



We Are Oak Lawn

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Update From The Pastor

You may have noticed that we recently made a change in our configuration on Sunday mornings as we worship in the round. We're able to do this right now with movable seats while we are out of the sanctuary for renovations. This affords us the opportunity to worship in the round – to truly gather around the table together.

And yet, there's something disturbing about worship in the round – we have to look at each other! When you gaze up from your bulletin or hymnal, it won't just be the backs of a bunch of heads. You will see each other as we sing and pray and worship together.

This is an obvious yet often overlooked part of our worship – it doesn't occur in a vacuum. When we worship, it isn't just us and God – it is our whole community, gathered together, to do this thing called "liturgy" (which translates as "work of the people") together. People are facing each other



now which invites people into far deeper relationship with one another.

The theology of hospitality is extremely important to our congregation, which is why we look to Hebrews 13:1-2 as our guiding scripture at Oak Lawn. "Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it."

We seek to show hospitality in many ways at Oak Lawn. Worshipping in the round gives us a new way to add depth to our theology of hospitality. There is a greater sense of community and when we sing and pray we see Christ in the face of each other. We are reminded that we are not alone on this journey.

The area we are using for worship right now is the space that we call the hospitality center. It is the space where life together happens in many different ways. We study together, we sing together, we eat together, and last winter it is where we sheltered together on freezing nights. Our communal theology is that all of human life is sacred, so it makes sense that we do all of our communal living and worshipping in the same space. We seek to hear God's voice in as many ways as possible.

Just as when we gather for a meal, we gather round the sacraments and look across this holy dinner table to see our sisters and brothers. The round is a reminder that all of us are moving together on this sacred and spiritual journey called life. The round is about inclusion. The round is about hospitality. Let love continue.

See you in worship!

Pastor Rachel



Oak Lawn Overnight Warming Shelter has officially been opened for the Season

by Cathy Bryan

Baby it's cold outside! Winter arrived early this year! We are off to a fantastic start as we enter our third year of providing overnight shelter for our unhoused neighbors. This year, we have been able to move our Shelter operations to the first floor of our building, providing us with more space and improved operational efficiency. Our shelter capacity this year is 72 beds, with the ability to overflow

up to 92 beds, as needed. During the 4 nights we have been opened thus far this season (10/30, 10/31, 11/11, 11/12), we averaged 57 guests / night over the first 2 nights in Oct. Our # climbed to over 90 guests / night in Nov. and maxed out our overflow capacity! Also new this year is the overflow shelter with a capacity of 240 beds that has been opened by the City of Dallas at the downtown Dallas Convention Center. The opening of the city shelter does not modify our work as we are now considered as part of the standard network of inclement weather shelters in the city. Additionally, we are also proud to work in collaboration with a network of sister organizations providing shelter in Dallas, including The Bridge, Austin Street, Our Calling, Salvation Army, and Family Gateway. Our criteria for opening Shelter is if the temperature is expected to be 32F or below, or 36F or below with at least a 20% chance of precipitation. We have a process whereby we monitor the need for Shelter based on the National Weather Service forecast as follows:



- **Standby** at 48 hours prior to expected Shelter day
- **Alert** at 24 hours prior to expected Shelter day
- **Activation** no later than 6am day on Shelter day





How can you help? So glad you asked!

When it looks like the temperatures will be dropping to meet our criteria, we will start to open opportunities to volunteer. You can access the Sign Up Genius to volunteer through our website (<http://www.olumc.org/olows/>), Facebook or Instagram. You will also receive an email sent to all who receive our eNews. If you do not receive our eNews but would like to be added to the list, please email Mara.Morhouse@olumc.org.

We need a minimum of 4-6 volunteers throughout the night to run the Shelter effectively. We run volunteer shifts in 4 hour blocks, as follows:

- Shift 1 5:30pm - 9:30pm
- Shift 2 9pm - 1am
- Shift 3 12:30am - 4:30 am
- Shift 4 4 am - 8 am
- Dinner Hot meal to serve 80-100 guests / volunteers
- Breakfast Hot meal to serve 80-100 guests / volunteers

In addition to volunteers, we always need donations of clothing and food. Please contact the church to drop off donations or for more information regarding specific donation needs.



Spread the Word!

So what can you do?

- Tell the story! of the important work YOUR church is doing
- Post on Facebook, Instagram, blogs, etc. to bring visibility to the problem
- Volunteer with friends or business associates, or schedule a day of service in the Shelter
- Donate clothing, toiletries, food, and of course, money to support our work
- Provide a meal (Dinner and/or breakfast)

Question? Email Pat.Jones@olumc.org or call the church office at 214-521-5197.



