



The Messenger

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The most wonderful time of the year.



You can almost sense the arrival of Christmas: the fragrant aroma of pine branches and cinnamon and hot cocoa, the snow-covered hills and the laughter of children, the sound of sleighbells and carols. For over 2.3 billion Christians around the world, Christmas is a celebration—a birthday party for our Lord Jesus Christ, who gives us hope and excitement for an amazing future.

And for Streetsboro UMC, we want to share that hope and excitement with literally everyone in the Streetsboro area. That’s why we are hosting a community-wide Christmas party and dinner! Here are the details:

When: Sunday, December 10th, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Where: Streetsboro United Methodist Church, 8940 St. Rt. 43, Streetsboro



It’s a full meal plus snacks and drinks and desserts—so moms and dads—you can take the night off! We’ll have great holiday music and decorations, crafts for the kids to create your own Christmas decorations, games and an Ugly Sweater Contest—can you out-ugly Pastor Gordon’s Christmas Goat sweater? [Click here to RSVP.](#)

THE REASON FOR THE SEASON

Have you ever wondered...?

Why do people get so excited about Christmas? It all started as a Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus, but now it has become a cross-cultural season of shopping and parties and gift-giving, decorating and singing and candy.

For the Christian, it’s still a special day, because of who Jesus is. Jesus is our King. He is the son of God, who came to earth to save us and promise everlasting life.



God created the universe, including our world and everything in it. He made us—we’re His **children**—because He wanted a family, a relationship with us based on love. But He wanted us to **choose** to want to be part of His family; He didn’t want to force it. By giving us the power of choice, we made many bad choices, which separated us from Him. No amount of good things we do can wipe the slate clean. So God sent Jesus, His son, to take on human form, to live with us, teach us and then to die to pay the price for all of our bad choices. God raised Jesus back to life, with a promise—if we accept the death of Jesus as payment for our sins, when we die, we will be reborn in Heaven—with new, perfected bodies without pain or sickness or hunger—in a paradise that’s beyond our imagination. **And that’s worth celebrating.**

WORSHIP AND MUSIC

Christmas Services this holiday season

We'll have two very special Christmas services this year to celebrate the birth of Jesus and the hope He brings.



CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT CELEBRATION. Sunday, December 24, 7:00 pm.

This is our annual traditional Christmas service that falls (this year) on Sunday.

There will be no Sunday morning service this year as Christmas Eve is falling on a Sunday. Join us for uplifting music and messages as we celebrate the miraculous coming of Christ and the promise of peace on earth and goodwill towards men.

BLUE CHRISTMAS.

Sunday, December 17, 4:00 pm.

For many people, Christmas is a time of many wonderful memories. For those grieving a loved one who has passed, or for those who are suffering from illness or loss, it can be a profoundly difficult holiday. Our Blue Christmas service provides a time to remember, to offer comfort and hope and the love of our church for all those who suffer during this time.

Sunday, December 17, we are offering a Blue Christmas service that is designed for people who are suffering with the pain of loss, isolation, and grief during the Advent and Christmas seasons.

This season is a time when we are supposed to celebrate hope, joy, love and peace; yet for those people who are struggling with loss, this time can add to the overwhelming sense of despair. Yet, Jesus Christ is the gift to all people: those who celebrate ecstatically as well as those who are feeling “blue.” We believe that space must be created for everyone to experience the Hope of Christmas.

If you know of anyone who might receive comfort from this service, please invite them to accompany you to this 4:00 pm service. Contact the church office if you have any questions.



