

Use of Church Name Policy

Date of Policy Approval: May 2001, July 15, 2015

Policy Updated: 3/20/2006, 5/30/2015

Policy Owner: Social Justice

As Unitarian Universalists we live out our Principles and Purposes by responding to social and economic justice issues. Public response in the name of Second Unitarian Church of Omaha expresses our core values and advances our congregation's mission. Our public response must be grounded in values of Unitarian Universalist tradition including, but not limited to, the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly Statements of Conscience, Study/Action Issues, or resolutions.

Public response from Second Unitarian Church shall not jeopardize its 501(c)(3), a non-profit, tax exempt status. The Social Justice Committee is responsible for keeping abreast of IRS regulations concerning:

- issue advocacy (educating and mobilizing congregants),
- lobbying (supporting or opposing specific pieces of legislation, ballot initiatives, or constitutional amendments),
- and political campaign intervention (supporting or opposing candidates for public office or political parties).

In general, IRS regulations allow issue advocacy with no limit; lobbying is limited to 5% or less of total amount of money (of annual budget), staff, and volunteer time needed to run an organization (up to 1,000 hours/annually is allowed for our congregation, based on 2015 calculation); political campaign intervention is not allowed.

Public response does not bind our individual members to the position or prevent them from expressing personal views.

Examples of public response include “speaking” in the form of oral testimony, use of electronic distribution lists, social media, banners carried in public parades/rallies, letters to the editor or public officials, or signage on church grounds.

Individual committees and staff may speak for themselves but must receive permission from the Board to speak in the name of Second Unitarian Church of Omaha. This does not apply to the Minister.

To request Board permission, fill out the [Application to Speak for or Represent the Church in Public](#) form.

1. The Board reviews all requests. If the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the request is clear, the Board shall act accordingly.
2. If, however, the Board is unclear on the appropriateness of a particular use of the Church name, the Board shall seek feedback from the congregation as a whole. This can be done through Town Hall Meetings, surveys, phone calls, or any other means that is appropriate for the case in the Board's judgment.

3. If the feedback from the congregation on the appropriateness of the use of the Church name is clear, the Board shall act accordingly. If the feedback from the congregation is not clear, or is significantly divisive among the Church membership, the Board shall call a Special Congregational Meeting, in accordance with Article 6 of the Church bylaws. The use of the Church name will be on the agenda, and a vote shall be taken. The vote of the congregation shall be the final word on the use of the Church's name.

References:

- UUA Real Rules: <http://www.uua.org/action/realrules>
- Second Unitarian Church Master Communications Policy online at 2uomaha.org