

Named in honor of its original location, Sharp Street Memorial United Methodist Church descends from the first black congregation in Baltimore. In 1797, blacks gathered at 112-116 Sharp Street, where the Maryland Society for the Abolition of Slavery had opened Baltimore's first day school for blacks. The Society later abandoned this project and sold the lot and building in 1802 to the black congregation, which then built a church on the property.

The church quickly became a center of the black community. There people gathered not only to worship, but also to discuss the abolitionist and African colonization movements, to raise money to purchase the freedom of slaves, to hear their advocates speak, and to receive schooling.

In 1864, the church hosted the first regional conference for black Methodists, which resulted in the first appointment of black pastors and the creation of a black governing board. From 1867 until 1872, the Centenary Biblical Institute (now Morgan State University), held classes there.

Following its congregation into northwest Baltimore, the church erected the present building designed by Alphonsus Beider in 1898. In 1921, Arthur M. Segoing, a black architect, designed the adjacent Community House, the first of its kind in Baltimore.

SPONSOR: Democratic Women
Sharp Street Church

CAPTION: Old Sharp Street Church, 1860