

1           **To Reject and Condemn the Practice of Virtual (online) Communion**

2   **Resolution 2-02**

3           WHEREAS, The churches of the Lutheran Confession have diligently and  
4 respectfully followed the practice of communion in the midst of a gathered local  
5 congregation served by local pastors who are “servants of Christ and stewards of the  
6 mysteries of God,” (1 Cor. 4:1) as was handed down by Jesus to St. Paul and the first  
7 Apostles and to us; and

8           WHEREAS, These local pastors “are to be found trustworthy” (1 Cor. 4:2) and  
9 have vowed “to administer the holy sacraments in accordance with their divine  
10 institution,”<sup>1</sup>; and

11           WHEREAS, Our Lutheran Confession teaches specifically regarding Holy  
12 Communion:

13                   [83] But this “blessing” or the recitation of the Words of Institution of Christ  
14 by itself does not make a valid sacrament if the entire action of the Supper, as  
15 Christ administered it, is not observed (as, for example, when the consecrated  
16 bread is not distributed, received, and eaten but is instead locked up [in the  
17 tabernacle], made into a sacrifice, or carried around in a procession). [84] On  
18 the contrary, Christ’s command, “Do this,” must be observed without division  
19 or confusion. For it includes the entire action or administration of this  
20 sacrament: that in a Christian assembly bread and wine are taken, consecrated,  
21 distributed, received, eaten, and drunk, and that thereby the Lord’s death is  
22 proclaimed, as St. Paul presents the entire action of the breaking of the bread  
23 or its distribution and reception in 1 Corinthians 10:16 [85] In order to  
24 preserve this true Christian teaching on the Holy Supper and to avoid and  
25 eliminate many kinds of idolatrous abuses and perversions of this testament,  
26 this useful rule and guide is taken from the Words of Institution: nothing has  
27 the character of a sacrament apart from the use [*usus*] instituted by Christ or  
28 the divinely instituted action [*actio*]. (That is, when Christ’s institution is not  
29 observed as he established it, there is no sacrament.) This rule dare not be  
30 rejected in any way, but it can and should be followed and preserved in the  
31 church of God with great benefit.<sup>2</sup>; and

32           WHEREAS, It is not possible to provide in-person pastoral care or complete the  
33 “entire action or administration” of the sacraments “in a Christian assembly” when

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<sup>1</sup> Supplement to the Diploma of Vocation

<sup>2</sup> Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). *The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Solid Declaration: Article 7 Concerning the Holy Supper, pp. 607–608). Fortress Press.

34 members of the congregation participate remotely using the internet or other  
35 electronic means; and

36 WHEREAS, The sacraments were instituted by Christ to destroy doubt and bring  
37 the certainty of His forgiveness; and

38 WHEREAS, “Virtual” or “online” communion, as it has been variously called, is a  
39 rejection of proper pastoral care, negates the ability to practice the immediate  
40 Pastoral oversight of confession of sins and faith, breaks the “useful rule and guide”  
41 established by our Lutheran Confession, and creates uncertainty, doubt, and a  
42 division of the local gathered body of believers and a division in practice between  
43 congregations; and

44 WHEREAS, The Council of Presidents unanimously adopted the resolution: “To  
45 Encourage Advocating In-Person Communion,”<sup>3</sup> wherein the final resolved  
46 encourages congregations and pastors “to refrain from the practice of online  
47 communion,”; therefore be it

48 *Resolved*, That the Pastors of the Montana District provide a careful Biblical and  
49 catechetical instruction to their congregations regarding Holy Communion giving  
50 attention to the duties of a pastor and that of the congregation in this matter; and be  
51 it further

52 *Resolved*, That the congregations of the Montana District be encouraged to  
53 clearly and unequivocally reject and condemn the practice of virtual (online)  
54 communion by teaching members of the specific dangers, and be it further

55 *Resolved*, That the President of the Montana District (the Ecclesiastical  
56 Supervisor), seek information from all Montana District congregations about this  
57 practice and begin specific discussions to dissuade any congregation of this district  
58 that is considering, teaching, or practicing virtual (online) communion; and be it  
59 finally

60 *Resolved*, That the Montana District memorialize the Convention of the LCMS  
61 to broaden its scope to include every District and adopt this at its 2023 convention.

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63 Chair: Jim Pierce

64 Secretary: Sam Grayl

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<sup>3</sup> “To Encourage Advocating In-Person Communion.” lcms.org, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod,  
<https://files.lcms.org/file/preview/6CAF272D-692A-4653-9005-A5C931CD045B?> June 13, 2022.