Watch the video to learn how Phil Wenger, a member of Loveland United Methodist Church and VP of Combined Containerboard, created a partnership with Value Added Packaging to fill boxes for Operation Christmas Child.

The district office will be closed December 21-January 3. We wish
This month's breakthrough luncheon took place on Thursday, December 3. The church invited from the ORV to join the other 7 district honorees was **Ross Community United Methodist Church** located in Hamilton. They exceeded the goals they set for Radical Hospitality, Risk-Taking Mission and Service, and Extravagant Generosity. Pastor Larry Gallaher had this to say about the experience, "I appreciate the recognition for Ross Community Church. I also enjoyed hearing about other churches and getting some ideas that will be beneficial. A good experience."

**Advent Quiz: Test your Knowledge**

you Christmas joy and blessings as we celebrate his great love. Merry Christmas!

The December donation suggestions for Wesley Education Center are Play-Doh & books for toddlers-preschool. Please drop your gifts off at the district office or directly to the center at 525 Hale Ave, Cincinnati 45229. Thank you!
United Methodist Communications brings you an Advent Quiz to test your knowledge of the season. New questions are added each day throughout Advent.

**Test Your Skills**

Otterbein Lebanon's Renaissance Feaste.

**Conversations About Race**

Our monthly meeting of the Conversations about Race
leadership team had a special visit from Police Partnerships team member Officer Louis Arnold, Faith Based Community Liaison for the Cincinnati Police Department.

Officer Arnold shared with us the value of the work we do, and offered insight into the behind the scenes processes of police departments - including a recent report on the University of Cincinnati Police Department.

We are working on a Come to the Table Reunion for February - one that will invite law enforcement officials and past participants to continue dialogue and share updated information. Stay tuned for more information.

Our Church Partnerships team is looking for congregations to assist with Vacation Bible School at YMCA locations around Cincinnati. Interested in getting your church involved? Contact **Nicole Henderson-Johns** at 513.732.2027.
Our annual Leadership Training Day is January 30, 2016.

Workshops will focus on administrative processes of the church and developing and implementing a modified leadership structure. Three different church structure conversations will be held based on church size, giving you the opportunity to really see how it would work in your setting and what fruit, as well as, challenges, to expect.

Worship will be a very key part of our day, both in the morning and the afternoon. You'll take away learning insights, and you'll also have a chance to share what you know. **Given** is the theme to Annual Conference 2016 and we'll begin to immerse ourselves in Given with Luke 6:38: *Give away your life; you'll find life given back, but not merely given back - given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way. Generosity begets generosity.* (The Message)

Mark your calendar for this great day of learning and fellowship! Online registration will be available on Friday, December 18 at [www.westohioumc.org/events/all/register/](http://www.westohioumc.org/events/all/register/)
Christmas Eve: No Gimmicks Allowed

Should we have a Nativity scene or kids in costume? Should we do something more contemporary or have a choir? How can we top last year?

United Methodist worship leaders often ask these questions as they prepare for one of the most highly attended worship times - Christmas Eve.

A variety of services and worship styles is important, given the diversity of people attending, but two pastors offer additional advice.

"Save the gimmicks for another day," the Rev. Lee Trigg says. "That's not why people come."

The Rev. Ron Parker advises doing everything possible to make people feel included.

Read More

Led by God: a heart for giving

At 4:30 a.m. most mornings during Advent, Monica Kleman leaves home to drive to the Findlay Elder Beerman where she stocks shelves and unloads trucks of inventory all day. The extra cash would come in handy for household, school and other expenses plus help provide a nice Christmas for the family of seven. But Monica feels God has placed another purpose for that money on her heart. With her family's blessing, last week Monica donated all $650 of her first
Monica Kleman

paycheck to the Imagine No Malaria campaign.

5 Tensions Every Small and Mid-Size Church Encounters
Cary Nieuwhoff, Outreach Magazine

People clearly have strong opinions and emotions about the size of churches. The post I wrote on why most churches never break the 200 attendance mark struck a deep nerve.

