



MAPLES MEMORIAL

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.— Isaiah 9:6

Dear Maples Family,

As the days grow shorter, the season of Advent invites us to pause, reflect, and prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. This sacred time is not just about counting down to Christmas Day but about experiencing anew the transforming power of hope, peace, joy, and love.

First we find that there is hope in waiting. Advent reminds us that waiting is not wasted time. The prophets of old waited for the Messiah, trusting in God's promise to redeem His people. Today, we too live in a world that groans with longing—for healing, restoration, and justice. Yet, Advent encourages us to hold onto hope, knowing that God is faithful. Hope shines brightest in the darkness, and draws us toward the full light of Christ.

Second, we find that there is peace in the chaos. The world often feels anything but peaceful, especially during the busyness of the holiday season. Yet, the Prince of Peace entered a chaotic world to offer us a peace that transcends understanding. Advent invites us to create space in our lives for stillness, to listen for God's whisper amid the noise. True peace is not found in perfect circumstances but in the presence of Christ, who calms the storms in our hearts.

We also find that there is joy in the promise. The joy of Advent is not superficial or fleeting; it is rooted in the unshakable promise of Emmanuel—God with us. This joy goes beyond the twinkling lights and cheerful celebrations. It is the deep, abiding joy of knowing that we are loved, cherished, and never alone. As we light the Advent candles, may our hearts be kindled with the joy that comes from living in the light of God's promises.

Finally, we find that love is in the giving. Love is the heart of the Advent season. It is the love that moved God to send His Son into the world to save us. It is the love that calls us to serve one another, to extend grace, and to share the good news of Christ's birth. Advent challenges us to let love be our guide, shaping our words, actions, and attitudes as we prepare to celebrate the greatest gift ever given.

This Advent season, I invite you to walk through these themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. Take time each week to reflect, to pray, and to be present with God and with those around you. Let this be a time of renewal and preparation, as we ready our hearts to see Christ anew.

May this Advent be a season of deep spiritual blessing for you and your loved ones, as we anticipate the wonder of Christmas together.

Blessings,

Bro. Kerry Powell



Dates to Remember

December 1.....	First Sunday of Advent
December 3.....	Rook Club
December 5.....	Center Hill High School Choir concert
December 7.....	Olive Branch Christmas Parade
December 8.....	Second Sunday of Advent
.....	Lessons & Carols
December 9.....	Olive Branch High School Choir concert
December 10.....	Maples Women's Group
December 12.....	Olive Branch Food Pantry
December 13.....	Youth Dinner Theater
December 15.....	Third Sunday of Advent
.....	Maples Kids at Light Garden
.....	Youth Christmas Party
.....	Prayer Walk
December 22.....	Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 24.....	Christmas Eve Services at 3:30 & 11:00 p.m.
December 25.....	Christmas Day
December 29.....	Brunch and Unity Service
December 31.....	New Years Eve

Monthly Budget Offering Reports (designated giving excluded)

October 2023	\$38,643.98	May	\$39,142.90
November.....	\$46,420.75	June.....	\$45,556.35
December.....	\$103,027.27	July.....	\$53,403.86
January 2024	\$47,469.34	August.....	\$45,383.40
February.....	\$53,862.69	September.....	\$39,787.50
March.....	\$42,510.55	October.....	\$45,445.00
April.....	\$38,961.10	November.....	\$51,648.25

Weekly Attendance/Budget Giving Reports

	Sunday School	Worship Services	Giving
November 3.....	52.....	125.....	\$15,235.50
November 10.....	61.....	114.....	\$8,524.00
November 17.....	64.....	141.....	\$8,863.25
November 24.....	57.....	132.....	\$5,852.00

Sunday Morning Volunteers in December

Traditions Worship Ushers/Greeters:

- Dec. 1..... Ushers:** Eason Treadway, Ron Tucker, Ryan Barnes and Ashley Bowlan. **Greeter:** Rose Tobey. **Acolyte:** Cori Rice.
- Dec. 8..... Ushers:** Larry Bright, Pat Dorr, Eason Treadway and Ron Tucker. **Greeter:** Shannon Suttlemyre. **Acolyte:** Bettie Cummings
- Dec. 15..... Ushers:** Ryan Barnes, Ashley Bowlan, Larry Bright and Pat Dorr. **Greeter:** Earnestine Turner. **Acolyte:** Audrey Barnes.
- Dec. 22..... Ushers:** Eason Treadway, Ron Tucker, Ryan Barnes and Ashley Bowlan. **Greeter:** Jeanette Wallace. **Acolyte:** Ben Lane.
- Dec. 29..... Ushers:** Larry Bright, Pat Dorr, Eason Treadway and Ron Tucker. **Greeter:** Becky Bright.

