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### Mark your calendar!

The Ohio River Valley District has for the past several years offered a day of leadership training for clergy and laity in January. 2012 will be no exception and is set to be the most diverse and comprehensive training day yet! You won't want to miss it.



We will offer workshops in each of the areas of the Five Fruitful Practices of Passionate Worship, Radical Hospitality, Intentional Faith Development, Risk Taking Mission and Service, and Extravagant Generosity *and more!* Speakers from around the West Ohio Conference will lead your time together. Plan now to attend ~ more details to come!

### 2012 Mission Trip Opportunity



The first of two opportunities to travel with our new District Superintendent on an International Mission Trip takes place March 17-24, 2012.

This trip will be to Colombia, South America and will include three strategic areas of service ~ medical, construction, and VBS/basic English lessons.

The cost of the trip is \$1,895. Please pray about being a part of this life changing experience. For those desiring more information, **a conference call has been set up for 7pm tonight.** The phone number to call to participate is 877.621.0220 and the passcode is 863034. You may also email [Rev. Brian Brown](#) with questions or to express your interest.

### Alternative Christmas Cards

*Honor your family & friends while feeding the hungry!*

While you and your family celebrate the joyous Christmas season, many Americans will experience first hand the reality of hunger and poverty in our land of abundance. This Christmas, you can give them hope by the simple act of honoring your loved ones with a gift donation to feed the hungry. [Click here for details and ordering information.](#)



New tips from MyCom's November publication



The Ohio River Valley District office will be closed for Thanksgiving November 23-25.

There will be no News & Notes on November 28. Rich blessings for a memorable holiday with your family and friends!



- 5 tips for welcoming church visitors [video]
- Facebook changes mean new strategies for churches

- 5 tips to resolve church staff conflict (part two)
- Connect print with mobile media via QR codes
- Churches collaborate to advertise effectively
- Empowering children's ministry through technology

[Click here to read these articles & more.](#)  
[Sign up to receive MyCom.](#)

### HSA paperwork and health plan presentation

If you intend to be part of the West Ohio Conference's health plan next year and missed one of the meetings, you must complete an application form to be enrolled. A representative from the credit union will be at the Ohio River Valley District office on Wednesday, December 7th beginning at 9am to assist you in filling out your application. Make sure to bring your driver's license with you.



If you can't make it on the 7th, you may visit the West Ohio Credit Union on December 8th or 9th, 431 Ohio Pike, Suite 100, Cincinnati 45255 to complete your application.

Our conference health personnel will host another meeting to describe the new Health Care plan for 2012 on Friday, December 2 at 9:30am and 1pm. If you were unable to attend one of the regional presentations, you may want to go to the WOC Center (32 Wesley Blvd, Worthington 43085) to learn firsthand the changes in the program and how they will affect you and your family.

### 40 Days of Thanksgiving



As we finish up **50 Days of Prayer** we embark on another prayer journey beginning tomorrow. **40 Days of Thanksgiving** will take you through to the end of the year using scripture that focuses on **Praise, Prayer Walks** and **Preparation for a New Year**.

If you have been following along with Rev. Brown this fall, you will automatically begin receiving **40 Days of Thanksgiving** in your inbox tomorrow. Of course, you may "opt out" by clicking unsubscribe at the bottom of the email. We certainly hope and pray that you will "opt in" and join us on this journey of praise, prayer and preparation. Hearing of this for the first time? [Email Rev. Brown to join in.](#)

### Volunteers in Mission (VIM) to Nicaragua

A VIM team to the Managua, Nicaragua barrio of Nejapa is scheduled for June 15-23, 2012 and applications are now being accepted!



The team will work with the Fundacion El Samaritano ministry and the Nicaragua Methodist Evangelical Church on various projects. There may be light school construction/maintenance, also hospital visitations with donations of layettes, health kits and toys (maternity, pediatric, women's oncology), Bible school presentations, a child feeding program, neighborhood visitations, and visits to other ministries. Time will be available for worship in the Nejapa community, sightseeing and shopping. The cost is estimated to be \$1,300 per person plus materials for layettes/health kits/toys.

An informative brochure is available by clicking [here](#). Contact team leader, [Jack Reif](#), at 513.831.5550 for more information.

### The new health insurance plan and FSA & MRA accounts

Churches whose pastors and employees are covered by the conference health insurance plan and currently offer Flexible Spending Accounts (Section 125 plans) or Medical Reimbursement Accounts (Section 105 plans) please read this carefully as there may be actions required on your part.

Flexible Spending Accounts must be exhausted prior to January 1, 2012. Medical Reimbursement Plans will need to be reviewed. If the MRA is unlimited, it will need to be modified to cover only dental, vision and medical expenses only after the qualified High Deductible Health Plan statutory deductibles have been met, or else the plans would need to be discontinued. If the employees continue to have a 105 that covers medical expenses prior to the minimum HDHP deductible limits, the employees covered under the plans won't be eligible for HSAs.

**The Ohio River Valley District is not engaged in the practice of providing legal, tax, insurance or employee benefit services. The service of a qualified, competent professional should be sought for advice in these matters.**

### News from the Pews

#### Thanksgiving Feast

All are welcome to New Vision United Methodist Church on Thanksgiving Day, November 24 for a community meal from 11am-2pm. You'll enjoy a delightful Thanksgiving feast along with great fellowship and music offered by New Vision's pastor and members. New Vision is located at 4400 Reading Rd, Cincinnati 45229.

#### Ladies' Advent Service

Women of the ORV district, you are invited to Olive Branch United Methodist Church on Monday, November 28 for their Ladies' Advent Service. There will be refreshments, crafts and baked goods for sale, and an Advent skit entitled "Have you Heard the Latest?" Please come and enjoy fellowship with other women while you prepare your heart for the celebration of the blessed birth of Jesus Christ. Olive Branch is located at 7315 Wilmington Road, just ½ mile east of I-71 at Exit 36. For more information, please call the church at 513.932.3943.

