pepper jelly, salsa, novelty treats, breadmaking kits, dog treats, art cards, decorative and gift items and much more.

Refreshments will be served starting at **10:30 am**. Please join us and bring along friends and family to help us support EWCS food bank and the Rural Women's Support Program.



Sunday, November 24
begin the Christmas season with
An Evening of Christmas Carols
at 7 pm, at **Rockwood**
and on **Zoom**

with our own Eramosa Ensemble.

Stay for hot cider and cookies. There will be a Free Will Offering for EWCS Foodbank.



Thursday, November 28
For Men: you are invited to
Coffee Connections

from **10:30 am to noon**, at the **Bearded Barista**.

Watch the announcements for dates, come join in the conversation and fellowship!

Saturday, November 30
plan to attend the
Country Breakfast

from **8 to 11 am** at **Rockwood**.

Bring your family, friends and neighbours for a delicious breakfast and lively conversation. Breakfast is **\$12 per person** for eggs, bacon, sausage, toast, hashbrowns, juice, coffee or tea and apple crisp.

If you would like to help, please contact Barb Parker at bm1parker@gmail.com.

Proceeds will help us raise funds for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank in the effort to combat World Hunger.



Spiritual Saturdays

Join us on
and the second Saturday of the month

at **Stone** or on **Zoom** from **1 to 3:30 pm**



If you are praying scripture for the first time, contact Lisa Leffler to learn the practice. Email lleffler@live.ca by Wednesday to receive the materials. Take time to pray the scripture.

At 1 pm on Saturday afternoon join the group on Zoom, meet with and companion one another, and share in the large group conversation. Everyone is welcome.

Friday, December 13

Faith, Food, Friendship and Fun
beginning at **6 pm**, at **Rockwood**

Join us for dinner, activities, conversation, a craft, and casual time of worship. Contact Heather at hleffler@rogers.com or 519-573-9642

by the Wednesday before if you plan to attend.





Communion will be celebrated the first **Sunday of Advent December 1** at **9:45 am** at **Stone** and on **Zoom** and at **11:15 am** at **Rockwood** and on **Zoom**.

Wear Your Festive Apparel for Advent ...

On **December 1** wear something **red**

on **December 8** wear **green**

on **December 15** wear a **festive hat** and/or **Christmas sweater**



on **December 22** wear **all of the above**

add adornments like festive belts, dangly earrings and more – homemade all the better and join us for **Worship!**

Advent Gifts – In the Spirit of Christmas help us support **Anishnabeg Outreach Spirit Bundles**.

Most needed items include ...

- cleaning supplies
- larger size diapers (5,6) and pull ups (5,6,7)
- baby wipes
- personal hygiene supplies including tampons, shampoo & conditioner
- children’s clothing (new or used)
- bicycles, scooters, tricycles, child carriers for bikes, train wheels, bicycle pumps, bicycle repair parts (new or used)
- helmets (new)
- gardening supplies (pots, seeds, etc.)
- homemade face masks

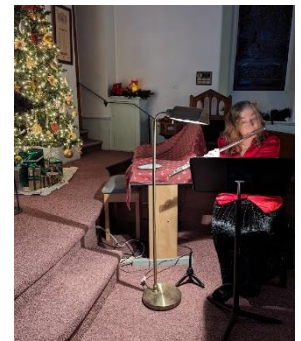
Consider making a donation to one of our outreach partners ...

**Mission and Service,
Anishnabeg Outreach,
Canadian Foodgrains Project,
East Wellington Community Services and
the Rural Women’s Support Program.**

*Thank you for supporting
our churches and
outreach partners!*

Christmas Eve

from **6:15 to 7 pm** we will share **Readings and Reflections** with **Communion**, accompanied by flute music at **Rockwood**.



At **7:30 pm** we will celebrate **the Birth of Jesus** with **Communion, Scripture Story, Song and Conversation** at **Stone**.



Sunday, December 29

Join our Worship Committees for **Worship** at **10 am** on **Zoom**.

You are welcome to join us in your Christmas pj’s.

Saturday, January 25, 2025

and the last Saturday of the month until May

Country Breakfast

at **Rockwood**, from **8 to 11 am**



Bring your family, friends and neighbours for a delicious breakfast and lively conversation. If anyone would like to **help serve, cook, clear tables or clean the kitchen afterwards**, please contact Marcia at **519-856-4968**. The next breakfast will be.

