



"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."

~Jeremiah 29:11

Dear Northern Great Lakes Synod,

We all have been making plans; plans to re-open, plans to re-engage in-person congregational life, plans for the welfare of all and not for harm, plans for a future with hope.

It is no easy thing, as you well know, to make plans and adjust, and think through so many details and decisions. Yet it seems we cannot avoid the challenges of our times.

As governors and health departments continue to proclaim edicts and advice, I have found the following to be helpful:

1. Efforts for in-person gathering should still prioritize creating a safe space for the most vulnerable. Both the vaccinated and the unvaccinated alike need to feel safe and welcomed.
2. Consider the metrics given for bars and restaurants, currently at 50%. While our buildings are not bars or restaurants, they vary in size and capacity. Following a percentage, rather than a flat amount, makes more sense for our worship spaces.
3. Be aware of the rising or falling numbers of COVID cases and ICU capacity in your community and act accordingly. [This helpful tool](#) to assess your local level of risk has been added to the homepage of our [synod website](#) in the section "Meeting the Challenges of COVID-19."

Pandemic fatigue is a real thing, and we are all tired. Soon and very soon we will turn a corner. I believe every one of our NGLS congregations has been diligent and mindful, and pastoral leaders and councils have considered together what is best. Thank you for your faithful attention to safety, to staying connected, and to encouraging each other.

Yours in Christ,  
Rev. Katherine Finegan  
Bishop of the Northern Great Lakes Synod