

Vetting the Name Possibilities

10-09-2022

For the latest responses, the Naming Sub-Committee has tallied the six most favored names. They are listed below in alphabetical order.

We are now in the stage of the vetting process. In this process we list the strengths and challenges of each name, based on the criteria shared at the congregational meeting last spring. That criteria helps us ask and answer the question of: which names will potentially help us best express and fulfill our vision, communicate our ministry and mission, and connect with others to become a part of a growing church? A copy of that criteria is attached on the last two pages of this document.

As part of the vetting process, we also: (1) list what the name itself means and what we hope those words will mean and communicate about us and our mission and ministry to visitors and our community; (2) how does it align with the church's vision; (3) possible acronyms; (4) possible domain names; (5) how do the name possibilities sound to youth; and (6) what are the results if a someone were to attempt to find us by googling our name. We would expect that no name will perfectly fit all the criteria, and that each name will have its own set of strengths and challenges.

On the following pages, you will find a summary of that vetting process for each of the six name choices.

✓ = checked as positive - the name met that criteria in a positive way

▼ = caution sign - the name did not meet that criteria or there is a potential negative associated with that criteria

△ = neutral - there is not necessarily a strong pro or con for the name for that criteria

The "Expressed Meaning" or "Subtext" refers to, what does naming a church this name convey to people; what message are we trying to share with our community using these words in the name; what message do we hope the unchurched will hear.

The Youth Insights were from asking the youth in the Youth Group and the Confirmation Class for their thoughts and impressions of the six possible names.

Vision Statement:

For All to be Connected in a Living Relationship with the Loving God.

Discipleship Statement:

*As a disciple of Christ, I am well grounded in faith when I am....
outwardly **serv**ing, upwardly **worshiping**, inwardly **growing**, together **connecting**
all to the Body of Christ.*

The Six Top Possibilities

Better Together United Church of Christ

Conrad Weiser United Church of Christ

Spirit United Church of Christ

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

St. Paul-Zion United Church of Christ

United Church of Christ of Robesonia

Better Together United Church of Christ

Expressed Message/Meaning:

- ✓ Being connected is better than being apart. Life is better, faith is better, when we are connected to one another and to God through His church.

Vision Alignment:

- ✓ **Yes**
This name aligns with and supports our vision, our vision statement, and discipleship statement, as well as with the UCC tag line.

Positives:

- ✓ Supports the church vision
- ✓ Free from church jargon
- ✓ Works ok as an acronym
- ✓ Communicates a Positive Message (both externally and internally)
- ✓ Relevant & Timeless Meaning
- ✓ Agrees with our theology
- ✓ Unique for the area
- ✓ Good word association
- ✓ Geographically unbound
- ✓ Can be graphically depicted
- ✓ Only two words long, and common words that can easily be spelled
- ✓ Neutral to both parent congregations

Challenges:

- ▼ May lead some to think only of the two churches being better together, which is time and situation limited, and therefore will need to be intentional about sharing with our community that we mean “we all” are better together when connected to God through His church.

Neutral:

- △ Perhaps some redundancy with “together” and “united”

Youth Insights:

- Impressions:
well-liked in general
- Stated:
brings us together

Possible Domain Names & Abbreviations:

BTUCC.org

Google Search:

Nothing of concern when googling BTUCC, Better Together, or Better Together Church. Most common responses refer to songs, marriage, and the book we have been using for this process.

Conrad Weiser United Church of Christ

Expressed Message/Meaning:

- ▼ Does *not* convey a faith message

Vision Alignment:

- ▼ **No**

This does *not* inherently support the vision or mission statements.

Positives:

- ✓ Free from church jargon
- ✓ Works ok as an acronym
- ✓ Not redundant
- ✓ Unique name for a church
- ✓ Only two words long, and easy to spell or those in the area (“Weiser” might be difficult for others and is not identified as correct by spell checker)
- ✓ Neutral to both parent congregations

Challenges:

- ▼ Does not support the church vision
- ▼ Does not communicate a faith message
- ▼ No direct theological connection - focused on an individual person
- ▼ Not a unique name for our area (it is the name of the school district)
- ▼ Geographically bound
- ▼ Cannot be graphically depicted to convey a positive faith message
- ▼ Youth - those outside of the CW School District can feel excluded by using the school district’s name
- ▼ With rival sports games between school districts, this may be seen as a negative by outsiders, especially during certain sport seasons.

