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September 10, 2021

Dear LTS Students:

The bountiful grace of the Lord be upon each of you. It was December of 2019 when we began to hear of a new virus that had arisen in the province of Wuhan, China. By March of 2020, the virus since named SARS-CoV-2 became a global pandemic and the U.S. federal government declared a national medical emergency. We thought that it would be for a few months. We kept thinking about when we would see each other in “3-D” again at LTS. It is now September of 2021. The nation is experiencing yet another surge. The positivity rate in Kentucky rose from 2 percent in June to its current “dire” 14 percent. There are over 40 million cases with 652 thousand deaths in the USA, and over 222 million cases and 4.6 million deaths worldwide.

We know that so many of you want to come to campus and we had been looking forward to seeing you. We had been planning since last June to have you onsite, purchasing things like air filters to ensure your safety. However, in light of the surge spurred by the Delta variant and the recent news of a new variant on the horizon, the faculty and administrative staff met on September 9, 2021 and decided that there are still too many risks. There are risks in air travel. There are risks in exposing some of you who care for at-risk or immunocompromised loved ones who cannot be vaccinated. The physical capacity of our classrooms must limit how many of you can come. Frankly, the reasons for coming—worshipping together, dining together, visiting sites, and so forth—are severely hampered since those options are not necessarily available in Kentucky at this time.

Given these reasons, we have chosen to hold January Intensives fully online. We pray and ask that you join us in prayer that our country and the world will eventually see a future in which we can once again gather as a community. In January, I will communicate with you regarding events for June of 2022. I ask for your patience and forbearance. I realize that this brings much sadness and grief. As faculty and staff, we hold each of you in our prayers as you do the hard work of studying, pastoring, caring for families, friends, and communities.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me. As always, I am available via email (lmartell@lextheo.edu) or via text messaging or phone call (859-300-9979). Ms. Windy Kidd, registrar, (wkidd@lextheo.edu) can also answer questions or concerns you might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Loida I. Martell". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Rev. Dr. Loida I. Martell
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean
Professor of Constructive Theology