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Paxton United Methodist Church **Exists to Grow and Share God's Love**

[Greetings from Pastor Gary](#)

It's that time of the year when the hustle and bustle of preparing for Christmas takes over our lives. Buying gifts, wrapping gifts, sending gifts, opening gifts, cleaning up after opening gifts, putting batteries in the new gifts, forgetting to buy batteries for the new gifts, and then returning the gifts that don't work or don't fit.

It seems like a lot of work for giving gifts, when the most important gift was already given to us. For God so loved the world that God sent Jesus to redeem us. This gift from God we don't need to go looking for – we can find Jesus everywhere we are. This gift from God was perfectly wrapped in the cross; God sent the gift of Jesus to us. No need for batteries because God has supplied the power in the Holy Spirit for us to accept the gift of Jesus. And lastly, Jesus is the perfect fit for our lives.

This year for Advent we will spend more time prepping our hearts to receive Christ. Join us through Advent as we study the four themes of Advent: Hope, Love, Peace, and Joy. We will look at these themes through the message of the four ghosts of Charles Dickens **A Christmas Carol**. The title of Charles Dickens book should have been "The Redemption of Scrooge." The lessons that Ebenezer learned from these ghosts are just as relevant today and might be applied to our own redemption in Jesus Christ.

Paxton UMC is a "Bah Humbug" free zone. Join in this Joyous celebration of Advent and Christmas this year.

Blessings, Pastor Gary



[December 22nd at 6:30 PM](#) at the Brookdale Retirement Community, 3560 North Progress Ave. We will be celebrating a special **Candlelight Worship Service** with the residents & their families. Please come join us in Scripture, Carols, and Prayers. And afterwards, a time of fellowship with Hot Chocolate and Cookies. All are welcome.



[December 24 Christmas Eve Service](#)

6:30 Sacred Christian Music presented by members and friends of Paxton UMC.

7:00 PM Worship and candlelight service.

[Prayer Focus for December:](#) Advent and Christmas – Hope, Love, Peace, and Joy

Sunday Services are 9:15 am in the Sanctuary. Worship is in-person and streaming live or available anytime at www.facebook.com/paxtonumc and <https://www.youtube.com/@PaxtonUnitedMethodistChurc-v8y>. A children's nursery is available. ***See the enclosed calendar for Paxton UMC's services, ministries and missions during December and January.***

Sew for Peace will restart on Thursday mornings, January 2. Looking ahead, we will be serving the Latino Community in January. In addition to the children cared for, they have a below-poverty-level elderly population that meets weekly. They have requested items for the elderly such as small toiletries of hand lotions, body wash, soap, toothpaste, low-sodium canned vegetables, low-sugar snacks, beans and rice. As you do your holiday shopping, please pick up some of these items & place them in the basket in the narthex.



Boiler Replacement Completed: The new boiler has been installed. The church is warm again! It has been heartwarming to see people respond to this emergency repair. Thank you to all who donated funds to fulfill this unexpected need.

Golden Agers will meet January 14 for food, fun and fellowship. The first bus trip in 2025 will be April 23: Winterthur & Wee Fancy Tea, DE (\$122 pp). For info about the club and other 2025 trips, see the bulletin board or contact Dotty Sellers at 717-564-9492.

Daystar: We are collecting hats, gloves, underwear, and socks for the men at Daystar. Please put your items in the box in the narthex by Sunday, December 15. Contact is Scot Dundore 717-979-9931. There is no dinner program during December or January. It will resume February 16, 2025.

Gift Cards – Great Holiday Gifts: The Paxton gift card program is a wonderful way to do your shopping and at the same time help Paxton earn funds for its mission projects. The last date to place an order is December 8th and you will receive the cards on December 15. Please contact Bill or Nancy Toner (717-512-1547) to place an order.

Ronald McDonald House: On Saturday, January 25th, Paxton Church will prepare an evening meal at the Ronald McDonald House for those folks staying in Hershey while their loved ones are in the hospital. Please let Andrea Smallacombe know if you will be there (570-460-8894).

