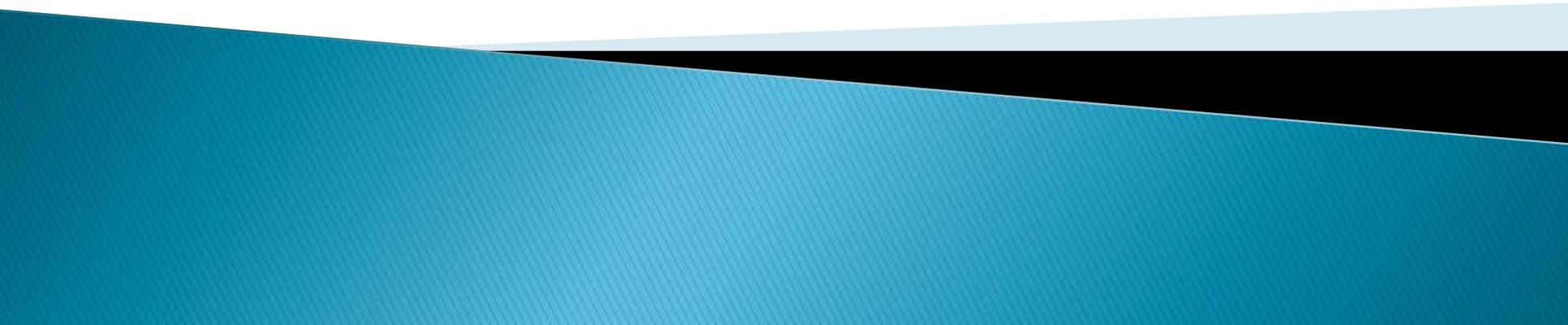


The Purposes of the Church We, the people of Plymouth Congregational Church, humbly seek and serve God within, among, and beyond ourselves.

Among

We walk together in covenanted Christian community.

We:

- Care for one another.
 - Cultivate a spirit of gratitude, love, joy, and compassion.
 - Celebrate many pathways to the sacred.
 - Deepen our understanding of our faith tradition.
 - Nurture a welcoming culture.
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Christianity: Our Faith Tradition

Theology (study of the nature of God)

- ▶ **MONOTHEISM : THE BELIEF IN ONE GOD**
 - **THEISM:** broadly defined as the belief in the existence of a Supreme Being
 - **DEISM:** belief in a creator but the creator does not intervene or alter the creation.
- ▶ **PANENTHEISM: IS THE BELIEF THAT THE DIVINE PERVADES AND INTERPENETRATES EVERY PART OF THE UNIVERSE AND EXTEND BEYOND TIME AND SPACE.**

PANTHEISM : THE BELIEF THAT GOD EXISTS IN EVERY FORM, AND THAT EVERYTHING IS GOD

ATHEISM : NON-BELIEF, OR THE VIEW THAT THERE IS NO GOD

Theology , con't.

Moralistic Therapeutic Deism consists:

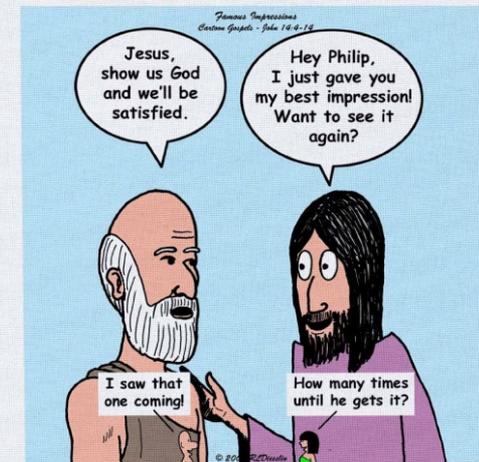
1. A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
3. The central goal of life is to be happy.
4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.

Christian Humanism:

regards humanist principles like universal human dignity and individual freedom and the primacy of human happiness as essential and principal components of the teachings of Jesus.

Jesus

- ▶ **Jesus of Nazareth (Low Christology) :** Jesus was a human child of God or who was adopted as God's Son when he was resurrected.
- ▶ **Jesus the Christ (High Christology):** Jesus was a pre-existent divine being who became a human, did God's will on earth, and then was taken back up into heaven.
- ▶ **Universal Christ or Cosmic Christ:** Christ is our shortcut word for "The Body of God" or "God materialized." This Christ is much bigger and older than either Jesus of Nazareth or the Christian religion, because the Christ is whenever the material and the divine co-exist—which is always and everywhere.



Progressive Christianity:

1. Believe that following the path and teachings of Jesus can lead to an awareness and experience of the Sacred and the Oneness and Unity of all life;
 2. Affirm that the teachings of Jesus provide but one of many ways to experience the Sacredness and Oneness of life, and that we can draw from diverse sources of wisdom in our spiritual journey;
 3. Seek community that is inclusive of ALL people.
 4. Know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe;
 5. Find grace in the search for understanding and believe there is more value in questioning than in absolutes;
 6. Strive for peace and justice among all people;
 7. Strive to protect and restore the integrity of our Earth;
 8. Commit to a path of life-long learning, compassion, and selfless love.
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- ▶ Theologies are about our understanding of God. They are not God. What new images or metaphors of God are compelling for today?
- ▶ Theological idolatry can kill faith as easily as biblical literalism. What Jesus stories can inspire a deeper understanding of faith?

“ Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried.” –G.K. Chesterton