

APRIL 2024



Foundry Forge

Inspiration and Information for the Weeks Ahead

Don't Miss the Sun!

A phrase Pastor Ben recently used in one of his beautiful prayers has stuck with me: "O God, help us not to miss a shining sun today, warmth even amid the cold."

The prayer began: "God of compassion, God of mercy . . . we lay before you the concerns of these days past and any anxious anticipations of the week ahead. We hold up our world, praying for the care and repair of human relationships. Our eyes burn and have gone dry, but our hearts still weep over the violence which besets the nations."

After a litany of petitions filled with the world's pain and soul-numbing anguish, Pastor Ben made a simple, profound shift: "And now, O God, help us not to miss a shining sun today, warmth even amid the cold."

And now, we, in this Easter season, are reminded that, because of Christ's life, death and resurrection, we can — even now — delight in the good, beautiful, true things of life, the nourishing, joyful, meaningful things. Even now, when so much pain, anxiety, uncertainty, and division fill our world, when the fabric of relationships and communities is increasingly frayed, when forces seen and unseen plague society with lies and manipulations . . . in the midst of all these things, we can rejoice in our hope.

Easter tells us that even when it seems the world is coming to no good, God comes to the world and brings new life — again and again.



Fredrick Nietzsche, the atheistic philosopher, taunted his Christian friends: "I'll believe in your redeemer when you look more redeemed." Pope Francis issues a similar challenge, asking what kind of Christians look like "Lent without Easter." He prays, "May the world of our time... be enabled to receive the good news not from [those] who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from [persons] whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ."

So now, may God help you (and me!) to not miss the sun, the love, and the Easter promise that are new every morning. By this, our souls are nourished, and our hearts are lifted to joyfully reflect God's life and love for others. May it be so.

Easter joy!
ginger+

OUR CONTINUING JOURNEY TO RACIAL JUSTICE

The Power of Community

AMELIA SHACHOY

You've probably heard the phrase "Interlocking Justice" around Foundry lately. Have you wondered what it means? Seven Foundry members – Madison Crum, Bert Keidel, Greg McGruder, Audrey Miller Hallett, Steve Pflasterer, Amelia Shachoy, and Margaret Yao – spent the last year learning about that. Now they are ready to share what they learned with Foundry's congregation, as we all work to foster racial justice within and beyond our community.

*This is the second of several articles interpreting the five interconnected values framing the work of becoming an inclusive community — **restorative, integrity, community, convergence, and expansive.** It follows Amelia's article in the February issue of the **Forge**. Foundry is already doing some of this, but we can all be more thoughtful about how to be more inclusive in our lives and at church. Read on and learn!*

"Community" implies sharing values and caring for one another, behaving in a way that creates a sense of belonging, of being welcomed and valued. If we feel respected and supported in community, we are able to support spiritual growth for other individuals and the church.

The goal of community in this context is to prevent unhealthy practices and address unintentional harm. This does not require us to do more, but rather to modify our behavior and interactions with others, themes explored in two recent sermon series — **A Dream Deferred** and **Reaching for Connection** — as well as in the Lenten Devotional where many members share their experiences of meaningful relationships.

At the December workshop on "Interlocking Justice," we discussed how different groups at Foundry — ministries, servant leadership, small groups — could be more inclusive. A common theme emerged:

being more intentionally welcoming through more informative communication with the congregation.

For example: the series of invitations from the music ministry to "singers [who] need only to have a love for music" and would like to join a music group, including both the Chancel Choir and the Congregational Choir. Another example: the Worship Guide announcement of a small group inviting new members, stating "all are welcome."

Once we have welcomed newcomers, it is also important for our actions to make clear that each person is a welcome and equal participant, fully included in the work of the group. This is a crucial part of being an inclusive community. When I first came to Foundry, I found it challenging to meet people. After I joined a couple of groups, I felt more of a sense of community. This feeling of belonging at Foundry has made a big difference in my life.

Another example of being welcoming and inclusive is Asbury UMC's recent invitation to Foundry folk to join its Lenten study of Howard Thurman's **40-Day Journey**. I felt welcome when I joined them, and we shared perspectives on the week's daily readings. I learned what was important to others in the group and felt a greater connection with Asbury. That's how we want to make every newcomer to Foundry feel.

Amelia Shachoy has been attending Foundry since 2010 and has been active in several groups. She is a certified instructor of adult learners and a certified Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Facilitator.

Foundry's Foxall Society

Whether you would like to support our work today or after your lifetime, we can help you find a charitable plan that lets you provide for your family while also supporting Foundry. Visit foundryumc.org/foxall-society to learn more.