As church leaders it's critical that we understand the tensions we're facing. In the same way that diagnosing that pain under your kneecap when you're trying to run a race is helpful, diagnosing what you sense in the congregation can be critical to taking your next step forward.

Overcome these tensions and you're closer to progress. Avoid them or fail to deal with them and you can stay stuck a long time.
Feeling Called to be a Pastor?

West Ohio Conference's Next Generations Leadership Ministry Intern program is for undergraduate students interested in exploring a call to United Methodist ordained ministry.

The 12-week paid summer internship allows selected mentors and host churches to play a critical role in the experience of each assigned intern discerning a call to ordained ministry. Each mentor and host church will develop a relationship with the assigned intern that will help he/she cultivate leadership skills for effective ministry in a local church. Learn more.

Applications for the summer of 2016 are available online and are due by March 15. Questions? Contact RaNae Street.

When the Snow Falls, Think Spring!

The Farmer's Almanac, the National Weather Service and even El Nino agree that this winter should be "worse" than normal. Although no one knows for sure, we do know spring will arrive on time and with it planting season.

Jackson Area Ministries would like you to remember them as you check with local seed distributors to see if they have leftover seeds labeled for 2015 that they would donate to their ministry. Typically, year old seeds germinate at around a 90% rate.

Another way to help them is to include this bulletin insert asking your congregation to collect seeds for their ministry. Learn more at www.jamumc.org.
It's happening in our district at:

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<th>Location</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Olive Branch-Blue</td>
<td>Christmas Worship</td>
<td>12/18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clough</td>
<td>Breakfast with Santa</td>
<td>12/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mt. Moriah</td>
<td>Accepting Grace, A Musical</td>
<td>12/20</td>
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Let us remember in prayer those grieving the loss of their loved one, and remember in thanksgiving the life and ministry of:

**Barbara Beittel**, 89, who died December 2. She was preceded in death by her husband of 67 years, Rev. Dale Russell Beittel, in 2012. Mrs. Beittel was an elementary music teacher and supervisor in the public schools of Pennsylvania and Ohio as well as on the faculty of several colleges and universities. She served alongside her husband in West Ohio at First (Perrysburg, 1950); Riverside (Columbus, 1957); Armstrong Chapel (Cincinnati, 1964); Central (Springfield, 1969); Christ (Marietta, 1973); King Avenue (Columbus, 1982); and Grace (Zanesville, 1984). Mrs. Beittel was the professional choir director at several of the churches her husband pastored. **Obituary.** A memorial service was held previously at Christ United Methodist Church, Marietta. The family would appreciate donations in Barbara's memory to Christ United Methodist Church, 301 Wooster Street, Marietta, Ohio 45750 or The Open Shelter, 61 E. Mound Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215. Messages of sympathy may be sent to the family at McClure-
Schafer Lankford Funeral Home.

Rev. Max Eugene Donahue, 82, who died on December 4. Rev. Donahue was serving as a local pastor at Slab Fork Centenary United Methodist Church in Pedro, Ohio. Max was ordained an elder in the West Ohio Conference, where he served 60 years pastoring congregations at Chesterhill Chg (1955); Sharon & McClure (1963); Middleport (1966); Coal Grove (1971); Coal Grove Memorial (1982); Honorable Location (1983); Lawrence Furnace (1985); Slab Fork Centenary (1996). Obituary. Services were held last week in Thornville. Condolences will reach Mrs. Patricia Donahue at 905 Center Avenue, Worthington, Kentucky 41183.

Olga Mae Perkins, 91, who died on December 6. Mrs. Perkins was preceded in death by her husband, Rev. Roland G. Perkins. Mrs. Perkins served alongside her husband, an ordained elder, who pastored churches in the West Ohio Conference. Obituary. Services were held last week in Pickerington. Condolences may be sent to her daughter, Donna Racette, 87 Knights Bridge Drive West, Pickerington, Ohio 43147.