Opportunities to Give: Some people have expressed an interest in financing special projects to improve our church building, its furnishings, and amenities. The Leadership Team has created a detailed list of new opportunities. The list is now available on our website – www.paxtonumc.org.

Thank you to everyone who helped decorate the sanctuary and narthex for the Advent Season. It is lovely, and adds joy to our worship experience.

Pastor Gary can be reached at 717-332-2743 and gallshouse@susumc.org His normal office hours are 9 am to 3 pm Monday through Thursday. Please call ahead to ensure he is available.



December: Advent and Christmas

A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens classic story *A Christmas Carol* was originally titled *A Christmas Carol in Prose, Being a Ghost Story of Christmas*. Dickens' story is not a song, though like a traditional carol, it is divided into verses or staves, with each section offering an independent thought. Dickens has us love to dislike the lead character, Ebenezer Scrooge, who receives visits from 4 ghosts prior to Christmas; the least favorite time of the year for Scrooge. Each of these ghosts though, bring us and Scrooge the message of Hope, Love, Peace, and Joy of Jesus for all people.

Like the carols we sing each year at Christmas, Dickens perhaps wanted us to share the story over and over again, year after year, in order to bring people together in joy and love. Join us each week as we sing our favorite Christmas Carols and study in Worship and Sunday School how the lessons of *A Christmas Carol* apply to us today.

December 8 th	9:15 AM	Second Sunday of Advent – Love Malachi 3: 1-4; Philippians 1: 3-11; Luke 3: 1-6, 21-22
	10:30 AM	Bible Study – <i>A Christmas Carol</i>
	11:30 AM	Children's Sunday School
December 11 th	4:00 PM	Pilates
	7:00 PM	Choir Rehearsal
December 12 th	6:15 PM	Leadership Team Meeting
December 15 th	9:15 AM	Third Sunday of Advent – Peace Isaiah 12: 2-6; Philippians 4: 4-7; Luke 3: 7-18
	10:30 AM	Bible Study – <i>A Christmas Carol</i>
	11:30 AM	Children's Sunday School
December 18 th	4:00 PM	Pilates
	7:00 PM	Choir Rehearsal

December 22 nd	9:15 AM	Fourth Sunday of Advent– Joy Micah 5: 2-5; Hebrews 10: 5-10; Luke 1: 39-45
	10:30 AM	Bible Study – <i>A Christmas Carol</i>
	11:30 AM	Children’s Sunday School
	6:30 PM	Christmas Candlelight Service – Brookdale Retirement Community.

Christmas Worship Services

**December 22nd 6:30 PM at Brookdale Retirement Community, 3560 North Progress Ave.
A Candlelight Service that is open to all people.**

Our Christmas services start on December 22nd at 6:30 PM. We will be celebrating a Candlelight Worship Service with the residents and families of the Brookdale Retirement Community. Please join us in Scripture, Carols, and Prayers. Then afterwards we will have a time of fellowship with Hot Chocolate and Cookies.



**December 24th 6:30 PM Sacred Music of Christmas.
7:00 PM Candlelight Worship Service**

For our Christmas Eve Service we are looking for musicians and singers to share your God given talents with everyone from 6:30 to 7:00 PM before worship begins. If you are interested, please let Pastor Gary of your intentions.

December 29 th	9:15 AM	First Sunday After Christmas – Home 1 Samuel 2: 18-20; Colossians 3: 12-17; Luke 2: 15-21 We will be singing lots of Christmas Carols and telling stories of Christmas memories.
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January

January 5 th	9:15 AM	Covenant Sunday – John Wesley encouraged us to re-covenant with God and each other at least on the first of each year. Isaiah 60: 1-6; Ephesians 3: 1-12, Matthew 2: 1-12
	10:30 AM	Bible Study – TBD
	11:30 AM	Children’s Sunday School

January 8 th	4:00 PM	Pilates
	7:00 PM	Choir Rehearsal

January 9 th	9:00 AM	Sew for Peace
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January 12 th	9:15 AM	Remembering Our Baptism – Is our Baptism individual or is it a community thing? Or both? Isaiah 43: 1-7; Acts 8: 14-17; Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22
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