Advent

Advent is defined as “the period beginning four Sundays before Christmas, observed in commemoration of the coming of Christ into the world.” It is observed in many Christian churches as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas and the return of Jesus at the Second Coming. This year, Advent began on Sunday, November 27.

Advent and Christmas Worship Opportunities

We have several special worship opportunities this month.

Sunday, Dec. 11, 8:30 and 11:00 AM: “Lessons and Carols”

Sunday, Dec. 11, 5:00 PM: Brasstown Ringers

Thursday, Dec. 15, 4:00 PM: “Longest Night” service.

Saturday, Dec. 24, 6:00 PM: Christmas Eve service.

Sunday, Dec. 25 – ONE combined Christmas Day worship service at 10:00 AM.

Sunday, Jan. 1 – ONE combined New Year’s Day worship service at 10:00 AM.
Sharp Memorial United Methodist Church presents the 2nd annual...

Sharp Christmas Cookie Exchange!
Sponsored by The Ruth Circle
Wednesday, December 14th
11:30am—1pm (light lunch served)

Participants will bake 6 dozen of their favorite (homemade from scratch) holiday cookies and swap with one another to take home a variety of wonderful tasty treats to give as gifts, say thank you to service workers, families and friends over the holidays.

RSVP by December 7th with name, email and copy of the recipe of your yummy homemade Christmas cookies to...

Email to sharpumc.programs@gmail.com or put information in Mailbox 43

THE RULES OF THE COOKIE EXCHANGE

1. All cookies should be homemade. Included can be cookie bars, no bakes and brownies.

2. Think of your favorite childhood cookie treats. Cookies should be festive and fun.

3. Please bring 6 dozen total cookies.

4. Keeping health and safety in mind, all cookies should be brought packaged in treat bags of 4–6 cookies each. PLEASE NOTE: (Once we have the final count of the number of participants, we will let you know the final amount per package.)

5. Bring a large container or tote to carry your cookies home.

6. Email a copy of your recipe to sharpumc.programs@gmail.com or put in mailbox #43 at the church. We will copy and hand them out to participants.

7. Christmas attire is encouraged!

8. RSVP as soon as you can and let us know what type of cookies you are planning on baking - no duplicate recipes please.

9. Once we have a confirmed # of participants, we will follow up with any additional information via email.

10. If you don’t have time to bake, or have burnt your cookies, but still want to attend, you may go to a real bakery and buy 6 dozen yummy cookies and package them.

11. If you want to participate but can’t be there to pick up, let us know and someone will gather your cookies for you.
A Christmas Message from the Church Staff

May the love that was born at Christmas live in your heart each day of your life.

May the hope and light of Christ shine in you and through you, each and every day.

Love and blessings to each one of you from your church staff: Stephen, Jim, Joy, Tena, Angela, Terry, Kim, Kayla and Jenn.

December Communion Offering for Sharp Scholars

The College Ministries Committee has a twofold purpose: to provide ministries for Young Harris College students and to members of our church family who are attending college. First I would like to say a big thank you to all of you for your generous gifts of service, time and money to the College ministries programs this year: from donating water, to greeting students at orientation and move-in days, to showing up for athletic events and feeding athletes, to providing lunch for the campus life staff and our planning team so we can work together, to providing lake boating fun for students, to welcoming students at worship. Every prayer, gesture, service and donation is much appreciated by the committee and the students and staff! We continue to seek to build relationships between Sharp members and the YHC family.

Our December Communion Offering goes toward the Sharp Scholars program for our own member students, a ministry we started nine years ago here at Sharp Memorial. Since that time, a total of 14 students have received $1000 annual scholarships for their education expenses at 7 different colleges and universities here in Georgia. Each scholarship applicant must be a member of Sharp and is eligible for $1000 annually during their undergraduate studies. For students choosing to attend a United Methodist institution, this gift from our church may be matched to result in up to $4000 in scholarships. We currently have 2 students receiving scholarships.

