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June 25, 2020

To: Families and Friends of Luther Court Society  
From: Karen Johnson-Lefsrud, Executive Director

Re: Update regarding current conditions at Luther Court

Dear Family and Friends,

This update seeks to keep you up-to-date on the status of life at Luther Court and provide you with pertinent and current information as it pertains to the care and well-being of your loved ones.

British Columbia officially entered Phase 3 of its COVID restart program yesterday. They have allowed for more travel within the province, have announced the re-opening of resorts and campgrounds, discussed the possibilities for schools in the fall, amidst other details. All details of the restart program can be found at [www.bccdc.ca](http://www.bccdc.ca). This website of the BC Centre for Disease Control is the most reliable source for what is current with regard to the pandemic for residents of this province.

What is not identified within the Phase 3 opening is long term care and assisted living residences. Although we did get some refined guidelines for what constitutes an essential visit, the parameters are still pretty narrow for what constitutes an essential visit. We have been told that the province is working on guidelines for non-essential visits, which we presume will begin with outdoor visits. However, we don't have details as to when or what these visits will look like. Dr. Henry and Minister Dix along with their team, are proceeding cautiously, knowing that this is the most difficult sector to reopen, due to its vulnerability. They have decided to open provincially, as opposed to regionally, and they are working on a plan that will work across the province. I know that it is difficult to wait, and it will be no surprise to you how very much the community at Luther Court is longing to see their families in person. As soon as we receive more information we will get it out to you and will act upon new guidelines as we receive them.

We celebrated today with one of our couples, Ted & Janet, who live in an apartment at Luther Court, their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. A small group gathered in the morning to participate in a blessing of their marriage, vows taken 60 years ago and still such a gift to them these many years later. Their family, who had planned to come from across the country for a celebration, and now were not able to do so because of COVID, prepared video tributes which were shared with the community here as they had their noon meal. An afternoon family Zoom call was planned with Ted & Janet's family so they could give their personal greetings. It was not the celebration that they had planned for – but it was lovely and meaningful, nonetheless. All of us are learning how to mark occasions differently during these pandemic days.

Below is a picture of Ted & Janet and we congratulate them and wish them continued joy in their life together.



One thing that we have continued to focus on at Luther Court, and that seems to make a difference as we experience this waiting together, is to remember and name the things that we are thankful for. Last week I shared some of the things that I am thankful for. This week we asked some of our tenants to name things that they were thankful for. This is what they named:

- My wonderful family
  - My granddaughter who brings me my groceries
  - Telephone/Facetime/Skype calls
  - Life at Luther Court
  - My health
  - My mind- I can still think and remember things
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- How my birthday was celebrated here. It made me feel extra special
  - My children and grandchildren
  - My faith
  - To be living at Luther Court
  - To have my mobility
  - The friendly family atmosphere here

In my next post we will try to include some things that our residents in care are thankful for.



This is what a window visit looks like

The day-to-day information is about the same:

1. Luther Court remains closed to all visitors except for those visits deemed to be essential visits (primarily compassionate end-of-life visits and visits when a person's condition has markedly changed, or at time of move-in to assist in settling).
2. Window visits are very popular – and the “next-best thing” to being in the same room together. You must sign up for the visits in advance – because so many people want to have their chance to connect in this way. Please email Amber at [ahayes@luthercourt.org](mailto:ahayes@luthercourt.org) or leave a message at 250 477-7241, extension 31, and she will get back to you. Electronic visits (Skype, FaceTime, Zoom - are also available and continue to be a very helpful way to connect and can be booked in the same way – just call Amber. **Please see the attached letter, below, from Lori McKenzie, Director of Care and Community, regarding Virtual/Window visit requests.**
3. Deliveries of groceries and other items can be dropped off at the main entrance for delivery to your loved one. The hours for drop-off are **9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.**
4. We continue to practice safe-distancing, wearing of masks when within 2 metres of the seniors, rigorous cleaning protocols, screening for symptoms of both residents and staff, and of course absolutely key – frequent and thorough hand-washing. We maintain regular and frequent contact with the health authority and the public health team, in order to be as current as possible on the best strategies to keep our community safe.



Our thorough cleaning routines continue throughout the building. Here, done with a smile!

We had a very successful AGM this past week on the Zoom platform. Although it is different from meeting in person, we were able to achieve completing the necessary business of the Society. We are so appreciative of the members of the Luther Court Society who joined us for the virtual AGM and for their support and encouragement, especially in these unusual times!

Our chaplain, Ed Chell, gave a very fine meditation at the beginning of the AGM. It is attached here so others can read it. Please feel free to reach out to Chaplain, Ed Chell for a conversation. He is a good listener and is happy to help as he can. Ed can be reached by emailing [echell@luthercourt.org](mailto:echell@luthercourt.org) or by calling 250-477-7241 ext. 23.

When we began this COVID odyssey more than 3 months ago, we didn't know what to expect. We have seen heartache and loss, we have seen courage and resolve, we have seen creativity and hopefulness. We are now entering Phase 3 of our province's reopening. The journey continues. We journey together. Thank you for your support, your forbearance, and your good humour.

