



We Are Oak Lawn

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Mission Together with Rev. Rachel

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing on behalf of our Mission Together team in Africa: George Howard, Owen Ross, Rob Spencer, Betty Kazadi, and Collins Etchi Acho. We are blessed to have Gaston Ntambo as our Global Ministries-Wings of the Morning pilot along this journey and we are incredibly grateful for the support and connections that Bishop Mande has made possible.

Key things We Have Learned

In working with Central Conference delegates, we must more adequately define what we mean in the United States as traditionalists, centrists, and progressives. The intended categorization is contextually lost in translation. The term traditionalist in Africa indicates indigenous religions. This opened the door for us to give more depth to the broad middle being the UMC and the extreme edge

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of the right and left representing those who desire to leave the denomination. This was huge in that it helped delegates with different views know that there is room for all of them in the UMC. The WCA and Good News in Africa have painted Centrists and Liberals as "diabolical and even demonizing". For Congolese delegates to interact with us and especially to hear that we have families was a game-changer. On several occasions delegates noted how important that was because they were led to believe that all centrists and progressives don't have family values. Rooms full of people have broken out in applause when we simply mention that we are married and have children. I have no doubt at this point that they know we value our families and the generations of family that have formed us in the Methodist church. The more we talk about our families, the more it unravels narratives that have been spun about us. In our meetings with delegates we have listened to their questions and concerns and shared information on critical points around the Christmas Covenant/Regionalization and the Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation.

What's Next

In our travels around Africa and we have built some wonderful relationships. In North Katanga, we met with the bishop and cabinet as well as delegates for 3 days of presentation and conversation, 2 meetings in Kamina and one in Lubumbashi. In East Congo, we met with the cabinet and the delegates for presentations and conversation over a day and a half. We also had visits to many churches and mission sites which all welcomed us so beautifully. I'm grateful for all that we have learned and certainly grateful for new relationships. We are looking forward to time in Kinshasa over the next few days. Due to the escalating COVID-19 situation in the US, our

team has had a long and difficult conversation resulting in a decision to change the remainder of our travel plans. Therefore, we will postpone our travel to Zimbabwe and Mozambique and return to the US earlier than originally scheduled.

A Tangible Way to Save Lives & Support Local Mission

The highlight of our time has been in visiting churches and missions. One of the opportunities to be in mission together that has most inspired us is with the Lupandilo Hospital. Despite owning state-of-the-art medical equipment, they are unable to utilize these resources because of a lack of electricity. The power infrastructure in the DRC is not adequate for the need. The energy from supplemental solar panels falls short of making this equipment usable. The best option to power this hospital is a 56amp generator which can be shipped by train from Lubumbashi to Kamina and costs \$15,000.

While visiting this hospital, I was blessed to be present in the birthing room and pray over a baby and mother as she gave birth. In this moment of prayer, an overwhelming rush of the Spirit washed over me as I remembered the birth of my own children and, in particular, my daughter Sylvia, who immediately needed the life saving work of state-of-the-art medical equipment to stay alive. Had she been born in this hospital, she would have died alongside the equipment necessary to secure her survival--because there was insufficient electricity in the building. Continuing work in mission together can change that.

Thank you for your continued prayers for our journey. It is good to be in mission together with you.



Update from Lay Leader Ryan

by Ryan Wager



"The Church is not [just] the building." Over the past few weeks, I've heard this said a few times; and it couldn't be more true, especially in

times like this. As I write this, the Dallas County "shelter in place" order is about to be in effect.

My prayer is for all of you, our family and friends and our community at large to remain healthy and safe. Our leaders (our One Board) and clergy and staff have met or talked almost daily about evolving our ministries to meet the needs of our Church. We are in uncharted times with this pandemic, but God has given Oak Lawn UMC the loving and caring spirit and spiritual gifts and talents to make it through this – together.

While you will see how the Church is responding and digitally "open" throughout this issue of We Are Oak Lawn – I want to recap them for you:

- Our Sunday services continue via Facebook Live each Sunday morning – we are especially blessed that our beloved Pastor Rachel has returned from her Africa trip safe and sound!
- A daily moment of reflection on Facebook Live happens each weekday at Noon
- Daily devotional prayers are available on Facebook each morning at 7 a.m.
- Our Grow Study now meets digitally via Zoom – each Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m.
- Our outreach team is exploring the possibility of a collective with other UM congregations and other city resources for our unsheltered neighbors.

