

Foundry Forge

Affirming Hope and Each Other, One Story at a Time

A friend admitted some anxiety recently that caught me off guard.

“Hey, Jill, he said, “I can’t attend your storytelling events at church because I am an AWFUL performer. I seem to function at a steady creative deficit anyway, so I would fail before even walking in Foundry’s door.”

He was referring to the “ThursdayStoryThrow,” our biweekly gatherings here at Foundry every other Thursday. My story-loving heart cracked with the sadness of his feelings. But I am grateful too, because his candor opened up a renewed and hopefully more hospitable perception of what storytelling is -- at its core. A story — before it ever morphs into a narrative, any type of performance, or a TED talk — is the very human assertion of one individual’s perspective. These casual story events are based on the implicit promise of unconditional listening. Whoever comes is open to whatever point of view a fellow neighbor wants to tell — whatever their religious, socioeconomic or political vantage point.



“ThursdayStoryThrow” is not about performance. There is no expectation that those who share should achieve a level of drama, energy, or reaction. We are not critics, rather an affirming group willing to give absolute attention without judgment or feedback. We share, listen, and applaud. We empathize with compassion. Then we move on to listen fully to the next storyteller ‘throwing out’ what is on their mind.

Some share their poetry in quivering, relieved voices that have escaped their oppressive inner critic. We celebrate their courage. Others share life challenges like job loss or a tough conversation or getting lost in another country. We honor human experience by listening without distraction. Every other Thursday, this open-to-all community comes

together at Foundry to share a sense of play, truthful perspective, and essential humanness. No preparation required!

What I love most is the marvelous consequence of our listening unconditionally to another’s story. This exchange becomes a forum for learning to accept ourselves as well as our neighbors. It is an informal arena where the prime criteria is to listen beyond (or despite) any preconceived assumptions.

There may be no more freeing gesture of hospitality than to let each other’s perspective reveal our hopefulness of being seen. As the “magical storyteller” Michael Morpurgo, has said, “Wherever my story takes me...there is always some hope and redemption.”



Jill Foster loves serving storytelling ministries with Foundry! All are welcome

to ThursdayStoryThrow every other Thursday. In January that’s January 3, 17 and 31 from 6:30 to 7:30 pm in Fellowship Hall.



Defining Our Priorities

Foundry is on a mission to change the world. With many competing demands, we need to identify priorities to focus our efforts and bring about positive change. Here are the three strategic priorities our board has identified for the Foundry community:

First, we will work to provide space within all Foundry ministries to share and hear each other's stories, and thereby foster deeper relationships within the congregation.

Personal connections and a sense of belonging are at the heart of a healthy, vibrant church community. This is especially true in a city (and a time) where interpersonal engagement is often marked by dynamics of competition, power, and status. We will work to make Foundry a place where people are known and loved for who they are. By sharing our stories, we will expand our individual and collective capacity to empathize, encourage, inspire and trust each other.

Next, we will continue to work for LGBTQ inclusion and justice in The United Methodist Church.

Our denomination is facing an existential crisis over full inclusion of LGBTQ siblings.

Foundry, already recognized as a leader in this work, must continue to be a strong voice of Christ-like love in this global conversation. We will do so in three ways: celebrating and charting our own course as a congregation, providing prophetic and pastoral leadership in the creation of beloved communities, and advocating for full LGBTQ inclusion and justice within our annual conference and The United Methodist Church.

Finally, we will endeavor to develop a stronger culture of generosity and financial stewardship.

Congregational giving is essential to every aspect of Foundry life. Generous and consistent giving supports innovation, new

ministries, and our prophetic work. The spiritual practice of financial stewardship deepens our relationship with God and our community. To achieve our vision for Foundry we must become an even more generous congregation.

These are not the *only* things we will attend to during the next twelve to eighteen months, but by focusing concerted effort on these aspects of Foundry life, we will maintain our current momentum and ensure our future vitality. We are already working to integrate these priorities into our shared life as a congregation. If you have ideas to share or wish to be involved, don't hesitate to speak with me, one of our ministry directors, or board members.