Annual Meetings

Stone’s Meeting

will be held on **Sunday, February 2, 2025**.

Rockwood’s Meeting

will be held on **Sunday, February 9, 2025**.

Friends,

Thank you for the gift of time away for my Sabbatical. The timing allowed me to focus on settling our family into our new home. We had a very special summer with our daughters, grandsons, sister-in-law, nephew and niece.

I was able to do a lot of reading and listening to books on theology, First Nations and fiction. I completed a certificate on anti-racism from the University of Western Ontario.

I also had the opportunity to worship with a number of United Churches and one Mennonite congregation. While the worship in each church had elements that were familiar, unique and inspiring, they left me missing our worship and community.

As I reflected on my experiences, I give thanks for your faithfulness. In worship, especially through conversation, you commit to Deep Spirituality. You live out Bold Discipleship and Daring Justice through our activities and partnership – committing to become affirming, partnering with our First Nations siblings at Anishnabeg Outreach, seeking to feed the hungry and do justice through Mission and Service, East Wellington Community Services, the Rural Women Support Program, and Royal City Mission. Stone's partnership with the Ecumenical Campus Ministry that provides pastoral support for students and staff on the University of Guelph Campus and the Rainbow Chorus that strives to foster inclusive community through choral music, their Wellness Series and Harvest Table, and Rockwood's Breakfast are all ways that we reach out to build relationships in our community and seek God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, may we share the gift that being part of Rockwood and Stone is in our lives, so that others might come to know the Holy One through our faithful witness.

Blessings,

Beather

November 2024

A Message from the Pastoral Charge Board Chair

Greetings to All,

I hope everyone has been able to enjoy the extended mild weather we have been having lately. It has certainly allowed me to be better prepared for the upcoming winter months. Our record-breaking temperatures could be another indicator of global warming, or maybe it's just a warm fall that we get to enjoy every once in a while.

As we head into the Christmas season, we are reminded of the needs of so many individuals and institutions. The 'asks' are many, but our funds are limited. We have to make choices. One amongst those choices is our church. For the last few years, our two churches have been dipping into our investment portfolios because our weekly givings are not enough to cover all our expenses. Many smaller churches have faced similar challenges, and some have had to close their doors. I'm optimistic that we can continue to remain open.

Our churches mean so much to us. I think we need to reflect on why that is so. For me, it is way more than just the building. It is the people; the friends that gather each Sunday to check in with me to see how I'm doing, to share news, celebrations, and concerns. We worship together, learn more about the teachings of the Bible, sing and enjoy music together, and pray together. It would be very sad to lose that. Many of us would find other churches to attend, some would not. We would be losing our base, our group of friends and members who would be scattered throughout the area.

It is my hope that we can all prioritize the needs of our church buildings in order to have them continue to be there for us. One idea that would help our churches cover our current budgets would be for us to donate our \$200 cheque that the Ontario Government is sending us in the New Year. We hadn't expected this tax rebate and if we can give it to our churches, it would go a long way to cover our deficits. In fact, if 25 families per congregation would donate just one of their cheques, that would give us enough to cover each church's projected deficit. I know it is a short-term resolution, but it is an action that could have long term benefits. Please consider.

I wish you all the best! Merry Christmas and a healthy, prosperous New Year!

Randy Dewey

From The United Church of Canada

Published On: August 16, 2024

This content was originally featured as part of our Centennial Newsletter in June 2024
[Subscribe today \(opens in a new tab\)](#) for the latest updates, and see more about how we're [Honouring our Centennial](#).



Centennial Newsletter: Love is Louder

As we embark on our journey towards celebrating the Centennial of The United Church of Canada, we are thrilled to welcome you to our inaugural Centennial Newsletter! This monthly communication will serve as a window into the rich tapestry of our history, shared faith, and ongoing commitments as a church community.

This month, we are shining a spotlight on one of the many facets of our commitment to inclusivity and social justice: our 2SLGBTQIA+ initiatives. Over the years, The United Church of Canada has been at the forefront of advocating for the rights and dignity of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals in our congregations and in broader society.