- Prayer requests can be made with our Prayer Team [here](#).
- Congregational Care efforts have increased – our clergy and staff are working to connect with those in our family that need them - if you need someone to talk to, text us at 214-441-6647
- Our New Member class has continued to meet digitally as well (we cannot wait to welcome these amazing people into our family!)
- Your continued giving is important – to ensure our Church can operate. Please give your Offering online [here](#).

March 29th would have been the Sunday that we moved back into the Sanctuary. And while we can't do that at this time, it will make coming back to Oak Lawn UMC and worshiping in our beautifully restored house of worship more meaningful and special. The restoration has continued while the building has been closed.

We continue to recruit ushers, greeters and AV techs that will be essential as we move to the restored worship space. If you are interested in serving in this way, please let me know!

Further, the One Board met in January and February. We participated in a "Retreat Day" at Tyler Street UMC in Oak Cliff with other clergy and laity from the Metro District. The Board also approved full payment of our 2019 Apportionments to the Annual Conference; and commissioned a Safety Team to establish new guidelines and procedures to keep our Sanctuary and building safe during worship and hours of ministry. The Safety Team will work to train ushers, greeters and staff; and is an output from a workshop that many of us attended; hosted by the Dallas Police Department in February.

Lastly, knowing that our global General Conference must be rescheduled due to the pandemic restrictions, I ask that you hold our delegates (including Pastor Rachel) in your prayers as they hear more from the denomination about when it will be rescheduled. Important work has been done in preparation for the meeting that was to have happened in May. Pray that the fruit of this work continues as the meeting is rescheduled.

Just recently, a team of volunteers comprised of myself, Bill Alston, Mike Baughman and Allison Bret prepared 100 sack lunches to give out to unsheltered persons staying in down town Dallas.



Outreach During the Pandemic

by Cathy Bryan



Our Outreach team has been working to figure out how we can best serve the community and city at this time. We are seeking creative solutions

for our community meal as well as working with Union to gather a list of healthy and able bodied volunteers to meet needs across the county.



VOLUNTEER WITH THE LINK BELOW

good neighbor opportunities

Union has a team of people now working to connect low-risk volunteers with organizations and individuals that need help during the Covid-19 pandemic. Join our efforts. Make the city better.

Union



The image shows a large, ornate stone monument in the foreground, with a city street and buildings in the background. The monument is inscribed with 'Legacy of Love'.

If you're interested in volunteering, click [HERE](#) to sign up for the Union's volunteer list. If you meet the criteria, we will have opportunities for you to help. Stay tuned for more on ways we can #LetLoveContinue in partnership with Union. Until then, stay safe!

Bento Box Moment

Reflections in a digital desert

by Chris Pillsbury

Honestly, when I first heard about the Corona virus, I rolled my eyes and mentally put it in the same box as Zika, Sars, the Flu and Chicken Pox.

The talking heads on TV urged the same protective measures; hand washing, stay at home if sick etc. etc. etc. Then, I saw the massive mobile hospitals in China go up. “Wow, I’m glad it’s their problem, and not ours...” I casually asked friends of mine in healthcare if this “social distancing” was being overblown – their almost furtive anxiety and concern was the first inkling of what was to come... And then large organizations and schools began making radical decisions to close. Then churches made the smart decision to close, for a week or two... and then my school went to all online classes.

What just happened?

When people experience a major health diagnosis, it becomes a marked time; before the diagnosis and after. A good friend shared how they longed for the stresses and normalcy of “before...the diagnosis.” Many of us, unknowingly are going through a process of letting go of what once was, and now trying to awkwardly find our way in what now is. There’s a word for that: grief. It’s hard work and not easy to do alone or with an appropriate use of “social distance.”

This past weekend, Hope, my daughter had an

ear infection and I chose to let them stay with their mom instead of hauling a sick 13 month old up here. The loneliness was crippling. I became anxious in my own apartment, not being able to concentrate and not desiring anything on TV. I needed to be touched, I needed to be in the community of people I loved. So I called people in Oak Lawn and was invited to eat, fellowship and connect. In those moments, I realized the richness I had taken for granted...before. I’ve come to crave connection and this past Sunday feasted with those whom gather with the Grow Study – via zoom.

