



Foundry Forge

Inspiration and Information for the Weeks Ahead

Transformed by Service

JOSIANE BLACKMAN

I served as a Stephen Minister at Foundry a little over 20 years ago.

It was a time in my life when I felt ready to put my faith into action. I had attended Foundry for a few years and benefitted from the available study opportunities, including intensive Scripture study.

So, I signed up and went through the training – a time of reading, learning, discernment, and rich conversations with fellow Stephen Ministers. Gradually, I bonded with a small group of kindred spirits, ready to enter into relationship with each other and with others. Such relationships grow from deep faith and commitment to the mission of Stephen Ministries. That mission is stated in Ephesians 4: 12–13: *“to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”*

Faith, Scripture, and prayer are at the core of Stephen Ministry. The training prepared me well to relate to others from a place of compassion and confidence.

Stephen Ministers are taught to be compassionate listeners, fully present to the needs of those for whom they are caring. So, significant time is allotted during training to understanding the importance of deep listening and practicing this crucial skill. Experience has shown that those receiving care often see more clearly how to move forward by sharing concerns and talking through issues with a compassionate listener.



Much time also is given to understanding and practicing assertiveness skills: clear boundaries define the care relationship. I became more assertive in my personal relationships and more confident as a teacher.

Another crucial skill is the ability to honor confidentiality: all relationships that Stephen Ministers enter with those needing care must be confidential. My training gave me confidence in my ability to effectively support a hurting person.

And, in addition to the joy of being of service, I realized over time that I had been transformed by becoming a Stephen Minister. I had grown personally and spiritually, and this growth enhanced all my relationships. I had grown in faith, and my prayer life had been strengthened, which helped me face the challenging task of caring for my husband for several years at the end of his life.

Stephen Ministry is a potentially a powerful gift to Foundry, an extension of pastoral care, enhancing the spiritual life of our congregation community in multiple unseen ways.

My husband, Hugh and I were invited to visit Foundry by a friend on our return from a posting abroad. We visited in August 1991, and felt so genuinely welcome here that we stayed, and became members in January 1992. Hugh often said that it is at Foundry that he discovered joy in worship.

Finding Joy in Ordinary Time



This is Ordinary Time. That's how the Christian calendar refers to the period between Epiphany, January 6, and Ash Wednesday, which this year falls on February 22.

Each year, I spend the last week of Ordinary Time in a less-than-ordinary way for me, caring for our four grandchildren in New Orleans. In that city, schools and daycare facilities close for the week before Ash Wednesday, the last feverish celebration of Mardi Gras season. I provide childcare for the children while their parents work.

In New Orleans, I have learned that Carnival season begins with Epiphany when the first parades roll and extends through the day before Ash Wednesday. This is clearly not ordinary time and as the locals like to remind visitors, "a marathon, not a sprint."

In the ten years I have been spending this particular week in New Orleans, I find myself thinking about what I celebrate, about what I am joyful about in these weeks in this Ordinary Time.

Of course there is King Cake, along with sharing jambalaya, shrimp etouffee and gumbo with friends. I am grateful for the rich traditions of intermingled cultures, not

just in New Orleans but in our city and nation.

I think about family themes we have used in the past for Mardi Gras day — a Roman family in togas with a chariot for the kids or a scaled-down family of Mardi Gras Indians, and, of course, what suggestion I might make for our theme this year. And that prompts me to ask myself – what masks do I choose to wear the rest of the year and why those? Have they changed over time? Why these masks, now?

Christianity reminds us of the need to celebrate — even during Lent — by having every Sunday be a feast day. (That's why Lent is 40 days not counting Sundays).

So now, even in the middle of Ordinary Time, let us each look for some Carnival time to disrupt us with joy and gratitude.