December Birthdays

- December 9:** Katherine Bailey
December 10: Grace Lott
December 11: Ty Hogan, Wendy Davis
December 13: Rick Osborn
December 15: Joyce Williams
December 16: Elwood Jefferson, Amy Bass
December 18: Jordan Galtelli
December 20: Ben Lane
December 24: Ashley Bowlan, Cyndy Heinze
December 26: Earnestine Turner, Bonnie Turner, Josey Jones
December 27: Claire Thompson
December 28: Jack Scholl
December 29: Kerry Powell
December 30: Bea Ann Pearce, Dorgie Nichols
December 31: David Thompson

Contact the church office if your name is not on the birthday list.

Ministry Opportunities

Little Free Pantry

Maples' provides this resource to anyone anytime - day or night. You can sign up at mapleschurch.org to fill the pantry on a particular day or if you are unable to commit to signing up to fill the pantry, please know you are always welcome to swing by and drop off a few items without signing up.

Matthew 25 Ministries

We are currently collecting gloves, blankets, socks and wool hats for the Matthew 25 Homeless Ministry. You can place your donations in the bin marked "Homeless Ministry" near the Information Desk. No clothes are needed at this time.

Olive Branch Food Pantry

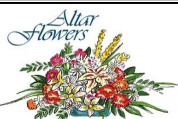
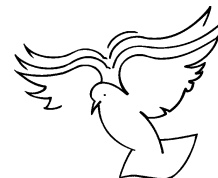
Maples serves at the Olive Branch Food Pantry the second Thursday of each month from 5:30-8:00 p.m. The pantry is located at 10947 Hwy 178.

Memorials

Given in Loving Memory of:

Jo Nell Speck: Earnestine Turner, Bonnie Turner and Wesleyan Sunday School Class

Failon Turner: Wesleyan Sunday School Class



The 2025 signup sheet for altar flowers is available at the information desk. Be sure to include who the flowers are in honor/memory of.

Christmas at Maples

2024 Advent Season

November 24.....*Hanging of the Greens*, 5:00 p.m.
December 7 *OB Christmas Parade Hot Coco*, 2:00 p.m.
Women's Christmas Night, 5:00 p.m.
December 8 *Lessons & Carols*, 4:00 p.m.
December 13 *Youth Dinner Theater*, 6:30 p.m.
December 15 *Connection Christmas*, 9:00 a.m.
Youth Christmas Party, 5:00-7:30 p.m.
Advent Prayer Walk, 6-10:00 p.m.
Maples Kids to OB Light Garden, 5-7:30 p.m.
December 24 *Candlelight Services*, 3:30p.m. & 11:00 p.m.
December 29 *Unity Worship Service*, 11:00 a.m.

Prayer Concerns

Home Bound: Phyllis Vanderburg; Carol McOlgan; Margaret Peden.

Military: Mary Murphy; Adam Kirchoff; Connor Tapley; Aaron James; Jimarco White; Ben Vanderburg; Emma Magnuson; Josh Tow; Matthew Roach; Alexandra Raburn.