Somebody smarter than me once said, “Necessity is the mother of invention.” It’s true.

The creativity we have all seen online and implemented in our own lives has deeply touched me. I’m proud of the creativity Oak Lawn has shown in the way it has reached out online – daily. At the funeral of Juan Carlos, a service under normal circumstances would have been bursting at the seams, was attended by five people, outside the family and clergy. Yet, you all submitted pictures and we pinned them on chairs before the family arrived. It was immediately evident how impactful this gesture was to them.

Friends, we will not always be in this place. I will close my time by quoting the favorite Bible verse of Christian comedian Mark Lowry: “and it came to pass....”

– it didn’t come to stay.

New Member Profiles

by Ryan Wager and Pastor Mara

Oak Lawn UMC is thrilled to welcome a wonderful group of new members! They have been participating in a New Membership class for the past few weeks. Once the Church reopens, we will have a special litany and celebration to officially welcome them into our family! We've gathered some details around our newbies – so that you can get to know them, digitally!



March & Sheila Maher

Where were you before coming to Oak Lawn UMC? Before Oak Lawn, we attended Church at Disciples of Christ but have been worshipping at Oak Lawn for about two years! We enjoy the diversity of membership and the Church's openness and acceptance. We love the pastoral team at OLUMC! **How did you find Oak Lawn UMC?** We found Oak Lawn online! **What do you like to do in your free time?** Home projects – solving problems. **What is your favorite ice cream flavor?** Coffee & Peppermint! **Any personal information you'd like to share?** We have 6 kids and 16 grandkids! **New Member Sponsors:** Steve & Marsha Franks



Stephanie Ledyard

(pictured with daughter, Megan)

Where were you before coming to Oak Lawn UMC? I grew up Methodist in Wichita Falls but had been away from church for a long time when I started looking for a place to worship in Dallas. Seeking a church that was inclusive, affirming, and out-reaching, yet with some traditional worship and music features, I'd started to think that maybe I was too picky. **How did you find Oak Lawn UMC?** Last spring, I read the following on Twitter from author and speaker Glennon Doyle: "If you want to know where a church stands on inclusion, do not ask who they invite to attend. Ask who they hire to LEAD. If there are no leaders who are people of color, women, queer—you have your answer." This stayed with me. One summer Saturday evening, I visited OLUMC's website and clicked on the link to view the church staff – and there it was! A week later, I visited for the first time, and I knew right away that this was the church I'd been looking for, the one I'd thought might not exist. (I'm so grateful you exist.) **What do you like to do in your free time?** In my free time, and sometimes when I should be doing other things, I write, play the piano, and read. **What is your**

favorite ice cream flavor? As for ice cream, I like a scoop of Tillamook chocolate chip, in a little flat cake cone, at home. **Any personal information you would like to share?** My husband, Aaron, and I recently celebrated our 13th anniversary. Our daughters are Natalie, age nine, and Megan, age 21. (My first daughter, Hannah, died 23 years ago from a genetic disease at seven months old.) Our family mascot is a Great Pyrenees rescue mix named Scout, who is the Best Dog Ever. And there are cats: Frisbee and Ollie. I work in the library of a private school that serves PreK through 12th graders. The kids make me laugh every day, and I really miss them right now. **New Member Sponsor:** Deborah Austell



Amanda Cooper

Where were you before coming to Oak Lawn UMC? Before I came to Oak Lawn I was simply lost in the rat race and in my own mind. I struggled with religion, due to a traumatic past. I slowly but surely came back to who I was and realized that I had to have a higher power and that I needed the church to serve on the level that I want to serve. God never gave up on me, so I ended up at Oak Lawn. I was attracted to Oak Lawn by the close proximity to my new apartment, social media presence, and all-

inclusive services. After attending I was attracted by the warm vibe, open communication, sense of community, and transparency. **How did you find Oak Lawn UMC?** I found Oak Lawn UMC on Facebook. **What do you like to do in your free time?** In my free time I love to spend time with my son, read, clean, learn, snuggle with my dog, and develop my random ideas. **What is your favorite ice cream flavor?** I am lactose intolerant, sadly, but I very much enjoy raspberry sorbet! **Any personal information you'd like to share:** I am autistic, so if I am sometimes quiet, say something odd, or seem standoffish, it is just because I am overstimulated or processing. I am a very happy and social person. It just doesn't always come out properly. I have a very deep-rooted type of empathy that I am very proud of.

I am looking for more ways spread to love people on a more widespread scale. I firmly believe that God is love and love conquerors all.

New Member Sponsor: Ryan Wager



Kaylan Coke

Where were you before coming to Oak Lawn UMC? I was in Miami, FL! I moved to Dallas after graduating! I was attracted to Oak Lawn originally because of its proximity, but once I came to my first service, I really loved the

inclusive atmosphere and space Oak Lawn creates. Oak Lawn also feels very personable and intimate which I wanted having grown up in a smaller church. I went to my first service the first Sunday back in the new year and have been coming since! **How did you find Oak Lawn UMC?** I found Oak Lawn through a Google search! I typed in church near me and it was the first church to pop up! Saw it was walking distance so I figured I would try it out! **What do you like to do in your free time?** In my free time I'm likely getting to know Dallas a bit more or dancing or singing with friends! I also like graphic design!

What is your favorite ice cream flavor? My favorite ice cream flavor is plain old vanilla! Well vegan vanilla or frozen yogurt! I'm allergic to eggs which are in most ice creams! **Any personal information you'd like to share:**

Cheers to Google searches! So glad to have found Oak Lawn and a community so close to my new home! **New Member Sponsor:** Lexi Reichman

was attracted to the diversity of the people and willingness to not do church the same old way. **What do you like to do in your free time?** Social media, Netflix, reading, playing with my Chi Bubba and walking. **What is your favorite ice cream flavor?** Chocolate **New Member Sponsor:** Christopher Crain and Gary Walden



Matt Reed

Where were you before coming to Oak Lawn UMC? I was not associated with any Church before coming to Oak Lawn. **How did you find Oak Lawn UMC?** John & Fabian Horany. **What do you like to do in your free time?** I like to listen to music and hang out with friends. **What is your favorite ice cream flavor?** Cherry Vanilla **Any personal information you'd like to share?** I always wanted to find a place where I feel I belong—and this Church can't make me feel anymore welcome! **New Member Sponsors:** John & Fabian Horany.

We will be offering a new membership class digitally VERY soon for those that would like to join when we're back in the sanctuary. If you're interested, email Mara.Morhouse@OLUMC.org so we can keep you updated!



