

November 10, 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.

We enter these winter months with thanksgiving that our community has been spared so far from infection with the COVID virus. We are especially glad of this when we see the increase of cases across our province, and across the country. We continue to be vigilant, to uphold our protocols with regard to screening and the wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and to adhere to the protocols for visits to our site. Rather than get hooked into the fear and anxiety that attends this time, I am seeking to be thankful for each day that we are COVID-free, striving to do our best to remain that way, but also confident that if it were to strike that we have made preparations to mitigate its effects. Thank you for your role in helping to keep our community safe.

We have been enjoying many virtual events that have shown us a new way of engaging in the world. Below is a picture of a concert that some of our tenants are enjoying that is provided by the Health Arts Society. Another family member has made a gift to us of a link to watch a concert by tenor, Ken Lavigne. All of these opportunities bring joy and richness to life that is especially appreciated in these challenging times.



With our recent BC election, approximately 73 people who live at Luther Court were able to vote, using the mail-in ballot system! One of our staff, Katherine, took the training from Elections BC and assisted residents and tenants both with voter registration, and with delivering their ballots. With hearty thanks to Katherine for a job well-done!

I want to announce some changes to our visitation protocols for those people who are living in our apartments. Effective Monday, November 16, each tenant's designated social visitor can book their appointment to occur in the client's suite. All visits must still be booked through our usual channel ([ahayes@luthercourt.org](mailto:ahayes@luthercourt.org)), but you will be able to proceed to your loved one's suite. We will have morning, afternoon and early evening visit slots. We are still trying to limit the number of visitors in our building at any one time, so we require you to continue to book your visit in advance. It also remains unchanged that you must enter our building only by the main entrance, and that you must be screened by our screener and wear a mask. Although you will proceed to the suite unaccompanied, we ask that you go directly to the suite and not linger anywhere else in Luther Court. And, when you leave, that you sign out with the screener. All early evening visits must be completed with sufficient time for you to be signed out by the screener before they leave at 8:00 p.m. These in-suite visits are still just for the one designated visitor for each client. Other family members or friends that are not the designated visitor are still able to book window visits or electronic visits. Information on how to book is below.

Another change that has occurred in the guidelines given to us by the province is around the length of time that a client in assisted/independent living can be away from our site without having to go through a quarantine period upon re-entry. This stipulation has now been withdrawn. Therefore, tenants can now have an overnight visit or be off site for longer than "the major portion of a day" without having to quarantine upon their return. We still urge caution, and keeping your bubbles small, remembering the vulnerability of older adults when exposed to the corona virus. However, we hope that this new directive will be welcome news for many families.

Visitation protocols for those who live in long term care remain unaltered at present. Please see the specifics below.

We have benefitted greatly from extra funding from the Province of BC targeted to specific areas, to provide ongoing support for visits, and to provide extra staff for additional cleaning, laundry and maintenance. Having more hands on-board to assist in these vital roles has made a tremendous difference to our community. We are grateful to our government for their support of communities such as Luther Court. We trust it will be of assistance in helping to keep our community safe.

Flu shots have been given to a number of our residents, tenants and staff, as well as to some of our designated visitors. If you are the designated visitor for your loved one, you can arrange to have your flu shot here coinciding with your scheduled visit. We are happy to do all we can to encourage widespread uptake of the flu shot this year, as our public health professionals have told us it is more important than ever to have your flu shot this year. Let Amber know when you are booking your visit if you would like to arrange for a flu shot to be given while you are here, and we will do the rest!