Members of Southminster-Steinhauer United Church celebrating Pride in Edmonton

Credit: Southminster United Church

A Brief Timeline of LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit Justice in The United Church of Canada

Summer festivals are in full swing, and many United Church communities are proudly participating in Pride events. Some of these communities have earned the title of “Affirming” because they've made a commitment



Delegates of the 1988 General Council voting

Credit: The United Church of Canada Archives

to support 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, including marching in Pride parades. This marks a significant departure from the 1980s, when the church grappled with whether openly gay individuals could serve as ministers. Back then, there were heated debates, often centred around interpretations of scripture. In 1988, the church made a landmark decision affirming that anyone who professes faith in Jesus is welcome, and is able to serve as an ordered minister, regardless of sexual orientation.

sponsoring 2SLGBTQIA+ refugees, advocating against legislation that negatively impacts transgender youth, and creating vibrant banners to proudly display in Pride parades.



Emmanuel United Church marching in Ottawa Pride Parade

Credit: Emmanuel United Church

Key Moments in United Church History

- **1984** - The United Church affirms its acceptance of all human beings as persons made in the image of God regardless of their sexual orientation and acknowledges that it has encouraged, condoned, and tolerated the rejection and persecution of homosexual persons in society and in the church. The church calls for repentance.
- **1988** - General Council 32 declares that all people regardless of sexual orientation are welcome as full members of the United Church, and all members are eligible to be considered for ordered ministry.
- **1992** - The church urges the government to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground for discrimination.
- **1992** - Tim Stevenson becomes the first openly gay minister to be ordained in the United Church.
- **2001** - United Church minister The Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo performs the first registered same-sex marriage in Ontario (and all of Canada).
- **2003** - The church calls on the federal government to recognize same-sex marriage in the Civil Marriages Act.
- **2009** - The church affirms the participation and ministry of transgender people, and encourages all congregations to welcome transgender people into membership, ministry, and full participation.
- **2010** - Rev. Cindy Bourgeois is the first openly transgender person ordained in the church.
- **2012** - Gary Paterson is elected Moderator, the first openly gay leader of a major Christian denomination.
- **2012** - United Church partners with Rainbow Refugee Canada to sponsor 2SLGBTQIA+ refugees.
- **2016** - The United Church supports Bill C-16, which ultimately adds gender identity and expressions to the Canadian Human Rights Act and Criminal Code.
- **2017** - The church and Affirm United host a dialogue on Global 2SLGBTQIA+ rights with global ecumenical and civil society partners.
- **2017** - The church and Affirm United launch *Iridesce: The Living Apology Project* to help the church discern a possible apology to the church's 2SLGBTQIA+ community.
- **2019** - United Church supports Revitalizing the Circle, Saskatoon's first Two-Spirit Powwow.
- **2023** - The United Church hosts an [Asian Consultation on Gender and 2SLGBTQIA+ Justice](#).
- **2024** - The United Church plans a Gender and 2SLGBTQIA+ consultation with African partners to be held in Zimbabwe.

Learn more about The United Church of Canada's belief that [all persons are made in the image of God](#).

Committees and Groups ...

Rockwood and Stone Worship and Faith Formation

Submitted by Barb Eley and Brian Mack

We continue to be grateful to God for everyone in our congregations who have contributed to worship and faith formation.

