



Dear Oak Lawn UMC Family and Friends –

As you are aware, positive cases of the COVID-19 virus are at an all-time high, even since the pandemic first began. For eight months, members of our lay leadership, clergy, and medical professionals from within our own congregation have been meeting to monitor and address concerns regarding the pandemic and impacts to the ministries at OLUMC. As I am sure you can imagine, the most recent meeting of this task force led us to decide that we would continue digital worship for the foreseeable future; as gathering for in-person worship and other activities is not safe. Our outreach programs will continue – and our staff will continue to work at the Church and follow appropriate safety protocols.

The current state of the pandemic, the inability to provide enough space for everyone to attend and to remain socially distant during worship and the overall concern for the health and safety of our entire Church family makes this decision the most appropriate at this time. In addition, in a recent letter to the entire North Texas Annual Conference, Bishop Mike McKee also addressed the topic of COVID-19 by writing:

*As people of faith, we place a considerably high value on how we live together in community. This is a critical tenet of who we are as United Methodists. We must realize how our actions can affect our church community and the broader communities in which we live. We must act in ways that show our love for one another and lift each other up; specifically, we must not do anything that could conceivably harm others (intentionally or otherwise.) ...*

*For more than eight months, we have been challenged in ways that many of us could never have imagined. Thank you for your perseverance and faithful witness, which has made us a stronger Church.*

While it is not safe to gather, it's important that we continue to be in community. Our clergy and worship team have developed plans for a meaningful Advent and Christmas season (please visit [olumc.org/advent](http://olumc.org/advent) for more information). In the next week, you will learn more about our new Congregational Care program debuting in December. And in the new year, the task force will look to solicit further feedback about our online Church programming.

I encourage you to remain safe this holiday season. Please continue to participate in our digital activities while you pray for each other, for our Church and for our community.

If you need us, please reach out. We know this has been a trying time. We are here for you. Feel free to contact me at [layleader@olumc.org](mailto:layleader@olumc.org) or text the Church at (214) 441-6647.

Yours in Faith,  
**Ryan Wager**  
Lay Leader