Kyle Carpenter

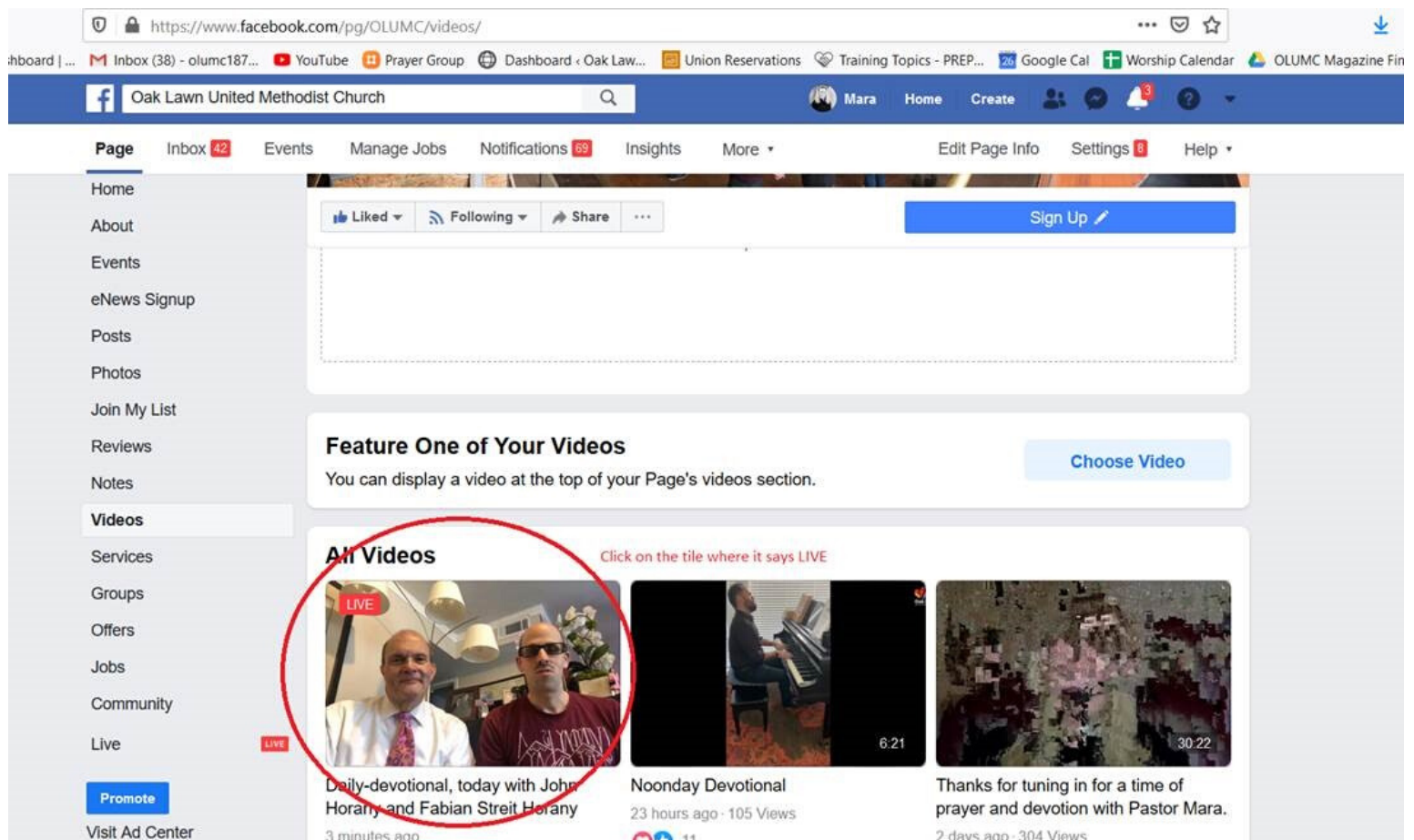
Where were you before coming to Oak Lawn UMC? I was attending Church of the Resurrection online. **How did you find Oak Lawn UMC?** I had been a member before in 2011. I



Interested in joining Oak Lawn UMC or Gracia Viva for Worship on Sunday, but not quite sure how to access Facebook LIVE? Here is a step-by-step instructional to use either your mobile device app or computer to access the video section where the LIVE stream is located!

VIA YOUR COMPUTER

- Click on this link: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/OLUMC/videos/>
- This should lead you to Oak Lawn UMC's video section of the Facebook page.
- We will start worship at 10:55 AM with a 5 minute countdown. Thus, you can scroll down the page until you see the video with the **LIVE** icon. It will look like so:

