



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY
Assembly Standing Committee

12-14 November 2021

DOCUMENT 15

Title	Online Gathering for Worship with Holy Communion
Type of Paper (Information/Decision)	For decision
Assembly or ASC Minute	ASC Minute 21.10.02 approve the extension of permission for Uniting Church in Australia Congregations to hold online gathering for worship with Holy Communion in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Assembly Standing Committee to the end of November 2021
Consultation	
Purpose	To consider extending the approval of permission for online gathering for worship with Holy Communion until the matter can be considered at the 16 th Assembly reconvened meeting.
Rationale & Findings Summary	See the report
Attachments	Nil
Proposal/s	The Assembly Standing Committee: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. approves the extension of permission for UC Congregations to hold online gathering for worship with Holy Communion in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Assembly Standing Committee until the reconvened meeting of the 16th Assembly2. requests the Associate General Secretary, in consultation with Advocates and Panels of relevant Circles of Interest, bring a report about the permanent approval of online gathering for worship with Holy Communion to the March 2022 ASC. If relevant it should also include proposals and rationale for the consideration of the 16th Assembly at its reconvened meeting in 2022.
Submitted by	Colleen Geyer Assembly General Secretary colleeng@nat.uca.org.au ; 0411 333 167

Online Gathering for Worship with Holy Communion

As per the UCA Constitution Clause 38, the Assembly has determining responsibility in matters of worship. At its March 2021 meeting, the ASC agreed to extend the extension of permission for Uniting Church Congregations to hold online gathering for worship with Holy Communion until November 2021.

Australia is currently moving out of lockdowns in various states. Restrictions on the gathering for worship in person still remain in some places, with no firm understanding of when all congregations will be able to meet for worship in person and at full capacity.

Therefore, it would seem prudent to extend the permission currently available to UCA Congregations.

However, continuing to extend permission also brings up questions of how long the ASC should continue to do this. It also raises the question of whether the ASC or the Assembly, while recognising the importance of celebrating Holy Communion in person in a worship context, should allow the online gathering for worship with Holy Communion on a permanent basis.

At its recent meeting, the Northern Synod resolved:

PROPOSAL 10
Regarding Online Communion

That the Northern Synod asks UCA Assembly to allow Holy Communion online to continue as an option beyond November 2021.

CONSENSUS

Rationale:

Assembly will soon decide again about online Communion. We think it is a good idea to let people do it online always (permanently), instead of just during COVID-19. We think it is a good idea to leave online Communion as an option for everyone if they need it. As an example, people living in remote areas are not often able to have communion in person.ⁱ

The resolution also expresses what other UCA Ministers and members have indicated in informal conversations with Assembly staff.

As the Assembly has determining responsibility for matters of worship, it would be appropriate for a proposal to be brought to the Assembly regarding whether the permanent approval of online gathering for worship with Holy Communion is given.

ⁱ This resolution is in plain English, which the Northern Synod is committed to using as far as possible.