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July 23, 2020

The Church Council has completed a survey of the congregation, and has decided to begin the initial steps of welcoming the worshipping members of the congregation to participate in *in-person* worship on Thursday evenings in the month of August. We are all moving together, not to a new normal, but what may be called a new *reality*.

As we work together in this intentional and incremental transition, let us assure you that your safety and the safety of others is our guiding principle. We will follow the guidance of the Minnesota Department of Health, the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and the Governor and his team. In consultation with our own, *in-house medical professionals*, Drs. Brenda Weigel, Clara Rizzotto and Remi Pizarro, we have developed safety protocols, practices, and procedures that will be implemented, monitored, evaluated, and adapted to provide a safe worshiping experience.

We will begin this first stage of reopening in August by welcoming a limited group of worshipers to attend the Thursday evening recording session. This will not only provide an option for in-person worship for the congregation, but will also serve as something of a laboratory for the staff and musicians as we work to eventually transition from pre-recorded worship services to a more live-streamed format. Maintaining and improving our virtual worship allows us to focus on what has become an important link between both members and the greater church community.

You may be assured that the *online worship service* option will continue to be a high priority for our congregation: the recent survey results bear this out. We have purchased a new camera that will connect directly into our sound system and will mount on the back of the sanctuary to better accommodate live-streaming on Sundays down the road. Overall, we hope that this will enhance the quality of the on-line worship experience. Again, we must acknowledge that this is only the first of several likely stages, which may themselves change due to the course of the pandemic.

The first open, recording session will be held on Thursday, August 6th from 7:00 - 8:00 pm. Doors will open 10 minutes before the recording session begins. Attendance will be initially capped at 40 worshipers, not including staff and musicians. This number represents approximately 21% of the sanctuary seating capacity. Please review the following guidelines prior to registering to attend a recording session.

Sincerely,

*Lake of the Isles Lutheran Church Council*