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PRESS RELEASE

Historical Name Change Reflects Truth and Justice

December 20, 2020, Louisville, KY__ In recognition that the name of the congregation should change to reflect their values rather than a man whose actions are antithetical to the same, members of Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church have voted to change their name to **All Peoples**. This remains affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Congregation. The mission and principles of the church remain unchanged.

The name “Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church” was originally adopted by the church at formation in 1960. Since that time, history around this founding father has become more complete - reflecting greater understanding that his values and his actions were not in alignment, even by the standards of the time. Through conversations with allies and accountability partners, the congregation began to understand that by operating under this name, they were perpetrating harm against African American people.

"All Peoples" denotes every racial, ethnic, religious, gender, age or other category of humankind imaginable. When Thomas Jefferson referred to the "people" in the line from his Declaration, he meant only one kind of person: white, male, Christian, property owners of American allegiance and West European ancestry. By adopting "All Peoples," we can transcend Jefferson's world view and signify our commitment to universal fellowship and genuine inclusion. Changing our name does better communicate that intention, but perhaps even more important are the lessons we've learned along the way about letting go of the old, fostering empathy, trusting each other, and embracing a better version of ourselves.

Board President Deborah Novgorodoff observes, “Members had a vision of joining together as a force fighting for justice and equality in Louisville and in the world. In our desire to work in solidarity with oppressed people, it became clear that changing the name of our church was a necessary step in our commitment to justice.”

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