



Foundry Forge

Inspiration and Information for the Weeks Ahead

Christmas at Foundry

GREG MCGRUDER

One Foundry tradition I look forward to every year is our celebration of the Christmas season.

From the beginning of Advent to Christmas itself, I'm always struck by how Foundry makes what could be a formal and quotidian calendar event a lively reflection of our congregation's diversity as well as a reflection of the spirit and meaning of Christmas.

For me, it all begins with the lighting of candles each Sunday of Advent which gives families of all varieties a chance to play an active role. We see children who seem to us to have been born yesterday but are suddenly seven years old, gamely reading and putting flame to candle with parental assistance.

I sing in the Gospel and Chancel choirs and during this period the songs we diligently rehearse and share offer a musical narrative to the season. Additionally, every year the congregation gets to witness the thespian skills of Foundry youth during the Children's Christmas pageant, an event that also gives us a chance to see a child who once played the role of the Baby Jesus now play the role of Joseph, Mary, or one of the Wise People — as we designate them at Foundry.

Throughout the season the clergy ensures that the words of the Scripture are ever present, as they also help us reflect that ancient story in our contemporary lives. The striking Christmas tree near the pulpit, the garlands of evergreens draping the balcony, and the bountiful display of fiery red poinsettias at the altar always add a memorable colorful note.



But one of the most striking events is the Christmas Eve service. It is a homecoming of sorts, with evocative music and scripture readings, all culminating in the entire congregation standing in the dark, holding lighted candles and singing "Silent Night."

Every year I marvel at this sight and, even with so many open flames, I've never witnessed an accident. Traditions like these were not part of the church of my early years, but these Foundry traditions, reflecting the spirit of the church as well as the season are worth anticipating and taking part in every year.

In 2001, the last year Bill Clinton was President, the Foundry choir was invited to sing at the White House for Christmas. A friend of mine who was in the choir asked if I wanted to sing with the choir. I had never sung at the White House, so I said yes. After that I started attending and singing at Foundry.

I eventually became a member, served on the Staff Parish Relations Committee and the Board. I co-led the Summer of Great Discernment, that examined same-sex marriage at Foundry, chaired the Journey to Racial Justice group which devised a strategic plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion at Foundry, and I currently chair the Religious and Racial Justice Committee. I moved to DC from Ohio in 1980, right out of Ohio State University, where I graduated with a degree in journalism. For 3 decades I've worked at the National Geographic Society, in book publishing and producing programs and events.

Christmas Music “Great Joy”

More than a decade ago, the phrase “transcendent music” emerged as the most accurate way to describe the music that is part of worship at Foundry.

Service after service, the truth of that phrase shines through. Foundry has for years been blessed by extraordinary musical leadership, gifted musicians and amazing voices.

No matter the style or selection, the music transports us into a realm combining emotion and intellect, enhancing and reinforcing the message of hope, love and faith we are called to share.

*The music of Christmas is especially meaningful to many of us, and this year we will have a service of Advent Special Music on **Sunday, December 15**, which our **Director of Music and Worship Arts Stanley Thurston** describes below.*

*Don't miss it – note the **10 o'clock** time for this one service of “Great Joy!”*

On behalf of Foundry's choirs, instrumentalists and soloists, it is my pleasure to invite you to join us on Sunday, December 15 at 10 o'clock for 'Great Joy!' We will all worship together that day at this one service.

You will hear many of your favorite Advent and Christmas songs – “Joy to the World,” “What Child is This?” “Go, Tell it on the Mountain” and “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” – in high-energy, cutting-edge gospel arrangements. These celebrations of joy, peace and love, arranged by Michael McElroy, Joseph Joubert and Burl Red will have toes tapping, hands clapping and spirits soaring.

The music will be performed by Foundry's Nine O'clock Choir and our Chancel Choir, supported by Foundry instrumentalists Jidong Zhong on the piano, Dan Campolietta on the piano and organ, Richard Slye on drums, and Mike Pryor on bass guitar, along with guest instrumentalists on saxophone and brass.

Bring your own sense of joy and wonder, as we share this worship service of special music and the spoken word.

Foundry Forward

DECEMBER 2024 ACTION ITEMS

Sunday, December 1

Advent Begins!

Today is the first day of the Christian year. It begins not with the trumpets of Easter, or the wonder of Christmas Eve, or the winds of Pentecost — but on the contrary, in Advent, we begin in the shadows of despair, conflict, sorrow, and hate. It is here that the God of grace will arrive. And so it's here that God's church is called to light candles of heartfelt hope, peace, joy, and love.

And today we light the **candle of hope** as we begin this holy season. Pastor Ginger will preach, drawing on texts in Jeremiah – chapter 33, verses 14–16, and Luke – chapter 21, verses 25–36.