Neutral:

- ⊞ Relevant & Timeless Meaning
 - This may be positively relevant for those who have had a good experience with the school district.
 - For those who are not positively connected with the school district, this may not be relevant or positive.
 - This is a historic figure, which links us more to a past, than it does to speak to the present or future vision.
- ⊞ Neutral word association (positive attributes are attributed to the man Conrad Weiser, but there is no positive faith based message inherent in this name)
- ⊞ Based on a human person that is not directly related to the Christian faith, but was a Christian.
- ⊞ It is not gender neutral, as this would be naming the church with a man’s name. Concern around gender based names was noted in some of the naming responses and may be seen by some as not inclusive, but others might not see gender as an issue.

Youth Insights:

Impressions:

might be exclusive to those outside of the Conrad Weiser School District

Stated:

Too long

What if we did “Scouts UCC”? [meaning instead of Conrad Weiser UCC]

I like that it is the same name of the school district that I am in

Too many things in this area already named after that guy
exclusive (does not include kids from other school districts)

Possible Domain Names & Abbreviations:

CWUCC.org

Google Search:

Nothing of concern. Primarily the school district appears; secondarily the man; and third the homestead. A number of businesses that note that they are in the Conrad Weiser School District.

Acronym: Central Women's University Career Club (CWUCC), Central Washington University Computer Center (CWUCC), & CWUCC is an acronym for Compatible With Universal Channel Clamp

Spirit United Church of Christ

Expressed Message/Meaning:

- ✓ We seek to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit in our daily decisions. We are united as one by the Holy Spirit. We are baptized by water and the Spirit. Our baptism is sealed by the spirit. Being filled with Spirit, conveys an energy that moves us to action.

Vision Alignment:

- ✓ **Yes**

In the sense of being one in the Spirit and in seeking for others to share in the oneness of the Spirit, this name aligns with and supports our vision, as well as we are trusting in the Spirit for our future.

Positives:

- ✓ Supports the church vision
- ✓ Communicate a Positive Message
- ✓ Relevant & Timeless Meaning
- ✓ Agrees with our theology
- ✓ Unique for the area
- ✓ Good word association
- ✓ Non-redundant
- ✓ Only one word long, and a common word that can easily be spelled
- ✓ The domain name could potentially be sprucc.org, which we already own, and would not need to set up a new website, church and staff email, or other media links to the church
- ✓ Neutral to both parent congregations

Challenges:

- ▼ SUCC does not work as an acronym. SPRUCC works ok, but not perfectly as people often pronounce that as “SPRUCE.”
- ▼ Acronym SUCC does not have good word association, and therefore if choosing this name, we would not use an acronym.

Neutral:

- ⬆ “Spirit” is not free from church jargon
- ⬆ The Holy Spirit cannot directly be depicted graphically. However, the Holy Spirit is often symbolically depicted as flames or a dove.
- ⬆ “Spirit UCC” is unique; although having “spirit” as a part of a church name is not unique.

Youth Insights:

Stated:

Sounds good

The only bad thing is the acronym “SUCC”

Possible Domain Names & Abbreviations:

SPRUCC.org

“SUCC” would not be a good abbreviation due to its pronunciation. It also is a slang in the Urban Dictionary that we might not want associated with our church.

SpiritUCC.org is available

We might not want to abbreviate this name, and this is a short name, so we might not need to shorten it.

Google Search:

“SPRUCC” already has an established presence by St. Paul’s UCC on the internet, which helps people get our church’s website and Facebook page faster when doing a web search.

There are many negative results for SUCC.

“Spirit UCC” leads to positive results of our denomination and other UCC churches that either have “spirit” in their name or in their description.

“Spirit” leads first to Spirit Airlines. Other results include: definition of spirit (primarily in regard to a human’s soul), a 2002 Disney movie called “Spirit” about a horse, and other businesses with “spirit” in the name.