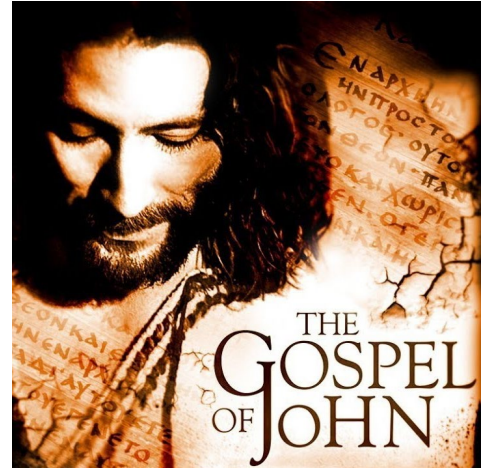
GROWING IN FAITH

Opportunities to learn more about Jesus and His teachings

Jesus gave His life for us. But while He was here on earth, He did a LOT more than just sacrificing Himself on the cross. He taught a lot of incredibly important messages. And when Jesus rose from the dead, He came back to His disciples with an important message: “Teach everyone everything that I have taught you.” (Matthew 28:20)

GOSPEL OF JOHN BIBLE STUDY. In January, each Saturday morning at 9:00 am we’ll begin a group Bible study on the Gospel of John, the eyewitness account of the life, miracles, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus as told by one of His closest followers.

Click below to watch a preview video on YouTube:



[Gospel of John Summary: A Complete Animated Overview \(Part 1\)](#)

[Sign up here!](#) January 20-April 14: Gospel of John Part 1 (Chapters 1-12)

GROWING IN FAITH

Why should I be part of a Bible Study group? *Excerpted from GotQuestions.org*

Really understand what the Bible is saying. Reading the Bible on your own is valuable. But it’s a very rich text, and often you can miss important insights. A Bible Study group, where scripture is read together aloud and then discussed, with references to other parts of the Bible and historical insights, can help everyone in the group learn from each other and gain insights and how to apply it to your life.

Jesus did it this way. Small group study is so effective that Jesus used it to train his apostles (Luke 6:12-16; Mark 4:34).

Friendship and fellowship. A group Bible study can be a place to celebrate life’s victories, get prayer support, be encouraged in tough times, and keep ourselves accountable in our personal growth. Group Bible studies offer a structured time to focus on topics that address our needs or interests. They offer a way to help carry us from Sunday to Sunday and a safe place to work out the challenges we face.



God wants us to do this. God designed us to need Him, and to need each other. His word to us is to reach out and love one another. Colossians 3:16 says we should allow “the message of Christ to dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.” What better place for that than in a small Bible study group?

THE POWER OF PRAYER

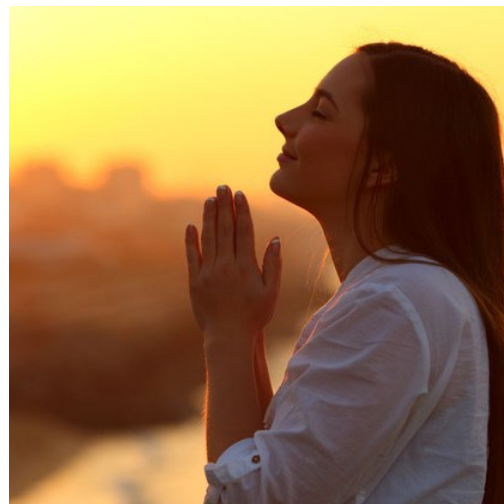
How Shall I Pray? *Excerpted from GotQuestions.org*

Far too often, prayer is viewed as a “magic formula.” Some believe that if we do not say exactly the right things, or pray in the right position, God will not hear and answer our prayer. This is completely unbiblical. God does not answer our prayers based on when we pray, where we are, what position our body is in, or in what order we word our prayers.

We are told in 1 John 5:14-15 to have confidence when we come to God in prayer, knowing He hears us and will grant whatever we ask as long as it is in His will. Similarly, John 14:13-14 declares, “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”

According to these and many other Scriptures, God answers prayer requests based on whether they are asked according to His will and in the name of Jesus (to bring glory to Jesus).

