

Dear Friends,

The Committee of Ministry has heard concerns from members of Westside and First Jefferson who are concerned about naming our religious community in a way where we appear to be THE congregation in Fort Worth. This is a concern that the COM has come to share. Examples of this are the second and fourth names receiving the most votes in the first round of the name change voting. Russell has spoken with the minister of First Jefferson UU church and both agree there would be tension created if our community were to attempt to name our congregation in this way.

During the January 25th congregational meeting the congregation took part in what basically became a straw poll to see where the naming interest lies. On February 15th you will be asked to begin voting to narrow down the names by which your religious community will consider using as its name. This is a serious task and should be taken seriously. We will go from 25 names all the way down to six.

If unfamiliar with the results, they are here:

<http://www.westsideuu.org/name/NameVoteResults1.pdf>

There is over a hundred years of Unitarian history in the city of Fort Worth and the first 70 years of that history is filed under the name of "The Unitarian Church of Fort Worth". Two churches have developed out of that history and both churches have a legitimate claim to that history. It is an opinion among some that for Westside to take that name is a bit presumptuous.

We do not believe the suggestions for these names were, in any way, submitted with the knowledge of what the name might engender with First Jeff. Indeed, the COM only became aware of the problem well after the names were submitted. Our community is, in fact, looking for avenues by which these two congregations might be able to participate and commune with each other more frequently and pleasantly. For example, there is a picnic in the planning stages where all three Tarrant County congregations will likely get together in the coming months. Our opinion is that we should be building bridges between these congregations. Naming our congregation as the "Fort Worth UU " or "The UU of Fort Worth" could hinder these efforts.

Again, we do not believe there to be any malice in the name submissions, only missing information. You can, of course, vote in the manner you choose for the name you desire. However, we do want you to be aware how votes for "Fort Worth UU " or "The UU of Fort Worth" will likely be perceived by the other congregation in Fort Worth. We hope you will choose to not take the risk of

possibly harming the relationship with our UU friends in the first UU congregation of this city. With the narrowing from 25 to six names, this next round of voting is very important.

Signed,

Committee On Ministry (COM)
Russell Elleven, minister