

Foundry Forge

Earworms of the Spirit

MICHAEL LAWSON



“Here I am, Lord. *Is it I, Lord?*” The Foundry Choir had just sung this simple, wonderful piece last Sunday. As with the earworms I get almost every Sunday, I found myself repeatedly humming it for a few days afterward — when an email hit my inbox, asking if I’d write a brief article on the topic of what singing in the choir means to me. I quickly said I’d be happy to. So, for this month and for this purpose, “It is I, Lord.”

Singing in the choir enriches my life. I love the wide variety of music we sing. It challenges and inspires me. It touches my soul. I enjoy the camaraderie of the choir members, the laughter, the personal stories, the bonding.

But the choir meant much to me long before I joined. I have been attending Foundry for two decades and a member almost as long. I didn’t join the choir until 2013. Before then, I was like most parishioners, simply soaking in the beautiful music every Sunday.

But a number of personal losses deepened my appreciation of Foundry and the choir. Many times, I’d find tears welling up when a particular piece of music touched me. I found solace in such moments. I was so thankful for the choir.

As now a member of the choir, I realize there might be a few people in the congregation each and every Sunday who are hurting — from any variety of losses, transitions, or the inevitable bumps in the journey of life. Although we sing for everyone, I know that on any given Sunday, we might be singing especially for someone like me about a decade ago. We sing for exuberant joy, for reflection, for spiritual sustenance . . . or as a balm.

Though there are far better voices in the choir, still I sing. When a particular phrase of music initially befuddles me, still I sing. When a note is a bit too high or held too long, still I sing. “Here I am, Lord.”

Michael Lawson has been attending Foundry for nearly two decades and joined in 2003. In addition to singing in the Chancel Choir, Mike has assisted with the Children’s Choir, served as a member of the Nominating Committee and currently serves on the Personnel Committee. Mike and his daughter, Brooke, are avid fans of Foundry’s Family Camp.

Idle and Blessed

REV. GINGER E. GAINES-CIRELLI



*I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall
down
into the grass, how to kneel in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll
through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
With your one wild and precious life?*

- From "The Summer Day" by Mary Oliver

During long stretches over past years, the idea of being idle was laughable. Deadlines, strategic planning, social crises and relational needs made it a remote possibility. But my spiritual practice has taught me that even in periods of intense activity, it is possible and, frankly, necessary to locate the stillness within, to connect with the love of God that holds me and allows me to perceive what is going on—within and outside myself. This awareness, when I'm able to maintain it, allows more faithful discernment and action.

At the Benedictine Monastery of Christ in the Desert some years ago, I saw a simple block of wood with the Latin phrase *Festina Lente* burned into it. A monk nearby explained that the phrase meant "make haste slowly." This, for me, captures the spiritual practice of paying attention, of moving through our tasks and the often-frenetic pace of our lives with intention and awareness of what is most real.

Doing this takes, well... *practice*. One of the ways I practice is by stopping all "productive" activity for a week every year for silence and intentional time with God. My eight-day silent retreats are a time to practice what Mary Oliver describes.

I pay attention to the fields and the birds and the patterns of the clouds and the smells of food or wet earth and the way the breeze falls upon my skin. I practice being still so that I can more easily find that place within once I return to my daily rounds. I practice listening—in scripture, silence, and creation—for God who I trust will guide me to fully inhabit my "one wild and precious life."

Wherever you find yourself these late summer days, take advantage of any moment to be "idle" and in those moments to know - beyond any doubt - that you are blessed.

Practicing the practices with you,

Ginger E. Gaines-Cirelli,
Senior Pastor

Foundry Forward

WAYS TO CONNECT

Saturday, August 3

A Prayer Retreat

There are many ways to pray. Come discover contemplative forms that help us settle our minds, feel God's presence and hear God's voice more clearly. We will meet in Davenport Center from 9 to noon. For more information, see Pastor Kelly Grimes or Pastoral Intern Alicia Grey.



Sunday, August 4

The Art of Music Ministry: Poems, Prayers, Images

The compositions of Dan Campolietta, Foundry's new music associate, will be featured at both services as we begin our month of sharing musical chronicles of spiritual journeys.

Wednesday, August 7

Midweek Service of Healing

For a blessed pause in your busy schedule this summer stop at Foundry for an evening service of prayer, meditation, music and reflection. We will gather at 7 PM in Community Commons. Come as you are.



Sunday, August 11

The Art of Music Ministry: Freedom's Journey

Through the songs of slavery, we revisit the pain and cruelty of that inhumane institution and celebrate the resilience of those who could sing despite their suffering.

Thursday, August 15 - Sunday, August 18

Youth Week (end)

Your youth will not want to miss this fun weekend. Each night from 5:30 until 8:30 we'll engage in a different activity designed for making friends and learning about Youth Ministry at Foundry!

Parents will meet Saturday evening while youth enjoy their activities.



Foundry Forward

WAYS TO CONNECT

Sunday, August 18

The Art of Music Ministry: She Said It

Today at both services, we enjoy hymns, gospel songs and anthems written by women composers, speaking through melody when their voices could not always be heard.

Learning about Baptism

Baptism Orientation will take place from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. You will learn about the history and theology of baptism in The United Methodist Church. For more information, contact Whitney Kinsey at wkinsey@foundryumc.org.

Sunday, August 25

The Art of Music Ministry: Down by the River to Pray

Back by popular demand, a perennial Foundry favorite, familiar Christian songs with a bluegrass flair, accompanied by authentic bluegrass musicians.

Tuesday, August 27

Management Board Meeting

Foundry's Management Board will meet at 7 p.m. in Room 101. All members of Foundry are welcome to attend.

Friday, August 30 – Sunday, September 1

Family Camp!

Join us at beautiful West River for rest and recreation. All are invited - single, couple, parent, non-parent, grandparent! Accommodations are in air-conditioned lodges with bathrooms. Six meals are included, Friday dinner through Sunday lunch.



To register or find more information on these events, go to <https://foundryumc.churchcenter.com/registrations>.

Share your thoughts about the Foundry Forge with ForgeNewsletter@foundryumc.org.