



5 PRIORITIES

“The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”

- Stephen Covey 7 habits of highly effective people

"There is no such thing as 'I do not have the time'. This is all just a matter of priorities."

- Maciej Aniserowicz

“Action expresses priorities.”

- Mahatma Gandhi

SORTING OUT PRIORITIES

One of my favorite lines from the Harry Potter series comes from the first book in the series “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone.” In the book, the three main characters, Harry, Ron and Hermione are sneaking around their school of magic that has dangers lurking everywhere. During this late night expedition, they nearly get killed.

Hermione says to the boys

”Now, if you two don’t mind, I’m going to bed before either of you come up with another clever idea to get us killed. Or worse, expelled.”

Once she leaves, Ron says to Harry,

“She needs to sort out her priorities.”

For Hermione academics were the highest priority throughout the series - apparently even more important than her life!



PASTOR PHIL YODER

We all have priorities - which are often expressed in what we do with our time. Sometimes I have ideals that I think are my priorities, but I don’t live them out. Like when I am scrolling on my phone for an hour. I know I have priorities that I want to live out. I have things in my life that are more important to me than the next meme. Then why do I scroll anyway?

I guess to a certain extent, phone scrolling is one of my priorities.

In religion, we have a lot of ideals. We talk a lot about love, and grace, and following Jesus. Oftentimes, we have these ideals, but struggle to put them into action! Gandhi also famously said. “I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.”

How do we shift from having priorities that are ideals, to living them out as a community. How do we continue to work towards being LIKE Christ?

Before I came to FMC, I was really encouraged by a succinct document that was shown to me during the interview process. It was FMC’s “Five Priorities.”

- Follow Jesus in the Anabaptist tradition.
- Nurture faith within relationships.
- Extend hospitality.
- Engage scripture in participatory worship.
- Identify, develop, and express gifts.

I thought this was a great list of priorities - a great list of ideals that I hope to prioritize myself. I hope we can continue to live out these priorities and not simply claim them and not act on them. Like me scrolling on my phone!

It would be an interesting practice to compare this list to a list of actions that FMC has taken in the last year, and see if they line up with our priorities. I am guessing that we have acted in ways that identify with each of these priorities, but like in all things, there probably is some space for growth too!

So I thought it might be good to explore these 5 priorities over five Sundays in September and October, where we can consider how we are prioritizing them, and dream about how we continue to live into this vision as a church.

REALLY? THE BLOCK PARTY IS A PRIORITY?

You might have heard, literally, that last weekend's Vine Street Block Party was rockin'! Greenhorn's annual event featured DJs and dancing, booths, mini golf, and lots of great Greenhorn fare including Mexican street corn, donut burgers, and Trusty's favorite, grilled watermelon! FMC joined the festivities by hosting a booth with activities for all ages: an interactive Bingo game with prizes, sidewalk chalk drawing (thanks, Isaac Schumacher!), and the Soapbox, where people could stand up and talk about anything they wanted for 1 minute with a guaranteed listening audience. Soapbox highlights included Bruce Steingass' jokes, a birthday serenade for Gail Clingerman, and Kathy Dickson gettin' her groove on! The newly finished Pride quilt also made its debut alongside our Vision statement.

Our presence at the event signaled our support of Greenhorn and the Bluffton community, which helped us realize one of our 5 Priorities that day: Extend Hospitality. The expanded version of this priority, called "Connecting," articulates a commitment to "lives of mission, peace and justice, and service, reflecting Christ's broad invitation to all people, our neighbors across the street (and on Vine Street!) and around the world."

The idea to participate in the Block Party was initiated when Greenhorn owners Jonah and Nancy Corle-Agner approached Pastor Phil with the idea of an official sponsorship only a few weeks prior to this year's event. After several conversations among staff and Leadership Circle, it was decided it was too late to sponsor the event (by giving \$1000) without more congregational input. For this year, at least 14 FMC member households contributed financial support to help offset the costs associated with the event. During the upcoming year, our

