

2019 Priorities

These three priorities are concrete tasks we will be working on as a congregation this year. They will guide the work we engage in as a congregation: committees, small groups, Council, and individuals.



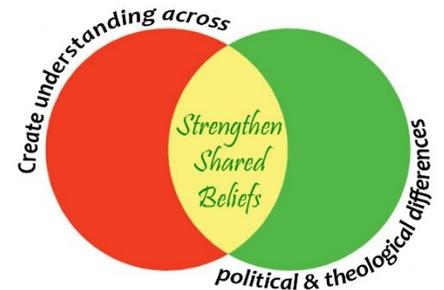
Seek and promote opportunities for education about the spectrum of gender and sexuality & the use of inclusive language.

Encourage the sharing of each person's gifts, including diverse expressions and explorations of faith.

Work for racial justice within ourselves, our congregation, and our community.

2019 - 2020 Questions

These questions are ongoing conversations that may guide our work and develop into future priorities.



What changes to the green space will we pursue?

How are we called to focus our peace witness in response to many interests and needs?

How do we create understanding across political and theological differences & at the same time identify and strengthen the shared beliefs that draw each of us to FMC?

2019 FMC Priorities and Questions: Rationales

- from the FMC Council

Priority 1: Seek and promote opportunities for education about the spectrum of gender and sexuality and the use of inclusive language.

Rationale: We need to be proactive about our welcoming church policy to a community in which there is still much misunderstanding and discrimination. We need to be open to learning about the experiences of our LGBTQ participants about how FMC's welcome is experienced and what changes are needed. This also has implications at this time for our conference relationships. In addition, we need to be sensitive to our use of language in worship when the default is commonly male.

Priority 2: Encourage the sharing of each person's gifts, including diverse expressions and explorations of faith.

Rationale: We are a congregation with many talented people and need to make sure that we provide opportunities for these talents to be used and that all will be affirmed in sharing their talents. In From data collected in 2014 in the US (below), there are clear trends that the importance of religion is declining in the younger generations. Not all young people growing up in FMC are finding the church meaningful in their life. It is important for us to understand why this is happening and the role of our definition of the Christian faith in forming negative perceptions.

**Importance of religion in one's life by generational group (2014)
Pew Research Center: Religion & Public Life**

| Generational cohort | Very important | Somewhat important | Sum of important | Not too important | Not at all important | Sum of not important | Don't know | Sample Size |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------|-------------|
| Younger Millennial | 38% | 29% | 67% | 17% | 16% | 33% | < 1% | 3,291 |
| Older Millennial | 44% | 27% | 71% | 14% | 15% | 29% | 1% | 4,128 |
| Generation X | 53% | 25% | 78% | 11% | 11% | 22% | 1% | 7,303 |
| Baby Boomer | 59% | 24% | 83% | 9% | 8% | 17% | 1% | 13,049 |
| Silent | 67% | 18% | 85% | 6% | 7% | 13% | 1% | 5,989 |
| Greatest | 72% | 15% | 87% | 7% | 6% | 13% | 1% | 585 |

Priority 3: Work for racial justice within ourselves, our congregation, and our community.

Rationale: We live in a community in which current racial discrimination and effects of past discrimination are major factors that negatively affect the lives of people of color and provide benefits to European Americans. This is contrary to the Gospel. We cannot change everything that needs to be changed but we have the power to change some things including ourselves.

Question 1: What changes to the green space will we pursue?

Issues: What factors should be considered in planning changes to the green space? Use? Public witness? Aesthetics?

Question 2: How are we called to focus our peace witness in response to many interests and needs?

Issues: Several important areas were highlighted in our discussion including gun culture/violence, earth care, immigration, racial justice and LGBTQIA justice. At least two of these are also explicitly stated priorities. How do we choose what we do? How important is it to have an impact? How does our institutional lifestyle reflect our peace witness and are changes needed?

Question 3: How do we create understanding across political and theological differences and at the same time identify and strengthen the shared beliefs that draw each of us to FMC?

Issues: Those that hold minority opinions can be hesitant to express their ideas and may feel alienated from the congregation. We are not all going to believe the same things. Is our goal acceptance, understanding, tolerance, change, or something else? What is the value of differences and what can we gain from these interactions? What holds us together?