JJ HOUSTON

CONSTRUCTION & DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

+ Building Updates!



As you all know, we are under construction in multiple parts of our beautiful church building. However, did you also know that our general contractor for these projects is actually in-house? That's right! Literally more so than figuratively, JJ Houston Construction and Development (a family owned and operated business) is doing a fantastic job with our restoration and renovations, and they're renting office space on the first floor of our church building. This is great for them (to be on site) and great for us (to have them on site) and yet, their presence here is more than just their work; they've become the friendly faces we greet in the parking lot, the lively bunch we wave to when passing through the first floor, the voices

of reason when discussing sound board placement and the reliable masterminds regarding ADA accessibility. They're coming to know our church very well inside and out and as a result, they're also becoming part of the Oak Lawn family.

To know JJ Houston better, let's start with Jeff Bales who is Grandad, Pops, and co-founder of JJ Houston Construction and Development with his sons, James and Matt. Jeff is not new to the commercial development and construction industry. He's also the husband of Paige Whiteside-Bales, a member here at Oak Lawn (they were married in the church by Pastor Anna), so he's not totally new to our church community either! Jeff blends into Texas seamlessly, until you listen more closely to how he pronounces his vowels. Particularly, the sound of his "o" gives away his roots; Jeff is originally from Toronto. He was born and raised in Newmarket, Ontario and started out in the grocery, and convenience store business. Jeff had hoped to raise his family there until the 1980s when the Canadian economy headed into a recession. Skyrocketing unemployment, a large government deficit, and mortgage interest rates as high as 17% led Jeff to pack up his family and make his way south, specifically to Texas. Jeff, and his boys are all Green card carrying Canadians that have made Texas their home.

Jeff found work as a handy man and took jobs in the mechanical contracting industry (HVAC, electrical plumbing, etc.) Jeff soon found employment as a maintenance man with the Trammell Crow Company. He was hired personally by Trammell Crow. Within several years he became the Director of Engineering for Trammel Crow and became responsible for the high-rise maintenance of all Dallas High Rise square footage. Jeff went on to create his own companies, Avondale Construction, and BP Dallas Construction, which eventually he sold, providing him the opportunity to co-create his final project: a family run outfit in partnership with his two sons, James and Matt Bales.

There's no doubting Jeff Bales has an entrepreneurial spirit in construction and development, but in chatting with him, one can't deny Jeff has been doing his own thing since he was a boy. His big migration to Texas in the '80s, bringing his family, station wagon, and a U-Haul trailer was not his first trip to the U.S. As a young lad, Jeff left a broken home, ended up in



Guthrie Oklahoma, and negotiated a deal with his grandfather to pay for his first year tuition to The Church Farm School, a private Episcopal boarding school for boys from who sought educational and leadership development, in Exton, PA. It was there that Jeff began to learn skills that would be relevant to his future career. The boys ran the dairy farm that supported the school and he also learned to play the organ by secretly sneaking into the chapel late at night. All skills included, we have come to discover the humble beginnings of the Renaissance man that is Jeff Bales and we give thanks to the Episcopalians (and safe hitch-hiking back and forth to Canada during school vacations) for that!

We count it a great blessing to have Jeff and the JJ Houston team officing in our building. Their combined construction knowledge, almost 80 total years, makes them the ideal team and we have thoroughly enjoyed watching them work to restore and renovate our beloved building. Next time you see them, and you are bound to at some point over the life of these projects, give them a warm Oak Lawn greeting!

Below is the entire JJ Houston family/team along with a report from Jeff on their progress to date.



Areas of Expertise

CAD drawing and design, OSHA safety standards, real estate flip and development, city planning, permitting, development and zoning.

James started early in the construction industry with his Dad, hauling construction trash, and delivery materials, at 16 years old.



Areas of Expertise

HVAC/R service and construction which encompasses not only his ever expanding construction knowledge, but also an intimate knowledge of large chiller replacements, working with Tri-State Sikorsky helicopters, to set large equipment on the roofs of tall buildings .EMS controls, general service and general mechanical and plumbing construction of aviation, retail, hospitality, hospitals, schools and science and research centers.



Areas of Expertise

Project Superintendent, onsite management, online bidding and ordering materials.

Hunter is training to become a project manager, and eventually will become Matt's (his Father) right hand man.



Areas of Expertise

Admin, insurance, contract preparation, AIA payment billings, HR, payroll and accounting.





