



# Foundry Forge

Inspiration and Information for the Weeks Ahead

## We Need a Silent Night

Some years ago, a colleague mentioned that a particular Amy Grant song "starts playing in her head earlier and earlier each year." It is the song entitled, "I Need a Silent Night" from Grant's album *The Christmas Collection*. Here is the refrain:

*I need a silent night / A holy night  
To hear an angel voice / through the chaos and the noise  
I need a midnight clear / A little peace right here  
To end this crazy day / With a Silent Night*

Since Christmas has been co-opted by the culture at large, one thing the Church can offer is an alternative way to experience the season. That alternative, at least during Advent, has to do with waiting and watching, with listening, with being quiet and still.

Crossing the threshold from the malls and stalls of the market, we are invited into a place where ancient prophecies and flickering candles beckon us to shift our focus. Simple rituals and family observances invite us to slow down, to be attentive to one another and to God.

We all need a little peace, a space for wonder and joy, and to end our harried days of toil and stress with a silent night, a holy night.

That's what the season of Advent prepares us for: a holy night when God does the unexpected and comes into the world in flesh and blood. Jesus, the Light of the World, breaks through the darkness of that holy night and changes everything, promising to shine in the world and in our hearts forever.



This Advent and Christmas, Foundry will once again be bustling and busy. But in the midst of it all, here and there, now and again, there will be moments of silence, beckonings of the holy, invitations to be held in the peace and calm of God, and to be guided by the brightness of hope, the hope that has come to us and to this world as light, as perfect love.

Cross the threshold and enter with joy and wonder into a silent night.

See you there,

ginger+

Ginger E. Gaines-Cirelli  
Senior Pastor

# Foundry Christmas Through the Years

ANN BROWN BIRKEL

The celebration of Christmas at Foundry has been a central feature of our family life since our children were born. We were never a family that travelled at Christmas so we could be counted on to be in the pew at 16th & P for one or both Christmas Eve services every year.

In our earliest years, two saints of Foundry, Marion and Neva Beasley – active members of the Foundry Players theater troupe – directed the Christmas pageant for families at the early service. Our daughter was born November 30, 1989, and soon began showing up in the crib room on Sundays. Another Foundry saint, Ruth Weber, who ran the crib room for many years as a volunteer, approached us as Christmas neared to suggest that our infant, Maggie Birkel, fill the role of the infant Jesus in that year's pageant. So, at the tender age of 24 days, Maggie represented Jesus in the manger before Foundry's altar and the Beasleys costumed my husband Terry and me as Joseph and Mary.

Thirty-two years and that many Christmases later, Maggie and her beloved Scott Harman-Heath stood in that same spot before the Foundry altar to take their marriage vows in a beautiful ceremony led by Pastor Ginger.



On reflection, all those Christmases at Foundry (including childhood Christmas Eves costumed, along with her brother Charlie, as barnyard animals, angels, or wise persons) seem to have flown by — even that one memorable year, Christmas Eve 2020, when we had to gather around our television to join the service on livestream.

Over those years, the wonderful gifts of our Foundry community new and old have deeply enriched our lives. We recall with love those who volunteered in the crib room, our children's Sunday School classes and youth group, as well as our peers in parenting and our children's Foundry contemporaries, each of them shaping our children into the adults they are today.

Yes, time has passed quickly, but as we all find pathways to re-engage both in person and virtually with our Foundry community, we are so grateful it has been part of our lives all these years.

*Ann Brown Birkel, a lifelong Methodist, joined Foundry with her husband Terry Birkel in 1988. They have been active in a variety of Foundry ministries. Ann has been the convenor for the LGBTQ Inclusion Advocacy Ministry Team since 2010, is currently a member of the Foundry Board, and has been a lay member of the Annual Conference representing Foundry for several years.*

LEARNING MORE

# Stephen Ministries at Foundry

*Bear one another's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ  
Galatians 6:2*

**Stephen Ministries, set to begin at Foundry in late Spring 2023, offers an effective way to organize, equip, and supervise a team of congregation members — Stephen Ministers — to provide high-quality, one-to-one, Christ-centered care to those in the congregation and the community experiencing life's difficulties.**

**Who's involved in Stephen Ministries?**

**Stephen Leaders** are trained Foundry church staff, lay leaders, and pastors.

**Stephen Ministers** are congregation members trained by Stephen Leaders to offer care to people who are hurting. A Stephen Minister typically cares for one individual at a time, meeting with that person once a week for about an hour.

**Those receiving care** are individuals in the congregation or community experiencing a crisis or life difficulty. They first meet with a pastor or Stephen Leader, who assesses their need and matches them with a Stephen Minister. The caring relationship lasts as long as the need persists.

**The benefits of Stephen Ministries:**

- Our congregation can carry out Christ's commandment to "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12 RSV) in a powerful and practical way.
- Foundry pastors will have a team of gifted, trained, and committed lay caregivers ready to minister to people who are hurting.
- Laypeople use their gifts in meaningful ministry, growing spiritually as they serve others.
- Those who are hurting have a caring Christian presence providing emotional and spiritual support.

