



# We Are Oak Lawn

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## Mission Together with Rev. Rachel

This month we have been lifting up stories of African Americans as a way of honoring the rich contributions to our faith made over the years by black leaders in our society. In order to truly recognize Black History month I think we need to talk about the much needed work of reconciliation and redemption.

In 1844, the Methodist Episcopal Church split over the issue of slavery. The offspring denomination was the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Oak Lawn was started in 1874 as part of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. As a matter of fact, there even was separate seating for freed black men in the balcony of our sanctuary. (We have retained the uncomfortable and unaccommodating spacing of these narrow pews as a way of remembering our history and our call to redeem this part of our story.) The north and south factions

reunited in 1939, compromising on the race issue by creating a segregated system. Alongside the five geographic jurisdictions created at that time, an overlapping Central Jurisdiction was formed for African Americans. It was dissolved in 1968 with the merger of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches. We have a long history of racism, discrimination and oppression in our church.

We cannot recognize Black History Month without talking about our need for reconciliation. Overtime, I fear the church has used reconciliation when they want the oppressed to just forgive. This allows those who benefit from the racial injustice to confess nothing, change nothing, pay nothing and concede nothing. When this happens, it negates the injustices of the past and those ongoing. It doesn't seek to correct any injustice at all. This kind of false reconciliation seeks to accommodate injustice and oppression. It never addresses the injustice, inequities or assaults on the humanity and dignity of those who endure the injustice. I have no interest in participating in this practice. Instead, we must pursue a reconciliation that addresses the root cause of the injustice and lays a new foundation that leads to community. In our work at Oak Lawn UMC I'd like to invite us to redefine racial reconciliation as a spiritual and political process that continually seeks to restore broken relationships due to racial injustice. It is not a singular act. It is a process of restoration in our relationship with God and with one another.

As we seek to engage in this process at Oak Lawn, I invite you to start by reading and engaging in some of the work offered from the Southern Poverty Law Center: Ten Ways to Fight Hate: A Community Response Guide. Please read it in the following pages and consider how we can #LetLoveContinue via the spirit of reconciliation.

For such a time as this,



Pastor Rachel

# TEN WAYS TO FIGHT HATE

Hate in America has become commonplace. A presidential candidate wins election after denigrating Muslims, Latinos, women and people with disabilities. A young white man opens fire and kills nine African Americans who welcomed him into Bible study at a church in Charleston, South Carolina, telling his victims, “I have to do it.” A Muslim woman is seated on a bench in front of a coffee shop in Washington, D.C., when a woman begins screaming anti-Muslim epithets. A swastika and other anti-Semitic graffiti appear at an elementary school in Stapleton, Colorado. A lone gunman carrying an assault rifle and a handgun storms a well-known gay club in Orlando, Florida, killing 49 people and wounding 53 others. What can we do to STOP THE HATE?

Bias is a human condition, and American history is rife with prejudice against groups and individuals because of their race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or other characteristics. As a nation, we’ve made a lot of progress, but stereotyping and unequal treatment persist.

When bias motivates an unlawful act, it is considered a hate crime. Most hate crimes are inspired by race and religion, but hate today wears many faces. Bias incidents (eruptions of hate where no crime is committed) also tear communities apart and can escalate into actual crimes.

Since 2010, law enforcement agencies have reported an average of about 6,000 hate crime incidents per year to the FBI. But government studies show that the real number is far higher — an estimated 260,000

per year. Many hate crimes never get reported, in large part because the victims are reluctant to go to the police. In addition, many law enforcement agencies are not fully trained to recognize or investigate hate crimes, and many simply do not collect or report hate crime data to the FBI.

### THE GOOD NEWS IS ...

All over the country people are fighting hate, standing up to promote tolerance and inclusion. More often than not, when hate flares up, good people rise up against it — often in greater numbers and with stronger voices.

This guide sets out 10 principles for fighting hate in your community.