Worship

- **Sunday, April 28 Affirm Celebration** – The Celebration began at Stone with the peeling of the bells. Following the message and Statement of Intention, Rosemary Kennedy of Dublin Street in Guelph presented Stone with their certificate from Affirm United. A picture was taken on the steps after singing the first two verses of Let Us Build a House. We were greeted by the Chimes at Rockwood and took a picture outside before going in to sing the last three verses of Let Us Build House. We again made our Statement of Intention and Rosemary presented Rockwood's certificate. Following the choir anthem, we celebrated communion. We enjoyed tossing rainbow-colored balloons in worship and a rainbow feast after the service. The decorations remained in each church through Pride month in June.
- **Sunday, May 12 Sabbatical Liturgy** – This was Rev. Leffler's final service at both churches before she began her time of study leave, holidays, and sabbatical. Stone had breakfast before worship thanks to Worship and Pastoral Care. We used the Sabbatical liturgy from 2019 in worship at both churches. At Rockwood, Lillian Margaret Pothier was baptized.
- **Sundays, May 19 to September 8** – Rev. Leffler was away from May 13 until September 9. Lisa Leffler led worship from May 19th until September 8 except for May 26, June 9, June 16, June 23, and July 7. Each of these services were led by Worship & Faith Formation. The services utilized by Worship and Faith Formation were part of a six-week series of services prepared by Lisa Leffler and Andrew Hyde. Lisa Leffler prepared the slides for all services.
- **Sunday, May 26 Pastoral Charge Picnic** – Picnic was held at Stone following the service which featured favourite hymns. Thanks to Tom Parker and Tammy Smits for providing exciting rounds of Trivia and Bible Pictionary.
- **Sunday, June 9 Rockwood's Anniversary** – Barb Eley and Carol Smelsky led the full service as Andrew Hyde was unable to speak due to a prior commitment.
- **Sundays, June 23 to September 15** Alternating Summer Services-Services began June 23 at Stone and ended September 15 at Stone. Barb Eley graciously led worship on July 14 when Lisa Leffler's flight from Winnipeg was delayed. Lisa recorded her sermon and uploaded it.
- **Sunday, August 18** – Foodgrains zucchini weigh-off was held at Stone following worship.
- **Sunday, September 15 Welcome Back Liturgy** – Brian Mack led the liturgy to welcome Rev Leffler back. The Leffler family graciously provided lunch for all to enjoy following the service. Lisa Leffler was thanked and given a small gift from the congregations for her leadership during the summer. Rev. Leffler was given two potted fall plants for her garden as she returned to the pulpit.
- **Sunday, September 22 Resumption of Regular Services** – Regular services resumed on September 22 at Stone at 9:45 and at Rockwood at 11:15.
- **Sunday, September 29 Orange Shirt Sunday** – Folks wore orange shirts in remembrance of harm done to our Indigenous brothers and sisters.
- **Sunday, October 6 Worldwide Communion** – Communion was served in both churches.
- **Sunday, October 13 Thanksgiving Sunday** – We offered thanks for our many blessings.
- **Sunday, October 20 Stone Anniversary** – Growth Animator Greg-Smith Young outlined his role with the national church. The choirs from both Rockwood and Stone combined to offer an anthem. Parkers provided a soup lunch which was followed by a Foodgrains Celebration.
- **Sunday, November 3 All Saints Sunday** – We remembered Gary Walton at Stone and Roy Steinberg and Georgina Ferguson at Rockwood.
- **Sunday, November 10 Remembrance Sunday** – Service held at Rockwood at 10 am with Worship and Faith Formation leading. Marion Reidel, a

speaker from Royal City Mission, brought a message of need and hope.

- **Monday, November 11 Remembrance Day** – Rev Leffler offered the prayer at the Cenotaph ceremony. Choir members participated in the community choir.

Upcoming

- Sunday, November 24 Carol Sing – Led by the Eramosa Ensemble at 7 pm at Rockwood
- **Sunday, December 1 Advent 1** – Communion will be served.
- **Sunday, December 8 Advent 2** – Rev Leffler will incorporate prayers and other elements of Blue Christmas into the service. We will light candles in remembrance of loved ones during Prayers of the People.
- **Tuesday, December 24 Christmas Eve** – Readings and Reflections with communion at Rockwood from 6:15 until 7 pm. Christmas Eve communion service at Stone beginning at 7:30 pm.
- **Sunday, December 29** – The Worship Committee will lead the service on Zoom.
- **Sunday, January 5** – Lisa Leffler will provide pulpit supply.

Faith Formation

- **Contemplation & Conversation** – Rev. Leffler continues to offer contemplation and conversation each Sunday. Along with the commentaries, we are often provided with links to various United Church resources for our individual study. During the summer, when Rev. Leffler was on holidays, study leave, and sabbatical, Lisa Leffler, Tammy Smits, Karen Richardson, Liz Guthrie, Brian Mack, and Rosslyn Bentley offered thoughtful commentaries.
- **Creation Packs** – Creation packages were prepared for distribution beginning September 8 using The New Creed as the central theme. The thought-provoking reflections, questions and prayers were provided by Sarah Leffler, Liz Guthrie, Tammy Smits, Brian Mack, Barb Parker, and Cate Dewey. Pictures to accompany the reflections were courtesy of Lisa Leffler, Liz Guthrie, Sherol Steinberg, Randy Dewey, and Cate Dewey. Lisa Leffler, Heather Leffler, Brian Mack, Barb Parker, and

Cate Dewey provided the spiritual practices and activities. Lisa Leffler and Helen Smith created the colouring pages. Henry and William Smith along with Heather and Lisa Leffler filled the packages that were delivered by various volunteers. The next congregation pack for Advent and Christmas will be distributed on December 1.