Please consider investing in the education of the undergraduate students who are members of our congregation. It is important work to support these students as a church family in a very tangible way. I believe knowing you care so much makes a difference in their lives. I know it did for my daughters. So I ask you to give generously to the Sharp Scholars Scholarship Fund!

—Susan Vardeman, College Ministry Committee Chair

Feeling blue this Christmas?
YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN.

Longest Night Service

For many people, it has been another hard year (or two) and holidays can sometimes intensify our feelings of loss or grief. Our “Longest Night” (sometimes called “Blue Christmas”) service is for anyone who needs hope – and don’t we all need hope?

We will hold a “Longest Night” worship service near the longest night of the year, acknowledging the struggle with darkness and grief faced by those living with loss, and offering healing and hope. We hope you will tell your friends and loved ones about this special worship service on Thursday, Dec. 15 at 4:00 PM, and that you will gather with us as the body of Christ to renew our hope together.
Staff Love Gift
The Staff Parish Relations Committee asks you to consider how blessed we are throughout the year by our dedicated, hard-working staff. They share their giftedness through preparing for and leading us in worship each week. They pray for us, they feed our souls, they encourage our spirits, they seal with the details of the church. We ask that you show them your appreciation through our Annual Love Offering. Please place your gift in the offering plate, mail it or drop it off here no later than December 20. Checks may be made to Sharp Memorial UMC, marked “Staff Love Gift”. The Staff Parish Relations Committee thanks you for your gifts as we thank our extraordinary staff.

Christmas Dinner
December 8

Christmas Dinner

The Sharp Men will sponsor our annual Christmas Dinner on Thursday, Dec. 8, in the Fellowship Hall, with the Sharp Tones providing the musical entertainment. This year, the Sharp Men will provide turkey and ham, and ask those in attendance to bring a side dish or dessert. Tickets will be only $5.00 per person.

Check Us Out Online!
When you visit our website, www.sharpumc.org, you will find a pastoral video message from Stephen, as well as the weekly worship videos. Just click the “Watch Now” button under “Watch the Sharp YouTube Channel”—underneath the church picture. It will take you to a YouTube site where you can see the videos we have uploaded.

Cookie Exchange
Dec. 14

You are invited to the 2nd Annual Sharp Christmas Cookie Exchange on Weds, Dec. 14 at 11:30 AM. Bring 6 dozen homemade cookies and take home an assortment! (These make great gifts for neighbors, family, and friends, too.) A sign-up sheet is posted outside the church office. A light lunch will be served.

Stretch Class Schedule
As the mornings get cooler, the Tuesday morning Stretch class has changed time to 10:00 AM, in Mayor’s Park (of course, weather permitting). Everyone is welcome! To be added to the contact list for class information, please email Tena at sharpumc.programs@gmail.com.

Golf News
Weather permitting, our Monday golfers will be playing on the 1st and 3rd Mondays at Old Union Golf Club and on the 2nd and 4th Mondays at Chatuge Shores Club. Due to the time change, you’ll need to be there at 2:30 PM to form teams, tee time is 3:00 PM.

These golf scrambles are for any golfer, regardless of expertise or handicap, and everyone is welcome. You do not have to be members of the church. If you would like to be on the golfers’ email list, please let us know by contacting the church or emailing sharpumc.programs@gmail.com.

Golf Scramble

December 11

We will have special services on the 3rd Sunday of Advent, December 11, as we celebrate “Lessons and Carols”. Both services will feature Scripture readings and lots of music! Don’t miss it.
Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the January 2023 issue of Sharp Notes will be December 15. Items for the newsletter may be emailed to the church office at sharpmeml@gmail.com.

You are invited to CELEBRATE!

The Christian Education Committee goals for 2022 included offering more opportunities for you to learn about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and to grow in your faith through Sunday school classes and weekday study groups as well as participate in worship and social gatherings.

Sunday School classes:
- The Circle of Friends led by Kirk and Susan Vardeman.
- The Disciple Class led by Rev. John Kay.
- The Mikata Class led by Virginia Tinsley.
- The Seekers Class led by Barbara Davis.
- The new Bible class led by Sally Barker and Stephen Soulen.