## 1 ACT

Do something. In the face of hatred, apathy will be interpreted as acceptance by the perpetrators, the public, and — worse — the victims. Community members must take action; if we don't, hate persists. **page 4**



## 2 JOIN FORCES

Reach out to allies from churches, schools, clubs, and other civic groups. Create a diverse coalition. Include children, police, and the media. Gather ideas from everyone, and get everyone involved. **page 7**



## 3 SUPPORT THE VICTIMS

Hate crime victims are especially vulnerable. If you're a victim, report every incident — in detail — and ask for help. If you learn about a hate crime victim in your community, show support. Let victims know you care. Surround them with comfort and protection. **page 8**



## 4 SPEAK UP

Hate must be exposed and denounced. Help news organizations achieve balance and depth. Do not debate hate group members in conflict-driven forums. Instead, speak up in ways that draw attention away from hate, toward unity. **page 10**





## 5 EDUCATE YOURSELF

An informed campaign improves its effectiveness. Determine if a hate group is involved, and research its symbols and agenda. Understand the difference between a hate crime and a bias incident. **page 13**



## 6 CREATE AN ALTERNATIVE

Do not attend a hate rally. Find another outlet for anger and frustration and for people's desire to do something. Hold a unity rally or parade to draw media attention away from hate. **page 17**



## 7 PRESSURE LEADERS

Elected officials and other community leaders can be important allies. But some must overcome reluctance — and others, their own biases — before they're able to take a stand. **page 19**



## 8 STAY ENGAGED

Promote acceptance and address bias before another hate crime can occur. Expand your comfort zone by reaching out to people outside your own groups. **page 22**



## 9 TEACH ACCEPTANCE

Bias is learned early, often at home. Schools can offer lessons of tolerance and acceptance. Host a diversity and inclusion day on campus. Reach out to young people who may be susceptible to hate group propaganda and prejudice. **page 25**



## 10 DIG DEEPER

Look inside yourself for biases and stereotypes. Commit to disrupting hate and intolerance at home, at school, in the workplace and in faith communities. **page 28**

# The Caricature of Black Church Music

by Bill Alston

It is well into February, the time where the country celebrates Black History Month. This is the time of year where congregations outside of the black community make extra effort to incorporate traditional African-American spirituals into worship services. Of course, this can end up as a caricature of black church music, reminding me of a scene from The Blues Brothers!



While certain songs seem to be performed specifically to recognize the cultural history, other spirituals sung in churches outside the black community have become so ingrained that they may not be recognized as traditional African American songs. "Let Us Break Bread Together" and "Kumbaya" are derived from songs sung in the Gullah/Geechee slave communities of the Carolinas. Some songs that are added to services this time of year do not even have origins in the black community. "This Little Light of Mine", performed as an African American spiritual and noted in the Methodist Hymnal, was co-opted by the Civil Rights Movement. It was actually written by a white minister at the Moody Bible Institute! But while this song was not by a black writer, it is important to recognize the historic role it played. This one, and others, captured the spirit of the Civil Rights movement and conveyed that message to the world, leading to great freedom for the community. Songs served to unite civil rights activists, keeping them committed to the cause by reminding them of the prize they sought. Nightly news broadcasts captured protestors in that era singing songs like "We Shall Overcome," and "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around", inspiring others around the country to support the movement. As songs selected for Black History Month, they seem to have one characteristic: they typically are lively and upbeat. But this does not reflect much of the music played in the black church. Music can often be dark, sung in minor keys at slower pace. Songs remind the community of the struggles faced. Consider the last stanza from "Lift Every Voice And Sing":

Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chast'ning rod,  
Felt in the day that hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet,  
Come to the place on which our fathers sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the  
slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our star is cast.



Songs reflect the pain they faced at a time when an end to the oppression was not certain. Mahalia Jackson sung “How I Got Over” at the March On Washington in 1963 where M.L. King delivered the "I Have A Dream" speech, recognizing the daily struggle they faced. Music written in that time could reflect the constant bereavement found in the black community, with some songs pointing to death as the only means of escape. Songs like “Precious Lord, Take My Hand”, by Thomas Dorsey or “Trouble of World”, by Mahalia Jackson rarely find performances outside the black church, but they should.

Churches should select songs for their historic nature. From a time when many did not (or were not allowed to) read and when hymnals were often not available, singing often replaced parts of the liturgy. Songs sung in a call-and-response format often served as the responsive readings. That format, tracing back to African roots, is found in the cultural music in the US, Caribbean, and South America. "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" (The United Methodist Hymnal #127) is an example of a modified Methodist hymn that is still used as part of service in black churches.

Just remember there is music much more reflective of the rich history of the black church than the happy, hand-clapping songs typically heard this time of year. As it is incorporated into services, consider some of the iconic examples that changed history.