- **Bible Study** – Bible Study started for the autumn on October 29 on Zoom with participants from Stone, Rockwood, and Arthur. The parables of Jesus are being examined.
- **Spiritual Saturday** led by Lisa Leffler – Spiritual Saturday started on October 26. It is normally held on the second Saturday of the month.
- **Faith, Food, Friendship, and Fun** – Led by Heather Leffler, casual worship started again on October 25 with sixteen in attendance.
- **Choir** – Led by Barb Eley at Rockwood and Liz Guthrie at Stone, choir has met on a weekly basis since September 12. For special occasions, choir practice has been combined.
- **Eramosa Ensemble** – Practices Tuesday at Stone. They played in worship in the summer and will play in worship in the fall. They will share their music for the Annual Carol sing on November 24.
- **Chimes Choir** – Played for our Affirm Celebration.
- **Men's Coffee Group** – Men gather on the last Thursday of each month from 10:30 am to 12 noon at the Bearded Barista.
- **Book Club** – Book Club meets monthly normally on the 3rd Wednesday at 7 pm on Zoom or in-person at Stone.

Rockwood Pastoral Care and Fellowship

Submitted by Heather Leffler

Scott Grant and Brent Stiles met with Heather before her Sabbatical to review our contact list so they could keep in touch with folk. Thanks to Ian Pasmore for continuing to send cards in sympathy and on special occasions.

Broadview subscriptions were renewed. Anyone wishing to pay for their subscription is invited to send \$30 to rockwooduc.treasurer@gmail.com and indicate it is for Broadview.

Stone Pastoral Care and Fellowship

Submitted by John Leffler

The members of the committee along with other Church members helped to deliver the fall Creation Packages to each Church family. Many thanks were received for the Church family thinking of the folks we do not see too often. Thank you to the Stone Pastoral Care members and all who visit people, send cards, keep the phone and membership list up to date and keep in touch with our Minister to keep her informed of life events within our congregation. The turkey and beef dinners provided dinner for over 90 people – for many this is great Pastoral Care.

Rockwood Stone Ministry and Personnel

Submitted by Brian Mack

Ministry and Personnel met on October 23rd at 7:30 pm on Zoom.

All of the lay employees for the pastoral charge were interviewed by members of the committee during the late summer and early fall. Brief oral reports were given concerning these interviews and thanks was expressed to all our employees for their dedication and hard work on our behalf.

Rosslyn Bentley and Brian Mack conducted Rev. Leffler's annual review. During the course of the interview, Heather expressed deep gratitude for the following:

- The willingness of both congregations to embrace an atmosphere of openness and transparency.
- The creativity of both congregations and their willingness to work together.
- New voices who took risks in writing pieces for Contemplation & Conversation and who orchestrated the Creation Pack prior to her return from Sabbatical.

Heather briefly outlined the nature and scope of her sabbatical. She will be sharing many of those details with us during worship and in other settings such as at our council meetings or at a pastoral charge meeting. Heather also commented on her progress toward meeting her 2024 goals. Those goals were as follows:

- To encourage our congregations to grow in understanding of what it means to be affirming
- To continue to support the Rockwood and Stone Trustees

- To prayerfully discern how to support volunteers and committees in embracing change
- To continue to invite our entire congregations to see themselves as part of pastoral care

After reviewing her ministry during 2024, Rev. Leffler identified the following goals for 2025:

- To support discernment concerning where God is leading our churches
- To continue to support the Trustees of both Rockwood and Stone
- To help our churches further refine our unique place in the community

Rev. Leffler was thanked for her efforts during 2024. Ministry and Personnel provides recommendations to the Pastoral Charge Board concerning salaries. The following two recommendations were made by consensus:

- Heather's salary would reflect the cost-of-living increase (3%), her change in the cost-of-living group for this pastoral charge, and her current historic amount above minimum. Mileage would be at \$0.55/km, education resource allowance \$1689, and phone allowance \$50 per month
- visiting ministry personnel daily rate of \$254
- In keeping with minimum increases as suggested by the United Church, that the pastoral charge secretary receive a 3% COL increase keeping in mind the recent change in Ontario's minimum wage and that historically the secretary has been paid a little more than the minimum.