Rev. David Argo

Foundry Forward

FEBRUARY ACTION ITEMS

Sunday, February 5

It's Valentine Cookie Day

Bring cookies or candy to Foundry this morning and/or help pack these goodies to send to Foundry's college students and active-duty military. You can provide the names and addresses of those who should receive such a package at foundryumc.org/cookies or to register to help pack at foundryumc.org/pack-cookies. Questions? Email valentinecookies@foundryumc.org.

And today, Foundry's own Cassandra Lawrence, a recent Wesley Seminary graduate, will preach at both our 9 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. services, as we begin Black History Month. Join us!

Tuesday, February 7

Building Power through Public Narrative

Join your Foundry fellows and others from across the city in this Washington Interfaith Network (WIN) training session from 7 to 8:30 p.m. as we prepare for separate ward-wide actions with councilmembers leading up to DC Budget season, which begins in March and ends in May. Training sessions are offered in a hybrid format. With questions, email sacredresistance@foundryumc.org or visit foundryumc.org/win-training.

Sunday, February 12

A Disciple's Path

Join us at 10 a.m. for our hybrid new member class, "A Disciple's Path," which begins today and meets each Sunday for the next five weeks. You will learn much more about life and ministry at Foundry Church. Register for "A Disciple's Path" at foundryumc.org/path.

Sunday, February 19

Baptism Orientation

Baptism Orientation will be held today at 12:30 p.m. To attend and learn more about adult and infant baptism at Foundry, visit foundryumc.org/baptism-orientation.

Tuesday, February 21

Training for Action

Come to — or log into — this second February training session with Washington Interfaith Network. We'll explore how a problem becomes an issue and prepare for local actions related to the DC Budget. The session runs from 7 to 8:30 p.m. With questions, email sacredresistance@foundryumc.org or register at foundryumc.org/feb-21.

Wednesday, February 22

Ash Wednesday

Today we mark the end of Ordinary Time and the beginning of the season of Lent — and our "Holy Darkness" series — with a morning service at 8 a.m. and an evening service at 7 p.m. Both will be in person and livestreamed.

Friday, February 24 – Sunday, February 26

Foundry Women's Retreat is BACK!

The women of Foundry are invited to participate in the relaunch of our in-person, annual retreat at Riverview Retreat Center, Pecometh UMC Camp in Centreville, Maryland. Led by the Rev. Dr. Katy Hinman, we will explore how to reconnect, reenergize and reinvigorate our journey of discipleship and engagement. Dr. Hinman is program director, Dialogue on Science, Ethics and Religion at the American Association for the Advancement of Science. For more information and to register, visit foundryumc.org/womens-retreat.

Tuesday, February 28

Foundry Board Meeting

Foundry's Board convenes its monthly meeting at 7 p.m. Interested Foundry members can join via Zoom by visiting foundryumc.org/board-meeting.

THESE FOUNDRY MISSIONS NEED YOUR HELP

Foundry's Sustainable Coffee Hour

As part of Foundry's commitment to sustainability and caring for God's creation, Foundry has begun using ceramic/stoneware plates and mugs. We need volunteers to take these items to the dishwasher at the end of each coffee hour. Please contact Jackie at jwright@foundryumc.org if you are interested!

Cooks at Christ House

Join fellow Foundry members the first Saturday of every month at Christ House, Located at 1717 Columbia Road NW. Christ House is a 24-hour residential medical facility for unhoused people. Foundry cooks lunch at Christ House the first Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. until noon. If you are interested, contact christhouse@foundryumc.org.

Saturday ID Ministry

Foundry's ID Ministry has returned to the first and third Saturdays of the month! If you are interested in a very meaningful and life-changing volunteer opportunity, ID Ministry is for you. Please email idministry@foundryumc.org if interested.

ESL Night Captain

Our ESL program is looking for a volunteer to help welcome and direct students to classes. It is an easy but important role! If interested, email esl@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.

It's not too late to pledge your support for Foundry in 2023!
Visit foundryumc.org/estimate to submit your estimate of giving now.