

**MEDIA ALERT: Montclair Congregation Votes on Name Change after 100 Years**  
An invitation to attend the Annual Meeting of The Unitarian Church of Montclair  
Sunday, May 20, 2007

The Unitarian Church of Montclair has stood at 67 Church Street for more than 100 years. Many discussions between members of the congregation in recent years lead to a formal process, begun a year ago, to determine whether a majority of the congregation were in favor of a name change, and what that change would be. It seemed that many informal discussions revolved around whether to keep the word "church" in its name. For this congregation, it has been a fascinating process, reflecting the roots of the organization, what it has become, and what it hopes to be.

The process will reach its climax on May 20th at the members' Annual Meeting when they will consider a motion to change its name to the "Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair." The committee members who undertook the name change process involved much of the congregation, and made a tremendous effort to build a consensus along the way. Because of their due-diligence, it is anticipated that the motion will carry, but not without some passionate and heartfelt discussion at the Annual Meeting.

The Board of Trustees has been fascinated by the democracy of the process, and thought that our story might interest your readers. We found the notion that a 100-year old religious organization with its roots in Christianity would take steps to drop the word "church" from its official name both interesting and enlightening. We experienced fascinating dimensions in the ways that individuals dealt with this growth and change. This story is not just about the name, but about how individuals grapple with issues of faith and tradition and religion in community. Our pending vote by the members to accept a new name not only speaks to the values of our particular congregation, but raises questions about the role of faith and religion in the wider society.

We extend an invitation to you to attend our Annual Meeting. As a part of this invitation we would provide you with opportunities to interview key members who were involved in the process and provide you with background concerning the genesis of the proposed name change, the thinking behind it, and some of the considerations and arguments that were raised during the process. We, the members of the congregation, welcome the opportunity to share our real life story with your reporter, welcome your attendance, and if you accept, we ask that you not publish any background information until after May 20th.

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