

# Foundry Forge

## Lighting the Darkness

CASSANDRA LAWRENCE



Christmas is about welcoming the light and joy of the world, so why do we sometimes feel so sad or just numb? The holidays can and do bring up memories and dreams -- perfect families, delicious meals, and just the right amount of snow. Those dreams, frequently disconnected from reality, have sometimes left me feeling dejected and not delighted.

Foundry's longest night service is a place to which we can bring all these feelings, memories, dreams, and realities. It's a moment when our fears, our grief and our anger mingle with our hopes, our persistence and our community. In this mingling we find our liberation in the trusting relationships we build when we share our deepest wounds and longings amidst the surrounding joy.

Working in advocacy and activist spaces lately, I find a wide and deep urgency for positive social change. People are yearning for it, praying for it, working for it. There are so many stories of pain, heartbreak, and infuriating complacency. Stories most often relegated to the margins of our society, with the forgotten, the cast aside.

And I have also experienced what it means to find light shining from these same stories. In these spaces, where we can see our inhumanity etched in tears, scars and death, I've witnessed incredible gifts. Without warning, there come moments when God's love and promise shine through those same tears and scars as relationships form and reconciliation emerges. A welcoming smile, a hug, a meal, can give just enough energy to find hope.

For me, the longest night service embodies this tension of working with both our best and worst selves, as the darkness of pain and injustice meets the light of simple kindness, as the dreams of holiday perfection meet our imperfection. At these moments when the darkness can feel and be crushing, I've seen how our eyes are drawn upward toward the light of distant stars. The tiny light of small almost unnoticed simple acts of love. Those tiny pinpricks of light, mapped out by our ancestors, tell stories of strength and resilience and community, leading us on until dawn comes again.

*Cassandra Lawrence, who came to Foundry in 2012 from Santa Rosa California, is studying at Wesley Theological Seminary and works with the Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign to address anti-Muslim discrimination through faith community engagement. She is one of Foundry's current candidates for ordained ministry as an elder.*

# The Importance of Now

REV. GINGER E. GAINES-CIRELLI



Recently, I've been thinking a lot about birth and life and the passage of time. Perhaps this is due to the fact that I recently celebrated a "significant" birthday—one with a zero. So, as we step into a new Christian year, preparing to celebrate the most significant birthday (Happy Birthday Jesus!), I'm particularly mindful of the great gift of life and of our responsibility to make every moment count.

Jesus' birth and life provides us with encouragement, challenge, and hope for our own lives. In Jesus we see the love of God at work, the courage born of faith and how much good can be accomplished in a relatively short life. Isn't it amazing that a person who lived so long ago and, best we can tell, had a public ministry that lasted only three years, continues to change lives, to shape communities, to inspire love, peace, and justice?

Our world moves so fast these days and time can seem to vanish. It is easy to miss things or to speed past important moments in the swirl and stress of daily life.

During the season of Advent, we are reminded again to be awake to what is happening around and within us each moment.

We are reminded that our lives are so important that God came into the world in Jesus to make sure we know the depth of God's love.

We are reminded in this season that even small and simple offerings, even from those the world may not recognize as important, are cherished and honored by God with purpose and divine encounter. Who you are and what you do and how you spend your time matters.

Wherever we are on the journey of life, God continues to draw near to us, to wake us up, to guide, prod, inspire, and encourage us to LIVE and SERVE and GIVE with hope, peace, joy, and love.

May you know the light and love of God in Christ in ever deeper ways through these holy days.

Awakening,

*Ginger E. Gaines-Cirelli*  
Senior Pastor

# FOUNDRY FORWARD

## ACTION ITEMS FOR THE MONTH AHEAD

**SATURDAYS, NOVEMBER 30, DECEMBER 14**

### **Hanging of the Greens, Ordering Poinsettias**

Come from 12:30 until 2 either or both of these days and help us prepare the sanctuary for Advent. And don't forget to order poinsettias to make Foundry even more beautiful this Christmas season. Order at the welcome desk or online using the registration link below.

**SUNDAYS, DECEMBER 1, 8, 15**

### **Christmas Shopping in Community Commons**

You can buy fairly traded coffee, tea, chocolate, dried fruit and Palestinian olive oil at wholesale prices right at Foundry on these three Sundays. They all make wonderful gifts!

**WEDNESDAYS, DECEMBER 4, 11, AND 18**

### **Advent Evensong Services**

Gather with us from 6:15 to 6:45 on these Wednesday evenings for a brief service of communion, prayer and song. More information, email [wgreen@foundryumc.org](mailto:wgreen@foundryumc.org).

**SATURDAY-SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7-8**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14**

### **Hector Berlioz' The Childhood of Christ**

Don't miss this beautiful oratorio in Foundry's sanctuary, presented by our music, discipleship, and social justice ministries in collaboration with In Series Opera. Come at 8 PM on either Saturday or a 3 PM matinee on Sunday, September 8 for a fully-staged performance. You can also hear selections from the oratorio at one or both services on Sunday morning, September 8.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10**

### **Management Board Meeting**

The final meeting of the year for the Foundry Board is at 7 p.m. in Room 101. All members of Foundry are welcome to attend. This is a public meeting.

# FOUNDRY FORWARD

ACTION ITEMS FOR THE MONTH AHEAD

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14**

## **Community Christmas Festival**

Foundry's Family Ministry invites all Foundry folk to celebrate the season from 10:30 AM until 12:30. We'll create Christmas crafts and take photos with Santa.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15**

## **Children's Christmas Musical...and Fair Trade Gifts**

Foundry's Children's Ministry invites you to join us at 10:10 AM in the sanctuary as our kids, through the story of Charlie Brown, discover just what Christmas is all about.

And this is your last day to buy fair trade gifts -- coffee, tea, chocolate, nuts and olive oil -- in Community Commons.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19**

## **Longest Night/Blue Christmas Service**

Come to Foundry at 7 PM for a worship service acknowledging that not everyone feels happy and jolly throughout the Christmas season.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24**

## **Christmas Eve Services**

There's no better place to be on this holiest night of the year than Foundry, whether you choose the family and child-focused service at 6:30 or the traditional service of carols and candlelight at 8:00. See you there!

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31**

## **New Year's Eve – Watch Night Service**

Join Foundry members and our siblings at Asbury UMC at 7 PM for worship together as 2019 ends and a new year begins. Asbury is located at 926 11th Street with convenient parking and Metro access.

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](mailto:ForgeNewsletter@foundryumc.org).