

Foundry Forge

Teaching English, Creating Community

This new year brings each of us new opportunities to grow our community and express our love for our neighbors in new ways.

One way we practice loving our neighbors at Foundry is by providing free adult English as a second language (ESL) classes on Tuesday and Thursday nights throughout the year. Foundry has been running this free program for almost 15 years. Offering beginner, intermediate, and advanced classes, we welcome anyone at any ability level from anywhere to come to our classes and become a part of our ESL family.

Our teachers are an incredible (and fun!) group of volunteers -- a Tuesday team and a Thursday team. They facilitate one of the most inclusive and life-giving groups I've ever been part of.

Students from all over the world join us each week. It is deeply moving to see the tightly knit family that forms within and between these classes each semester. Our students' curiosity and care for their fellow classmates and teachers, untethered to nationality or similarity, reminds us what an inclusive community looks like.



And coming to ESL classes at Foundry sometimes provides our students with more than an increased ability with English. One student told us she enjoyed learning about the atmosphere of a church; she'd never been in a church before.

She came to the United States from a country in turmoil and continued to carry a lot of that stress. She worried about her mother, her friends and other family and couldn't focus on much else. Then, someone told her about Foundry's ESL classes. When she stepped inside Foundry, she later told one of our teachers, she felt calm. She came for English classes, but she left with a real sense of peace, a peace that has made a difference in her life.

We welcome you to become part of the ESL team. We can always use substitute teachers, teacher support, advertising assistance and help getting the word out about the program. If you are interested in getting involved, let me know - you can email me at sarah.k.comer@gmail.com or find me in the balcony at church.



Sarah Comer moved to DC in 2015 and has been a member of Foundry since 2016. She began working with an ESL program in 2013 while she was living in Singapore and working with migrant workers.



Owning A Shameful Past, Shaping A Better Future

This year we at Foundry are sharing our stories in order to deepen our relationships. One story is of the painful toll which institutional racism has taken on our Christian fellowship through the years, separating and segregating black and white members of our faith family.

Two neighboring churches, Asbury United Methodist Church and John Wesley African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, were founded by black members of Foundry who no longer felt welcome to worship in the same church as their white counterparts. Our shared history is one of profound harm and deep injustice. In a recent **Connections**, Foundry member Ralph Williams added poignant personal context.

Now it is critically important that we tell, and own, this sad story. It is difficult, but we must not whitewash the injustices of racism. We must not shy away from the shame and anger we feel – or the conversations that ensue.

Beginning last fall, Ralph and other Asbury, Wesley and Foundry members have created a space for these conversations, places where we can come together as fellow Methodists to confront and explore our painful past. I hope you will join our “cousin congregations” on Sunday afternoon, March 3 for the screening of “Backs Against the Wall: The Howard Thurman Story.” Thurman, a theologian and teacher who deeply influenced the leaders of the civil rights movement, co-founded one of the first intentionally multi-racial and inter-religious churches in the U.S.

We know that each of us must grapple with the effects of racism in ourselves, our church and society. Foundry has and will continue to offer opportunities for study and engagement around these issues.

As we engage our particular history, I encourage you to delve more deeply into issues of race - as an individual or with others.

We are developing a suggested reading list including books by authors such as Timothy Tyson, Angie Thomas, James Cone, Michael Eric Dyson, and Robin DiAngelo. By the end of 2019, Foundry staff will read at least six books from the final list for study and reflection.

The list will be published by the first Sunday of February, Black History Month, and its titles will be available in the Foundry Library. Please prayerfully consider making a commitment to join us in reading at least six books on the list.

This history, our story, is a difficult one to acknowledge. But we know that God can bring new life into the midst of great struggle. We are an Easter people! And Sunday’s always coming. Thanks be to God.

Humbly,

*Ginger E. Gaines-Cirelli,
Senior Pastor*



Foundry Forward: February Action Items

Sunday, February 3

NEW CLASSES:

Journey to St. Louis: LGBT History and The UMC

In preparation for the 2019 Special General Conference later this month, the *Rev. Peter DeGroot* will lead this historical overview of recent church history, **continuing on Sundays, February 10 & 17.**



Learning to Walk in the Dark

Join *Pastor Will Green* in exploring the intersection of faith, doubt and fear in the dark times of life, using a book by Barbara Brown Taylor. This class will meet **each Sunday through March 17.**



Monday, February 4

This is Us: Traveling the Redemption Road

If you haven't already, please send your submission **today** to this year's **Lenten Devotional** at LentenDevotional@foundryumc.org. Share a story from your faith journey to inspire and encourage those who travel with you.



Sunday, February 10

Valentine's Cookie Packages!

Help send a sweet package to Foundry's college-age students and military service members. Bring home-baked cookies and/or your donations for postage to Foundry this Sunday. Non-perishable Valentine's candy can also be marked and left at the Foundry reception desk anytime. And be sure to send all names and addresses of college-age military and students to valentinecookies@foundryumc.org by **Thursday, February 7.**



Foundry Forward: February Action Items

Friday - Sunday, February 15-17

Authentic Living Through Change: Women's Retreat

Don't miss this special weekend with Foundry women and this year's leader, *author Jeannie DuBose*, as they gather at Priestfield Retreat Center in Kearneysville, WV. **February 3 is the registration deadline.**



Tuesday, February 19

Management Board Meeting

Foundry's Management Board will approve the **General Operating Budget for 2019** at its February meeting at **7:00 p.m. in Room 101**. All members of Foundry are welcome to attend. This is a public meeting.



Saturday – Tuesday, February 23–26

A Time for Prayer: Special General Conference

Whether or not you are traveling to St. Louis, take time each day to pray for a positive outcome. This gathering will vote on several different proposals that address our denomination's deep divisions over the full inclusion of LGBTQ individuals in the life of our church. See explanation [here](#) of the three major proposals.



Sunday, February 24

Storming, Norming and Reforming

Come to Fellowship Hall **after the 11:15 service** for a lecture and discussion providing historical context for the discussion in St. Louis. *Our topic: the history of division and reunification in American Methodism.*



For more information on the events above, go to <https://foundryumc.churchcenter.com/registrations>.

FOUNDRY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Foundry is a historic, progressive United Methodist Church that welcomes all, worships passionately, challenges the status quo, and seeks to transform the world.