**Mahalia Jackson – Trouble Of The World**

Soon	No more weepin' and wailin'
it will be done	No more weepin' and wailin'
Trouble of the world	No more weepin' and wailin'
Trouble of the world	Going home to live with my Lord
Trouble of the world	I want to see my mother
Soon it will be done	I want to see my mother
Trouble of the world	I want to see my mother
Going home to live with God	Going home to live with God

Ruehl, Kim. "10 Essential Civil Rights Songs." ThoughtCo, Feb. 11, 2020, [thoughtco.com/essential-civil-rights-songs-1322740](https://www.thoughtco.com/essential-civil-rights-songs-1322740).





## HIV—YES, WE STILL NEED TO TALK ABOUT IT

It seems like you do not hear as much about HIV today as in decades past, when the HIV / AIDS epidemic was literally claiming thousands of lives each year. Today we have many effective treatments to manage HIV, but that was not always the case. As many of you know, Oak Lawn UMC was in the epicenter of the AIDS crisis in the 80's and early 90's, conducting hundreds of funerals in our sanctuary as the community of Oak Lawn / Cedar Springs mourned the passing of so many. The 80's were a time when the gay

community was "coming out" in larger and larger numbers, especially in large urban areas such as Dallas, but it was also a time of tremendous fear. We began to understand what caused AIDS and how to decrease transmission, but there were no cures, only the ability to prolong life maybe a few months, or possibly years, but AIDS was almost always a death sentence. Medications to manage the disease began to become available in the 90's, but were difficult to take—they required a very strict schedule, had a huge array of side effects, and for many, the primary goal was to "hang on" long enough where there might be a cure.

**There is still not a cure for HIV.** Not even as we enter the fourth decade after HIV was first identified and recognized as the virus that caused AIDS.

Here are a few recent facts about the prevalence of HIV in 2020:

- More than 700,000 American lives have been lost to HIV since 1981.
- More than 1.1 million Americans are currently living with HIV and many more are at risk of HIV infection.
- While new HIV diagnoses have declined significantly from their peak, there are still an estimated 40,000 Americans being newly diagnosed each year. Without intervention another 400,000 Americans will be newly diagnosed over 10 years despite the available tools to prevent infections.
- Dallas County continues to have one of the highest rates of new HIV infection in the country, with 75219 being one of the highest areas within Dallas County.

The federal government has a new initiative that seeks to reduce the number of new HIV infections in the United States by 75 percent within five years, and then by at least 90 percent within 10 years, for an estimated 250,000 total HIV infections averted.



## **READY, SET, PrEP EXPANDS ACCESS TO HIV PREVENTION MEDICATIONS FOR THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE**

Of the more than one million people who are at risk for HIV in the United States that could benefit from pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) medications, only a small fraction receive it. The Department of Health and Human Services has recently launched a new program, Ready, Set, PrEP, which makes PrEP medications available at no cost to individuals who are HIV negative and lack prescription drug coverage.

PrEP medications allows those at risk for HIV –but who are not yet HIV positive--to take control of their health and reduce their risk.

PrEP medications are safe and effective and can help prevent HIV.

When taken prior to an exposure, PrEP medications can work to prevent HIV. However, PrEP should be used along with safe sex practices to minimize exposure to HIV.

### **DO I QUALIFY?**

The Ready, Set, PrEP program provides access to PrEP medications at NO COST to people who qualify.

To receive PrEP through the program, you must:

1. Test negative for HIV;
2. Have a valid prescription from your healthcare provider; and
3. Not have health insurance coverage for outpatient prescription drugs.

If you receive PrEP medication through the Ready, Set, PrEP program, you will not have to pay for the medicine. The costs of clinic visits and lab test costs may vary depending on your income.

### **HOW DO I ENROLL?**

Before enrolling in the Ready, Set, PrEP program, talk to a healthcare provider to see if PrEP medication is right for you and obtain a prescription. If you do not have a provider, you can find one at <https://locator.hiv.gov/>.

Once you have the necessary prescription, visit [GetYourPrEP.com](https://GetYourPrEP.com) or call toll-free 855-447-8410 to qualify and enroll.