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

Expressed Message/Meaning:

- △ The Apostle Paul was a Jewish Pharisee, a Roman citizen, and a Jewish-Christian. He was born as Saul and went through a name change when he came to believe in Jesus as the Christ. He was highly educated in Judaism, Greek philosophy, and multi-culturalism. He wrote the majority of our New Testament. He is known as the great evangelist, emphasizing bringing Christianity to non-believers. He worked toward the unity of Jewish-Christians with Gentile-Christians. His teachings include that all should be knit together as the Body of Christ, that all Christians should be continually growing in their faith, that those who are idle in their participation in the church should be lovingly warned and removed until they repent, that Christians should change themselves to better reach the unchurched (rather than expect others to change to become a part of the church), emphasized salvation by grace through faith, and humbly acknowledge the limits of his own knowledge.

Vision Alignment:

▼ No

The words "Saint Paul" does *not* inherently communicate the vision or mission of the church; however, his teachings and his example of course do.

Positives:

- ✓ Agrees with our theology
- ✓ Geographically unbound
- ✓ Not redundant
- ✓ Already has a positive meaning for most, including an intangible positive word association with this name
- ✓ Already known in a positive light in our community
- ✓ Would be able to use the current St. Paul's electronic media, and build upon the established electronic foot print of our website, Facebook page, YouTube Channel, Instagram, and email.
- ✓ Would be able to use the current St. Paul's building signs (cheaper, quicker, easier)
- ✓ Only two words long, and common enough to be easily spelled (there is a little ambiguity if "Saint" or "St.")
- ✓ In St. Paul's past merger, the merger successfully involved using the name of the younger congregation for the name of the new congregation (as St. Daniel's was about 10 years older than St. Paul's). That was a different time, under different circumstances, but does give us a positive example of that possibility.

Challenges:

- ▼ Communication of Vision: Although the Apostle Paul is a key person in the history of the Christian church, and he models a primary focus on evangelism (with additional foci on discipleship growth and stewardship), his name does not directly communicate the church's vision. However, it can strengthen our message internally, when communicating, "As the person for whom we have named this church has taught us, we as disciples of Christ and as the church are to....."
- ▼ uses church jargon
- ▼ may be theologically confusing — in the UCC we do not canonize saints, so why is the title "saint" used?
- ▼ Not unique to our area. "St. Paul's" is the most common name for UCC churches in the PSEC. In addition, it is a very common name for area churches of other denominations, for which we sometimes receive phone calls by those calling the wrong church.
- ▼ Cannot be graphically depicted to convey a positive faith message (St. Paul's UCC does not currently use images of St. Paul to depict the message we are trying to convey about who we are).
- ▼ The use of "Saint" in the name is not timeless, as for younger generations it is seen as an old thing to do.
- ▼ Is biased toward one of the two parent congregations.
- ▼ Using a former name may make it more challenging to communicate how the "new growing church" is different than the former church and how being a disciple of Christ in the new church is different than membership in the former church.
- ▼ Using a former name could increase the chances of some of our members saying one of the following *deadly phrases*, as such we need to be extra vigilant in holding one another accountable if choosing this name: "We have always done it this way," "We have never done it this way," and "But this is my church."
- ★ A special consideration with this name, is that, as we form a new identity together as equal members of a new church, we will need to be clear in distinguishing the "new" St. Paul's from that of the "parent" St. Paul's.

St. Paul's United Church of Christ *continued.....*

Neutral:

- △ The name "Paul" does not inherently communicate a positive message; however, it is about a mostly positive person in Christian history, and it does not inherently communicate a negative message. Paul himself would be the first to admit that he is a flawed person who sees but dimly.
- △ Relevant & Timeless Meaning is somewhat neutral for this name. Using saints to name a church does not directly convey a relevant message to the issues of today. However, as a Biblical character, Paul continues in a timeless way as long as the church continues. The Apostle Paul wrote the majority of the New Testament, making his writings very relevant to those within the church.
- △ The word association is mostly good. However, Paul's writings are sometimes wrongly used to suppress people and support "isms" in our society, for which we need to be sure that our voice is more determined than those negative voices in sharing correct and good interpretation of the writings of Paul.
- △ Works ok as an acronym. People tend to pronounce SPRUCC as "spruce", which results in them not being able to quickly find our church on the internet.
- △ This is naming the church after a human person.
- △ It is not gender neutral, as this would be naming the church with a man's name. Concern around gender based names was noted in some of the naming responses and may be seen by some as not inclusive, but others might not see gender as an issue.

