



Overbrook United Methodist Church

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December 15, 2020

Overbrook UMC-

I write to you all out of a desire to clear up misconceptions as to why I have chosen to provide a video sermon rather than meet in person as some are choosing to do. First, let me share a quote from a letter from our Bishop of the Great Plains Conference.

“Out of an abundance of caution I am strongly encouraging that in-person worship services for congregations located in counties identified as being in critical or dangerous statuses related to the COVID-19 pandemic be suspended until further notice. I fully recognize that this means worshipping physically apart from one another during the Thanksgiving and Advent seasons, including Christmas Eve, funerals, weddings, and other large group gatherings but I believe this is the most responsible action at this time to preserve the health and wellbeing of our laity and clergy.” -Bishop Ruben Saenz, Jr.

For our county, we currently have 56 confirmed cases, which puts us firmly in the critical (26-75 cases) status according to covidactnow.org. Our state remains in the extreme/dangerous status. Thankfully, both are coming down from their recent peaks, but are expected to spike again with Christmas. Our county was in the medium (2-10 cases) to high (11-25) range up until November 6.

I will continue to provide sermons by video until we are consistently in the high/medium range as a county. I will also be looking at what is happening in the state and counties around us. This isn't anything I like doing. I absolutely love being in person for worship. I love visiting with people and hearing what is happening in their lives. I love the live music and seeing everyone together in community. So please understand it's not a decision I make lightly. It comes down to I feel ethically and theologically obligated to follow the guidelines set before us.

This season of Covid-19 is hard on everyone. It doesn't help when we are not all on the same page with what's happening around us. My hope/belief is that there is grace sufficient to make it through this challenging time in our history. It's going to take patience, love, and a willingness to be understanding of the other. This is a huge part of our Christian tradition and I believe we are up to the challenge.

Blessings,
Pastor Dean

*Open hearts, Open minds, Open doors
The People of the United Methodist Church*