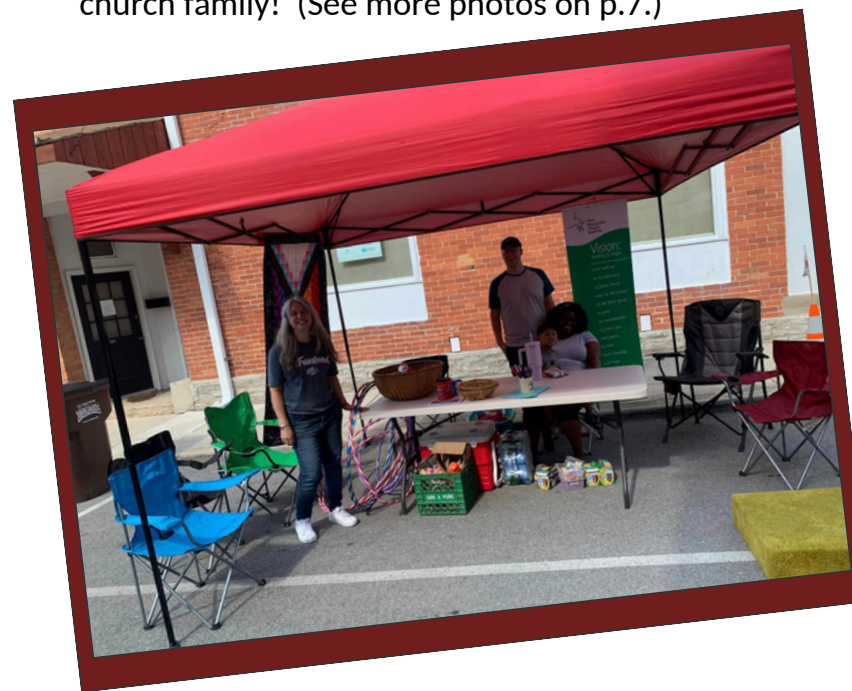


PASTOR CARRIE MAST

congregation will spend some time processing the idea of serving as an official sponsor of Greenhorn's annual Block Party scheduled each August.

Since the Greenhorn opened, overlaps in mission between the restaurant and FMC have become apparent. Sustainable food and building community are two areas of alignment. Pastor Phil noted, "There are many things that I am excited about in developing this connection with Greenhorn. Last winter, we worked with them and Kathy Dickson through her work at MTSO to bring Dr. Chris Carter to the restaurant to discuss the intersection of race, food, and faith, and I feel that this connection could continue to deepen."

As we settle back into our routines this fall, Pastor Phil will help us revisit our commitment to extending hospitality and all 5 Priorities, which were developed in 2016-17 through congregational input and the guidance of the ad hoc Congregational Discernment Team, through a 5 week sermon series. Phil's exploration of these themes will help him understand the collective identity of this church as he also provides us with some fresh insights into whom we aspire to be. May the creative Spirit work among us to revive our commitments and walk innovative paths as a church family! (See more photos on p.7.)



Special thanks to those who helped set up, organize, and tear down the booth at the Block Party - Cassidy Bush, Trusty & Isaac & Keagan Schumacher, Phil & Flora Yoder, Ray Raeburn, Ray Person, Sally Roth, and Carrie Mast - to all those FMCers who came out for the fun - and to all those who provided financial support to make the event possible!

MUSIC ENSEMBLE REHEARSALS 2023



Music Ensemble Rehearsals to begin in September: note the dates, times, locations, and ages for the church's music ensembles. Please consider offering your musical gifts to this important part of worship for our congregation and encourage others to join. We would gladly welcome new additions to the ensembles and will greatly enjoy the return of former members.

- **Chancel Choir** (adults of all ages) begins on Wednesday, September 13 at 7:00 p.m. (Mark Suderman, director) – sanctuary.
- **Adult Bells** (adults of all ages) and **Youth Bells** (Grades 7-12) - both begin on Wednesday, September 6 at 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. respectively (Ray Raeburn, director) – assembly room.
- **Cherub Choir** (3 yr. olds-2nd graders) begins on Sunday, September 10 at 9:15-9:45a.m. (Laura Hartzler, director) – children's choir room.
- **Jubilate** (3rd-5th graders) begins on Wednesday, September 13 at 3:00-3:45pm (Laura Hartzler, director) – children's choir room.
- **Youth Choir** (6th grade and up) will meet on Sunday, September 10 at 8:30-9:15a.m. (Laura Hartzler, director) – children's choir room.

o Parents with new children in a choir are welcome to stay as needed.

YOGA WITH EMILY!



