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



From the Desk of Pastor Gary ... From Empty Space to Sacred Opportunity

Each month when it's time to write for the newsletter, sometimes the words come easily. Other months, I sit and stare at a blank page for a while. This month has been one of those "stare at the page" months.

We are in the middle of Lent—a season many of us have walked through for years. I found myself wondering: what can be said that hasn't already been said? How do we speak about a season that feels so familiar, yet can be experienced so differently?

At our pastors' Lenten service on February 19th, District Superintendent Gary Weaver offered a helpful reminder. He suggested that our experience of Lent often depends on a few important things:

1. Are we ready for Lent?
2. What have our past Lenten experiences been like?
3. Are we actually seeking a change?

It's that last question that has stayed with me: **What change are you seeking?**

Are you seeking a physical change? Or a spiritual one?

There's nothing wrong with improving our health. But if we give up sweets simply to lose a few pounds and call it "fasting," we may want to examine our motives. Jesus gives us a clear warning in Matthew 6:16–18. He tells us not to fast for show, not to make a display of our sacrifice. If our goal is attention or appearance, then that attention is all the reward we'll receive. But if you are seeking a spiritual change—and you believe giving up sweets (or something else) will help you grow closer to God—then let me gently ask: what are you replacing it with?

If every time you crave something sweet, you turn instead to prayer...

If every time you feel that small sense of sacrifice, you let it remind you of Christ's sacrifice...

If you use that moment to refocus your heart on God...

Then that physical act can become a doorway to spiritual growth.

Now let me share something a little more personal.

Recently, I had what we might call a “grooming accident.” I was shaving and trimming my mustache and goatee when the razor slipped. Let’s just say the end result was not what I intended. This is only the third time in our life together that Cindy has seen me without a mustache! My outward appearance changed—quite suddenly and completely unintentionally.

That got me thinking. If an accidental slip of a razor can change how we look on the outside, how much more can a genuine work of the Holy Spirit change us from the inside out? I truly believe that inward spiritual change shows up outwardly. When you grow closer to God, something shifts. You may carry yourself differently. You may smile more. You may respond with greater patience. You may find a deeper sense of confidence—not in yourself, but in the assurance and promises we have through Jesus Christ.

Lent is not about looking different for others to see.

It is about allowing God to make us different from the inside out.

So let me encourage you: **Be changed this Lent.**

Come ready. Come open. Come expectant.

And may you experience the love of God in new and exciting ways—not just in your heart, but in your life.

Grace and peace, Pastor Gary

HOLY WEEK:

Palm Sunday March 29th 9:15 AM

In this powerful time of worship, we will journey with Jesus from His triumphant entry into Jerusalem... to Table... and finally to the Cross.

Music, prayer, Scripture, and video will all help guide us through this sacred story as we remember the depth of Christ’s love and sacrifice.

Maundy Thursday April 2nd 6:00 PM

On this holy night, we will remember the Last Supper by sharing a simple meal together in the Fellowship Hall. Dinner will be Pastor Gary’s homemade chicken and rice casserole. As we gather at table, we will sing, read Scripture, pray, and remember Christ as we break bread and share the cup (individual cups will be provided).

Following the meal, we will move quietly to our “Garden” — the sanctuary — where we will spend time in prayer, remembering Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Good Friday April 3rd 2:00 PM

Friday is called “good” — not because of what happened, but because of what God was doing through it. And even in the shadows of the cross, we remember: Sunday is coming.

Join us for a solemn and meaningful time of prayer, reflection, Scripture, and music as we remember Christ’s sacrifice and hold fast to the hope that is on the way.

Easter Sunday April 5th

6:00 AM Sunrise Service at Paxton Church Cemetery (weather permitting)

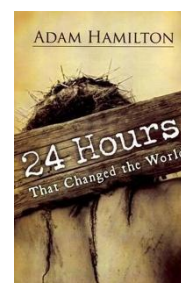
8:00 AM Easter Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall

9:15 AM Easter Worship Celebration

Opportunities to Participate, Give and Serve

[24 Hours That Changed the World](#) – Adult Class – Sundays after Worship

No single event in human history has received more attention than the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. In this book, Hamilton will help you experience and understand the significance of Jesus' suffering and death like never before. He retraces the day that changed human history in his usual straightforward yet easy, conversational style that speaks to both long-time Christians and those who are simply curious about the story of Christ's crucifixion. Adam Hamilton guides us, step by step, through the last 24 hours of Jesus' life in his popular, heartbreaking, and inspiring book. Grab a cup of coffee and a snack after worship and join us for this look at the last 24 hours of Jesus' life.



[Cora Martin Weeber Student Scholarships](#)

This scholarship program was created by Ms. Cora Martin Weeber to assist worthy students in the Paxton UMC family by providing tuition assistance at undergraduate academic institutions toward an associate or bachelor's degree. Applicant or applicant's parent, grandparent, or legal guardian must be members of Paxton United Methodist Church. To apply, please fill out the downloadable form found at paxtonumc.org and submit using the instructions on the website.

Completed applications are due to the church office by April 30, 2026.

[Juvenile Justice Reform Training and Advocacy Conference](#)

On March 3rd and 4th Paxton will be host to The Susquehanna Conference *UMC Peace with Justice and Advocacy Team* and *The United Women of Faith*. This is a Susquehanna Conference-wide event. Please mark your calendars. Volunteers will serve as parking lot hosts, inside hosts, lunch preparers and servers for this event. We will also be providing snacks all day and lunch each day. Please see *Pastor Gary* for more information.