Youth Insights:

Stated:

Feels like we aren't accepting fully (meaning not fully accepting members from both congregations)
I didn't pick because that would be the same as what one of the churches is right now

Possible Domain Names & Abbreviations:

SPRUCC.org

"SPUCC" was already taken

Google Search:

"SPRUCC" already has an established presence by St. Paul's UCC on the internet, which helps people get our church's website and Facebook page faster when doing a web search.

"St. Paul's" is a very common historic name for churches and church organizations, and therefore leads you to a variety of St. Paul's churches and schools.

St. Paul-Zion United Church of Christ

Expressed Message/Meaning:

- * For the “St. Paul” half of this name, see the above.
- △ For the “Zion” half of this name: Zion is the place where you find God and God’s people. It is a holy place you are to go to worship, and out of any other physical place, it is to be the most important place in our lives. Biblically Zion generally refers to the city Jerusalem, but also to Judah, the people of Jerusalem, the people of God, the place of God’s throne, where the 144,000 saved will stand with the Lamb of God, to where the Messiah will return and will once again return it to a beautiful city, and from where salvation will begin. The etymology of the word means: dry place, hilltop, mountain ridge, or fortress.
- ▼ Instead of communicating one unified straight-forward meaning, this combination name gives two divergent complex meanings with church-jargon words.

*Special Note:

The above is without an apostrophe “s”, for two reasons: (1) it is theologically inappropriate and incorrect to have a possessive word other than “God” to precede Zion; and (2) it would be inappropriate in bringing two churches together to have the possessive form of one congregation’s name precede the non-possessive form of the name of the other congregation, as grammatically it could be seen as possessively hierarchical (i.e. that is “Timmy’s Ball”). The word “and” is not placed between the two, as that communicates that there are two things (“this and that” or “Timmy and ball”), rather than one new unified thing.

Vision Alignment:

▼ No

This name does *not* inherently convey the vision or mission of the church.

Positives:

- ✓ Some of the same positives as “St. Paul’s UCC”
- ✓ Agrees with our theology (the name Paul and Zion are both found in the Bible in mostly positive terms)
- ✓ Not redundant
- ✓ Already has a positive meaning for most
- ✓ Already known in a positive light in our community
- ✓ Mostly equal in regard to both parent congregations (one proceeds the other).

Challenges:

- ▼ many of the same challenges as “St. Paul’s UCC”
- ▼ uses church jargon
- ▼ The acronym might be pronounced “spaz”, which is experienced as offensive by some.
- ▼ People used to using SPRUCC.org might not notice the difference with SPZUCC.org and thereby not get to our website and other social media connections.
- ▼ may be theologically confusing — in the UCC we do not canonize saints, so why is the title “saint” used?
- ▼ Not unique to our area. “St. Paul” and “Zion” are commonly used names.
- ▼ Cannot be graphically depicted to convey a positive faith message.
- ▼ In regard to support of vision: a hyphenated name implies that there is not complete oneness and full commitment to a new singular identity as one church.
- ▼ “Us and them” language has been extremely common when using the names of the former churches to describe who it is that we are now seeking to be.
- ▼ Using former names may make it more challenging to communicate how the “new growing church” is different than the former churches and how being a disciple of Christ in the new church is different than membership in the former churches.
- ▼ Using former names may make us more susceptible to saying *last words of a dying church*: “We have always done it this way” or “We have never done it this way.”
- ▼ Commonly, when combining names, one of the name eventually becomes used more than the other. Local examples include: St. John’s (Hains), Salem Belleman’s, St. John’s Gernant’s, St. John’s (Hill), and Bausman Memorial.
- ⊕ Special considerations with choosing a name for the new church that utilizes the name of both former churches: (1) being sure to treat new members to both churches as equal members, regardless if they do or do not have roots in one of the former churches; (2) it may lead to thoughts of $1+1=2$, rather than the seeking of all the membership to be $1+1=3$ and intentionally reaching out to and connecting that third group of people aspect it may be the same as one of the former churches is, as we form a new identity together as equal members of a new church, we will need to be clear in distinguishing the “new” St. Paul’s from that of the “parent” St. Paul’s.

St. Paul-Zion United Church of Christ *continued.....*

Neutral:

- △ Although the Apostle Paul is a key person in the history of the Christian church, and he models a primary focus on evangelism (with additional foci on discipleship growth and stewardship), his name does not directly communicate the church's vision
- △ The name "Paul" does not inherently communicate a positive message; however, it is about a mostly positive person in Christian history, and it does not inherently communicate a negative message.
- △ Relevant & Timeless Meaning is somewhat neutral for this name. Using saints to name a church does not directly convey a relevant message to the issues of today. However, as a Biblical character, Paul continues in a timeless way as long as the church continues. The Apostle Paul wrote the majority of the New Testament, making his writings very relevant to those within the church.
- △ The word association is mostly good. However, Paul's writings are sometimes wrongly used to support "isms" in our society, for which we need to be sure that our voice is more determined than the negative voices in sharing correct and good interpretation of the writings of Paul.
- △ Three words long; each word on its own is easy to spell; how they come together, what symbol joins them, what order, and "Saint" or "St." are potential challenges; as is the challenge of not shortening it in conversation by dropping one of the two halves
- △ Geographically neutral. Although, this name does not bind us to a physical place in Berks County, it does refer to a physical place, and does lead to an emphasis of people coming to the physical building as opposed to our vision of being sent out.
- △ In regard to support of vision: whereas the Apostle Paul as the great evangelist teaches us to go out and change and adapt ourselves to reach people, Zion is the place to where people go.
- △ It is not gender neutral, as the first half is a man's name. Concern around gender based names was noted in some of the naming responses and may be seen by some as not inclusive, but others might not see gender as an issue. The second half of this name is not associated with a gender.

Youth Insights:

Stated:

- Sounds good, because it puts them [the two church names] together
- Feel like it separates us, instead of *really* bringing us together
- Like we're just stuck together, but not *actually* together

Possible Domain Names & Abbreviations:

SPZUCC.org

potentially use St. Paul's current domain of SPRUCC.org

Google Search:

- "Zion" leads to Zion National Park, as well as references to the Biblical references about Zion.
- "Zion UCC" and "Zion Church" lead to a variety of churches
- "St. Paul-Zion" leads to many online references of St. Paul AME Zion Church, it also leads to other churches with a combined St. Paul-Zion name.

United Church of Christ of Robesonia Robesonia United Church of Christ

Expressed Message/Meaning:

- ✓ We are Christian, we are united, and we are a church, the Body of Christ.
- ✓ When the UCC merger took place, this is what all four former bodies could agree upon when saying who they were.
Does show a strong connection to our denomination.

Vision Alignment:

- △ Neutral
The name is certainly not counter to the vision, but it does not communicate anything more about the vision than any other name that might also include “United Church of Christ.” It does stress the importance of being “united” with the “church” of “Christ,” which does resonate with our vision.

Positives:

- ✓ Supports the church vision
- ✓ Works ok as an acronym (uccr.org is taken, but rucc.org is still available)
(nothing overtly negative pops up when searching that acronym).
- ✓ Agrees with our theology
- ✓ Good word association
- ✓ Non-redundant
- ✓ The words are easy to spell, does not effectively add any length or any more words to spell than the other possible suggestions
- ✓ Mostly neutral to both parent congregations (including “Robesonia” makes it less neutral)

Challenges:

- ▼ Not unique for the area (other churches have “UCC” and the name of a town associated with their name)
- ▼ Geographically bound
- ▼ Cannot easily be graphically depicted as something unique to our congregation.
- ▼ With “Robesonia” in the name, we will need to be that much more intentionally diligent to see our primary mission field not just Robesonia, but also Womelsdorf (and Wernersville and surrounding areas).
- ▼ In choosing a name that is focused on bringing two together, we need to be that much more encouraging and vigilant in remembering and acting upon that we are not seeking $1+1=2$, but rather $1+1=3$, as we are tasked with how to bring in that third group of people.

