All of us as members of Lakeview Covenant are eager to meet again in person. Corporate worship and gathering with other believers are key parts of the Christian experience and contribute to our spiritual health and wellbeing. With a relaxation of Minnesota’s stay at home order, we as the church Leadership Team are excited to begin facilitating opportunities for our church to gradually increase the ways we can connect in person, while remaining safe. As we go forward, we will appreciate your feedback and comments on our ongoing phased approach as well as creative ideas about how to begin worshipping and gathering together safely.

Phase One Principles, Goals and Priorities.

- We want to have the Bible guide this process, and take to heart what it says in Philippians 2:3-4--“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”
- We do want to do everything we can to meet both people’s spiritual and relational needs, while ensuring the health and safety of everyone, both ourselves and our community. Our plan is to gradually increase in-person meetings in phases, beginning with smaller groups.
- We recognize that different people have different tolerance of risk; however, as we seek to pursue Christ and advance his priorities, our church will act with love and deference, erring on the side of protecting people who are the most vulnerable. This is consistent with “looking to the interests of others” and with the biblical requirement that we act in a way that protects the physical health of others when it is within our power (Dt. 22:9).
- We acknowledge that the overall unpredictability of the COVID-19 pandemic will require us to constantly reassess our “phased” approach, making changes when necessary to keep people safe.

Phase One: Small Groups Beyond On-Line Events.

- Beginning immediately, off-site meetings or gatherings of 10 or fewer people can take place. Outdoor gatherings are preferred if at all possible. All gatherings should follow the guidelines below.
- Lakeview-associated meetings should follow the current CDC guidelines:
  - Do a self-screening. Ask yourself, “Have I had a cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell in the past 10 days?” If you have developed any of these symptoms, you should contact your physician or clinic before meeting with others.
  - Stay home if you are sick
  - Maintain social distancing—stay 6 feet apart
  - Wear a cloth face covering or mask
    - If you are meeting outside, masks are optional but encouraged, provided that 6 feet or more of distancing will be constantly maintained.
    - If you are meeting indoors, they are highly encouraged for the protection of others. If someone is NOT wearing a mask, permission needs to be asked of the entire group to see if it’s okay with everyone. Please remember that masks are important for preventing OTHERS from getting sick.

Cloth face coverings are important, because not everyone who is infected with Covid-19 has symptoms of the illness. Cloth face coverings help keep others from getting sick. Most people that get sick with COVID-19 have a few days when they can pass the virus before they develop
symptoms. There are also a number of people who get the virus and are able to spread it, without ever developing symptoms. Cloth face coverings prevent spread of the virus to others both directly and through others, both before and after symptoms develop.

- Clean your hands frequently.
  - Wash with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. If you do touch these areas, clean your hands before and afterward.
  - Clean your hands after touching common areas or items others have touched.
  - Disinfect common, high-touch areas in the places you are meeting before and after meeting together.

- Online services, activities and other connections will continue. This may be a good time to gather with a few others and together watch the online worship, and spend time discussing it in your group afterward.

- Using the church parking lot for small group meetings is an option. However, if you would like to use the church parking lot, please do not just “show up.” Check with the church office first.

In this first phase, you may want to meet in your backyard around the firepit or on the patio, go to Brighton Beach and enjoy Lake Superior, or take a walk at Hartley. Use your imagination for ways and places to meet. Whatever you find to do, enjoy your time together. Remember, we are not all equally comfortable with how close we get. Be kind to each other.

**Looking to Future Phases.**
As we progress to the next phases we plan to address things like:
- Meeting in and using the church building
- The gradual transition to meeting in larger groups
- Eventually worshiping as a corporate group

Please note that our decisions in all these areas will be made based on what is most fitting for Lakeview. You may hear of differences between how we approach certain issues and how other churches address them. Please remember that each congregation’s situation, facilities, and capabilities are different. Therefore, our reopening process will most likely develop differently from others, but that is to be expected. Specific guidelines for each new phase will be determined as the situation develops and more information and guidance becomes available.

**The work of God’s church continues!**

God has been, is now, and will continue working through the church during this time. We have had dozens of people joining our online worship services who almost certainly would never have stepped foot into the Lakeview building. We are supporting and developing relationships with our community in ways that may not have happened otherwise. Hurting people in each of our neighborhoods, workplaces, and spheres of influence are watching and waiting to see how God’s Church will respond in this situation. We are called to be God’s hands and feet whether or not we are able to worship together in person, and we are called to lives shaped by the fruits of the spirit, boldness in sharing the Gospel, and unity among believers.

Sincerely,

Lakeview Covenant Leadership Team