Foundry Forward

APRIL ACTION ITEMS

Sunday, April 7

The Power of So That

As we move into the Fifty Days of Easter, Pastor Jonathan Brown will preach the first sermon in a series exploring the questions – What drives our priorities in life? Why do we relate – or organize – in certain ways? Our text is John 20:31 – “But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.”

Pastor’s Coffee

Are you considering joining Foundry as a full member? You’ll have a chance today to learn more. Join us in Fellowship Hall to learn about our church and your next steps toward becoming a Foundry member. With questions, email Pastor Jonathan at jbrown@foundryumc.org. To register, go to foundryumc.org/coffee

Wednesdays, April 10 – May 15

Sermon Discussion Group

Tonight, we have the first of six weekly opportunities to come together with other Foundry folk on Zoom to talk about Sunday’s sermon. We’ll meet from 8 to 9 p.m. The sessions will be led by experienced facilitators who will offer brief excerpts from the sermon and relevant scriptures, as well as some discussion prompts, after which, discussion will begin. Sign up to join us at foundryumc.org/sermon-discussion

Sunday, April 14

Why Do We ...?

Continuing our Easter season sermon series, **The Power of So That**, in today’s worship services at 9 and 11:15 Pastor Ginger will lead us in considering the new-life generating power of intention, aspiration, vision, integrity, perseverance and purpose.

Also today, we begin both a new member course, A Disciple’s Path, at 10:10 a.m. in Room 101, and also at 12:30 p.m. an examination of The Foundations of Sacred Resistance, the aspects of our faith on which our sacred resistance movement is based. For more information and to register for this session, go here. foundryumc.org/principles-class.

Sunday, April 21

Earth Day

We celebrate Earth Day as Pastor Ginger and our lay delegate Tracy Collins prepare to head to General Conference this week. Our speakers at both services will be Deborah Bombard, Foundry Green Team member and Sidra Siddiqui, organizer with the Washington Interfaith Network.

Baptism Orientation

Do you need to know more about what baptism – at any age – means in the United Methodist Church, and specifically at Foundry? Bring your questions and join us online today from 12:30 – 1:30 with Foundry’s Director of Family Ministries Natalie Harvey. Email her with any questions, nharvey@foundryumc.org

Tuesday, April 23

General Conference Begins

This afternoon the long-postponed General Conference 2020 (now meeting in 2024) will open in Charlotte N.C. with a worship service at 3:30. For more information, go to <https://foundryumc.org/future>.

Sunday, April 28

Great Day of Service

Join us for our Spring Great Day of Service! We are partnering again with Rise Against Hunger to pack meals for those who need food assistance. Everyone is invited to come help us for whatever shift you can take between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. Register at foundryumc.org/gdos

We’ll take a break from our meal packing for our worship services at 9 and 11:15 a.m. because no one should miss hearing our guest preacher, the renowned Michel Martin, who will continue leading our exploration of the reasons we and others do what we do.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GENERAL CONFERENCE

The United Methodist General Conference will take place in Charlotte, NC April 23 – May 3 2024. It was supposed to take place in 2020 but has been postponed three times due primarily to the pandemic.

Attending from Foundry will be Senior Pastor Ginger Gaines-Cirelli, a delegate, and Foundry member Tracy Collins, an alternate. They will come together with delegates from all over the world, who speak at least ten different languages.

There will be a different make-up of delegates at General Conference this year than in the past. This is due in part to the fact that since the Special Called General Conference in 2019, a large number — close to 25% of UMC churches — have left, "disaffiliated" from the UMC.

The General Conference is the legislative body for the United Methodist Church, the only body that can revise the language in the Book of Discipline and Book of Resolutions. The Discipline contains the denomination's doctrine, constitution, church law and rules of organization and procedures. The Book of Resolutions contains its positions on social issues.

Foundry is working with the Reconciling Ministries Network and others for action at the General Conference to change language and policies in those documents which are anti-LGBTQ+. Two examples are 1) removing the statement that "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching." and 2) redefining marriage as a union between "two persons" not "a man and a woman."

The other major change Foundry is supporting would amend the UMC's constitution to create regional conferences, each in a specific area of the world. One would include all UMC churches in the United States. Regional conferences would have the authority to adapt certain portions of the Book of Discipline based on their context, while sharing the core doctrines that are the foundation of our worldwide denomination.

There's much more to learn about General Conference at <https://foundryumc.org/future>.

CHECK IT OUT!