# Sanctuary Interview with Jeff Green

by Chris Pillsbury



Over the past several months, we have both seen and even smelled progress in the sanctuary. With the scaffolding down and work seeming to enter into the final phases, I met up with Jeff Green, architect and interior designer for ten years, to learn more about the work going on and Jeff himself. Jeff has acted as the lay leader design consultant for the sanctuary renovations. We began at the sanctuary and were greeted by loud jack-hammering in the Narthex, so we didn't get a walking tour like I had hoped. Instead, we connected over a great lunch at Zaguán. When

asked about how his involvement started with the project he laughed and said, "Well, I've been 'volun-told' to do many projects over the years!" After another laugh, Jeff's demeanor changed and he became reflective: "This project is bigger than us and more important than us. In all honesty, I've felt a great sense of privilege and responsibility throughout this process."

This responsibility included protecting identity of the space, including the blue ceiling and yellow walls. Instead of changing the colors, Jeff sought to emphasize the innate "beauty of the materials and heighten the experience of worship." Jeff always seemed to begin with the perspective of the person in the pew to help make decisions. "If a proposed design detracted from the experience in the pew, the answer became pretty clear. I want people who are visiting the church for the first time, or people who knew this sanctuary in the 1930's to feel at home in this place. You do that by protecting the space's identity."

For Jeff, whose main architecture work is in home renovation, the most challenging part of this project was the client. "Normally, I have one person who's the decision maker; in this case the client is more complicated. It's not just Rachel or the board, it's bigger than that. In a way, the client is the people who have been in this church for decades, and the people who will fill the space long after we are gone. It's a big responsibility!"

Jeff and team were guided by two principles throughout the planning process. Original drawings and old photographs, relating to the architecture of the building were studied to learn the intent of the original designers. Older members were also interviewed for their input as well. For some aspects of the building, original information was just not possible, so Jeff turned to the design trends of the period when the building was constructed for inspiration. "At the end of the day, you've got to balance the practical with the philosophical." Jeff's goal was to maintain a common thread linking the past with the present and future.

I liked the way Jeff talked about spaces. In the homes he renovates, he always has a professional photographer come in and take "great" pictures but his favorite are always the pictures where his



work is the backdrop for Thanksgiving dinner, prom pictures and birthday parties. “My work serves as the backdrop of their lives. Without people, it’s just a room; it takes people to activate the space. Seeing the space activated is satisfying for me.” It is this activation Jeff has kept in mind from the beginning on this project.

Our conversation shifted to the power and influence architecture has on an individual. Jeff has observed that people often park their cars and



walk around to the front of the church, come up the steps to enter the church. “People do this for a reason. Through walking up the stairs, there’s a sense of entering another plane and the room reflects this.” Between the blue ceiling and golden light entering through the stained glass, I begin to see what he described. Jeff highlighted the impact Oak Lawn’s stained glass has on such a small room. “Traditionally the scale of the cathedrals coupled with the stained glass inside them that are meant to emphasize the scale and importance of God compared to the insignificant humans who worship God. I know it may sound like a small difference, but at OLUMC it is the size and scale of both the windows and overall space that invites the viewer to see themselves as important.” I couldn’t agree more.



As the banana chips we had snacked on through the conversation became ever smaller crumbs, I asked Jeff why he has remained at Oak Lawn for 10 years. He described feeling betrayed by family and friends who hid behind the church & its teaching to shun him for coming out as gay. Oak Lawn and the way it put the gospel in action through serving the homeless, and becoming a friend to the community has had a real impact on Jeff. “When the church became a reconciling congregation, that was big for me. Honestly, if it weren’t for Oak Lawn, I don’t know if I’d even be a Christian.”

On the way home, I was filled with gratitude for the way Jeff and so many have selflessly invested in creating a space that is accessible, functional and beautiful. Without guiding voices like Jeff’s, it would be easy for another group of leaders to overlook the value and beauty of the stained glass, blue ceiling and yellow walls in favor for the latest trend in church design. For me, it is imagining the space activated with our diverse community that brings me the greatest sense of anticipation. Work is slated to be done soon in early spring.





## Bento Box Moments



Last week, LOVE was in the air. We hosted a Valentine's Luncheon for our unsheltered neighbors and feasted on the talent and generosity of Chef Giuliano Matarese of Mille Lire. We gathered our neighbors into the Fellowship Hall, and served them a delicious pasta meal. It was a pure delight to serve them in this way! Special thanks to all our volunteers and of course, the Chef!