Yoga with Emily

All Levels Slow Flow

Thursdays 6-7 pm

Classes will run from
September 5 - October 17

No experience necessary!
Come as you are.
Each class is \$12/person



First Mennonite
Church, Bluffton, OH

Contact me:
warriorfromwithin1@gmail.com



A CHURCH ON THE MOVE

Change in the church isn't always welcome but we're excited for the transformation and rejuvenation in our classrooms courtesy of Amy Shadbolt with the helping hand of Ethan Blount. Ethan helped move furniture and prep two classrooms for painting, and Amy took primary responsibility for prepping the walls and executing the painting. Following their hard work, the Junior High Youth room moved into the recently renovated basement classroom next to the nursery. The Faithful Living SS class will be moving into the former JHY room on the 3rd floor providing some space for this well-established class to make their own and opening up the Fellowship Hall each week where the temporary walls were set up to create their meeting space for the last two years. Additionally, the old 6th grade classroom across from the adult choir room received a fresh coat of paint.

A big thanks to Amy and Ethan who served as sub custodians this summer and accomplished many projects like painting, carpet cleaning, and deep cleaning the kitchen in the Fellowship Hall.



CLFO. CONTINUED LEARNING ELDER ORGANIZATION

Never stop learning because life never stops teaching
-Anonymous

4 Weeks
courses to begin
Monday September 11
at First Mennonite
Church

Registration is REQUIRED.
To register online go to:
fmcbluffton.org
Registration forms can be found at
First Mennonite,
Et Cetera Shop, Book Reviews and
Twisted Whisk or call JP Schumacher
at 567.712.1891.

- Conversations with Fred Steiner 10:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
- Inspired writing with Ruth Naylor 1 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.

Come To Learn, Stay for Community

Organized by
JP Schumacher
567.712.1891
gridleygal@gmail.com

A SWEET TREAT FOR OUR EDUCATORS

BY SHELBY CLUTS

Our congregation has many who are involved in education or retired from education. One of the sessions at Convention was about connecting with the community and how you need to look at your specific community and see how to do that. With Bluffton Schools all around us, it seemed like a good place to begin. We all know that teaching is an ever-increasing challenge and in spite of that teachers and administrators care about and know their students. So, how do we help students and teachers? Members of the Freudige class made cookies for all teachers and staff of Bluffton schools and for those in our congregation involved in education at other schools and Bluffton University. Attached to the cookie was an encouraging note and an offer to support them by letting FMC know if they have a student with needs that we may be able to help with. Cookies were delivered Sunday and Monday, August 27 and 28



and within a few hours a teacher contacted us with a need that we could fulfill that very day with the help of Ray Raeburn and Kevin Cluts! Another request came in later in the week that FMC will be helping with. An individual need may be small but for the student that it helps it can mean so much! Funding for this is through the Mutual Aid Fund.

Thank you to the cookie bakers: Judy Diller, Jean Miller, Pat Sheidler, Jane Steinmetz, Jane Weaver and to cookie bakers, packagers, and delivery persons: Mary Edmiston, Lisa Shelly, and Shelby Cluts.

SEE SOMETHING NEW IN FELLOWSHIP HALL?

BY TESS EGER



Women from First Mennonite came together to create our own PRIDE progress quilt flag. Tess Eger, Jean Miller, Sue Schaff, Mary Ann Suter, Mary Edmiston, Lisa Shelley, Pat Sheidler, and Carrie Phillips planned, shopped, pieced, and quilted the flag. The border was signed by attendees of the 2023 PRIDE event in Findlay, OH, along with our First Mennonite church family. We hope this flag helps those in the LGBTQIA+ community and other marginalized groups feel seen, loved, and welcomed by our congregation. Thank you, Pastor Phil, for your excitement behind the idea and for nurturing a safe and inclusive place of worship. Thank you to all the women who shared their gifts and worked together to

create this symbolic representation of hope and love for all.



TECH



TECH ASSISTANCE MINISTRY

Calling All Techies! With the ever changing landscape of technology in our world, there is an increasing need for assistance with a variety of these technology issues within our congregation. If you are willing to be part of a list of people that would be willing to help congregational members with their problems, please contact Ray or Trusty in the church office. Some possible issues that members may need assistance with, internet/WiFi, computer problems, Zoom/video conferencing help, cell phone or tablet assistance, etc...

Additionally, if you find yourself in **need** of such assistance, do not hesitate to contact Ray or Trusty.

Ray - 419.230.2769 or ray@fmcbluffton.org
Trusty - 419.358.5766 or fmc@fmcbluffton.org



RAY RAEBURN

CHURCH NURSERY



Mary Edmiston will be coordinating the Nursery ministry this year. To follow our Safe Church policy, two unrelated adults must be in the nursery for parents to leave their children with volunteers. Parents will be asked to remain in the nursery when there aren't two adult nursery workers.



To volunteer in the nursery, sign up here: <http://fmcbluffton.org/nursery-volunteers>