Now that the 3rd floor demolition is complete, JJ Houston and team are concentrating on full speed ahead for the Sanctuary.

We located a pew refinishing company out of Austin Texas that was able to remove, document, and transport the pews to their facility. This allows us to concentrate on the floor stabilization and refinishing without having to work around the pews. This also allows us to rework the pews, adjusting for ADA, and converting them from nailed to screwed, eliminating a good deal of the squeaking and groaning. (We assume that was coming from the pews).

We have taken the first two layers of finish off the floors, and they are in remarkable condition.

The ADA areas for wheelchairs are inserted, and within the next week the entire floor will be covered with a Masonite board to protect it while we install our scaffold system for the upper walls and ceiling work.

The raised platform that allows wheelchair access to the choir is in progress, and ready for the new ADA lift. The wheelchair ADA elevator system has been ordered, and fine tuning of the ADA room dimensions are being done.

The organ and pipes are well protected and checked on daily.

We are well into the sanding and preparation of the wood surfaces throughout the Sanctuary. All doors, furniture, railings, etc., have been shipped off for refinishing.

The old plaster that was falling off the wall has been removed, and we are now resurfaced, and ready for finish coat.

The new ladder to access the Bell Tower has been ordered

These next two weeks, we will be focusing on preparing the surfaces for paint. Once the scaffold is erected the painters will be focusing on all work that is in the upper levels of the Sanctuary.

It is our intention since the scaffold will be in place through Christmas, to have secure walkways throughout the Sanctuary should the members like to observe the progress. Floor demolition in the Narthex will start this week, or early next.

We are very excited about the progress and look forward to turning over a beautiful facility before Easter.



New Faces at OLUMC!

We asked some of our new members the below questions. Enjoy their responses!



Where were you prior to coming to Oak Lawn?



What do you like to do in your free time?



How did you find Oak Lawn?



What is your favorite ice-cream flavor?

Don



I'm originally from New Orleans, LA. I moved to Denton, Texas in 2017. I was a member of Open Worship at First United Methodist Church of Denton.



Board games!



I actually found Oak Lawn through Google!



Cookies and Cream

Bento Box Moment

Last Sunday we finished our final session of the membership class. We were just **delighted** to have such an awesome first co-hort! In our 4 sessions, we spent time navigating through Oak Lawn's discipleship model, The Bento Box, and discussed ways we could Gather, Grow, Go and Give to honor our God given talents and maintain balance in our lives.



Participants, from left to right, included Matt Wilson, Ryan Wager, Shannon, Sammantha Bennett, Cedric Nixon, Mildred Lacy, Joshua Smith and (not pictured) Kate Sander.

We will offer the course again after the New Year. Keep your eye on our eNews, bulletin and social media for the announcement of dates!



El Dia de los Muertos

by Betzy Vazquez



Day of the dead, or El dia de los Muertos, is a celebration recently adopted in our church. Providing some history and background, this tradition is heavily linked to Mexican culture which believes that family and beloved friends come back this day (November 2nd) for a



reunion that includes their favorite food, drink and celebration of their life. Starting from that point, this Mexican tradition adds a flavor or mindset that we are never gone as we will always live in the heart of the people that love us. Searching in my heart as a Christian, I found this to be true as my soul has been saved, paid for by Jesus! That brings me peace as I can continue to move forward to what the next phase brings. However, I always remember that we have “Dia de los Muertos” as a bridge

to come back and celebrate with my family the beautiful and fragile life we have and the importance and impact of our ancestors in our life. Their teachings, their struggle, their love and acceptance - it makes us who and what we are and that is something truly important to be celebrated!



5 Things I wish I'd known before opening a coffee shop church

by Mike Baughman

Our first worship gathering at Union, Christmas morning, 2012.

I'm Rev. Mike Baughman, the founding pastor and Executive Director for Union Coffee, a non-profit coffee shop launched by the United Methodist Church. In 2019, we will turn seven years old.. We get contacted a lot from folks looking for a quick run down of what I wish I'd have known before launching Union so here are my top five in blog form.

ONE - *The Coffee Business is HARD*

*Opening a coffee shop is like writing the great American novel, everyone thinks it's a great idea...everyone thinks they can do it, but it's really f***** hard.*

-Mary Grieshaber

I remember my rose-colored glasses, tinted by coffee-dream stains from Starbucks "Coffee beans are inexpensive" I thought. "Specialty coffee is expensive. The margins are huge! If Starbucks can do it, so can we!" What I've learned is that the margins aren't nearly what you think they are (especially if you want great coffee). Starbucks, as it turns out, thrives on volume and leveraging capital that you will not have. Comparing the success of an independent coffee shop to the ease of success that Starbucks has is kind of like saying "Pixar makes movies that make money. I have iMovie, therefore..."