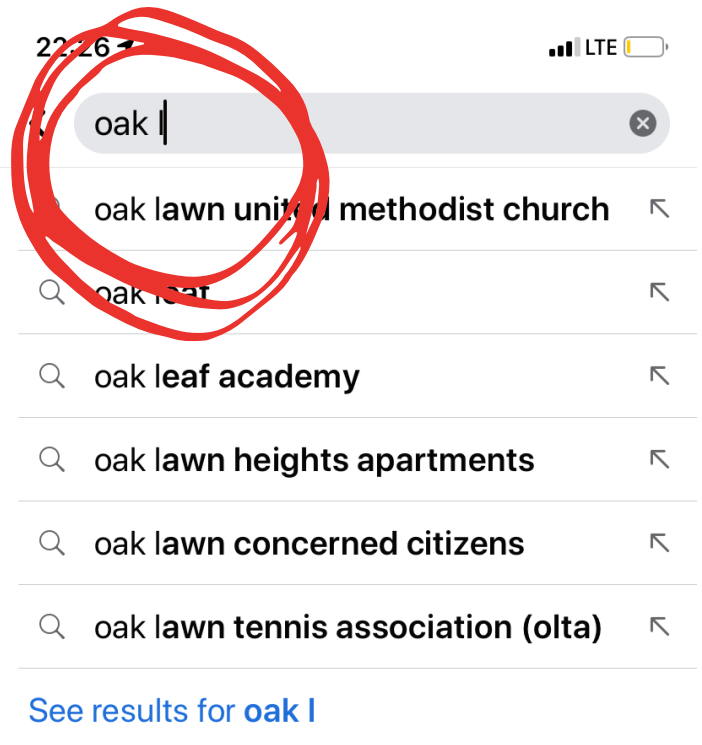
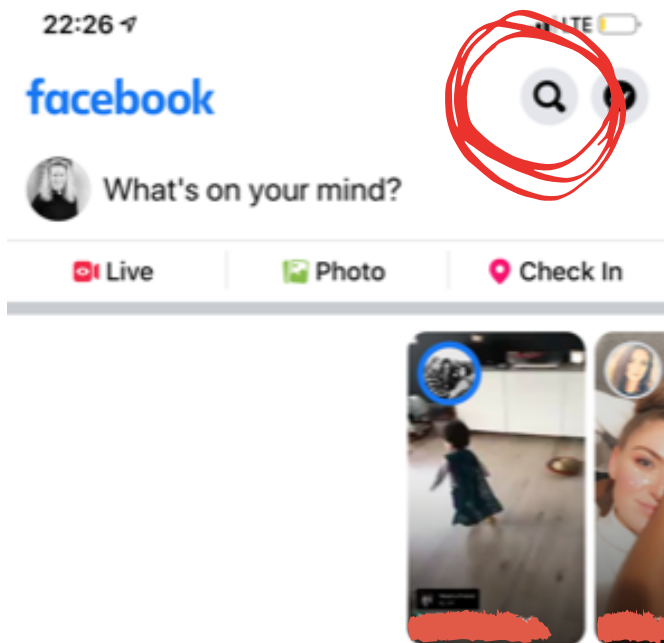


- Click on the tile to maximize the window and then you'll be able to watch, full screen, and comment on the right hand side of the stream!

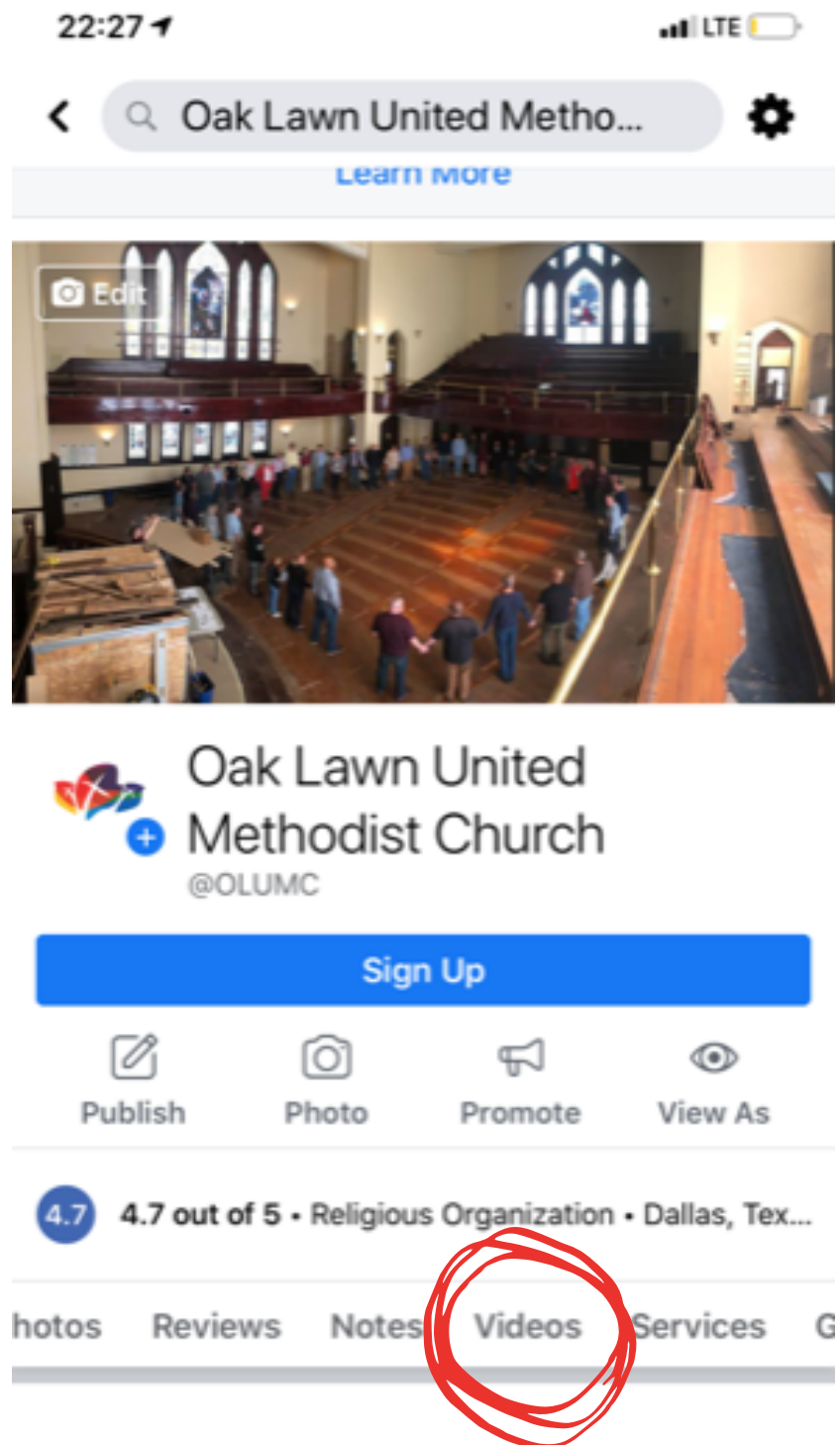


VIA YOUR PHONE APP:

- First go to your page and search for Oak Lawn United Methodist Church at the top of your browser where the magnifying glass icon is:



- Once on OLUMC's page, swipe to the right until you get to "videos." Tap on it!
- From here, you'll be able to scroll down and see the **LIVE** icon once again. Click on the video and voila!
- You're streaming with us LIVE!



WATCH IT LATER VIA YouTube

- If you don't have a Facebook account, and would like to watch the recorded service afterwards, you can always check it out on our Youtube channel.
- Link to channel found here:
 - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQ720gQVHoa5SZq_UnoyHQw/videos?view_as=subscriber

Union

Coffee on The Corner

by Le Tang



Did anyone who is currently reading this anticipate a global pandemic before April Fool's Day? Certainly not us. But it's here, and Union is taking on a series of measures to make life better for all of us in the midst of these uncharted waters.

Our plans are being reviewed by physicians and leaders in the restaurant industry to make sure we're taking care of Dallas, our customers, and our community. Here's some of what you can expect from us:

Daily Mirth Follow us on social media for updates that will make you smile.

No Touching! Standard Bluth rules apply. Please no touching the staff and keep your distance from other customers.

App Ordering Want to maintain maximum social distancing? Order your drink with the Union Coffee App (found in the App Store) and pick it up at the counter or walk up window. Then proceed to enjoy your beverage in the only lawn in Oak Lawn with actual Oak trees.

We Deliver! Craving a Matcha Mint while working from home? Give delivery a try. At checkout, make sure you select "Delivery" as the fulfillment method. You'll have the chance to put in your physical address once that's done. You can also help someone else feel seen and loved with a digital gift card!

Paid Sick Leave While we cannot offer *you* paid sick leave, we do offer it to our staff, which means that they will not show up for work sick. We take this seriously and take care of our baristas. You can rest assured knowing that any Union staff members with symptoms will not be on the premises.

Livestream Events The Naked Stage, Studio, and Kuneo will all be livestreamed moving forward so that you can watch and participate from the comfort of your home. Snuggle up on your couch and join us. We may be physically apart, but that doesn't mean we have to stop building community.

Make a Difference in Dallas A lot of our customers are in low-risk categories for serious complications and have minimal contact with higher-risk groups. We are in touch with area non-profits, city officials, and churches to see if there are volunteer needs from able-bodied folks who are less at risk. If you are interested in getting involved or know of needs, click [here](#).

Opportunities to Donate Don't forget that Union is a non-profit, which means that your donations help us bring incredible programming and leadership development to the city of Dallas. Like every other non-profit, we are worried that we will struggle financially in the midst of this pandemic. [You can help secure our future by donating [here](#).]