Additionally, last week, we were blessed to host a memorial service to honor the lives of our neighbors who are homeless who have passed away over the last year. We were enriched by their presence on this side of eternity; they will be missed. However, we know that they are safe and at rest in God's loving embrace. In their honor here are their names...

Aviadar Gomez  
"Baby J"  
Billy Roberts  
David "Skeeter"  
Janet Calvert  
Jason Cheney  
Lyndell, Marty Parnell  
'Skittles'  
Wendy



# Update from Lay Leader Ryan

by Ryan Wager

Are you as excited about 2020 at Oak Lawn UMC as I am? The transformative vision for our Church, our ministry, our congregation and those we serve is coming together all around us! It's my daily prayer for all of us that we find our hearts transformed to #LetLoveContinue with the exciting changes happening at OUR church!



I am blessed to be serving as the Lay Leader at Oak Lawn UMC this year. Very truly, I am called to be of service to this congregation, our Church and the community that we serve. The United Methodist connection provides this role to celebrate the work of the congregation – the laity -- within our Church and the community. The Lay Leader represents your needs to the local leadership, gathers support for and interprets the vision of the Board to all of you, and helps ensure that programs and offerings occurring at the local Church, district, and conference level reach your awareness.

As our working teams develop plans for the new spaces within our building, it will be particularly important for us to engage all of you as these plans evolve. Our Sanctuary restoration is within a few short weeks of completion; and renovation work has begun in other parts of our church building. These changes to our campus will extend our ministries and opportunities for connection within and beyond the walls of our Church; and we want everyone at Oak Lawn to be a part of this exciting time!

This year, 2020, is also a pivotal moment for our denomination. As we prepare as a congregation for General Conference this May, it will be essential for us to come together in prayer and times of devotion to lift the important work of our delegates as they meet in Minneapolis. Our own Pastor Rachel is at the heart of inspiring change that will help us continue to do the work that Oak Lawn has been doing for years. As Rev. Chuck Aaron mentioned in his January sermon, Oak Lawn will not miss a beat! We have a tremendous team of clergy and laity working together to ensure all our ministries are “on point” while we support Pastor Rachel in doing this important work: representing all of us. Watch for additional information about devotional and prayer activities happening at Oak Lawn UMC in support of General Conference and Pastor Rachel’s work.

I joined Oak Lawn in June 2019. A “cradle Methodist”, it was my return to Church after a 20-year hiatus. My Methodist roots were planted at the New Paltz United Methodist Church, in New York, where I grew up. Returning, after some personal tragedies last year, including the loss of my father, meant finding Oak Lawn. As part of my calling in serving as Lay Leader this year, I want others to see how we help others – and even if they have been hurt by Church – to discover that this is a place



that can bring peace; and a place that helps us feel closer to God. Our love and hospitality transform those we serve - all of us, the stranger and angels among us - to feel God's comfort and grace.

If I can be of service to you, or if you have questions or comments or feedback as we transform together to #LetLoveContinue in 2020, let's please spend time together. You can see me at church on Sunday or feel free to call/text 405-213-8944 or write me at [ryan.wager@att.com](mailto:ryan.wager@att.com) anytime!

In Faith,  
Ryan Wager

## Feeling the LOVE

by Sammantha Bennett

### **We Want to Know:** *How has someone shown you love recently?*

It's February, a time when we take pause and tell our people we love them. Love shows up in a variety of ways, so we asked some of our regulars to share with us how they've received love lately.

**Rodrick:** I received lots of special birthday gifts from friends at church.

**Kelsey:** [My husband] brought me flowers last Friday and Tuesday, because I bought myself flowers a week ago and they died the next day and I was sad, so he brought me new ones to replace them and for Valentine's Day.

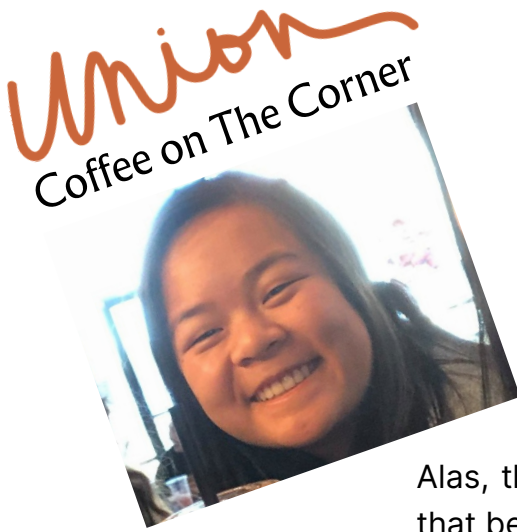
**Miss Pat:** when the staff prayed for me before my interview. It's nice to know I have a family that supports me in my journey.

