



October 26, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

After much prayer, discussion, and consultation among the congregation, we have decided to begin a return to in-person worship at Concordia. This letter is to encourage you as you prayerfully consider your decisions, as well as provide you with detailed answers to anticipated questions you may have. If, after you've read through this, you still have questions, please feel free to call me at the church office, or email me directly at mschutz@concordialive.ca.

The plan is to hold both online/telephone and in-person worship starting this coming Sunday, November 1. Our online/telephone worship has been at 10:30am Sundays. This will move to 9:30am Sundays. Then, at 11:00am, we will hold a short (approx. 25-30 min.) Communion service. In addition, on Wednesdays at 6:15 we will hold a short (approx. 30 min.) prayer service.

In order to minimize risk as best we can, we will be limiting numbers at each in-person gathering to 25 worshippers, plus leaders (pastors, ushers, etc.). Pre-registration will be required for each gathering, either Sunday or Wednesday. You can register online at our website - <https://concordialive.ca/worship/register> - or by calling the church office at 250-492-5902. If you call and get the answering machine, please leave a message and we will call you back to confirm your spot.

We are beginning to meet in person again because many are missing the fellowship and encouragement that we get by being together in person. It is, after all, God's design for His Church; the primary New Testament word for "church" is *ekklesia*, which means "assembly"! At the same time, we are mindful that this is a time when COVID cases are rising in BC, though the numbers in Penticton and area are still quite low.

We know that not everyone will be able or ready to meet in person, and some believe this is too soon. We know that some believe that we have been too long in making this happen. As your pastor, I am asking everyone to extend much grace to one another, and to not pass judgment on one another on these things, as Paul calls all Christians to bear with one another in matters of conscience (Romans 14). Perhaps we would do well to take his words in Romans 14:9 as our theme verse as we take these steps: "So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding."

We know that these are trying times for all of us in many different ways, and our congregational leadership has been faithful in considering as many factors as possible, including God's design for His Church, and also keeping up with the latest developments in health and provincial government guidelines and orders.

Please also read through the attached FAQ document, as it seeks to give details about many anticipated questions. Again, if you have any further questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out. May our gracious God guide us and lead us through the Holy Spirit as He brings His Word to us, and may He give us all wisdom and peace to guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Your servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Michael".

Pastor Michael