#### Fabulous Spaghetti Dinner

Did you know that each year Goshen UMC invites the community to a delicious spaghetti dinner? This year is no exception. The date is Friday, December 2 from 4:30-7pm. The meal includes homemade spaghetti, salad, bread and desserts. All are invited to join in for the great food and fellowship and donations will be accepted. Goshen is located at 6710 Goshen Rd, Goshen 45122.

#### Praise the Heavens with Harp and Voice

The Cincinnati Choral Society will present their Christmas concert, "Praise the Heavens with Harp and Voice," on Saturday, December 3 at 7pm at Sharonville United Methodist Church, 3751 Creek Rd, Sharonville, Ohio 45241. Under the direction of Dr. Douglas K. Belland, the program will include contemporary carols as well as traditional favorites accompanied by harp, cello, flute and piano. A dessert reception will follow the concert. Admission: adults \$15, students and seniors \$10, groups of ten or more \$8 each. Tickets are available through the CCS website ([www.cincinnatichoralsociety.org](http://www.cincinnatichoralsociety.org)) or at the door.

#### Living Nativity

Loveland United Methodist Church invites you to their Living Nativity, an outside guided walking tour through 21 stations featuring a dramatic presentation through drama and song of the story of Jesus' birth on December 3-4 from 4:30-7:30pm. After the 30 minute tour, guests are invited to visit with the live animals, including donkeys, goats, sheep and alpacas. Hot cocoa & cookies will be served inside. This Christmas offering is a free gift to you from the people of Loveland UMC. They are located at 10975 South Lebanon Rd, Loveland 45140: [www.lovelandumc.org](http://www.lovelandumc.org).

#### Carol Fest

Choirs from Anderson Hills, Clough, and Newtown United Methodist Churches are inviting the community to sing in the Christmas season at the fifth annual Carol Fest to be held at Clough UMC at 7pm on Sunday, December 4. Choirs will each sing 2 or 3 special Christmas songs. However, the majority of this free program will be audience participation with everyone present singing familiar Christmas carols. "Away in the Manger", "The First Noel", "Joy to the World", and "Silent Night" are a few of the favorites that will be sung. Light refreshments will be served afterwards. Clough is located at 2010 Wolfangel Rd in Anderson Township. For more information call the church office at 513.231.4301 or visit [www.cloughchurch.org](http://www.cloughchurch.org).

### Cookie Walk

Cherry Grove United Methodist Women will hold their 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Cookie Walk on Saturday, December 10 from 9am-12pm or until the cookies and candies are sold out, whichever comes first! Church members will spend the week prior to the Cookie Walk baking homemade specialty Christmas cookies and candies to sell by the pound (\$6.50) at the Cookie Walk. This is a great way to get a variety of cookies for holiday entertaining and gift giving without having to spend hours in the kitchen! If you are pressed for time, simply stop by during the sale and choose a pre-packed assortment. What could be easier?! Cherry Grove is located at 1428 Eight Mile Rd in Anderson Township. 100% of the proceeds will support ministries and missions that serve children, youth and women. For more information, call the church office at 513.474.1428.

### Messiah Sing Along

Franklin First United Methodist Church will host a Messiah Sing Along on Sunday, December 11 at 3pm. Dust off your Messiah score and join the fun! Don't sing? Come enjoy the music anyway! Singers from the Lebanon and Otterbein-Lebanon UMC's will join Franklin's Chancel Choir. A reception will follow. The church is located at 303 S. Main St, Franklin, 45005 "under the green steeple." The building is handicapped accessible. For more information, call 937.746.5232.

### Drive Through Nativity

Church of the Saviour UMC will present their 25th Drive Through Nativity as a Christmas gift to the community on Sunday, December 11 from 5:30-9:00pm. Ten different live scenes capture biblical times with animals and inspirational music. These scenes are placed throughout the parking lot and it just takes 10 minutes to complete the drive in the warmth of your car. Actors in the scenes are all youth from the church. Admission is free. Church of the Saviour is located at 8005 Pfeiffer Rd, Cincinnati 45242. Watch a YouTube video explaining the event by clicking [here](#).

### Do Not Open Till Christmas

Juli Peterson, wife of Trinity UMC pastor, Kirk Peterson, will be starring in the Friends of the Groom Theater Company original hit show, **Do Not Open Till Christmas** on December 16, 17, and 18 at the Performing Arts Theatre at the Anderson Center, 7850 Five Mile Road, Cincinnati 45255. The full-length production asks the question: What happens when you mix spiked eggnog, performance art, and online dating with a holiday family reunion? The answer is a wild, witty, and uniquely touching look at family relationships in the Christmas season. Show times and ticket information are available by calling 513.831.2859 or online at [www.friendsofthegroom.org](http://www.friendsofthegroom.org).

### Dying and Grieving



**William O. Rowland**, father of Rev. Mark Rowland (Anderson Hills UMC) passed away on Friday, November 18. He was 89. Services will be held for him in Athens, OH this weekend. Condolences will reach Mark and Melinda Rowland at 1093 Hawkstone Dr, Cincinnati 45230

**Alton Wilburn**, maternal grandfather of Rev. Alan Brown (Hayes Memorial UMC, Maumee Watershed District) died November 17 after a battle with lung and throat cancer. Condolences may be sent to Rev. Alan Brown at 1501 Fangboner Rd, Fremont OH 43420.

*(Deadline for News and Notes articles is noon on Fridays)*

Ohio River Valley District office hours are Monday - Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM