



Foundry Forge

Inspiration and Information for the Weeks Ahead

Roads Go Ever, Ever On

Some of you know of my lifelong love for J.R.R. Tolkien's **The Hobbit**. Bilbo, a young, unsuspecting hobbit, overcomes social expectations, self-perception, and a variety of other obstacles to complete a quest that, at its start, he had no desire to join. Along the way, Bilbo grows — closer to unexpected friends, farther from home, more aware of his true capabilities.

I love this story because it captures the essence of every disciple's journey. The call of Christ demands that each of us leave behind the promises of familiarity and comfort for the possibilities of grace and Spirit's power, both available only when our hands and hearts are empty enough to receive them. The story reminds us, as do many passages of scripture, that the disciple's path is one of transition, change and growth.

Along the way, we draw close to new friends and companions, and apart from those from whom we learned and whom we love. We enter new realities and deeper self-knowledge. We depart from places where Spirit once led and now calls us to leave, taking what we've learned and journeying on. No matter where we are, we give thanks, knowing we are still on the same path, journeying deeper into the heart of God and our home in the love dwelling there.

Most of all, we trust that as new horizons break open and familiar pathways fall behind, we go with God. And we trust that in God's loving spirit we are bound together with unbreakable bonds, pilgrims on the disciples' path, united across time and space.

As his quest ends, Bilbo sings, walking back to the home he'd left behind:

*Roads go ever ever on
Under cloud and under star,
Yet feet that wandering have gone
Turn at last to home afar.
Eyes that fire and sword have seen
And horror in the halls of stone
Look at last on meadows green
And trees and hills they long have known.*



As I prepare to begin ministry with the people of Silver Spring UMC as their lead pastor, I feel a bit like Bilbo at the end of his quest. I look back on these last six years with profound thanksgiving for all the unanticipated gifts of grace I have received as your partner in ministry. You offered patience as I learned to love and lead alongside you. You shared wisdom and deep insight as we discerned and developed new ways of being in ministry. Along the way we laughed — and cried — through some of life's most intimate moments.

My path now leads me to a new place and, as I go, I take those gifts to share with a new community. And though I am no longer your pastor, in that way I carry you with me into all that lies ahead. What a gift you have given me, and what a gift I'm now blessed to share with others! Roads go ever on and on, it's true. But by God's grace no matter where we wander, we're bound together in the bonds of this hope — companions always on our journey into the deep that is the heart of God.

Much Peace, Beloved.

Pastor Will

Associate Pastor | Director of Discipleship Ministries

Beneath the Monuments

A Deeper Look at Our City's History



ANN BROWN BIRKEL

Washington, D.C. has been my home for thirty-six years, longer than anywhere else. An Alabama native growing up during the civil rights movement, I saw how Jim Crow laws enforced racial segregation across the south. I have now learned more about Washington's particular experience with Jim Crow (often imposed by southern politicians) and about Washington's history of racism from its founding to this day.

Last fall, I was a member of one of several Foundry groups who studied our city's history, reading **Chocolate City: A History of Race and Democracy in the Nation's Capital**. Our bi-weekly discussions used excellent chapter study guides written by Rev. Will Ed Green and others. Groups included members of Foundry, Asbury UMC, John Wesley AME Zion, and the Edlavitch Jewish Community Center. The book's authors, Chris Myers Asch and George Derek Musgrove, spoke engagingly at the William Astor and Vivian T. Kirk Symposium at Foundry, and later led a master class at Foundry.

From this experience I gained a deeper understanding of the racial history of my chosen home, the city where I formed my family and where we raised our children. Our discussions with people of different ages and races helped me see history through their eyes. One member, Ralph Williams, who arrived in Washington in the early 1970's, shared many insights as a Black man, including the story of his own neighborhood's evolution as demographics shifted over time. His personal experience helped us understand a major thread of our history – how the land on which our city stands has been used, taken, re-envisioned and fought over as a manifestation of economic and racial power.

Now I understand more clearly Washington's unique position as the nation's capital located, in many ways other than geography, at the intersection of north and south. I acquired context which explains many of the unusual aspects of Washington's political and cultural history which shape our current circumstances.

