



# Foundry Forge

Inspiration and Information for the Weeks Ahead

## Practicing Faith in the Wilderness

The time between Christmas and the beginning of Lent always seems to blow by like mid-winter winds, fast and furious. Time flies, especially here where schedules are so full and expectations so high. There is often little time to just *be*, to reflect on our lives.

Yet, during the season of Lent, that is what we are invited to do: listen to our lives . . . slow down . . . pay attention . . . evaluate our priorities . . . confess our sins . . . claim our gifts . . . follow our hearts. . . spend time with God.

Lent is our annual journey to the cross, the tomb, and Easter morning. Our ancestors in faith understood that to experience the transforming power of Easter, we need to first walk through the wilderness.

Just as the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness for 40 years before entering the Promised Land, just as Jesus was led by Holy Spirit into the wilderness for 40 days before beginning his public ministry, so do we journey through Lent. During these days, we are called to go into that wilderness that is our own soul, to wander around a bit with Spirit in that space, and try to discern where God calls us to grow, to go, to change, to connect.

There is much diversity at Foundry, but most of us share having full schedules. Sometimes the most important thing falls to the bottom of our priority list. This year, I encourage us to engage in three practices during Lent:

- Attend worship regularly, making time with God in community a priority.
- Participate in a class, Bible Study, small group, or mission project, making learning about and living our faith a priority.



- Observe Sabbath: set aside time each day or a whole day of each week to rest, recreate and play, to spend time with God in prayer and reflection, making soul nurture a priority.

I pray that we will experience a blessed 2024 together and that our journey through the wilderness time of Lent will lead us to the fruits of transformation and deeper love for God, ourselves, and others.

Peace be with you as we embark on the journey!  
ginger+

# Making A Difference for All

OWEN CRUMPLER

Among all my volunteer activities, one stands out as particularly meaningful — the Appalachia Service Project (ASP), a week-long program that left a lasting impact on both the community I served and my personal growth. Last summer, I, along with a group of young volunteers, traveled to eastern Kentucky to repair homes severely damaged by floods in 2022.

In preparation, I dedicated time to learning the ins and outs of power tools and raising funds to cover trip expenses. Once we arrived in Kentucky, the task at hand was clear: repairing homes. I spackled drywall, sanded, and painted the new walls of a house. The work was physically demanding, but the heartfelt gratitude and appreciation expressed by the homeowner made every challenge worthwhile.

The emotional connection with the community deepened as the elderly lady, who had experienced the flood firsthand, shared her story. She recounted the night the flood came, recalling how she and her dog climbed onto the roof to survive. Her daily visits to our work site were a powerful reminder of the impact our team was making, rebuilding her house and her life.

Beyond construction tasks, the simple act of sharing meals created new connections. Lunchtime brought volunteers, homeowners, youth, and leaders together, creating moments of camaraderie and shared stories. Communal meals symbolized unity, reinforcing the idea that, in the act of service, bonds are formed that transcend the physical work.



What struck me unexpectedly was how ASP, designed to benefit others, played an integral role in helping me navigate personal challenges. The sense of accomplishment from contributing to the community's recovery translated into personal happiness and newfound confidence.

In retrospect, the combination of meaningful labor, skill development, and communal interaction created a holistic volunteering experience. ASP not only affected the lives of those we served but was also transformative for me. ASP's combination of service, learning, and human connection has become a profound and enduring chapter in my life journey.

*Owen was baptized at Foundry when he was less than a year old. He has lived in London and Israel, each for three years. Currently, he is a senior at McLean High School with an interest in pursuing biomedical engineering in college.*

# The Continuing Journey to Racial Justice

AMELIA SHACHOY

Growing up in Baltimore City, I remember hearing about the 1968 riot, part of which took place in "Sandtown"—the West Baltimore neighborhood once known as "Baltimore's Harlem." Long neglected with inadequate schools, housing, transportation, and other basic services, the neighborhood will be familiar to those familiar with David Simon's HBO series "The Wire" or the name of Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old Black/African American who sustained fatal injuries and died while in police custody in April 2015. His death led to protests that turned violent.

In June 2015, the Baltimore-Washington Conference sponsored summer camps for children at several churches in Sandtown, and I volunteered at John Wesley UMC on North Avenue — one of Baltimore's historically grand boulevards. At the end of each day, I walked the neighborhood to learn what it was like to live there.

Several years later, after becoming a certified Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Facilitator, I was reminded that, when it comes to issues of racial justice, it is a privilege to be able to say, "I want to learn." The "Interlocking

Justice" framework developed and facilitated by AnaYelsi Velasco-Sanchez offers Foundry members this privilege.

