



Foundry Forge

Inspiration and Information for the Weeks Ahead

The First Day

"Imaginary Conversation"

*You tell me to live each day
as if it were my last. This is in the kitchen
where before coffee I complain
of the day ahead—that obstacle race
of minutes and hours,
grocery stores and doctors.*

*But why the last? I ask. Why not
live each day as if it were the first—
all raw astonishment, Eve rubbing
her eyes awake that first morning,
the sun coming up
like an ingénue in the east?*

*You grind the coffee
with the small roar of a mind
trying to clear itself. I set
the table, glance out the window
where dew has baptized every
living surface.*

– Linda Pastan (From *Insomnia*, published by W. W. Norton, 2015)

As we enter a new year, I'm happy to share these words by accomplished local poet, Linda Pastan, who died just a year ago. As we gaze into another stretch of months, weeks, and days, Pastan's question is powerful and poignant:

Why not live each day as if it were the first—all raw astonishment...?

Imagine what it would be like if each day you awoke as if you had never seen an evergreen tree or a cardinal perched on a branch, had never experienced a blue sky or a sunset, had never received the smile of a beloved. Wonder and delight and awe and curiosity might be part of your every day.

The poet encourages us to shimmy off the dull and cynical ways we approach our lives and to let go of any baggage that keeps us from seeing life in a new way.

Pastan doesn't pretend that there won't be a "small roar of a mind trying to clear itself," that is, a struggle to release what clogs our thinking and perception. Each day we can choose how we will enter the day or the moment or the gathering or the year — how we will interpret what we see as we glance out the window.

Notice the word the poet uses to describe her vision through the window — it's a baptism of all life. Baptism dying and rising, washing and shining, emerging to a new birth and new life through God's grace.



As you contemplate the year ahead, how will you be alert to signs of new life? Which things will you choose to set down, to allow to be washed away in the tide? How will you attune yourself to the promise of a "new every morning" opportunity to perceive God's grace and love?

My father always reminded me that no matter what happens in a day, the sun will rise the next morning with the opportunity for a fresh start.

What if you greeted each new day of this new year as if it were the first day of your life — all raw astonishment? Maybe it would be like a daily baptism, leaving you scrubbed and clear-eyed, dripping grace everywhere you go.

Imagine...

Blessings upon your 2024,

ginger+

Foundry Women's Retreat!

Registration is open for the 2024 Foundry Women's Retreat! Check out the additional information and register [HERE](#)

This beloved annual, in-person gathering of the Women of Foundry with our sister congregations, returns February 23–25 at Pecometh Riverview Retreat Center, a UMC facility across the Bay Bridge in Centreville Maryland. Registration is open now and closes January xx, 2024.

Our theme is "Rediscover, Reimagine and Reclaim: The Freedom and Power of Personal Storytelling." Our leader is the Rev. Theresa Thames, who served earlier as associate pastor at Foundry and is now Associate Dean of Religious Life and the Chapel at Princeton University.



Submit your 2024 Estimate of Giving

We are 83% of the way to fully funding our Annual Stewardship Campaign goal of \$2.2M. There is still time to join us by supporting our Reunite and Renew campaign that helps fund the life-changing mission and ministries of Foundry for 2024. We invite you to read our annual booklet to learn from those who have offered their witness and be inspired by how your gifts can and will impact lives. Submit your 2024 Estimate of Giving at foundryumc.org/estimate.

A Meandering Faith

JAY HICKS

Unlike Paul's, my road to Christ was a plodding, meandering walk in the woods, sometimes in the dark.

No one in my family attended church. On the rare occasion that religion was mentioned, it was usually with mild contempt. Nevertheless, I still had a mixed bag of exposure. My great-grandmother made sure I was baptized and one summer when I was very young, she took me to Vacation Bible School at her Lutheran church. At the laundromat I read creepy Chick Publications cartoons designed to scare kids into belief. Sleepovers at the home of my one church-going friend meant obligatory church attendance the next morning and the embarrassment of being told to stay seated while the others took communion. I did find my way, alone, to Salvation Army band concerts. I watched movies like **The Ten Commandments**, **The Robe**, and **Becket**. I'm not easily intimidated, but with experiences like that, I felt a bit ill at ease around "church people" on my Christian journey in my 20s and 30s.