So, what is the proper way to pray? Philippians 4:6-7 tells us to pray without being anxious, to pray about everything, and to pray with thankful hearts. God will answer all such prayers with the gift of His peace in our hearts. The proper way to pray is to pour out our hearts to God, being honest and open with God, as He already knows us better than we know ourselves. We are to present our requests to God, keeping in mind that God knows what is best and will not grant a request that is not His will for us. We are to express our love, gratitude, and worship to God in prayer without worrying about having just the right words to say. God is more interested in the content of our hearts than the eloquence of our words.



THE POWER OF PRAYER

Prayer Concerns

Please join us in lifting up these prayer requests:

- **Ron: Recovering from surgery**
- **Pattie Pinkerman: Support through her cancer treatments**
- **Connie Snyder: Healing**
- **Natalie: Health concerns**
- **Prayers for the McDole Family**

No matter what you are going through in life, there is no prayer request too big or small for our God.

At Streetsboro United Methodist Church, we want to walk alongside you and bring your request before the Lord. If you want to share your trials, struggles or burdens, know that you are not alone: someone is praying for you and with you. **How can we pray for you?** Contact us with your prayer concerns!



LOVE IN ACTION | MINISTRY MOMENT

Mat Makers benefit the homeless

SUMC has been the home base for the Mat Makers for the Homeless since 2018 under the guidance of Pastor Sue Ritts. The group has been collecting plastic grocery bags and making crocheted sleeping mats through a process that includes folding, cutting into strips, looping, plarning (balling) and finally, crocheting. The finished mats take some time to make but have a unique look due to the talented crocheted colorful patterns.

The Mat Maker group project is a charity, open to everyone. The Mat Makers have been meeting at SUMC on the first Monday of the month from 12:30-2 pm. The group is currently on a schedule break during December and January but plans to start the sessions up again the first of February 2024. Many of our members continue to work at home on the phase of the process they prefer. No idle hands with this charity project!

It is estimated that we have delivered 300 finished mats to homeless shelters in northeastern Ohio since the conception of our Mat Makers for the Homeless

The biggest event for the Mat Makers has been participating in the Kent State University Alumni “**Flashes Give Back Week,**” which is held annually in April.



Next year’s event will be Saturday, April 20, 2024 10:30-1pm in the Church Fellowship Hall. Grab your plastic bags, bring your scissors, or your extra-large crochet hook, and join us at our regular sessions in February and the Spring, and be sure to mark the date April 20 on your 2024 calendar.

Upcoming Services and Messages

December 2023-March 2024.

Yellow dates indicate Communion Sundays and Fellowship Hour after church

Date	Message Title	Message Scripture
Dec 03, 23	God is Faithful	1 Cor 1:3-9
Dec 10, 23	God's Patience	2 Pet 3:8-15a
Dec 17, 23	He's Coming!	John 1:6-8, 19-28
Dec 24, 23	It's a Miracle!	Luke 2:1-20
Dec 31, 23	God's Child	Gal 4:4-7
Jan 07, 24	The Pride of The Father	Mark 1:4-11
Jan 14, 24	Follow Me	John 1:43-51
Jan 21, 24	The Call	Mark 1:14-20
Jan 28, 24	Even Demons Obey Him	Mark 1:21-28
Feb 04, 24	He Came to Heal	Mark 1:29-39
Feb 11, 24	Son of God	Mark 9:2-9
Feb 18, 24	The Good News	Mark 1:9-15
Feb 25, 24	The Way of the Cross	Mark 8:31-38
Mar 03, 24	My Father's House	John 2:13-22
Mar 10, 24	Love, Light, and Life	John 3:14-21
Mar 17, 24	Honor in Service	John 12:20-33
Mar 24, 24	No Sacrifice Too Great	Mark 15:1-39
Mar 31, 24	The Great News!	Mark 16:1-8

CELEBRATING OUR BIG EVENT

22nd Annual Chili Cook-Off

by Bruce Harwedel

This exciting event went off without a hitch, Saturday, November 4th. Seventeen unique chilis offered a wonderful assortment of flavors and tastes...how could it not be a success?