Weekday Book studies and learning experiences:
- Walking with God through Pain and Suffering led by Rev. David Tinsley.
- Forgiveness, a Lenten Study led by Sally Barker
- Disciple Fast Track Old Testament led by Virginia Tinsley and Barbara Davis
- Group trip to the Biblical History Center and Sea of Galilee exhibit.

Have you participated in more Sunday School and study groups this year?
- Do you understand more of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ?
- Have you increased in knowledge about what the Bible teaches?
- Have you increased in your sense of compassion for others?
- Have you been challenged in your faith?
- Have you wrestled with new ideas?
- Have you expanded your circle of friends?

If you can answer yes to any of these questions, join the Christian Education Committee in celebrating and giving thanks for God’s faithfulness to us and to those who lead these classes. We look forward to continued learning and transformation in 2023.

Remember our members...

Please remember those who are homebound or in assisted living or nursing homes.

In Brasstown Manor: Donna Bosman, Helen Kimsey, Rachel Windsor. In Stonchenge Assisted Living: Gene Rex. In Clay County Care Center,

Hayesville, NC: Ramona Davidson. At home: Gray Appleton, Aileene Brandt, Ruth Heusel, Margaret Mullins.

The United Methodist Women is the largest women’s faith denominational organization in the world, with over 800,000 members. They have changed their name to “United Women in Faith.”

Ask any member of Sharp Memorial United Methodist Women if you are interested in joining.

UMW Circle Meetings

The Fay Hoag Circle meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. They will meet on December 21 at 10:00 AM at Joyce Frick’s home.

The Mary Martha Circle meets on the 2nd Tuesday of most months. They plan to have a Christmas “potluck” lunch together at the church on Dec. 13.

The Ruth Circle usually meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 3:30 PM. They are not meeting in December since they are doing a meal for Brasstown Ringers and helping with the cookie exchange.
Stephan Ministry News

"Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2.

In addition to staying in contact with their care receivers, our Stephen Ministers have helped our congregation stay connected through phone calls and emails over the past months. To learn how to receive care from a Stephen Minister, contact our pastor or one of our Stephen Leaders, Jayne Brechbill and Jim Barker.

Brasstown Ringers Concert Dec. 11

The Brasstown Ringers, community handbell ensemble, will present their holiday concert, WE NEED A LITTLE CHRISTMAS, here on Dec. 11 at 5:00 PM. (You'll recognize Terry Mayhew, Anne Rice, Jackie Volk, and Tom Volk among the ringers!) The program's variety of pieces featuring traditional carols and pop favorites is sure to bring holiday cheer! The concert is free, but donations are gratefully accepted.

Memorial Gifts

A donation was made to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund in memory of Bob Atkinson, by Barbara and Bob Bone.

A donation has been made in memory of Bob Atkinson, by Woodie and Bud Dyer.

December Birthdays

Kathleen Painter – Dec. 2
Barbara Hale – Dec. 4
Betsy Smurz – Dec. 4
Myra Valentine – Dec. 8
Barbara Ide – Dec. 9
Doris Tilly – Dec. 9
Philip Rudisill – Dec. 10
Kathy Pierce – Dec. 11
Crystal Gary – Dec. 13
Julie Eggen – Dec. 17
Guy Firor – Dec. 17
George McLaughlin – Dec. 19
Ann Sebree – Dec. 19
Janice Parmer – Dec. 20
Joyce Garrison – Dec. 21
Kim Tigar – Dec. 21
Alberto Becerra – Dec. 22
Ruth Heusel – Dec. 23
Marie Scott – Dec. 26
Frank Sebree – Dec. 30

December Anniversaries

Jane and Billy Snipes – Dec. 17
Beth and George Lansdell – Dec. 13
Shirley and Joe Matwick – Dec. 20

Happy 70th anniversary to Shirley and Joe Matwick!

