



Central Lutheran MINNEAPOLIS

Dear Friends in Christ,

I write with the good news that it is time for us to return to in-person worship as the Central Lutheran faith community. The Council approved the plan at their meeting on May 25. They have been guided by our welcome statement: "You are welcome. No exceptions." They have also been guided by vaccination rates as the key metric. Essentially, the Council has waited until almost all ages have access to the vaccine, and we have arrived at the 70% rate for people receiving at least one dose here in Hennepin and Ramsey counties.

The return to in-person worship will be phased in over several weeks to allow adaptation and preparation. The start date also allows for time to communicate the plan and for the staff and lay leadership to prepare.

Here is the phased in plan for you to note. For some the plan will feel late and that we should have been back to in-person worship sooner. For some the plan will feel too early and that there are still unknowns and some anxiety around larger in-person gatherings. For some, this will feel about right and that the plan looks good. What you need to know is that wherever you are at, you are supported. For those ready to come back to in-person worship, it will be wonderful to be together. For those that are not quite ready, the full livestream worship will continue with a renewed energy to balance the in-person and livestream worship experience. The Letter to the Ephesians provides a helpful invitation to us as the followers of Jesus Christ: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32)

The Phased-In Plan for the Return to In-Person Worship

- **Sunday, June 20** – "Soft open" for the 10:30 a.m. worship. We will worship in the current online service format so you can experience in person what that has been like these 15 months. Coffee and cookies will be served on the north plaza following worship. The 5:00 p.m. Saturday and the 8:30 a.m. Sunday worship services remain online only.
- **Sunday, June 27** – 10:30 a.m. worship in the same format. Coffee and cookies served on the north plaza following worship. The 5:00 p.m. Saturday and the 8:30 a.m. Sunday worship services remain online only.

- **Sunday, July 4** – 10:30 a.m. worship in the same format. Coffee and cookies served on the north plaza following worship. The 5:00 p.m. Saturday and the 8:30 a.m. Sunday worship services remain online only.
- **Saturday, July 10** – 5:00 p.m. worship resumes in the new in-person format, with Holy Communion. Happy Hour follows on the patio.
- **Sunday, July 11** – 10:30 a.m. worship resumes in the new in-person format, with Holy Communion. The first carillon concert is offered with the first food truck of the summer. The 8:30 a.m. worship service remains online only.
- **Saturday, July 17 and Sunday, July 18** – 5:00 p.m. worship continues in the new in-person format. The 8:30 a.m. worship service resumes in the new in-person format, with Holy Communion. The 10:30 a.m. worship continues in the new in-person format. The second carillon concert is offered and there will be a food truck on the north plaza.
- **Monday, July 19** – 11:00 a.m. in-person worship resumes in the great room. The 11:30 a.m. community meal resumes in person.

In this transitional time the Daily Prayer and Holy Communion services will continue, with some slight changes in when they are offered. Beginning the week of June 7, Daily Prayer with Holy Communion will be offered on Wednesdays at 12:00 p.m. and on Saturdays at 4:00 p.m. Advance sign up is no longer needed. When the Saturday evening in-person worship resumes on July 10, the Saturday Communion service will be discontinued. The Wednesday Daily Prayer with Holy Communion will continue.

Masks will be required as we resume in-person worship for the foreseeable future. We will also let you know the status of singing as we look to the return to in-person worship.

After 63 weeks of online worship, there are many things to note and tend to before we return to in-person worship and the new formats that balance worship for those in the sanctuary and those who continue to worship online.

Thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for your grace, patience, and adaptability. We have never done this before, suspending in-person worship, creating a positive online worship experience for all three services, and now preparing to return to in-person worship while continuing the online experience. God will continue to guide us. Thanks be to God!

Yours in Christ Jesus,



Pastor Peter