Happy New Year! And blessings for what promises to be an amazing and challenging 2019 at Foundry!

*Ginger E. Gaines-Cirelli,
Senior Pastor*



Foundry Forward: January Action Items

Saturday, January 5, 9 am – noon

(Un)Hanging of the Greens

Join members of the Altar Guild as we prepare for our next season of worship by removing our Advent greens. For details, email altarguild@foundryumc.org.



Sunday, January 6 – Sunday, February 3, 10:10 – 11:05 am

Foundry's Lenten Devotional: Sharing Your Story

Begin the new year helping develop our annual collection of Lenten devotionals. These sessions, led by **Joanne Steller with Jill Foster**, include reflection, storytelling and writing about our spiritual paths and their intersection with Foundry.



Sunday, January 13

The Wisdom of Women Mystics

Continuing our series on classics of the Christian tradition, **Anthony Gaines-Cirelli** will lead this 7-session series from **10:10 – 11:05 am** each Sunday through February 24. Learn more about how influential women of earlier times experienced the presence (or absence) of God.



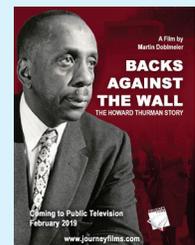
Exploring A Men's Ministry

If you're interested in brainstorming about the need for a coordinated men's ministry at Foundry, join **Pastor Will Green** at **10:10 am** in Room 101 to talk, listen and learn.



Backs Against the Wall: The Howard Thurman Story

Join members of John Wesley AME Zion and Asbury UMC at John Wesley AME Zion (1615 14th Street NW) to preview the new documentary about this influential mystic. Come to either of two screenings – one at **2:00 pm** and one at **4:15 pm** - and join a plenary conversation about the film from **3:10 – 4:10 pm**.



For more information on the events above, go to <https://foundryumc.churchcenter.com/registrations>.

Foundry Forward: January Action Items

Sunday, January 20, 9:00 am & 11:15 am

MLK Jr. Sunday Guest Preacher

Worship with us at either service as we welcome **Bishop Gregory V. Palmer**, resident bishop of the West Ohio annual conference, who will be preaching on this important anniversary Sunday.



Tuesday, January 22, 7:00 pm

Management Board Meeting

The Foundry Board will hold its first meeting of the year in Room 101. These are public meetings open to all members of Foundry.



Wednesday, January 23, 6:30 – 8:00 pm

The Challenge of Paul

Delve into alternative narratives surrounding the Apostle Paul, one of Christianity's most controversial figures. This 6-week class, led by **Rev. Steve Clunn**, will feature videos that demonstrate why Paul is more relevant today than ever.



Disciple I Fast Track

If you are a busy person interested in a deeper engagement with the Bible, this 12-session study of the New Testament, led by **Ed Crump** is for you. To learn more, come to an introduction to the course on **Sunday, January 6**. Classes begin **Wednesday, January 23** at **6:30 pm**.

DID YOU KNOW?

...that you can find a helpful explanation [here](#) of the three major proposals under consideration next month at the Special General Conference in St. Louis. It was put together by Dave Nuckols, who serves on the board of the Reconciling Ministry Network and is a member of the **Commission on a Way Forward**.

...and all month long

- Register ahead of time for a class, if you can. It ensures better planning for the class and better communication with you. Here's where to register - <http://bit.ly/Foundrylearns>.
- Strengthen Foundry's witness at the 2019 Special General Conference by making a prayer flag representing your prayers for the church. Stop by our Altar for All in the narthex to learn more.
- Help our less fortunate neighbors obtain clean, like-new clothing. The ID Ministry needs volunteers to sort clothing donations and maintain the clothing closet. Volunteer times are varied. If you are interested, contact IDMinistry@foundryumc.org.

FOUNDRY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Foundry is a historic, progressive United Methodist Church that welcomes all, worships passionately, challenges the status quo, and seeks to transform the world.