More than one hundred people attended from our community including our sister church in Twinsburg. The event emcee was Bob Long, Director of Radio FM 88.9 along with his Rocket radio students and his group did a wonderful job selling auction tickets and passing out gifts for the winning numbers.

Mailings and announcements surely added to the success of this event and a big call out to Jeanette Thompson for the procurement of so many wonderful prizes.



We hope to see all of you next year. Big thanks to Jackie Searfoss, Dennis Bontrager, Ann Arbuckle, Eleanor Cline, and all of this year's participants for making this such a memorable event. We all are looking for an even larger event in 2024.



TEEN MINISTRY

Rocket Teens making plans for a BIG 2024!

Streetsboro's **Rocket Teen Ministry** is a place where you can have fun, meet friends, and learn about doing life with greater meaning and purpose. Plans are coming together for a big year in 2024 for area youth in Grades 7-12.



ROCKET TEEN MINISTRY | WEEKLY LAUNCH SEQUENCE

SUNDAYS | **BLAST-OFF** | 10:00-11:00 am

Sunday mornings we'll start big with our morning youth get-together. We'll provide a meaningful message about Jesus and purposeful living, Christian pop/rock worship music, skits and fun that our youth can help put together.

WEDNESDAYS | **RE-FUEL** | 7:00-8:00 pm

On Wednesday's we'll get real with conversations with friends, games and fun, and straight talk about the challenges of being a teen today.

ROCKET TEEN MINISTRY | MONTHLY LAUNCH SEQUENCE

Here are some monthly activities we are considering—our youth plus their parents and advisors will determine together the final program and schedule:

MEANINGFUL SERVICE | **ROCKET IMPACT**

Live with purpose and make an impact by serving others in our community.

We show the love of Christ by sharing that love with people who truly need it.

Some of our projects have included...

- **Mats for the Homeless.** Life on the streets is harsh. We provide mats that we create by recycling and reusing plastic grocery bags and distribute them through local homeless agencies.
- **Food Drive.** Streetsboro UMC hosts the community food pantry to fight hunger and ensure everyone in our community has nutritious food they need every day. Our youth help to collect and distribute food in support of the food pantry.
- **Angel Tree.**® Collecting and packing Christmas gifts for children of inmates.

FUN & FRIENDS | **ESCAPE VELOCITY**

Doing church should be fun! Each month we plan activities where we can be together for fun, fellowship and friendship and Jesus.

Some of our activities have included...

- **Scavenger Hunts**
- **Canoe Trips & Hikes**
- **Parties, Cook-Offs, Picnics**
- **Escape Rooms**
- **Game Nights** | Board/Card/Video Games
- **Lock-Ins/Sleepovers** | All-Night Party
- **Movie Nights**
- **Cookie Baking/Decorating** | Christmas Party
- **Halloween Party** | Food, fun, music, games and crazy costumes
- **Watch Parties** | Super Bowl, Browns Games, etc.
- **Christmas Caroling** with shut-ins

Come along side us and help us plan and lead these great activities, to help our young people grow in faith, character and community. Contact Diane Bonham at (330) 990-1904 for more information.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Star Kidz Youth Ministry launching in 2024!

Streetsboro's **Star Kidz Youth Ministry** is a place where you can have fun, meet friends, and learn about doing life with greater meaning and purpose. For area youth in grades K-6.



STAR KIDZ YOUTH MINISTRY | WEEKLY LAUNCH SEQUENCE

SUNDAYS | **POWER-UP** | 10:00-11:00 am

Never a dull moment as you learn about connecting to God so you can receive His power. Each week experience worship through music, fun object lessons (can be messy), prayer, skits, and games. We meet together, then split into breakout rooms for age-appropriate lessons.

