**A Prayer for the Eighth Week of Virtual Church**

O Lord our God, when we began meeting virtually eight Sundays ago, we had no idea we would still be meeting virtually on Mother’s Day. Yet, many congregations are still meeting virtually or have discovered innovative ways to gather.

Spiritually, Easter was difficult as that is such an important Sunday during the church year. The resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ is the core foundational experience of our faith relationship with You.

In a different way, Mother’s Day is an equally if not more emotional Sunday. We have a life-giving attachment to our mothers that it is difficult to replace with any other experience. To be with our mothers, to remember our mothers, to celebrate the life and nurture given to us by our mothers cannot fully be replaced by any other experience.

Mother’s Day and the days that follow are an annual time when we renew our commitment to family and the experiences of joy, anticipation, and remembrance that are best encountered through family togetherness. But we feel this cannot happen without hugs, kisses, closeness, food, laughter, and tears. Experiences such as this are difficult, if not impossible, during this pandemic.

Many of us are jealous because we hear and see that some churches have resumed worship. We wonder when our church will do so. At the same time, we are anxious about returning to our church for worship before the it is safe.

We went out into the community around us the past few days to get ready for Mother’s Day and experienced heavy traffic we have not witnessed for two months. Is everyone out now? We wore a mask and saw only a few people who were not wearing masks. This is so strange. We have seen news stories for years of cities in high pollution areas around the world where wearing masks was commonplace. We just never thought we would live in a place where mask wearing is the norm.

We want to go back to work. We want to go back to our favorite restaurant. We want to go back to sports. We want to get our children and grandchildren back to school. We want our summer plans to take place.

It is all so confusing. We need information, knowledge, and wisdom we have never needed before so we can make the best possible decisions about re-entering an open world. Do we believe the politicians? Do we believe the doctors? Do we believe the scientists? Do we believe the protestors who are demanding that everything open back up? Do we believe You will protect us?

Yes, that is the greatest truth. We believe in You. Our trust is in You. We seek to discern our next steps from You. We may make plans, but we ask You to guide our steps.

In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.