Neutral:

- △ Seemingly, the primary reason for choosing this name is that it is *neutral* - not too far from who we are, not too far to who we hope to become and be
- △ Perhaps some redundancy with “together” and “united”
- △ Supports the church vision
- △ Communicate a Positive Message (both externally and internally)
Because all of the names include “United Church of Christ,” this name does not communicate anything more than any of the other names. However, it does emphasize that we do not wish for other words to get in the way of our mission of uniting people to Christ through the church. If there is a focus on “united” past tense that can be negative (we brought our churches together, we are done, now we can rest would be negative); focus on “uniting” in the present and future tense that we are with untiring zeal uniting people to God through the church can be a very positive message.
- △ Free from church jargon - no overly “churchy” words, but no additional words beyond the denomination
- △ Relevant & Timeless Meaning - the words themselves will hopefully always be relevant and timeless; however, the seemingly main reason for choosing this name is to help derive a neutral name for this moment in time.
- △ The strong connection to the United Church of Christ is overall positive; however, for some outside of the church or from non-denominational backgrounds, there can be suspicion and hesitancy to join denominational churches and this name does not provide an additional identity piece to connect beyond the denomination.

United Church of Christ of Robesonia *continued.....*

Youth Insights:

Stated:

Okay name, but members are also from Womelsdorf
exclusive [meaning, it says “Robesonia” and not “Womelsdorf” nor does it include other towns]

Possible Domain Names & Abbreviations:

RUCC.org

uccr.org is already taken by United Camps Conferences and Retreats

rucc.org is available

Google Search:

Nothing of concern. There are lots of organizations that have the acronym in that name. When googling “United Church of Christ,” the result is our denomination and affiliated churches, organizations, ministries, etc. When googling UCCR, there is United Church of Christ Resources, United Camps Conferences and Retreats in CA, and other businesses. In googling RUCC, the primary result is the USDA’s Rural-Urban Continuum Codes, as well as Rugged Urban Classic Chic fashion, and RUCC is another denomination in (primarily in South Africa) affiliated with the International Federation of Christian Churches, Reading Ukraine Community Center (in Europe), and Redlands United Church of Christ.

By Any Other Name

A Discernment Process for the Name of Our New Church

Here is the good news, God is not scratching His head in heaven wondering, “What potential name would be good for this new church? I’m not sure. I hope they come up with something.” God already knows what name(s) would further Christ’s ministry in our community and bring us more fully together as his disciples, and what names would not be as good. God wants us to know, as well. All we need do is pray, keep our focus on the vision of evangelism outreach and growing discipleship, follow a healthy discernment path, communicate well, and listen.

A few important pieces of advice from Rev. Josh Blakesly of Love In Action UCC, who went through a process of renaming their church during the pandemic: (1) be prayerful; (2) focus on the vision, mission, and inviting others in; (3) involve youth; and (4) have fun with the process. His church found this process to be fun.

What are we aiming for in a name?

Positive Characteristics Wanted in a Name

+ Supports the Vision

As cute as panda bears might be, if our vision has nothing to do with pandas, “Panda UCC” might not make for a good name.

+ Free from church jargon

A name that appeals to the non-churched whom we are striving to welcome, would be a name that does not need explanation to know what it is that we are talking about. If you need a seminary education or a confirmation class education to understand it, it is probably not a name that will support the vision and be inviting to the non-churched. For example “Gaudete UCC” is perhaps a very joyful name for a church, but without a seminary education or studies in Latin, the average person won’t know what that word is, what it means, or how to pronounce it. Similarly, names such as “Immaculate Conception,” “Transfiguration” (but not transformation), “Ascension,” “St. Bartholomew,” “Zwingli” all require pre-existing insider information.

+ Work well as an acronym

We do not want to write out “United Church of Christ” all the time; we will want to use “UCC.” Plus in a texting and bumper sticker world, everyone is using acronyms and abbreviations all the time, so we want to make sure that the new name works well with common abbreviations. For example, one of the names that “Love in Action UCC” turned down was “Sanctuary UCC,” because when you pronounce the acronym, that name “SUCC.”