We are grateful for your prayers. You are in our prayers.  
Best regards, Karen Johnson-Lefsrud, Executive Director

## Being still in these times

I asked a resident the other day to tell me his favorite verse.

He was quick to respond, “Be still and know that I am God”— Psalm 46

Being still is not always something we embrace – waiting in line, being restricted from going out to see friends or family, slowing down due to illness.... Waiting for the morning in a sleepless night... Name your stillness..

We have been getting a lot of experience with being more still during the COVID Pandemic.

Our usual rhythms around here at Luther Court have been upset, for an extended period of time now. Disrupted visiting schedules with families, children not in school, spouses not working, even gathering within the site has been curbed. Thankfully we have not had any COVID cases here at Luther Court, however, we have had some deaths of residents and even a staff member. Grief is a challenge at the best of times. Now our pattern of gathering for a memorial of community members has also been halted. The names, memories and the acknowledgement of connection to these valued members - has been somewhat stilled.

Being still may not be our favorite activity. Yet, – stillness can be an opportunity. – An opportunity to be present with the great I AM.

You may recall the naming of God early in the Bible when Moses asked God, “Who shall I say sent me on this mission to lead the people out of their misery in Egypt? God’s response was “I am who I am” or “I will be what I will be”. This is where we get the reference to God as the great I AM. We hear again many times in the Gospel of John when Jesus proclaims I am...The bread of Life who feeds us, I am the Vine ... providing connection and roots, I am the resurrection .... Breathing new life into us.....

The Great I am can take many forms.

I recall my Hebrew professor explaining that the Hebrew word for being, “hay ya” (sounds a lot like Yahweh) is active. The Hebrew understanding of being is one of action. Even seemingly inanimate objects are in the midst of being present – This chair is busy being a chair, this rock is taking its place in creation as a rock, more believable are things like water, fish, animals and plants that are visibly actively being. We too are active in our most rested state as we breathe.

The great I AM joins us in our stillness. In our stillness we might notice that God joins us so that we are not alone.

In the haze of dementia ... God sees us clearly.

In the frustration of immobility ... God moans with us.

In the yearning for closeness to loved ones ... God’s heart swells.

In the garden with the flowers and the birds ... God Sings.

In the complexity of planning large tasks like a rebuild ... God inspires wisdom.

In the quiet of the morning when we wake to face the day ... God joins our steps.

In the caring work of the Luther Court caregivers ... God greets with compassion.

In the evening when we transition from one day to the next ... God's love continues to enfold us.

Whether our stillness is chosen or imposed God accompanies us with love and compassion. We are valued. We are not alone.

Be still ... and know that the great I AM is with you. May it be so, among all our relations.

Blessings,  
Chaplain Ed.

## VIRTUAL/ WINDOW VISIT REQUESTS

June 26, 2020

You would have received a note from Karen earlier today, this note is in addition to that with respect to visits. As per Karen's message:

"We have been told that the province is working on guidelines for non-essential visits, which we presume will begin with outdoor visits. However, we don't have details as to when or what these visits will look like. Dr. Henry and Minister Dix along with their team, are proceeding cautiously, knowing that this is the most difficult sector to reopen, due to its vulnerability. They have decided to open provincially, as opposed to regionally, and they are working on a plan that will work across the province. I know that it is difficult to wait, and it will be no surprise to you how very much the community at Luther Court is longing to see their families in person. As soon as we receive more information we will get it out to you and will act upon new guidelines as we receive them."

In the interim we are carrying on with both virtual and window visits. We are asking some assistance on your part to ensure these times are optimum for yourselves and your family member. Previously we had requested 24 hour notice to arrange visits, but this has become too tight of a time frame for Activity staff to arrange and manage these visits, we are now requesting visits be booked one week in advance. As you might well imagine there are over 120 individuals living here, so scheduling the virtual/window visits and having them happen in a timely fashion can be challenging. When you have a scheduled visit arranged, please make note of the time and date, as there are instances when the visit has been forgotten, which as you will appreciate can be quite a disappointment for the resident on this end. We too will do our very best to keep a good appointment record so as not to miss any booked appointments.

Could we also request, in Dr. Bonnie's words, "kindness, calmness and safety", when arriving and waiting for a window visit. We will keep to the schedule, and as family/friends, if you could keep an eye on your visit time, to give enough space for saying goodbye, and for the family waiting to be able to begin their visit on time. Please stand back from those engaged in a visit to give them a respectful private visit. Activity staff are working hard to stick to the time schedule, they will be aware that you are awaiting your turn.

As Karen, has said many times, we are truly grateful for all the ways in which you have shown the Luther Court staff and residents your care and your concern. We appreciate your assistance in helping us to ensure that each individual has the opportunity to visit either virtually or with the window visit. Thank you for your ongoing efforts.

Sincerely,

Lori McKenzie  
Director of Care and Community