

**Special Congregational Meeting
First Unitarian Church, South Bend
8 June 2025**

The meeting was called to order by Chuck Leone, Board President, at 12:05pm. The sole purpose of this meeting is the question of the church's name.

Fern Hamlin, Board Secretary, confirmed that a quorum was present. There were 50 members present, 7 proxy forms, and 3 people on zoom, for a total of 60.

Chuck explained the background for the board's recommendation that the name change be a Doing Business As name which would mean that we continue to be recognized legally as a church, and as such we would continue to receive the tax benefits and legal protection afforded to religious organizations. It will cost us \$26 to file Doing Business As paperwork with the state.

There will be several elements of the name change to consider, and the process will work through a series of straw votes, to ascertain support or lack thereof for the different elements, culminating in a formal vote.

The first question was whether we did want to change the church's name or keep it the same. Comments for not changing the name included questioning the financial aspect and whether or not the benefits would outweigh the costs. Those speaking in favor of a name change noted the desire to add "universalist," the fear/turn-off factor of the word "church" in our name, the need to attract younger members if we want the church to continue, the need for a modern-forward-facing-inviting name for both us and the community. 46 wanted to change the church name, 6 did not.

The next question was whether or not to add the word "universalist" to the church name. 51 wanted to add it, 3 did not.

Next, did we want to omit the word "First" from the church name. 43 said yes.

Did we want to omit the word "Church" from our name. 42 said yes, 3 said no.

Did we want to include some kind of descriptor word in our name, since we are not using the word "church" -- something like congregation or community -- or did we not want any descriptor word. 41 did not want any descriptor word, 5 did.

Did we want to include a location name -- just South Bend, or South Bend, Indiana? 47 wanted South Bend only, 3 wanted South Bend, Indiana.

Gail deSomer moved, and Francisco Gomez-Dossi seconded the motion that we adopt the Doing Business Name of Unitarian Universalists of South Bend. Chuck called for a voice vote to adopt this DBA name and the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30pm.
Fern Hamlin, Board Secretary