+ Communicate a Positive Message (both externally and internally)

A good name is one that is appealing to the unchurched in our community, for which we are fishing as disciples. What words are welcoming, inviting, including, understandable, etc.? What names have negative or exclusive connotations? For example “Open Doors UCC” would probably be more appealing and inviting than, “We’re Better Than You UCC.”

A good name is one that both helps the community to know something positive of what to expect of the new church, and helps remind the members of what we are all about and are to be doing.

Two real examples: (1) Love in Action UCC - the name communicates the appealing message to the outsider that they will see love in action in this church, and the name reminds the members that they are to be participating in their church in such a way that people see the love of God in their actions; (2) Living Hope UCC - the name communicates the appealing message to the outsider that you will actively find hope if you come here, and reminds the members that if they are living their faith well they are sharing the living hope of Jesus Christ through their church.

+ Relevant & Timeless Meaning

A good name should lead people to hear that we are connected in a relevant way to life, that they will find a relevant experience here, and should be something that does not fix us in a moment in time.

For example, “Eight Track Player UCC” would not be a “timeless” name, nor perhaps would, “Two Became One UCC.” “SPAZY Church” works for now, but 20 years from now might not have the same appeal.

+ Theological Congruence

A good name should have congruence with our Reformed Protestant theology and UCC doctrines.

For example: “Priesthood of All Believers UCC” would have congruence, “Immaculate Conception UCC” might not, nor would “Hell’s Angels UCC.”

- + Uniqueness for the Area
 - A good name is one that is relatively unique for the area.
 - For example, we probably do not need a fourth “Trinity” church in the Conrad Weiser School District area.

- + Good Association
 - It is recommended to do a Google web search on the name that is being considered. Is the word association on the internet positive, negative, or neutral? If there are sufficient negative word associations, that might not be a good name for the church.
 - For example, if you searched “Crypts and Blood” on Google, pages of information about “Crips and Bloods” street gangs, and so that might not be the best name for a new church.

- + Spelling, Complexity, & Length
 - It is helpful if a name is relatively easy to spell, not overly complex, and not too long.
 - For example, “The Holy Apostolic United Church of Christ in Adulation of Mary’s Immaculate Conception, Annunciation, and Assumption” might not be the best name (for a number of reasons).
 - “Floccinaucinihilipilification UCC” is also not a great name, especially as our new church will be about important ministries within our community and people’s lives (and not a great acronym). Another example, in regard to spelling, “Galilee UCC” would potentially be better than “Gennesaret UCC.”

- + Non-Redundant
 - A redundant name can be confusing.
 - For example, “Christ’s Uniting Church of the United Church of Christ” might be too redundant, as would, “The Inviting, Greeting, Welcoming UCC”.

- + Geographically Unbound
 - It is helpful if a name is not bound to particular geographical setting.
 - For example, if I lived in Myerstown, would the name “The United Church of Christ for the Womelsdorf/Robesonia Area,” lead me to think maybe I should look at the churches in Myerstown first? Or, if named “Weiser UCC,” would that lead kids in Wilson, SV, & Tulpehocken school districts to feel less welcome?

- + Graphics/Logo
 - It can be helpful if the name or part of the name can be graphically depicted.
 - For example, a heart and cross could be used for “Love UCC;” it might be more challenging to graphically represent “St. Thaddeus UCC.”

- + Building Consensus
 - It is helpful if the process to discerning a name builds consensus to affirmation. To the extent possible, the process will hopefully culminate into something in which there aren’t “winners” and “losers,” but a collective process where we have discerned well one of the best names we could come up with, where the runner up choices were pretty good, too.
 - In the case of two churches forming one church together, it will be important that it does not feel like there is a “winner” and “loser” of the former congregations. Therefore, “St. Paul’s UCC” nor “Zion UCC” potentially might not be good names in this regard.

- + Youth
 - Be sure to involve the youth of the church:
 - (1) They will see things differently than adults
 - (2) They will often be able to think more freely about names (less encumbered by the past than adults)
 - (3) Reminds the adults that our new church is future-oriented. It is not for us to retire into, but for new life in future generations to spring forth, live, grow, and flourish. It is for future generations.

- + Building Excitement
 - Are we motivated by the name? Or, does the name lull us to sleep like a very long sermon (Acts 20:7-11).
 - The naming process should be fun! Have fun with it!