

JUNE 2021

FOUNDRY FORGE

Inspiration and Information for the Weeks Ahead

Re-Entry Reflections

Loving *All Our Neighbors*

The “re-entry” phase of the COVID-19 pandemic may prove an even greater challenge than did the last year. The quick shift in tone and guidance felt like whiplash and left me disoriented as a leader. To steady my thinking, I turned again to the values that have guided us through the pandemic: prioritizing health and safety, following the science, and discerning what it means in each phase of the pandemic to love God and neighbor.

By now, you will have received the message from Board Chair Todd Mullins and me, outlining Foundry’s re-entry strategy and timeline. If you haven’t already, please let us know your needs and insights by completing this brief [survey](#) to help us re-engage thoughtfully with the benefit of your input. You can also access the survey at foundryumc.org/return-survey.



Here are a few gentle reminders for each of us.

- Some of us have been vaccinated for months; others have not yet been vaccinated — for a *variety* of reasons.
- We each have differing levels of risk tolerance.
- Some find re-engagement anxiety-producing after the relative quiet of the past year, while others were ready months ago to resume socializing.
- All this to say, it’s important to remember that how *we* are feeling or what *we’re* needing is not necessarily what *others* feel or need.

And some things will be different as we return to worship in person. What exactly will be different is still to be determined. There are many details to consider as we figure out how to love our neighbor, do justice, and practice radical hospitality in this challenging environment.

Prior to our full return, some of Foundry’s systems need work, some for safety and others to support a robust in-person *and* digital Foundry community. It may not be obvious just how important it is to celebrate and maintain our growing digital community whose presence blesses our worship and ministry from places far and near. But God is using this moment to help us grow the circle of the Foundry family even wider! Let us give thanks that we are finally, truly turning a corner from an extraordinarily difficult time for the whole world. Let’s continue to pray for our neighbors wherever they are who are not yet safe or do not yet enjoy the signs of hope springing up around us.

In Christ,
Ginger.

Moving Ahead

Foundry's Seminary Graduates

Three Foundry members – Sean Gray, Chet Jechura and Cassandra Lawrence – graduated this spring from Wesley Theological Seminary. Here they share a few words about their path to seminary, their experience at Wesley and their next steps.



SEAN GRAY

I came to Wesley Theological Seminary and Foundry fresh out of college. At Foundry I particularly loved the opportunities I had to learn about how to put our Methodist faith into practice both in our own individual and collective lives and into service with the broader DC community.

My journey at Wesley was everything but a clear path. In fact, it was more like a labyrinth, weaving this way and that, in, through, and around itself with no clearly evident sense of direction. I entered seminary with only an ambiguous sense of my call. The only thing I was sure of at that point was that I was not called to pastoral ministry. That changed when I realized in my first year that God was calling me to be ordained in the United Methodist Church.

Still, I questioned that call, thinking that I'm too young, too inexperienced. I wanted to find a place in some non-profit ministry and even attempted to enter the world of politics. But in the end, my call won out and I am excited to share that I will be taking on the role of a youth director with a United Methodist church in northern Virginia and continuing in the process to become a pastor someday.

Sean Gray grew up in rural western and central Pennsylvania and began attending United Methodist churches while he was in high school. He came to DC and Foundry in 2018 immediately after graduating from Lycoming College in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

Connect with us on Church Center

** Please join Foundry on Church Center by visiting foundryumc.churchcenter.com. Here, you can manage your member profile, events, giving, and more. Choose "Log in" from the upper-right corner to get started.*

Pastor on the Plaza

Foundry's Pastors are pleased to begin scheduling one-on-one meetings on the plaza Tuesday through Friday. Join us for 30 or 45 minutes to check in, pray together, or simply catch up. Visit foundryumc.org/pastor-on-plaza to sign up for your slot.

CASSANDRA LAWRENCE

For nearly 15 years, I considered going to seminary, but my practical side held me back. I couldn't see what I was going to do with a seminary degree. I wanted to pursue peacebuilding, so I earned a master's in conflict studies, but seminary was a bridge too far.

Nine years ago, I came to DC from California to work in religion and peacebuilding. In that work, and in attending Foundry, I learned from clergy of many faiths about the need for chaplains in peacebuilding and social justice work. Knowing this made all the difference and attending seminary finally seemed like the right thing to do.

At Wesley I strengthened and nuanced my theological foundation for the Christian call to peacebuilding, justice, and liberation. I now see more clearly the long line of ancestors who have gone before us building beloved community. On June 1 I will become the communications and community engagement manager for my current employer, the Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign to equip and support communities addressing anti-Muslim discrimination and racism.