**Sammantha:** all the texts and calls and showing up from my Oak Lawn family during a very difficult time of health and transition.

**Rev. Mara:** Marsha and Steve sending me cards in the mail! March and Sheila giving great hugs and always asking how I'm doing. Cliff getting ice cream with me. I love ice cream!







## Enter: me, Le Tang

You would think that two churches being several hundred feet apart would mean that there is zero gap in communication, especially when the two pastors of the respective churches are married to each other and living under the same roof.

Alas, they are busy bees and out serving their communities, whether that be in the heart of Dallas or across the world in the Philippines.

Enter: me, Le Tang.

I'm the new liaison between Union and Oak Lawn United Methodist Church! I'm responsible for communicating Union's upcoming events to you all and, boy, do we have a year ahead. Between discussing dad bods to me finally having the opportunity to share my tale of getting kidnapped (in a fun way) at age eight, there is no shortage to the riveting conversations we will have in 2020. More on that later.

Throughout the weekends of March, Union will have Flexible Grey Theatre Company take to the stage to perform *Cherry Muffins*, a play about navigating the mundanities of life as a recovering sex demon with nosy family members who are just as demonic. Now that's a mouthful, isn't it! Loreliar, *Cherry Muffins*'s protagonist, decides to pull away from her devilish family business to open a coffee shop. What ensues is pure pandemonium as her siblings hound her for answers as to why she seeks normalcy within the confines of mortality. Swing by on the Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays between March 5 to March 28 and come promptly at 8:00pm for our pre-show specialty drinks. You might just be able to taste Loreliar's coffee yourself...

Union

### March

Flexible Grey Theater Co.:  
*Cherry Muffins*

- 5th-7th @ 8:00 PM
- 12th-14th @ 8:00 PM
- 19th-21st @ 8:00 PM
- 26th-28th @ 8:00 PM

### April

*Naked Stage*

- 4th @ 8:00 PM

*Easter Vigil*

- 11th @ 8:00 PM

On Saturday, April 4, we will have our first Naked Stage event of the year! Tentatively titled "Weathering the Storm: April Showers Bring New Power," we discuss everything from the ways bad weather has derailed our plans to how we endure shitstorms and come out more empowered than ever before. Come celebrate the arrival of spring with us!

Mark your calendars, because Union is back with a full agenda and we can't wait for you to enjoy it with us.

Coffee soon?

-Le



# Comienzos Humildes Allanando Nuestro Camino a Nuestro Hogar

## Humble Beginnings Paving Our Path Home



Written and translated by Lexi Reichman  
Interview with Fernando Diaz

When you walk into Oak Lawn UMC, you see a culmination of people from different communities who join hands and hold each other accountable to Let Love Continue. Fernando Diaz, one of the first people to attend and help create Gracia Viva, invited us into his world to better understand the significance of Gracia Viva in his life.

**Me puedes decir como Gracia Viva te demostrado actos de amor? // How has Gracia Viva showed you an act of love?**

*Gracia Viva me ha demostrado su amor de mil maneras, atraves de mis hermanos y hermanas y de la Pastora Isabel que siempre han estado a mi lado para apoyarme, darme un consejo y se han convertido en parte de mi vida. // Gracia Viva has shown me its love in thousands of ways. My brothers and sisters and Pastor Isabel have always been in my life to support me, to give me advice, and they have become a part of my family.*



**Como encontraste a gracia viva? // How did you find Gracia Viva?**

*Como encuentre a Gracia Viva?... Gracia Viva es un sueño que siempre tuvimos, hemos sido parte de varias Iglesias donde fuimos recibidas pero jamás fuimos aceptados abiertamente. De alli nacio la idea de formar nuestro propio Ministerio y siempre he estado en contacto, siguiendo y apoyando a la Pastora Isabel Marquez en cada uno de sus proyectos. // How did I find Gracia Viva?... Gracia Viva is a dream that we always had. We have been a part of various churches where they received us but they never fully accepted us openly.*

From there, the idea was born to form our own ministry. We did this by continuing to maintain contact with Pastor Isabel Marquez and supporting her in all of her projects.

