

DECEMBER 2025



Foundry Forge

Inspiration and Information for the Weeks Ahead

The Light of Christmas

*When everyone had gone
I sat in the library
With the small silent tree,
She and I alone.
How softly she shone!
And for the first time then
For the first time this year,
I felt reborn again,
I knew love's presence near.
Love distant, love detached
And strangely without weight,
Was with me in the night
When everyone had gone
And the garland of pure light
Stayed on, stayed on.* **"Christmas Light" by May Sarton**

It is rather unfathomable that we have arrived at the end of this calendar year, in the season of Advent, preparing for Christmas. The year has been full, fraught with many struggles, anxieties, losses, outrage and grief. And yet, in the midst of all that, we've known moments of joy, delight and even hope.

The gifts of our faith and connection with God and one another provide us with support and vision through even the most difficult moments. Together, we laugh, we welcome new friends and new babies, we serve, learn, worship and grow.

Foundry has been a source of strength and hope for me throughout this year — not in abstract ways, but in very concrete ones. Watching folk care for one another; learning how members of our Foundry family are practicing sacred resistance; seeing so many rise up in protest; witnessing the generosity of this congregation amidst RIFs and a government shut-down. Together, we have journeyed to this point in a deeply challenging time.



In this season we are focusing on the admonition throughout the Gospel story: "Do not be afraid." There IS good news for a weary world, good news for each of us in whatever our circumstances. It is news of God's love for us, for you, for me. We receive it in many different ways during Advent and Christmas. The poet May Sarton describes her experience sitting alone in her library with her light-filled tree — "For the first time this year, I felt reborn again, I knew love's presence near."

I pray each one of you will experience such a moment, buoyed by the message and signs of hope that emanate from Foundry Church. That as we celebrate Jesus' birth, you will be reborn yourself, remembering again the love that lights our path through even the darkest night.
Blessings of the season,

Ginger+

Hunger is Here

PATRICK BRADLEY

During the recent government shutdown, the Capital Area Food Bank — where I work — launched food distribution sites across our region to serve furloughed federal workers and contractors.

At one in Alexandria, the first car arrived at 5:30 am. We didn't start distributing food until 11 am. By the time we opened, the car line stretched almost a mile long. People were desperate to take home a box of shelf-stable goods and a box of fresh produce that would last a family just a few days. Inevitably, we had to turn people away when we ran out.

While the shutdown put many of our neighbors in an acutely difficult spot, this is unfortunately the norm for far too many others. In fact, one in three of our neighbors across the DMV is facing hunger. One in three. That's families unable to put food on the table. Seniors weighing impossible choices between paying for food or medication. Children going to bed on empty stomachs.

Earlier this year at a food distribution site, I watched a woman approach my colleague to check in. Before she could say anything, she burst into tears. She had just been laid off from the Department of Commerce. She had never needed help before, and she was ashamed. But, for every one person like her, fifty others joined the line with a resigned shrug of "this is life" — the fast food worker, the home health aide, the nail technician, the housecleaner.

Hunger lives in every zip code of our region. Last year alone, the Capital Area Food Bank distributed more than 64 million meals worth of food across all eight wards of DC, neighboring Prince George's and Montgomery Counties in Maryland, and Northern Virginia as far out as Prince William County. We provide food for more than 400 local nonprofit partners, from soup kitchens and church food pantries to larger organizations like Bread for the City.



Collectively, we're stretching our loaves and fishes to meet the extraordinary need, but it's up to all of us to fill the baskets that feed the crowds. This holiday season, as you visit with family or cook up a feast, remember our neighbors who are lining up at 5:30 a.m. for food, those facing hardship for the first time, and those who can only shrug at the normalcy of it.

Please consider donating your funds, time, or nonperishable goods to a local nonprofit close to your heart — and if you don't have one, visit CapitalAreaFoodBank.org/get-help to find a program near you.

Patrick Bradley is the Director of Marketing at the Capital Area Food Bank. He's been a member at Foundry for the past decade, and you can find him and his wife wrangling their two girls at the 9 am service most Sundays.