I am also pursuing ordination as a Deacon in the United Methodist Church. That is part of my commitment to mutual accountability, compassion, and justice, essential aspects of beloved community.



Cassandra Lawrence will remain in DC as part of the Foundry community. She will continue integrating creative arts in worship and writing of the hope, justice, and mercy of God. To relax after graduation, she plans to spend time kayaking, hiking and mastering her grandmother's pie and pastry recipes.

JOIN PASTOR GINGER FOR

"Ponderings from the Purple Parlor" with Pastor Ginger

While Foundry may not be hosting a Facebook live every day of the week this summer, Pastor Ginger will continue to join us every Wednesday at noon for "Ponderings from the Purple Parlor." We look forward to seeing you there.



facebook.com/FoundryUnitedMethodistChurch



CHET JECHURA

When I moved to D.C. and became a member of the Foundry family, I never imagined I would soon be balancing a full-time job with part-time seminary studies during a period of dramatic political and denominational upheaval. But that's exactly what happened.

Thanks to my Foundry family, I have been encouraged to take leap upon leap of faith, trusting that God has called me to ordained ministry and that the church has a space for me to live out that call in the way that only I can. As I reflect on my time in seminary, the relationships I cultivated, the spiritual growth that was nurtured, and the wisdom I gained with every question asked, I am also immensely grateful for the financial assistance I received through Foundry's Edward W. Bauman scholarship.

Later this year, I look forward to being commissioned a provisional Elder in the Baltimore-Washington Conference and to being appointed to serve a church in the area. I ask for your prayers during this time of transition as I begin a new chapter, one that has been a lifetime in the making.

Chet Jechura grew up in Cleves, Ohio and was baptized and confirmed at Zion United Methodist Church. He moved to DC and came to Foundry UMC in 2015 seeking a faith community that was United Methodist and safe for LGBTIQA people. Married to Darian Harnish, he spends many weekends outside gardening, connecting with God in nature.

Foundry Forward

JUNE ACTION ITEMS

Wednesdays, June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Morning Prayer

We gather at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday mornings via Zoom for prayer with Pastor Kelly Grimes. Join the call by visiting bit.ly/call-prayer.

Invitation to Genesis

On Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. we will begin a weekly study of Genesis. We'll explore many familiar stories, including Creation, Adam and Eve and Noah's Ark – and dig more deeply into their meaning for our faith. For more information and to register, visit bit.ly/study-genesis.

Thursdays, June 3, 10, 17, 24

This Sunday's Scriptures with Pastor Ginger

Join Pastor Ginger from 6 to 7 p.m. for an hour-long exploration of the Scriptures assigned for our upcoming Sunday worship celebration. We will join together via Zoom. Learn more and join the group at bit.ly/sundays-scriptures.

Sunday, June 6

Graduate Recognition and Communion on the Plaza

On Sunday, June 6, we will recognize Foundry individuals graduating from high school, college, or graduate school! We will also resume celebrating Communion on the Plaza that afternoon. Learn more and register at bit.ly/communion-plaza.

Every Sunday, June 6, 13, 20, 27

Practicing Spirituality

We will meet on Sundays in June from 10 to 11 a.m. to study, discuss, and pray. Feel free to drop in via Zoom and take part in our lay-led lesson, which is tied closely to Scripture and focuses on practices to sustain and renew one's spirit. Learn more at bit.ly/foundry-spirituality.

Sunday, June 13

Confirmation and Pride

Today we witness the confirmation of Foundry's newest young members: Raya Fowle, Chloe Iveson, Eve Jungman, Will Nichols and Abby Steele. We will also celebrate our commitment to true equality for all our LGBTQ+ siblings.

To print a copy of this issue of the Forge, go to foundryumc.org/forge.

Thursdays, June 17 and 24

Black Presence: The Obama Portraits in Context

Don't miss this virtual tour on June 24 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., led by Foundry's own Dr. Izetta Autumn Mobley. You'll learn why the portraits of Barack and Michelle Obama by Kehinde Wiley and Amy Sherald have created such interest and how they have changed the conversation about portraiture. Register by 1 p.m. on June 17 by visiting bit.ly/obamas-portraits.

Sunday, June 27 to Saturday, July 2

Appalachia Service Project

Foundry youth who are vaccinated are eligible to spend this week in southwestern Virginia helping repair family homes to make them safer and more comfortable all year round. Learn more and register by visiting bit.ly/foundry-asp.

Tuesday, June 29

Foundry Board Meeting

All Foundry members are welcome to attend the monthly meeting of the Foundry Board which gathers at 7 p.m. Email amandabeadle1@gmail.com for the link.

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