

1 **To Reaffirm the Biblical Practice of Gathered Local Congregations with**
2 **Rightly Called Local Pastors and To encourage congregations to practice in-**
3 **person worship, teaching, and administration of the sacraments**

4 **Resolution 3-02**

5 WHEREAS, The churches of the Lutheran Confession have consistently
6 maintained membership rosters for the sake of good order and pastoral care; and

7 WHEREAS, Local congregations have long striven to work with one another
8 fraternally and for the sake of good order in regard to transfers and changes in
9 membership, as well as honoring church discipline when such has been necessary;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Pastors are instructed to “shepherd the flock of God that is *among*
12 you, exercising oversight,” (1 Peter 5:2, italics added) and they have vowed to
13 “perform the functions of a pastor in an evangelical manner; to aid, counsel, and
14 guide members of all ages and social conditions; to visit the sick and the dying; to
15 admonish the indifferent and the erring,”¹; and

16 WHEREAS, A pastor, who is not physically *among* his people, is not able to
17 shepherd the flock by visiting the sick and the dying or to exercise oversight or to
18 administer the sacraments in person; and

19 WHEREAS, The emerging practice of congregations seeking and receiving as
20 members those who are geographically distant, especially when there is a local
21 congregation near such individuals, creates confusion and division in
22 congregations, circuits, and districts while generating many questions about
23 pastoral oversight and visitation, care at the time of death, and Christian burial,
24 etc.; and

25 WHEREAS, There are already a number of “churches”² in the quickly expanding
26 online world of remote pastors who teach and guide virtual members; and

27 WHEREAS, A growing number of Christians are choosing to join virtual
28 churches and participate exclusively online, and our Lutheran congregations are
29 not immune from this temptation to abandon the traditional gathered body of
30 believers as recorded in Acts 1:12-14; and

31 WHEREAS, The writer to the Hebrews teaches, “let us consider how to stir up
32 one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit

33 of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing
34 near,” (Hebrews 10:24-25); therefore be it

35 *Resolved*, That the Pastors and congregations of the Montana District of the
36 LCMS be encouraged to study God’s Word and our Lutheran Confessions to be
37 reminded what it means to be a Christian congregation and a member of the body
38 of Christ; and be it further

39 *Resolved*, That the congregations of the Montana District of the LCMS, be
40 encouraged to limit online worship, ~~except in exigent situations when attendance is~~
41 ~~not possible~~; and be it further

42 *Resolved*, That congregations of the Montana District of the LCMS be
43 discouraged from practicing remote membership and virtual congregations; and be
44 it further

45 *Resolved*, That the congregations of the Montana District of the LCMS, be
46 encouraged to teach our members the specific dangers of remote and virtual
47 worship attendance; and be it finally

48 *Resolved*, That this resolution be forwarded to The Lutheran Church—Missouri
49 Synod for adoption at its 2023 convention.

50 Christ the King Evangelical Lutheran Church,
51 Billings

52 ¹ Supplement to the Diploma of Vocation

53 ² For example: Life.church/metaverse

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Signatures

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58 Pastor Dan Rinderknect, Chair

59 [name and office of submitting entity officer #1]

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61 Pastor Michael Musegades, Secretary

62 [name and office of submitting entity officer #2]