Actually, scratch that comparison. Pixar makes great movies. Starbucks makes terrible coffee and I can prove it to you with math (but that's a different blog).

Still, the sentiment stands. The coffee business is hard. Quality coffee is an art and financial success in coffee requires equal measures of capital, well-informed decisions and luck.

TWO - *Get to work*

I really wish that I had spent six months working in a successful, independent coffee shop that produced solid third-wave coffee. Even if I had only done this as a quarter or part-time job, I would've learned so much about day-to-day operations that I instead learned slowly on-the-job at Union. Had I done this, I believe that I would've had better credibility with donors and granting agencies. Furthermore, I would've been connected into a support network of coffee folks and had a better grasp of healthy day-to-day operations which would make me a better supervisor.

Let me be clear: you don't have to know how to run a coffee shop in order to manage a coffee shop manager. After all, a pastor doesn't have to know how to play an organ in order to supervise an organist...but it sure does help to know a thing or two about music in order to better collaborate and work together. Working in a coffee shop would've given me a language and understanding to make me a better supervisor and make better strategic decisions.

THREE - *Hire a manager*

Seminary didn't teach you to run a coffee shop.

Just because you can exegete a text doesn't mean you can calculate Cost of Goods Sold.

Just because you know Jesus doesn't mean you know how to make a latte. My hunch is that Jesus doesn't know how to make a latte and if he did, he'd make it with sheep or goat's milk and I am not about that.

Someone actually did give me this advice before opening Union and I'm so glad he did. One of the most common mistakes of failed coffee shop church endeavors were church planters who thought they could plant a church and manage the coffee shop. It just doesn't work because there aren't enough hours in a week. The mission will always suffer. Given the choice between inviting people to worship (or even preparing a sermon) and ordering cups so that you don't run out, 99/100 people are going to order cups.

Your job is to pastor people and support a manager.

Let the manager manage.

FOUR - *Don't be an underpants gnome!*

One of the biggest mistakes I see church-run coffee shops make is failing to develop a comprehensive strategy for how their coffee shop feeds into and fuels the mission of the church. Far too many churches do, what I like to call, under-pants-gnoming.

In the first episode of South Park, the town was plagued by underpants theft. (I clearly

only watch high-brow television). As it turns out, there were gnomes stealing all of the underpants. When asked why, they said...

Step 1: steal underpants

Step 3: profit

At no point could they articulate step two.

Churches have done this for decades with pre-schools, thrift shops and now coffee shops. They build a thing and just assume because they have it, their mission will be accomplished.

One of the things that Union has done best is develop an intentional strategy so that people coming in to our shop helps us accomplish our mission. This strategy has developed over time, but now we have measurable ministry impact that correlates directly to coffee shop operations.

Any church enterprise should go through a rigorous process of developing a theory of change. This is one of my personal passion projects. Feel free to email me (mike@uniondallas.org) to know more.

FIVE - Top Five Lists will Not Make your Coffee Shop Church Successful

Union is contacted on a regular basis with people asking for a quick phone call to ask questions and learn more about our experiences. While I applaud the desire to

research and learn from the experiences of others, the reality is that running a coffee and running a church are both very complicated and significant endeavors. When Union first started, we didn't really have many successful models to follow. Here's the good news: there are now people to guide you through this process.

I highly recommend that churches who want to launch a coffee shop consult with people who have actually done that work. Union is beginning to offer these services, but we are not the only ones. Spending some money on a consultant in this case will save a LOT of money down the road. Learn from the successes and failures of other churches who have learned "the hard way."

Mike



Our first ever latte with two of Union's first baristas!

OAK LAWN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Sunday Morning Grow Study 9:30 A.M.

Sunday Morning Worship 11:00 A.M.

Mañanas de Domingos de Adoración 12:30 P.M.

Wednesday Communion 12:00 P.M.

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OLUMC.ORG

Oak Lawn UMC exists to be a hub of transformative Christian community that is inclusive, expansive, and entrepreneurial.

We are inclusive

Welcoming and caring for all, particularly those on the margins.

We are expansive

Connecting with new people beyond the walls of our church.

We are entrepreneurial

Willing to be courageous and take risks in faithfulness to God's call.

Union




Gracia Viva
¡Viva la Gracia!

OAK LAWN
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