In short, Stephen Ministries helps carry out the mission of the church, as we focus on one of Foundry's developmental goals: To call, equip, send, and support spiritual leaders to serve the church and world.

**Next Steps for Stephen Ministries**

As we prepare to train persons to be Stephen Ministers, **you can learn more by visiting our Stephen Ministries table in Community Commons after each service on Sunday, December 4.** You can ask questions, sign up for our informative discussion in January to become a Stephen Minister or learn how to support our Stephen Ministries team. For more information, contact Pastor Kelly at [kelly@foundryumc.org](mailto:kelly@foundryumc.org).

# Foundry Forward

## DECEMBER ACTION ITEMS

Saturday, December 3

### Holiday Festival!

Foundry's Family Ministries invites you to join us on the field at Stead Park today from 1 until 4 p.m. for our annual Christmas Festival in partnership with Friends of Stead Park. No registration required!

Sunday, December 4

### Advent Peace

In both services today, we light the peace candle in our Advent wreath and share the sacrament of communion. Our sermon, "Wondrous Peace," draws upon the passages found in Isaiah 11:1-10 and Matthew 3:1-12. Our Advent class, "Adult Christ at Christmas Time," also meets today at 10:15 a.m. in room 202.

Come to coffee hour and learn more about Stephen Ministries, which you will have the opportunity to be part of in 2023! Look for the informational table in our Community Commons. Questions? Email Pastor Kelly at [kelly@foundryumc.org](mailto:kelly@foundryumc.org).

Wednesdays, December 7 and 14

### Evening Midweek Services

Join us for a mid-week meditative service of prayer and song the first two Wednesdays of December (Dec. 7, Dec. 14). Each week we'll gather at 6:30 p.m. with an optional song practice at 5:45 p.m. in the Foundry Sanctuary.

Sunday, December 11

### Advent Joy

"Wondrous Joy" is the subject of today's sermon, as we light the Joy candle. Our scriptures are Isaiah 35:1-10 and Luke 1:46b-55.

Our "Compassionate Neighbors" gathering will also meet today at 12:30 both in room 203 and online via Foundry's YouTube channel. This will be a conversation with community partners about the barriers faced by our unhoused neighbors and understanding the resources available to help them. No registration is required. Learn more at [foundryumc.org/compassion](http://foundryumc.org/compassion).

Thursday, December 15

### Foundry Board Meeting

Foundry's Board holds its final meeting of 2022 at 7 p.m. tonight. Interested Foundry members can attend by visiting [foundryumc.org/board-meeting](http://foundryumc.org/board-meeting).

Sunday, December 18

### Wondrous Love

As we begin the final week of Advent, we will light the fourth candle on our Advent wreath. Love is the focus of our sermon, based on the texts Isaiah 7:10-16 and Matthew 1:18-25.

Wednesday, December 21

### The Longest Night

Today is the Winter Solstice, the shortest day — and longest night — of our year. We remember and support each other, especially those who find this season not a time of joyous expectation, but instead a time of unhappy memories. Join us at 6:30 p.m. as we share music, prayer, and time together.

Saturday, December 24

### Christmas Eve

Join us for this holy night at both or either of our two worship services. The earlier service, at 4:30 p.m. is open to all and designed with families with young children in mind. Our service includes a participatory re-telling of the Christmas Story.

Our evening service begins at 8 p.m. and will be a traditional Christmas service with candlelight, lessons and carols.

Sunday, December 25

### Merry Christmas!

On this joyous day, the Foundry community will come together for one special Sunday worship service at 10 a.m. to celebrate the joy and wonder of Christ's birth.

*Don't forget to pick up your poinsettias after our evening Christmas Eve service at 8 p.m. or after our Christmas day service at 10 a.m.*

## Join our support team

Our Clergy and Staff Support team is looking for people to join them! Their mission is to care for Foundry clergy and staff — sponsoring Tuesday treats, sending encouraging notes, along with any other small ways to show our love and appreciation of the clergy-staff team. To join our support group, go to [foundryumc.org/clergy-support](https://foundryumc.org/clergy-support).

## Parking passes for sale

Come by our front desk to purchase your 2023 parking pass for the Colonial Parking Garage before December 31 and save \$50! The current price of the passes is \$200. That price will increase to \$250 beginning in 2023.

Foundry's **Christmas Eve family service** is scheduled for **4:30 p.m.** Our planning team would like to estimate our attendance to ensure we have the supplies we need. We are also seeking **10-12 youth volunteers** to help that evening. Please complete this survey to let us know your family's plans for Christmas Eve (not a firm commitment; just a "quick check" to help us predict the service size): [bit.ly/FoundryChristmas](https://bit.ly/FoundryChristmas).

To print a copy of this issue of the Forge, go to [foundryumc.org/forge](https://foundryumc.org/forge).

Share your thoughts and ideas by emailing [ForgeNewsletter@foundryumc.org](mailto:ForgeNewsletter@foundryumc.org).

It's not too late to pledge your support for Foundry in 2023!  
Visit [foundryumc.org/estimate](https://foundryumc.org/estimate) to submit your estimate of giving now.



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