Ministry and Personnel also encourages Councils when they are preparing their budget to review compensation for all church employees and that consideration be given to a 3% COLA as a minimum increase as per United Church Guidelines.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 5, 2025 via Zoom at 7:30 pm.

Rockwood Stone Finance & Stewardship

Submitted by Heather Leffler

The Committee met on October 30 on Zoom.

Heather thanked our Treasurers for helping her with our statistics which were submitted to the United Church on June 19, 2024. We calculated that our congregations gave 5997 volunteer hours in 2023.

The church will be tracking volunteer hours from now on.

One License which allows us to reprint and podcast hymns reviewed our license and confirmed that we can continue to pay for a single license for the pastoral charge instead of one for each congregation.

Our Treasurers and Property Chairpersons shared updates with the Committee.

We are actively seeking someone to replace Bill Allen who has been filling in as Pastoral Charge Treasurer. When a new Treasurer is found, Bill will assist them. We will ensure there are three signatories on the account.

Bill shared the Pastoral Charge Financial Statement and Draft Budget for 2025. The Committee recommends that the Trustees draw \$25,140 to cover the housing portion of the minister's salary from the Manse Fund in 2025.

The Committee was reminded of the organizations that offer grants for congregations in Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council.

Stone Property & Finance

Submitted by Jack Ward and Bill Allen

Property Update – Jack Ward

Stone held four takeout dinners since May 1st. All were well received and profitable.

After putting a sign in front of the church advertising our dinners, we had a response from some of the close neighbors of the church. These dinner sales proved to be a great outreach to our community.

We continue to test our water every 90 days and are pleased to report our water is good.

During a very hot summer, our new hybrid furnace with the air conditioning proved to be very useful for Sunday services and for other meetings in the church.

Financial Update – Bill Allen

The Stone UC Operating Statement to the end of October shows an operating deficit of \$3,596 mainly as a result of lower weekly givings and the loss of three regular PAR donors. The deficit has been reduced from earlier in the year with impressive returns from the four take-out dinners of \$5,920. Also encouraging were \$1,140 donations to the Community Outreach Fund. Operating expenses are

tracking slightly lower than budgeted.

Our Foodgrains Growing Project has raised \$4,000 to date. We are still hoping to raise an additional \$4,000 through donations and our Foodgrains Breakfast, November 30th. Donations in support of our Church or any of our fundraising initiatives can be made by e-transfer to stoneuc.treasurer@gmail.com or by cheque to Stone United Church mailed to P.O. Box 57, Rockwood, NOB 2K0. Indicate in the memo line where you wish your donation to be credited.

Thank You

Your faithfulness through PAR, e-transfers, Canada Helps and postdated cheques is keeping our finances stable and allowing us to continue to serve God in our church communities and the world.

How can I support our churches?

1. **PAR:** To sign up for monthly Pre-Authorized Remittances or to change your givings, contact Bill Allen at stoneuc.treasurer@gmail.com or 519-841-4170 for **Stone** or Amanda Hunter-Anthony at rockwooduc.treasurer@gmail.com or 519-856-1129 for **Rockwood**.
 2. **E-transfer Stone** at stoneuc.treasurer@gmail.com or **Rockwood** at rockwooduc.treasurer@gmail.com
In the memo, please designate whether your offering is for your church, M&S and/or other and include your contact information.
 3. **Canada Helps** is a Canadian registered charity that enables other charities to receive online gifts. Go to Stone <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/80455/> or Rockwood <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/48574/> to make a credit card donation. You can designate your offering to the church, M&S and/or other in the message box.
 4. **Cheques** can be sent to **Stone United Church**, PO Box 57 Rockwood, ON N0B 2K0 or **Rockwood United Church**, 119 Harris St., Rockwood, ON N0B 2K0
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Rockwood Property & Finance

Submitted by Sherol Steinberg

Thank you to all who support the church with their resources and time. From the report last November – “One negative note is the pump on the dishwasher stopped working and the part has been backordered for months ... impacting breakfasts and potlucks”. The backordered part for the dishwasher was received in early November 2024. Thanks to Kevin Anthony who took apart the dishwasher and MacGyvered a fix—which is still holding. We took delivery of the new pump but will not install until the current fix fails.