Penny and Dick Fille – Dec. 28
Liz and Joe Ruf – Dec. 28
Virginia and David Tinsley – Dec. 29
Helen and Guy Firor – Dec. 30

Stewardship/Finance Notes

Operating Budget (through 9/30/2022)
Sept. income: $27,278.
Year to date income: $276,584.
Sept. expenses: $33,578.
Year to date expenses: $311,034.
Sept. deficit: $6,300.
Year to date deficit: $34,450.

September Communion Offering for Wesley Woods: $8,020.

Monthly financial reports are posted each month next to the bulletin board in the hall by the Church Office.
Worship Servants

Altar Flowers
The Altar Flower calendar for 2023 is posted on the bulletin board near the church office. You may sign up for any open date, and you may order the flowers from any florist or arrange them yourself.
Dec. 4 – Communion
Dec. 11 – Penny & Dick Fille
Dec. 18 – poinsettias
Dec. 25 – poinsettias

Coffee Set-Up
Dec. 4 – Gail and Ron Day
Dec. 11 – Jay and John Richards
Dec. 18 – Janet and Bill Zimmerman

Ushers
8:30 AM
Dec. 4 – Ron Day, John Richards
Dec. 11 – Jamae and Ted Bruton
Dec. 18 – Marie and John Scott

11:00 AM
Dec. 4 – Barbara and David Pittman, Joann and Steve Wicker
Dec. 11 – Joyce Frick, Sharon and David Ratley, Katie Strals
Dec. 18 – Jennifer and Henry Angelopolus, George McLaughlin, Myra Valentine

Special services:
Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, 6:00 PM: Alberto Becerra, Ron Day, David Pittman, Bill Rice
Dec. 25, one service at 10:00 AM: Ushers are needed for this service. A sign up list is posted on the office wing bulletin board.

Support our Troops in Prayer
Please remember in your thoughts and prayers all of the men and women in our armed forces stationed all over the world, keeping our country safe and free, along with the civilians who are there to support them. (Due to security issues, we no longer print locations of service.)
Especially we remember:
LCPL Michael Ashton – Joy Breedlove’s great-nephew, Marines.
W-2 Ron Barker, son of John and Martha Barker.
SGT Charlie Bell – Nancy & Paul Bundy’s grandson.
SSGT Jeff Buckingham – Ron Denton’s cousin.
Staff Sgt Brandon Ciesla – Melanie Beighley’s son-in-law.
LT Bentley Foster – Jim Gilmore’s grandson.
SGT Dustin R. Gammill – Jenny Moe’s niece’s husband.
David Junghans – US Army
Cpl Samuel Todd Lee – US Marines, grandson of Leon and Judith Lee.
PFC Daniel Quentin Moriarty – Jenny Moe’s grandson. Brenda Maynard’s 2 grandsons in-law, in service.
CDR Gregory Morris – Diana Smith’s great-nephew.
SGT Ian Servis – US Army, Barbara Hale’s grandson.
BRIG GEN Stephen Smith – Larry Smith’s son.

Celebrate with YHC!
Young Harris College invites you to join them Saturday, December 3 at 7:00 PM and Sunday, December 4 at 3:00 PM for their annual “Christmas at YHC” concert. Tickets can be purchased at the door for $10, but admission is free with YHC ID and for children 14 and under. Come enjoy the sounds of the season, brought to you by YHC Choirs and Bands!

Christmas Week Schedule
The church office will be closed between Christmas and New Year’s Day. Our worship service schedule is:

Saturday, Dec. 24, 6:00 PM: Christmas Eve service.
Sunday, Dec. 25 – ONE combined Christmas Day worship service at 10:00 AM.
Sunday, Jan. 1 – ONE combined New Year’s Day worship service at 10:00 AM.
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<td>7:30am Sharp Men's breakfast at Mary's Southern Grill</td>
<td>9:30am Administrative Board</td>
<td>6:00pm YH Christmas Tree lighting, Mayor's Park</td>
<td>10:00am Stewart Family, FH</td>
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<td>10:00am Staff meeting, CE</td>
<td>10:00am Stretch class, Mayor's Park</td>
<td>7:30am Sharp Men's breakfast at Mary's Southern Grill</td>
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