MONTHLY | **KIDZ CLUB** | 7:00 PM

Go deeper in your friendships and your relationship with God with activities that help you learn and connect with others who want to show thanks for all God has done for you!

STAR KIDZ YOUTH MINISTRY | OUT-OF-THIS WORLD EVENTS

MEETING GOD TOGETHER | QUARTERLY YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Here are some of the programs we are discussing for next year, final details to be determined.

SPRING 2024

- **Easter Egg-cellent Adventure** | Search for hidden eggs with candy and hidden surprises!

SUMMER 2024

- **Vacation Bible School.** A week-long daytime event taking place both indoors and outdoors. You'll have a blast with activities, Bible lessons, and songs pointing to a vibrant life in Jesus.

FALL 2024

- **Back-to-School-cebration!** | Our big annual youth program kickoff event. Food, fun, and activities plus a preview of all the great things we are planning for the coming year!
- **Trunk 'r Treat & Halloween Party** | Get ready for fun! Candy distribution in the parking lot, then indoors we have food, music, games and your crazy costumes...in a safe, non-scary setting.

WINTER 2024

- **Cookie Decorating | Christmas Party** | Bring a friend and enjoy decorating (and eating!) Christmas cookies...and take some home for your family to enjoy

Come along side us and help us plan and lead these great activities, to help our young people grow in faith, character and community. Contact Diane Bonham at (330) 990-1904 for more information.

INSPIRATION

Former Buckeye standout credits God for success

It's been an amazing rookie season for Buckeye alum C.J. Stroud. The first draft pick of the NFL's Houston Texans, Stroud has broken rookie records in taking one of the league's worst teams and turning them into playoff contenders.

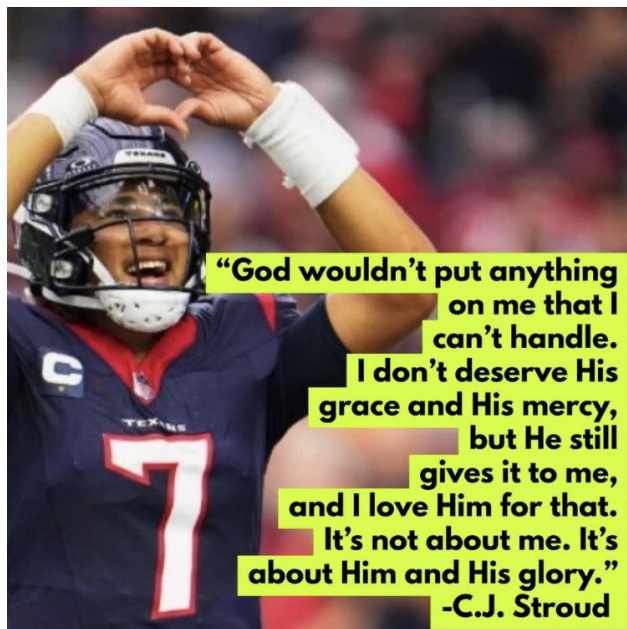
But unlike many other young athletes who find success and glorify themselves, Stroud starts every interview by praising God and all that He has done for him in his life.

Stroud is using the platform of his fame as a professional football player to make millions of Americans aware of the gifts God gives each of us.

Across his social media pages, Stroud frequently posts a favorite Bible verse, Proverbs 3:5-6:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

You don't have to be a football fan to appreciate what C.J. Stroud is doing with the gifts God has given him, especially his voice.



ABOUT US

Streetsboro United Methodist Church

8940 St. Rt. 43 | Streetsboro, OH 4441 | Office: 330-4393

LOVING JESUS. LOVING LIKE JESUS.

Our Vision

To make disciples of Jesus, providing hope and meaning through a Christ-focused, spirit-filled, and mission-minded family of faith. We follow the example of Christ, share God's love with all, respond to needs, and help to create mature disciples of Jesus Christ.



WE WELCOME YOU! Come and share the Lord!

Pastor Gordon Bickle

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