Stone United will be running a breakfast using the Rockwood facilities at the end of November in conjunction with a Silent Auction to benefit Foodgrains. Rockwood ran breakfasts in September and October and will be running breakfasts in January, February, March, April and May. Beyond the wonderful opportunity for fellowship and community gathering, The Country Breakfasts are an important source of income.

Currently PAR givings cover a little over half of our monthly expenses. Having a steady, predictable income, helps the church with budgeting and paying our bills in a timely fashion. We would also request that you keep the church in mind at Christmas time, when many look to make donations over and above your usual generosity.

The sale of the parking lot fell through, we are grateful to the Trustees who arranged that the deposit be nonrefundable. Rockwood has received the deposit held by the lawyers and currently the money is being used to coverage monthly shortages. After the stressful fail of the sale, we have had a brief respite. Looking forward the Trustees are looking for a mandate, with some of the options including re listing the parking lot, listing the house, entering discussions with a management company who would ‘run’ our buildings and who would take over maintenance and ‘rent’ the times we require back to us. It is a great time to look forward and determine how we see how future!

Rentals of Day Hall have been increasing.

Thank you to:

- the Country Breakfast Volunteers who are steadfast and true
- Cees Braamse and Kevin Anthony for mowing the lawn—and going on the quest for the perfect Christmas Tree.
- all for decorating the outside and inside of the church, especially to Colleen for organizing decorating the church throughout the year – with help of her minions
- thanks to Eric and Christine Wenger for the awesome tree for the outdoor nativity collected on November 10 (Outside decorating will be November 23, 2024)

A special thank you to Amanda, our Treasurer, who works hard to ensure our books are balanced and our bills paid, especially through the months when a lot of juggling was required.

Please note for donations to be included on a 2024 tax receipt they will need to be received by December 20, 2024.

Rockwood Outreach

Submitted by Marcia Haworth

Mission and Service

It looks as though we may fall a little short of our \$12,000 target by year end, but we will be close. We are grateful to receive \$826 a month through PAR and also some weekly donations.

Fund-raising

In spring and early fall we were able to help out EWCS food bank by purchasing a large quantity of frozen food from MacMillans. Sadly, there are now many more families needing the food bank, including a small number who are homeless. In early fall the pantry inventory became very low. This was why we planned the pre-Thanksgiving food drive and are so thankful for the amazing response we received. Generous donations of the most needed food items and \$995 meant that we were able to make a huge difference to the almost 90 people being supported by them.

Recently we were asked by a couple who have fallen on hard times if we could help pay their Hydro bill. As Council previously approved Outreach to spend up to \$300 without making a special request, we did this as a one-time donation, spending \$285. We thank David

Smelsky for his professional wisdom on how to accomplish this ensuring an appropriate audit trail.

Coming up is our major fund-raiser of the year and plans for the Christmas Market on November 24 are well underway. There will be on-going refreshments during the event, and we will again be making preordered outdoor Christmas arrangements as well as Christmas goodies, preserves, and decorations. This year we will also be selling frozen chicken pot pies. There will be a Silent Auction table as well so we hope you will invite your family and friends to join us. The event will run from 10:30 am to mid-afternoon.

Before Christmas we hope we will have raised sufficient funds to purchase grocery gift cards for the food bank and Rural Women's Support Program clients as well as send cheques to support Women in Crisis, Anishnabeg Outreach and continue to replenish the supply of drop-in gift cards as needed.

Stone Canadian Foodgrains Bank Project

Submitted by Barb Parker

Stone United Church in conjunction with the participants from the churches of Rockwood and Barrie Hill, carried out our sixth Foodgrains growing project. This year, Zucchini's, Pumpkins and Sunflowers were included in the growing competitions. The growing project wrap-up was held October 20th at Stone Church. An enthusiastic crowd gathered following the Anniversary Service and lunch, for conclusion of the growing competitions and activities.

Winners in the growing competitions included the Benham family, and Mead family, for the heaviest pumpkins, Nixon family for the smallest pumpkin, Heather Leffler for the best decorated, and Helen Smith for best carved pumpkins. The Sharman family grew the tallest sunflower, and also tied with Murray Oliver for the sunflower with the biggest head, and the Parker family had the sunflower with most heads. The Nixon family had the tallest corn stalk.

So far this year we have raised approximately \$4000. A Foodgrains fundraising breakfast will be held November 30 at Rockwood UC. We look forward to additional donations before year end, to help us raise as much as possible to help combat the ever-increasing need of world hunger and food insecurity.