Other Requests: Jonathan Lott; Michael Stone; Ryan King; Tobey & Rose Tobey; Dot Taylor; Edwards & Phillips families; Martha Doddridge Vanderburg; Gary Weeden; Chris Wallace and Linda Wallace. *Please contact the church office or let a staff member know if you or a family member have any upcoming surgeries scheduled or you know of someone in the hospital.*

Elevate Retreat 2025, January 17-20, 2025

Mark your calendars for the Elevate Retreat, January 17-20, 2025, in Gatlinburg! ALL youth 6th-12th grades are invited to attend. The cost varies, depending on the package you choose. The ski package is \$330, snowboard package is \$360, and the no-ski package is \$260. Most take the opportunity to ski or snowboard, however, there are still plenty who chose to spend their free time exploring the city of Gatlinburg. The cost includes travel, conference sessions, 3 nights of lodging, 3 breakfasts, 2 days of skiing/snowboarding (depending on your package) with lesson and equipment and tram tickets. Non-skiers get tram tickets as well. A deposit of \$115 no later than Wednesday, Dec. 8, will sign you up. Second payment is due by Jan. 8. Payments are non-refundable.

Maples 2025 Leadership Team

Finance:

Meg Maddox, chair
Rachel Farabee
David Olds

Property & Grounds:

Trev Sprabery, chair
Meghan Galtelli
Eason Treadway

Personnel:

Jane Downs, chair
Ron Tucker
Mark Wilson

Lay Leader/Ex Officio:

Kevin Doddridge

Leader in Training:

Tyler Barnes

Lay Member to Annual Conference:

Lynn Cox

Reserve Members:

Pat Dorr
Kristi Pacenza
Chad Webster



Maples Kids

Maples Kids took part in worship services by sharing their ministry prayer and enacting the scripture about the widows' offering in Mark 12.



Maples Youth

Maples Youth had the opportunity to serve families in the community on November 23rd with the Marine Toys for Tots Program. Here, they were able to pack bags of presents to give to families with children and help with some manual labor to get them going at the start of this Christmas season. It was a blessing to serve!

Maples Youth also had fun making turkey pumpkins for the Thanksgiving holidays!





Advent is my favorite time of the Church Year. I don't love it just because of the decorations, lights, trees, food, more lights, and yes more trees. When I started my doctorate, I knew what Advent was, but I saw it more as a preamble to Christmas. Gussy up the halls and celebrate Jesus' birth and eat all the chocolate peanut butter balls I could possibly eat! Believe me, I did just that!

When I started reading and learning more about Advent, that is when I realized it's importance. You see, many times we look at this season as a remembering of the promised one. The HOPE of all creation coming to earth in the form of an infant. PEACE spreading to others, JOY and LOVE abounding in that night. And yes, all of this is very important. They prayed and prayed and waited for so long....waiting for a Messiah.... The King of Kings...."the one who would make straight the path." All of this came true. Again, all of this is very important!!!!

Now, if I may, think about today. Are we just remembering that time from so long ago? Do we realize that we are now living in the second Advent. Waiting for Jesus to return. Waiting, hoping, loving, and being joyous. Maybe this season for you is about getting all the presents wrapped, attend celebrations, run run run and work work work! But what are we waiting for? How do we wait? How on earth could we just stop and wait? One of my professors said something about this season that I will never forget. He said, "What you are waiting for is determined by how you wait." Are we sitting idle (waiting), or are we expectantly waiting? Waiting doesn't mean sitting and doing nothing. It means, we as Christians, are extending hope, peace, joy and love to those around us through our words and actions.

As we walk together in this season of Advent, yes TOGETHER, take time to stop....look....listen. Take a breath. Breathe in and breathe out. Come to worship, join us for the Lessons and Carols, or the Advent Prayer Walk. All of these experiences are offered to help us be filled with HOPE....PEACE.....JOY.....LOVE. Once we are filled, we can go wait expectantly by sharing each of these with friends, family, co-workers, and everyone else we come in contact with. Are you ready? Live into this season of Advent. Allow this season of hope, peace, joy, and love to take up residence within you, so it can be poured out on those around you!

Merry Christmas,

Dr. Joey Lott

Senior Pastor, Rev. Kerry Powell • Worship Arts Pastor, Dr. Joey Lott

Assistant Pastor of Youth and Worship, Ben Larsen • Children's Ministry Resident, Christi Rice

Administrative Secretary, Gail Ross • Organist, Allen Sanders

Maples Memorial United Methodist Church

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Facebook: facebook.com/mapleschurch



Reaching Up...Reaching Within...Reaching Out.