Fast forward to 2001 when I married Camilla and into the Foundry family.

Pastor Ginger welcomes people "no matter where you come from." That includes people like me without the benefit of the head start of an upbringing in the church. At Foundry, I feel at home and comfortable exploring how, for instance, I practice my beliefs.

Consider prayer. I'm not a lousy Christian because I defer to Camilla on family prayer; I'm uncomfortable praying in front of others and she's so good at it. I pray alone and in silence, kneeling or seated, although I'm just as apt to pray audibly and conversationally, like Jimmy Stewart talking to Harvey the rabbit. And I pray everywhere, including the water closet.



Left to right, Charley, Jay, Camilla and Jackson

I often think about my sons Jackson and Charley and their faith journeys at Foundry. While their attendance in the sanctuary is spotty, they feel at home at Foundry and have close relationships with many who have encouraged them over the years. Family Camp and the Appalachian Service Project were godsend and figured prominently in their spiritual lives, as did skulking around the church's dark places and back rooms. It's a gratifying contrast to my own upbringing when I hear them say, even in teenage-speak, "Dude, Foundry's fire!"

Foundry gives them the community, the teaching and the room to be themselves which is exactly what they need to figure it out. I've always felt like I belonged at Foundry. I know my boys feel the same. This plodding meanderer was even invited to contribute to the **Forge!**

Jay Hicks is from Flint, Michigan, the fifth and last generation of his family born there. He has spent most of his career in planning, real estate and development, with assisted living companies and the U.S. Department of State.

Foundry Forward

JANUARY ACTION ITEMS

Lenten Devotional Development

This is the month the Foundry community comes together to create this year's Lenten Devotional, sharing personal reflections, verbal or visual, for each of the forty days of Lent. This year's Lenten Devotional will explore the theme "Reaching for Connection".

Everyone is invited to join our workshop after the 11:15 service on Sunday, January 7. All contributions must be in by Monday, January 22.

Sunday, January 7

Epiphany Sunday

Today we traditionally note the day that the Magi began their return home. And today we resumé our regular Sunday schedule, gathering at 9 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. with Sunday School for grades preK3 through sixth grade from 10:10 to 11:00 and Children's Worship during both services.

Lenten Devotional Creative Workshop

Come in person or via Zoom and learn how you can contribute to the 2024 Lenten Devotional! Join this workshop from 12:30 – 2:30 in Room 203 or online. It will help you incubate ideas for creating your 300-word essay, poem or artwork based on this year's theme "Reaching for Connection". Learn more and register [here](#) or at foundryumc.org/workshop

Sunday, January 14

Human Relations Sunday

Join us in person or virtually at 9 and 11:15 a.m. as we remember Martin Luther King Jr. and observe Human Relations Sunday in his memory. We will begin a new sermon series, **A Dream Deferred**, and our guest preacher will be Dr. Donyelle McCray, associate professor, Yale Divinity School, and author of **A Surprising God: Advent Devotions for an Uncertain Time**.

Youth@Night begins for the new year with dinner, activities and discussion from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

ChatGPT Discussion Group

If you are interested in being part of a group that will look at Chat GPT's response to questions asked to United Methodist persons answering a call to ordained ministry, join us at 10:15 a.m. in Room 203. We will critique the responses and determine if we

think ChatGPT has what it takes to be a pastor.

Saturday, January 20

Board Game Afternoon!

Do you like to play board games? Join us at 3 p.m. today at Foundry for a fun afternoon of board games and snacks. All ages welcome!

Monday, January 22

Deadline for Lenten Devotional Submissions!

Today's the last day to send in your contribution to Foundry's 2024 Lenten Devotional. Send it to LentenDevotional@Foundryumc.org

Tuesday, January 23

Foundry Board Meeting

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

Wednesday, January 24

Help in the Annual Count of Unhoused Neighbors

You are invited to be part of the Foundry team taking part in the Point-in-Time Count, the 'census' of unhoused neighbors in DC, which provides policy makers and funders the information they need on homelessness here. At least 16 Foundry volunteers are needed to canvass the Foundry neighborhood. Like last year, training will be available on-line. For more information, email ben@foundryumc.org

To print a copy of this issue of the Forge, go to foundryumc.org/forge.

Share your thoughts and ideas by emailing ForgeNewsletter@foundryumc.org.