#### **The day-to-day information:**

1. **All visits require an appointment.** Amber is our visit coordinator. Please email Amber at [ahayes@luthercourt.org](mailto:ahayes@luthercourt.org) or call 250 477-7241 ext. 35 to arrange visits – social visits for the designated visitor, window visits or virtual visits for family or friends who are not the designated visitor. Social visits with the designated visitor for clients in long term care occur at one of four

visit stations – 3 on our main floor, 1 outside in a covered area by the library. Window visits occur outside our main entrance with the resident/tenant inside in the Cedar Room. Designated visits with our tenants as of November 16 will occur in the tenant's apartment. The visits must be pre-booked with Amber, as usual, and all entry to the building must be through the front door. If you have not yet established a designated visitor for your family member, please contact Carolyn Hoekstra, who is coordinating that process. She can be reached by emailing: [choekstra@luthercourt.org](mailto:choekstra@luthercourt.org) or by calling 250 477-7241 ext. 28. A reminder that a designated visitor can request a flu shot, by emailing Amber when you are booking your next visit.

2. Essential visits will be allowed at the critical times of end-of-life and at critical decision points, where family input is deemed essential. There is an assessment that must occur to determine if the criteria for an essential visit have been met. Essential visits occur in the resident's room or the tenant's apartment and one visitor at a time is allowed into the room/apartment.
3. Tenants in our assisted living and independent apartments do have the ability to leave Luther Court. These off-site treks are no longer time-bound; even overnight stays off-site are permitted. We recommend masks for these times off-site, and we provide them to allow for the greatest measure of safety.
4. 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 8:00 p.m.**
5. 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. Our residents in long term care have their temperature taken daily, all tenants who leave the building have their temperature taken at time of leaving and returning, and our staff temperatures are checked twice daily. 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.

Christmas will be upon us before we know it. We are looking forward to making things “merry and bright” here at Luther Court. We will not be able to put up as many Christmas decorations as in the past, due to strict COVID guidelines about things that can be touched in our environment. However, we will be creative with decorations that can be hung from the ceiling, and will work to make our home festive. In addition, although our visit staff are usually not working on statutory holidays, we have made an exception for Christmas Day. We plan to have our visit staff on-site on Christmas Day for those important check-ins. More information on that will follow as we get closer to Christmas.

Our Chaplain, Ed Chell, has written an encouraging message that is appended to this note. I commend it to you, and also remind you that if you need someone who has a great supportive, listening ear, Ed is your guy! He can be contacted by emailing: [echell@luthercourt.org](mailto:echell@luthercourt.org) or by calling 250 477-7241 ext. 23.

We are so very grateful for your prayers. You are in our prayers.

Best regards,  
Karen Johnson-Lefsrud  
Executive Director

## Two Pictures

Pangs of fear and anxiety flash in the morning when the news begins with key words like, “A Care home in ..... and COVID.” I feel for the people associated with that care home. My mind begins to create an image of what it is like for people in the care home where an outbreak has occurred. I can see the wave of concerns that wash through the community. As I prepare for the day my mind also goes to Luther Court. I notice the bit of fear or worry that lingers from the newscast. My prayers for the day include holding the people affected by the outbreak up in prayer.

Preparing for the day I imagine life at Luther Court. I know there are families greeting residents at window visits, designated visitors sharing space together, and virtual visits with family near and far. The maintenance staff are throughout the building mending, refreshing and tending the needs of the facility. The laundry is collected and delivered. Families are bringing groceries and other packages to the front door greeter. Care staff respond and anticipate the needs of the residents. Activity staff design appropriate programs to engage the community. Meals are prepared and served. Residents still smile as we meet. Even some of the most confused residents respond with a smile or comment despite the mask I wear throughout the day.

I hold up these two pictures. One view contains my worst fears around an outbreak. The other is a picture of vibrant life at Luther Court. Of course we yearn for the freer flow of family and friends once the COVID cloud lifts. Meanwhile, we are living in the safest way we can by following all the prescribed precautions. In spite of the uncertainty, perhaps weariness and times of loneliness there are moments of community and connection that are a breath of life.

May this note be an encouragement to you. We can savour memories and look forward to moments when our hearts are joined with loved ones. We give thanks for all the caring people in the pictures we imagine. My prayer is that the God of love and hope accompanies us where ever we are through the hearts and presence of the people around us. Amen.

Chaplain Ed