You can donate by e-transfer to stoneuc.treasurer@gmail.com or to the Stone United Church, P.O. Box 57, Rockwood, N0B 2K0. Please make the cheque out to the Stone United Church with Foodgrains in the memo line. Thank you for considering donating to this important need.

Rockwood Trustees

Submitted by Rosslyn Bentley

Rockwood United Church Trustees met on June 4 and June 14, 2024 with the four Trustees, Rosslyn Bentley (Chair), Darryl Nichol, David Smelsky, Christine Wenger and Rev. John Benham (filling in for Rev. Leffler).

The sale of the vacant land (present church parking lot) was due to be concluded by 5pm 31 May 2024 an extension from 15 May 2024. This purchaser had asked for several extensions for closing and as a result the Trustees negotiated a \$60,000 non-refundable deposit to be held by our lawyer until either a successful completion of sale or forfeit of sale occurred.

In the afternoon of May 31, the purchaser indicated they were having difficulties obtaining title and were still finalizing funding. The deal did not close. The day after the purchaser also indicated that the language on the ownership/deed was archaic and was causing difficulties in obtaining insurance.

In good faith, the Trustees allowed a final extension of the sale contract to 5 pm June 7, 2024 EST in order for the purchaser to obtain title insurance. The Trustees met again on June 14 and concluded the sale was null and void. On July 26, 2024 Chris Wood advised the failed purchaser of the church's intention to cash the deposit cheques and there was a legal wait time required. Our lawyer indicated that legal action could be required to collect the moneys currently owed to the Church by the purchaser. The church has received the funds less the legal fees incurred to date.

Given the lengthy period of time and the current state of the church finances, the Trustees felt it prudent to bring the congregation up-to-date and to request a review of the current direction (ie to continue to attempt to sell the parking lot) to ensure ongoing support of the plan.

Western Ontario Waterways

Submitted by Liz Guthrie

Horseshoe Falls, Antler River Watershed and Western Ontario Waterways met from May 24 to 26, 2024 in person at the Unifor Family Education Centre, Port Elgin and online via Zoom

Theme: Life Together

The three regional councils share staff.

The Right Reverend Dr. Carmen Landsdowne, the United Church Moderator, spoke on several occasions about "Life Together."

Worship and song also included the theme, "Life Together."

Speakers included:

- Tanya Cameron – Vocational Minister/Tim Hackborn – building relationships with indigenous communities.
- Brenna Baker, Community of Faith Stewardship Support, encouraged us to be good stewards. Share, Invite, Thank You
- Greg Smith-Young in a new position of Growth Animator, encourages renewal through *Invite – Attract – Welcome and Engage*.
- Miriam Bowlby and Chris DeVella from Kindred Works of the United Property Resources Corporation help to make property decisions that will benefit the whole community.

Proposal #1

The regional council established the procedures by which it would conduct business. Passed

Proposal #2 and #4

WOW recruitment team prepared the slate of Ministry Personnel and Lay members that will represent the Regional Council at the GC45 in Calgary, July 2025. Passed

The recruitment team thanked those who have served/finished their terms and welcomed those newly appointed to the Executive and Commissions.

Proposal #3

Glen Morris presented a proposal to allow adherents to be elected to Governing Bodies of Communities of Faith in the United Church of Canada. After much discussion, the motion was defeated and referred back to General Council.

There have been amalgamations, name changes,

nesting opportunities and disbanded congregations in each region.

In the WOW region, we remember the disbanded congregations of Goldstone United Church and Oliphant United Church.

Andrew Hyde previously recognized as Designated Lay Minister has met the requirements to enter the Order of Ministry was ordained.

Carolyn MacMillan, Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, was ordained. She has a position at Appleby United Church. Carolyn was a member of Rockwood United.

President elect for Western Ontario Waterways, Rev. Rebekah Duncan, Massage therapist, mother and scouter was introduced

The WOW Fall Regional Meeting will be held online November 16 to 17, 2024.

Rev. John Neff, Congregational Support minister, has arranged for WOW lay representatives to meet monthly online.

The first session held on September 26 explored questions such as, "What challenges do you face? What questions do you have about your role and how can regional council support you?"

Feedback from the above questions were shared at the October 24, 2024 Zoom meeting.



*Wishing you &
your loved ones
a wonderful
Christmas
& a blessed
New Year!*