**Por cuánto tiempo has ido a Gracia Viva? // How long have you been going to Gracia Viva?**

*He formado parte de la familia de Gracia Viva desde que se inicio, hace más de un año en un pequeño local de Zumba, donde varias personas con muchos sueños, como el mío, nos unimos para formar este ministerio de amor. // I have been a part of forming the family of Gracia Viva since it started. It has been a little more than a year since it all began in a small Zumba studio where various individuals with many dreams, like mine, came together to form this ministry of love.*



**Hay algo que estás esperando en el futuro próximo? // Is there anything you're looking forward to in the near future?**

*Para el futuro próximo, me gustaría ver que nuestro ministerio creciera más; lamentablemente cada vez menos gente acude a las Iglesias, me gustaría que esa gente sintiera el hambre y la necesidad de escuchar la palabra de Dios para que sus corazones se llenen de gozo y alegría. // In the near future, I would like to see our ministry grow more. Unfortunately, fewer and fewer people come to churches. I would like it if those individuals felt the hunger and the necessity to hear the word of God and that their hearts become filled with pleasure and happiness.*

**Hay alguna manera que la gente de Oak Lawn UMC puede conocerte y aprender más de Gracia Viva? // How can people at Oak Lawn get to know you all and learn more about Gracia Viva?**

*Me gustaría que la gente de Oak Lawn UMC supiera que nos sentimos muy bendecidos y agradecidos por habernos recibido, en Gracia Viva siempre estamos con los brazos abiertos para recibir y apoyar a todas aquellas personas que nos necesiten. // I hope the people of Oak Lawn UMC know that we feel really blessed and grateful to have been received. In Gracia Viva, we always have our arms opened to receive and to support anyone who needs us.*



**Hay algunos eventos que van a celebrarse próximamente? // Are there any events you have coming up?**

*Como algunos de ustedes saben, tenemos un Potluck mensual, el ultimo domingo de cada mes. Cada uno de nosotros traemos un platillo de comida para compartir con los demás; además el primer Domingo de cada mes, alimentamos a los vagabundos (homeless) y durante el año, se van organizando otras actividades. // Some people know that we have a monthly potluck on the last Sunday of every month where everyone at Gracia Viva provides a meal to share with others. We also feed the houseless on the first Sunday of each month among other events that are generated during the year.*





#LetLoveContinue  
#QueFluyaElAmor



En Gracia Viva siempre estamos dispuestos a recibir gente nueva para compartir la fe y la misericordia de nuestro Señor Jesucrito, te invito a que te unas a nosotros cada domingo a las 12:30 p.m.

Recuerda esto siempre: Dios es Bueno y siempre provee, hay que aprender a vivir a los tiempos de Dios, porque El es sabio, y El decide cuando. Nunca pierdas la fe recuerda siempre que Dios es mas grande que todos tus problemas. Amen.

In Gracia Viva we are always ready to receive new people to share faith and mercy of our Lord, Jesus Christ. I invite you to join us every Sunday at 12:30 p.m.

Always remember: God is good and always provides. We should learn to live on God's time, because He is wise and He decides when. We must never lose faith and always remember that God is bigger than all of our problems. Amen.

## Coming up at Oak Lawn UMC

### February 23

- Lunch 'n' Learn begins
- Membership class begins

### February 23

- Ash Wednesday Services
  - 12:00 PM
  - 7:00 PM

### March 1

- Lenten Study begins on "Original Blessing" by Danielle Shroyer

### March 8

- Danielle Shroyer, Lenten book study author, guest preaches

### March 29

- **1st Sunday back in the Sanctuary!**
- 5th Sunday Joint Service with Gracia Viva and Potluck
- Joining Sunday; celebration of new members

### April 5-12: Holy Week

- Palm Sunday (normal schedule)
- Maundy Thursday
  - 7:00 PM
- Good Friday
  - 7:00 PM
- Easter Vigil (Union)
  - 8:00 PM
- Easter Sunday (normal schedules)

## February Contributors

Bill Alston  
Cathy Bryan  
Sammantha Bennett  
Mara Morhouse  
Chris Pillsbury  
Le Reing  
Lexi Reing  
Gregg Alan Smith  
Ryan Wager



# 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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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

