

# Foundry Forge

## The Power of a Small Group

HEATHER BATEMAN



*“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” – Matthew 18:20*

At Foundry, we often speak of the “kin-dom” – God’s kingdom here among us, in our kinship, our human relationships. For me, a strong depiction of kin-dom building is within the Foundry neighborhood small group that I have been a part of for the past two years.

Foundry has done tremendous work building small groups – some many years ago, and others more recently, like the one my husband Joe and I lead. Foundry’s small groups are neighborhood-based, helping us more easily connect directly with others in our faith community.

Each small group is a bit different. At ours, we have had people of different generations; some lifelong Methodists, others with fundamentalist evangelical upbringing, and still others with no strong faith background; individuals of different races, gender identities, and from different parts of the country.

Small groups can be somewhat different in structure. Our group meets every other week to talk, pray and share a meal. This provides room for discussions on a wide range of topics including our own spiritual autobiographies, Ibram X. Kendi’s book *How to be an Antiracist* and simply answering the question “Where have you experienced God at work recently?” or “How is your relationship with God?” Each conversation has provided powerful, moving responses.

We have laughed and cried; we have argued, grieved and gotten angry. In the process we have become stronger kin who support each other in our lives, physical and spiritual. Our small group creates a space inside a larger faith community where I check in regularly with myself and with others on our individual spiritual well-being – something I didn’t realize I needed until it happened.

As we begin this new year and new decade, I am hopeful for continued growth and closeness to God the Emmanuel. If you’re not already part of a small group, consider forming one in your neighborhood. Feel free to contact me, or Pastor Will for more information.

*Heather Bateman has been attending Foundry since 2016. Native to the DC area, she now lives in NE DC with her husband Joe. Heather works for the US Agency for International Development as an Investment officer for West Africa, enjoys travel, and feels blessed to spend time with many friends and family.*

# Standing at the Gate of the Year

REV. GINGER E. GAINES-CIRELLI



*I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year,  
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the  
unknown."*

*And he replied, "Go out into the darkness, and put  
your hand into the hand of God.*

*That shall be to you better than light, and safer  
than a known way."*

– Minnie Louise Haskins

At “the Gate” of every new year, I find myself reflecting on these lines. The image is compelling: we are stepping through from one territory into another, unsure of what we will encounter. And then we hear the Gatekeeper say – as if from his own experience – that staying connected to God is all we need to navigate the unknown.

“Put your hand into the hand of God.” These are words I need to receive and ponder again and again. King George VI used these lines in his Christmas broadcast of 1939, when Great Britain was in the middle of a war they had no idea they would win. He followed the reading of the poem with the prayer, “May that Almighty Hand guide and uphold us all.”

Every new year provides us opportunity to reflect upon our life journey, where we’ve come from, where we are going, and how we are traveling. Foundry has experienced great highs and lows over the past year. The year 2020 stretches out full of both possibilities. Together we face another

General Conference and another presidential election. We will endure tragedy and we will face challenges. We also will encounter beauty and surprising outbreaks of kindness and creative, life-giving movements in the world. We will experience transcendent worship, loving friendship, heart-changing service, fearless generosity, challenging study, acts of solidarity, joyous laughter – along with moments of offering and receiving tenderness, care, and prayer.

The mix and mess and miracle of our lives together are complicated and sometimes daunting. We never know how it will all turn out. My prayer is that God’s almighty hand shall guide and uphold us all as we travel into the days ahead. Remember! That “shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way.”

In faith, hope, and love,

**Ginger E. Gaines-Cirelli**  
Senior Pastor

# FOUNDRY FORWARD

ACTION ITEMS FOR THE MONTH AHEAD

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5

## **Epiphany: Festival of Light**

Come to our first worship services of the new year and celebrate the gift of light – illuminating, enlivening and liberating. We remember the Magi, who followed the light of a star and found the infant Jesus, who became the light of the world.

## **Support Inclusion**

Offer your virtual witness for full inclusion of our LGBTQ+ siblings in in the United Methodist Church. We'll have photo stations set up on Sunday morning where you can immediately take a photo and post it for the witness day. Learn more <https://resistharm.com/>

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12

## **Baptism of the Lord**

We remember the baptism of Jesus and celebrate the abundant grace of God that meets us just as we are, reminding us that we are each among those whom God calls “beloved children.”

## ***The Poetry of Faith and Doubt***

In a class beginning today at 10:10 AM, we will engage three Christian thinkers who wrestled with the tension between faith and doubt. Join us as we study their work which honestly explores belief and the challenges to belief, ultimately affirming the meaning and purpose of the journey itself.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19

## **Remembering Martin Luther King Jr.**

UMC Pastor and US Representative Emanuel Cleaver will preach at both services on this Human Rights Sunday when we honor the memory of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

# FOUNDRY FORWARD

## ACTION ITEMS FOR THE MONTH AHEAD

### IMPORTANT 2020 DATES

FEBRUARY 14-16

**Women's Retreat**

FEBRUARY 26

**Ash Wednesday**

MARCH 21

**Howard Thurman Retreat**

APRIL 5

**Palm Sunday**

APRIL 12

**Easter Sunday**

APRIL 14-17

**Staff Retreat**

APRIL 24-26

**LGBTQ+ Retreat**

MAY 5-15

**General Conference**

MAY 24

**Pentecost/Confirmation  
Sunday**

NOVEMBER 29

**First Sunday in Advent**

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19

### ***New Classes: Faithful and Inclusive, Know Yourself***

*Faithful and Inclusive* meets from 9 to 10 AM to discern how we can be both obedient to God's Word and fully welcoming to LGBTQ persons in the church. Today is the first of six sessions designed to deepen our understanding of the Bible's passages related to homosexuality.

*Know Yourself* is a three-part series meeting from 10:10 until 11:05 AM exploring the unique practices and perspectives that make us United Methodist. Today we begin Part One.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22

### **Point in Time Count of DC's Homeless**

Join members of Foundry's Sacred Resistance team to canvass the city with professional leadership to interview unsheltered homeless persons. Advance training available. Volunteer (note Foundry in the partners line) and learn more at [www.dcpit.org](http://www.dcpit.org)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28

### **Foundry Board Meeting**

Foundry's Board convenes its first meeting of the new year at 7 PM in Room 101. One portion of this meeting will be a strategic discussion of how Foundry manages its assets. All Foundry folk are welcome to attend.

To register or find more information on these events, go to <https://foundryumc.churchcenter.com/registrations>.

Share your thoughts about the Foundry Forge with [ForgeNewsletter@foundryumc.org](mailto:ForgeNewsletter@foundryumc.org).