Beginning with dispossession by English explorers and traders of the Native Americans who lived on the land we call Anacostia, there is a continuous arc of oppression of racial minorities, which is inextricably tied to limits on our voting rights, the uses of our land, our housing patterns and congressional control.

But our city's story is also one of resilience, the resilience of black citizens, who have, time after time, responded to oppression and discrimination by leading efforts for equal justice from abolition through civil rights to the advances of home rule. I came away from this study experience even more strongly committed to doing all I can to realize our nation's original promise of justice and equality for all.

Ann Brown Birkel, a lifelong Methodist, joined Foundry with her husband Terry Birkel in 1988. They raised their now-grown children Maggie and Charlie in the church, and have both been active in a variety of Foundry ministries. Ann has been the convener for the LGBTQ Inclusion Advocacy Ministry Team since 2010 and is currently a member of the Foundry Board.

Foundry Forward

JUNE ACTION ITEMS

Sunday, June 5

Pentecost, Confirmation, and Guest Preacher Rev. Dr. William Barber

Today we celebrate Pentecost and welcome our confirmands into membership, celebrating their journey at the 11:15 a.m. service. Our guest preacher, **Rev. Dr. William Barber II**, co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign, will preach at that service. Pastor Ginger will preach the final sermon in our **Resilience** series at the 9 a.m. service, "Resilience For Times When...Spirit Puts You in the Hot Seat." Her text will be Acts 16: 16-34.

Wednesday, June 8

Disciple: Invitation to the New Testament

Join us for "Invitation to the New Testament," an eight-week survey of the new testament. This study looks at how the early church took ownership of and was shaped by the story of Jesus, and how the church learned how to develop as disciples and create communities of faith. We will gather for eight weeks beginning Wednesday, June 8 from 6:30 until 8:30 p.m. via Zoom. [Learn more and register here.](#)

Saturday, June 11

Pride! Lemonade stand, march, decorating and more

Join Foundry in celebrating PRIDE today! We will be hosting a lemonade stand at Stead Park, decorating the church, marching in the Capital Pride Parade and more. [Register to volunteer at our lemonade stand here.](#) To get involved with everything else, email Pastor Will at will@foundryumc.org.

Sunday, June 12

Farewell to Pastor Will

Pastor Will Ed Green, our Director of Discipleship, begins our new sermon series Living the Questions, on his last Sunday at Foundry. On July 1, he becomes the lead pastor of Silver Spring UMC. We bid goodbye to Pastor Will with gratitude for all he has brought us, given us, and built among us. He leaves a strong legacy. We are also celebrating Pride Sunday and will have special send-off events for Pastor Will after each service. You can contribute to the love offering for Pastor Will at <http://foundryumc.org/love-offering>

Saturday, June 18

Moral March on Washington

Foundry is a Mobilizing Partner for the Poor People's & Low-Wage Workers' Assembly & Moral March on Washington and to the Polls on Saturday, June 18. This march is a declaration of the power of poor people and their allies, and provides the opportunity for us to all stand up for human rights and justice for all people in this country. [Learn more about the march and sign up here \(select Foundry United Methodist Church as your Mobilizing Partner\).](#)

Sunday, June 19

Juneteenth!

"What is Your Name?" That's the question on which Pastor Ginger will preach today, using as her text Psalm 42 and Luke 8:26-39. This Sunday we will also commission our Appalachian Service Project teams, who will spend the week of June 26 repairing homes of low-income families in Clay County, West Virginia. They will report to the congregation on their experiences Sunday, July 3. [If you'd like to help fund their week of service, click here.](#)

Sunday, June 26

“Where is the God of Elijah?”

That's the question which Pastor Ginger will explore in her sermon today, using as her texts 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14, and Luke 9:51-62. This is the day our ASP teams leave for West Virginia, and we will celebrate baptisms.

Tuesday, June 28

Foundry Board Meeting

Foundry's Board will have their regular monthly meeting at 7 p.m. Foundry members interested in attending may [use this Zoom link](#) (Passcode: 624308).

For more information on the events above and other future Foundry events, go to foundryumc.org/events

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.

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