Foundry Forward

DECEMBER 2025 ACTION ITEMS

Sunday, November 30

Our Year Begins Today!

Today is the first day of the Christian year, the first Sunday of Advent. We light the first Advent candle, the candle of hope, and Pastor Ginger Gaines-Cirelli preaches. Her sermon title, "**Fear Not: The Promise is Coming**" encourages us to trust God, even when hope feels far away.

And today you can buy **fair trade gifts from Equal Exchange** (cash or check, please) at coffee hour and/or **order Advent Greens and Poinsettias** to enhance the beauty of our sanctuary and support the ministries of worship and music during this holy season. To do so, go [here](#).

Monday, December 1

Register for Lenten Devotional Workshop

Everyone is invited to join a creative workshop on **Sunday, January 4, 2026**, that launches development of **Foundry's 2026 Lenten Devotional**. For the 31st year, the Foundry community will share personal reflections on the Lenten theme. Ignite your creative thoughts in this hybrid workshop after the 10 o'clock service. Join us at 11:30 in person in Room 203 and online via Zoom.

Sign up now here <https://foundryumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3287908>

Sunday, December 7

God is Doing A New Thing

Today our message from Pastor Ginger is based on Mary's experience described in the first chapter of Luke. As God tells Mary not to be afraid, God calls us, ordinary people, for extraordinary work and experiences. We need to say "yes" even when the future is uncertain. Today we will also share Holy Communion.

Youth Christmas Kickback Sunday, December 7

All Foundry youth, grades 7-12, are invited for a time to eat, laugh, and celebrate the season together! We'll gather right after the 11:15 AM service, upstairs in Room 203 from 12:30-3:00 PM. Join us for a holiday party packed with food, cookie decorating, a white elephant gift exchange, decorating, movies, music, and more! Bring your holiday spirit (and NO WORRIES, we'll provide the small, wrapped gifts for the exchange) — it's going to be festive, cozy, and full of cheer! Let us know to expect you by registering [here](#)!

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 [here](#). Fair Trade gifts are available until next week.

Sunday, December 14

Great Joy!

We gather this morning at 10 a.m. for one worship service as we light the candle of joy.

Pastor Ginger will preach that **Joy is on the Way!** Her texts are Isaiah, chapter 35, verses 1-10, and Luke, chapter 1, verses 39-56.

Worship is followed by our **Christmas Community Potluck** – and **your last chance to buy Fair Trade products through Equal Exchange**.

Thursday, December 18

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. Led by Foundry's own Ed Crump, we will worship together in prayer and song.

Sunday, December 21

Lighting the Candle of Love

On this, the last Sunday of Advent, Pastor Ginger will preach on God's love, assuring us that God has not forgotten any one of us. as we light that candle, the fourth on our Christmas wreath. God's plans may disrupt our own, yet they are always rooted in love. With that understanding we are supported in choosing faithfulness over fear.

Wednesday, December 24

Christmas Eve

Everyone is invited to attend one or both of these very special services – our Family Service at 4:30 and our more formal service at 8 o'clock. Pastor Ginger will preach at both services. Poinsettias will be available for pickup following our 8 p.m. Christmas Eve celebration or our 10 a.m. service on Sunday, December 28.

Sunday, December 28

As This Year Ends

Let us come together for one service at 10 a.m. for a service of prayer, preaching and singing our carols as we prepare for the New Year, with hope, peace, joy and love in our hearts.

Important Dates in 2026

Sunday, January 1

Lenten Devotional Workshop (see registration information on Page 3)

Sunday, January 4

One service at 10 a.m. It will be followed at 11:30 by our in-person and online

Sunday, January 11

Our two regular services and Sunday School classes will resume today!

Interested youth should come to ASP Interest Meeting on Sunday, January 11 at 10:10 a.m. in Room B2.

Friday-Sunday, February 20-22

Foundry Women's Retreat Registration opens in late December. To receive more information, join the Women's Retreat group in the Church Center app.

Ash Wednesday, February 18

Easter Sunday, April 5

Appalachian Service Project, June 20-27

Advent begins Sunday, November 29

Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24

Christmas Day, Friday, December 25

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