Please tip mightily, sing joyfully, and bring your dogs by for a picture on our patio as we do our best to keep our staff and community safe (Remember, no touching!)

Be healthy and well,

-Union



Gracia Viva

¡Viva la Gracia!

Coronavirus: A Thief and A Teacher



Latin American folks as you have probably noticed by now, we tend to touch each other a lot. Or maybe more than you are used to. It is one of those cultural differences that seems beautiful, but that may generate some embarrassing moments.

Some people understand communication as a messenger and receptor circuit. When we are face to face, that is kind of easy, only waving your hand is enough to create communication between two people or more.

Now, what does this have to do with Latinos touching each other? Well, what better way to say to the other "you are here, I recognize your presence, let's start talking" than acknowledging the physical existence of each other? In other words, to hug and kiss means to ensure and recognize the bond we are creating with others and Latin American's wanted to make sure the message is delivered! Maybe for many, this is an excuse we have; however, you can't deny is a **good** excuse!

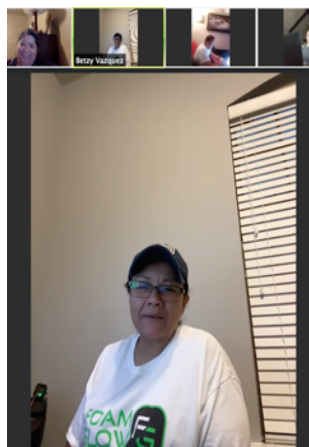
You might be asking why you are reading this. Well, so you can imagine how is Gracia Viva emotionally. The place that makes them feel security has been replaced by a screen. The hugs and kisses which make them feel as a family has been replaced by



emojis. The jobs they had have been terminated or they're sent home with no date to go back which makes this crisis time even more difficult.



During this hard time, Gracia Viva is doing the best we can to keep the connections stronger than ever. Many are using zoom for the first time. We created WhatsApp chat to maintain daily communication, pray together, to share necessities, and to encourage each other in this time. Many are learning how to use social media to engage these virtual relationships not fully recognized before. This crisis time has been a



time of learning; to show mercy, solidarity, love, compassion, empathy, and a time to recognize who is our neighbor.

"Don't worry about it, pray about it," "God is bigger than the coronavirus. Don't be afraid." The best is yet

to come! We will back home soon! Meanwhile, #LetLoveContinue *#DejemosQueFluyaElAmor.*

Activities / *Actividades*

Every Wednesday at 7:00 PM via Facebook live we connect to have a coffee with God. This is a time to gather, to raise questions, to learn and grow together. */Todos los miércoles a las 7:00 nos conectamos a través de Facebook en vivo para tomar un café con Dios. Este es un momento para reunirnos, hacer preguntas, aprender y crecer junt@s.*

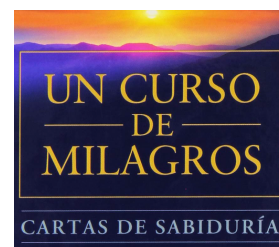


Curse in Miracles/ *Un Curso de Milagros*

"The heart is deceitful above all things" The idea of restoring the "power to choose".

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now God has reconciled us by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation. Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. For more info contact Esther Orozco 469-939-1817 / *"El corazón es engañoso sobre todas las cosas" La idea de restaurar el "poder de elegir". Una vez que te alejaste de Dios y fuiste su enemigo en tu mente debido a tu mal comportamiento, ahora Dios nos ha reconciliado por el cuerpo físico de Cristo a través de la muerte para presentarte santo a sus ojos, sin*

mancha y libre de acusaciones. Los jueves a las 7:00 p.m. a través de Zoom, para más información contacte a Esther Orozco 469-939-1817



Worship/ *Adoración*

We are also still offering Sunday Worship Service @12:30 PM via Facebook LIVE.



Oak Lawn United Methodist Church

Sunday Morning Grow Study 9:30 AM via ZOOM (see www.olumc.org/GrowStudy)
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00 AM via Facebook LIVE (see www.olumc.org/Worship)
Mañanas de Domingos de Adoración 12:30 PM via [Facebook LIVE](#)
Daily Devotional 12:00 PM Monday - Friday via [Facebook LIVE](#)

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Brenda Cowley, Administrative Assistant Brenda.Cowley@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.