It follows the "Journey to Racial Justice" initiative whose survey and focus groups in August 2020 reported that only 64 percent of the 477 recent and current members, active non-members, and current and past staff who responded agreed that "Foundry does a good job of reaching out to, including, and engaging people from racially under-represented groups." Eighty-three percent agreed with the statement: "I would like to learn more about the subtle and implicit ways that racial bias shows up in everyday community and interpersonal life."

For the past ten months, seven Foundry members have been working together within the "Interlocking Justice" framework, which is based on the values that can be applied to foster racial justice: **integrity, community, convergence,** and actions which are **restorative** and **expansive**.

We began by reviewing a timeline of injustices that demonstrated the interconnectedness among societal forms of oppression. This made us more aware of the systemic and social constructs that make it difficult to change behavior. The first three of the "interlocking justice" practices – restorative, integrity, community – were introduced to a group of 40 Foundry members at a December workshop session, using discussion and exercises to illustrate the practices and how the church plays a role in them. This was our first step toward expanding the congregation's understanding of the path to a more inclusive church which requires commitment from all of us – lay members, staff, the board, and clergy.

---

## Check Out Foundry's Library!

Located in Room 203 at Foundry, our library has many relevant resources for every season and most of the subjects mentioned in our classes or discussion groups.

Of particular relevance now are books and other materials on the subject of race, including Heather McGhee's *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*. This was

the first book discussed in the UMC Board of Church & Society's "Pages of Progress" series. You will find it and others on the Race Relations shelves.

And as we move into the season of Lent, you will find a variety of books on Lent and Easter on the library's display shelves. Check them out!

# Foundry Forward

## FEBRUARY ACTION ITEMS

Thursday, February 1

### Order Your Lenten Devotional!

If you haven't already, go to [foundryumc.org/devotionalregister](https://foundryumc.org/devotionalregister) and sign up to get your copy, either by email each day or in print. Only a limited number of print copies are available, so act now! They are going fast!

Sunday, February 4

### Valentine Cookies Day!

Bake for Foundry Valentine's Cookie Boxes! Valentine cookies have been mailed to Foundry's college-aged students and service members for nearly 60 years! Help us continue to fulfill this Baptismal promise by baking cookies and treats and bringing them to Community Commons for packing TODAY! Don't bake? Candy and postage donations are also appreciated. Register at [foundryumc.org/pack-cookies](https://foundryumc.org/pack-cookies). Questions? Contact Shelley Jessee at [valentinecookies@foundryumc.org](mailto:valentinecookies@foundryumc.org).

Sunday, February 11

### The Great Chili Cookoff

The football game is not the only important bowl today: it's the day Foundry chili cooks and chili lovers are all invited to bring bowls of their best chili for a mid-day chili cookoff at Foundry. And yes, you can come just to eat the chili – and you don't have to bring your bowl. Register [here](#).

### Pastor's Coffee

If you are not yet a member of Foundry but want to know what's involved in membership, come to Room 101 today at 10:10. Questions, email [jbrown@foundryumc.org](mailto:jbrown@foundryumc.org)

Wednesday, February 14

### Ash Wednesday

Today we mark the end of Ordinary Time and the beginning of the season of Lent with a morning service at 8 a.m. and an evening service at 7 p.m. Foundry's own Cassandra Lawrence will preach and both services will be in-person and live-streamed.

Sunday, February 18

### Reaching For Connection

Today and for the next four Sundays, we will explore our desire for authentic connection. Pastor Ginger will preach all five Sundays. The seminal text for the series is Hebrews 10:23-25: *Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for God who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another...*

Friday, February 23 – Sunday, February 25

### Rediscover, Reimagine, Reclaim

Many of the women of Foundry and our sister Churches will spend these days at the in-person, annual retreat at Riverview Retreat Center, Pecometh UMC Camp in Centreville, Maryland. Led by the Rev. Dr. Theresa Thames, former assistant pastor at Foundry, now Associate Dean of Religious Life and the Chapel at Princeton University, they will explore the theme and share hikes, discussions, songs and meals.

Sunday, February 25

### How Is It with Your Soul?

"How does your soul prosper?" This was the central question asked in John Wesley's historic Class Meetings. Today, we ask, "How is it with your soul?" The old language carries a sense of *growing*. What is spurring your soul to deepen, expand, shine? Led by Pastor Ginger today, we explore connection. What connection do we yearn for – with God, with others, with our true selves?

Tuesday, February 27

### Foundry Board Meeting

Foundry's Board convenes its monthly meeting at 7 pm. Interested Foundry members can attend, using [this Zoom link](#).

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).