And... **It's Advent, Charlie Brown** – Today we begin a four-week class that explores love, joy, hope and peace through the beloved characters of Charles Schulz's Peanuts. Don't miss the opportunity to engage with Advent in a uniquely meaningful way. You'll find more information and the registration at foundryumc.org/charlie-brown-advent

Saturday, December 7

Christmas Festival!

Come for a day of holiday fun in Stead Park's brand-new community center! Foundry is joining with Stead Park again this year for a day of holiday fund – treats, crafts, games, cookie decorating and photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus! If you'd like to volunteer with Family Ministries to help this day, contact nharvey@foundryumc.org

Sunday, December 8

Who Needs to be Unbound?

This year, poetry joins scripture to guide us through the season, inviting us to let go of things that keep us from entering more fully into its beauty and wonder. We are invited to “unbind” our hearts and minds from anything that holds us hostage from deeper hope, peace, joy, and love.

Pastor Ginger's sermon will reflect on texts in Malachi, chapter 3, verses 1–4, and Luke, chapter 3, verses 1–6. We will light the **candle of peace**.

And right after the 11:15 service, anyone interested is invited to come to the Youth Room by 12:30 to learn what confirmation is all about. Confirmation classes are tailored for youth in 7th grade or older who are ready to explore big questions about faith and grow in community together.

Monday, December 9

Holiday Greens Deadline

For friends, family or your own home, today is the last day to order hand-crafted fresh wreath, garlands, door swags and other items at foundryumc.org/holiday-wreaths. Use the code FOUNDRYA001. A great way to support Foundry ministries!

Thursday, December 12 and Saturday, December 14

Foundry's Kirk Symposium

This year's William Astor and Vivian T. Kirk Symposium includes a lecture tonight at 7 p.m. at Foundry and a Master Class on Saturday morning. More information [here](#).

Both feature Dr. Ashante' M. Reese, whose book **Black Food Geographies; Race, Self-Reliance, and Food Access in Washington, D.C.** has been studied for the last month by groups of Foundry folk and friends from the Edlavitch JCC. Whether you've read the book or not, come hear Dr. Reese speak on this important issue for our city and Washingtonians.

Sunday, December 15

Great Joy!

As you have read earlier in this issue, today is a special day of music and fellowship! We will gather at 10 a.m. for one worship service full of song as we light the **candle of joy**. Worship is followed by our **Christmas Community Potluck** – and **your last chance to buy Fair Trade products through Equal Exchange**.

At the 10 o'clock service, **Pastor Ginger will preach on "Good News of Impossible Joy."** Her texts are Zephaniah, chapter 3, verses 14–20, and Luke, chapter 3, verses 7–19.

Thursday, December 19

Longest Night

Come together with other Foundry folk on this longest, darkest night of the year, the first day of Winter, to support each other, especially those who find this season difficult. We will worship together in prayer and song.

Sunday, December 22

Lighting the Candle of Love

On this, the last Sunday of Advent, Pastor Ginger will preach on God's love, as we light that candle, the fourth on our Christmas wreath. Her texts are Micah, chapter 5, verses 2-5a, and Luke, chapter 1, verses 39-55.

If you are a comic book enthusiast or interested in exploring faith in contemporary culture, come to the inaugural session of Comics x Theology at Fantom **Comics on Dupont Circle at 3 o'clock. More information, contact jbrown@foundryumc.org.**

Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Eve

Everyone is invited to attend one or both services on this very special day – our Family Service in the late afternoon and our more formal service at 8 o'clock. Pastor Ginger's meditation will draw on familiar texts from Isaiah, chapter 9, verses 2-7, along with Psalm 96, Titus, chapter 2, verses 11-14, and of course, the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke.

Sunday, December 29

As This Year Ends

Let us come together to bid goodbye to the year 2024, to pray, to sing, and to hear the message of the day, based on the texts of 1 Samuel, chapter 2, verses 18-20 and 26, Psalm 148, Colossians, chapter 3, verses 12-17, and Luke, chapter 2, verses 41-52.

Advent Greens And Poinsettia Dedications

Add beauty to our Foundry sanctuary during this holy season by **purchasing Advent greenery and poinsettias!** Purchases may be made in honor or in memory of a loved one. Poinsettias will be **available for you to pick up for your homes following our 8 p.m. Christmas Eve Celebration, or following our 10 a.m. service on Sunday, December 29.** Register at foundryumc.org/poinsettias

Save The Date

Foundry UMC's 2025 Women's Annual Retreat

The **UMC's 2025 Women's Annual Retreat will be held on February 21-23, 2025, at Pecometh's Riverview Retreat Center, Centreville, MD.** We're honored to have Rev. Dr. Lydia Muñoz as our keynote speaker and invite the women of Foundry to join as she leads us in her call to: An Awakening! The Awareness of God's Presence in Us! Rev. Dr. Munoz may be familiar to most of us as she has served as a Foundry guest preacher. Registration opens in late December.

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.