[Congratulations, Cierra and Brendon!](#)

Cierra Frye and Brendon Wolfe began attending Paxton UMC last year after moving to central Pennsylvania for employment opportunities. They recently announced their engagement. They are looking forward to a late spring wedding in 2027 in Ohio with their families.

[Superintendent's Nutty Challenge](#)

For the third year in a row, Conference Superintendent Rev. Dr. Gary Weaver has challenged the River Valley District to collect peanut butter and other nut butters during Lent. Peanut butter is a very nutritious food staple. Please contribute some jars – big ones, little ones, JIF, Giant, any brand – as we participate in a district-wide United Methodist challenge to help our brothers and sisters. In our first year, Paxton UMC gathered 200 jars of peanut butter which went to the Hanna Food Pantry in Susquehanna Twp. and the Manna Food Pantry in Penbrook. Last year, we collected 202! Will we beat that number this year?



[Golden Agers](#)

The next meeting of the Susquehanna Golden Agers will be March 10 from 12:30 to 2:30. Upcoming bus trips are posted on the bulletin board. To celebrate America's 250th Anniversary, the first trip of the year will be April 28th to the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. Then on June 30 to The Sight and Sound Theatre in Lancaster to see **Joshua**. All are welcome. You do not need to be a member of Golden Agers to participate in the bus trips. See the bulletin board or contact Dotty Sellers at 717-564-9492.

[Sew for Peace](#)

Sew for Peace meets Thursdays from 9-noon. Anyone is welcome. On Sunday, February 15, 2026, the congregation blessed lap robes for the Community Osteopathic Hospital and clothing going to Cocoa Packs in Hershey which serves Dauphin, Lancaster, and Cumberland counties. The next blessing of Sew for Peace clothes will be Sunday, March 15, and delivered to the Swatara Community Closet at Swatara Church of God.



[Easter Eggs Now Available](#)



Paxton Church has a long-standing tradition of making Easter eggs. It is fun, a great way to interact with people. Come join us each Monday morning at 9AM. Egg sales help support the church and its missions financially. Why not purchase some eggs? Both coconut and peanut butter are available. Share the eggs with family and friends and watch them smile in delight. See Bill or Nancy Toner to purchase eggs.

[We Are Sharing Our Parking Lot](#)

The AAA (American Automobile Association) will be using our parking lot off and on from now through June. AAA is remodeling its facility and needs parking for those people who will be taking trips with them. Therefore, an area will be identified and reserved for this purpose. AAA has made a donation to the church to thank us for our help.

[Daily Devotional Emails are Available](#)

If you would like to receive our Daily Devotional via email every morning at 6:00am, please let Pastor Gary (gallshouse@susumc.org) know so he can add you to the email list.



Paxton United Methodist Church

Sunday Services begin at 9:15 am in the Sanctuary. Worship is in-person and streaming live or available anytime at <https://www.youtube.com/@PaxtonUnitedMethodistChurc-v8y> and www.facebook.com/paxtonumc. A children's nursery is available. *The calendar below provides details of Paxton UMC's services, ministries, and missions.*

March Worship and Events

March 1st	9:15 AM	2 nd Sunday of Lent – The Last Supper – Conversation Around the Dinner Table and Parables Proverbs 25:2-7; Hebrews 13:1-16; Luke 14:1, 7-24
	10:30 AM	Sunday School – 24 Hours That Changed the World Week 1 – The Last Supper and The Garden of Gethsemane
	11:00 AM	Trinity Worship Church Nepali Community
	11:30 AM	Children's Sunday School
March 2 nd	9:00 AM	Easter Eggs
	6:30 PM	AA Men's Meeting
	6:00 PM to 8:00 PM	Set Up for Conference
March 3 rd	8:00 AM	Easter Eggs
	8:00 AM to 7:30 PM	Susquehanna Conference UMC Peace with Justice and Advocacy Team Conference.
	6:30 PM	AA and Al-Anon Meetings
March 4 th	9:00 AM – 2:00PM	Office Hours
	8:00 AM to 7:30 PM	Susquehanna Conference UMC Peace with Justice and Advocacy Team Conference.
March 5 th	9:00 AM	Sew for Peace
March 6 th	6:30 AM	AA Meeting
March 7 th	10:00 AM to Noon	Trinity Worship Church Nepali Community Women's Bible Study and Music Practice
March 8 th	9:15 AM	3 rd Sunday of Lent – The Last Supper – Conversation Around the Dinner Table and Parables Ezekiel 34:11-16; Ephesians 2:12-19; Luke 15

	10:30 AM	Sunday School – 24 Hours That Changed the World Week 3 – Condemned by the Righteous
	11:00 AM	Trinity Worship Church Nepali Community
	11:30 AM	Children’s Sunday School
March 9 th	9:00 AM	Easter Eggs
	6:30 PM	AA Men’s Meeting
March 10 th	8:00 AM	Easter Eggs
	6:30 PM	AA and AI-Anon Meetings
March 11 th	9:00 AM – 2:00PM	Office Hours
	4:00 PM	Pilates (In the Choir Room)
March 12 th	9:00 AM	Sew for Peace
March 13 th	6:30 AM	AA Meeting
March 14 th	10:00 AM to Noon	Trinity Worship Church Nepali Community Women’s Bible Study and Music Practice

Looking ahead to Holy Week and Easter:

March 29 th	9:15 AM	Palm Sunday Service
April 2 nd	6:00 PM	Maundy Thursday meal and prayer
April 3 rd	2:00 PM	Good Friday Service

Easter Sunday, April 5th

6:00 AM Sunrise Service at Paxton Church Cemetery (weather permitting)
8:00 AM Easter Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall
9:15 AM Easter Worship Celebration



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.