

# “What’s at Stake: The Spiritual Heart of Plymouth’s Budget”

Notes from the Deacons (Sue Astin, Annette Atkins, John Cairns, Peter Eichten, Jasper Jonson, Sarah Lehman, Lynn Moline, Jay Matre, Mike McCallister)

In June, the congregation passed a six-month budget to allow time for us collectively to wrestle with the financial challenges and opportunities that face us. In response The Deacons will be hosting over the next six months a series of congregational conversations. The short-term goal is to inform the creation of a 2024 calendar year budget that reflects Plymouth’s priorities, our spiritual goals, and our financial responsibilities.

These conversations, that we’ve titled, have three intentions:

**to increase our capacity to talk and listen to one another,  
to help us live into our covenanted relationship with each other, and to deepen  
understanding as we make spiritually informed decisions about our budget.**

Beyond this six-month, budget-related process, and building on it, the Deacons will lead a multi-year visioning effort to discern together how we want to invest our time and resources to advance the Purposes of the Church, respond to the realities of being church in our current time and place, and envision how we are feeling called to evolve and change as an organization.

Here are some notes on our conversations so far (the notes are in black, **the Deacons’ comments in red**)

## Session #1, June 4: VALUES

Actually two sessions, one at 10 and one at 12. Total attendance about 120 people.

We invited participants first to think about and name their own values.

Then, invited them to talk in small groups to compare their lists and then to see if they could name Plymouth’s values. The discussion question was a little fuzzy and some people answered what they valued about Plymouth, some about the values that they think motivate Plymouth.

Reported out from the small groups:

Tradition	Making a	Activism	Caring
Hope	difference	Voice in the world	Familiar
Beauty/the Arts	Love	Reliability	Continuity
Justice	Curiosity	Service	Stability
Faith	Community	Stewardship	

Comments from the convenors:

1. This list of values, we know, is not complete and doesn't represent what all of the church members would define as "Plymouth's values." In an open letter to the Congregation the Deacons have invited others to add to or comment on this list and we'll incorporate those as they come to us. The purpose of naming them is to begin to see where we might agree, where our own values overlap with those of the congregation, where we might lean in one direction and the church in another. The purpose of discussing them, as the intention statement suggests, is to create an opportunity for us to know each other at the level of our values. This was a productive discussion from that point of view, for sure.
2. This list of values will provide a starting point for other discussions when we talk about, for example, how we think these (and other) values should be manifested by Plymouth Church?
3. The Deacons don't read this list as "the" values, only the ones that bubbled up in these conversations and useful as a basis for further discussion.