

1 **Resolution 1-03 To Reject Internet Communion as Contrary to the Word of God**

2 **(Derived from Overtures 1-03 and 1-09.)**

3 WHEREAS during the COVID-19 pandemic, congregations of our Synod started a novel practice -
4 “online” or “virtual” Communion, which is unknown to the Scriptures and had heretofore not
5 been practiced in the Synod, and

6 WHEREAS the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) and the systematic
7 theology departments of both seminaries issued opinions that unequivocally and unanimously
8 argued against the practice of online or virtual communion, and the Council of Presidents has
9 passed a motion for all members of Synod to “refrain from the practice of online communion,”
10 and

11 WHEREAS the CTCR affirmed its 2006 opinion on DVD consecration and applied its rationale to
12 online or virtual communion, putting forward the arguments - among others - that this practice:

- 13 1. Severs the consecration of the sacrament through the words of institution from the
14 distribution and reception of the sacrament;
- 15 2. Potentially and unnecessarily sows doubt in the minds of communicants as to whether
16 the elements received are in fact the sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood;
- 17 3. Vitiates the instrumental role of pastoral care in the administration of the sacrament
18 through the lack of pastoral oversight, preparation of communicants, and admission
19 to the table; and
- 20 4. Detracts from the corporate assembly of God’s people around the Lord’s Supper as an
21 expression of the common confession of Christ and unity in the faith, and

22 WHEREAS the Lutheran Confessions (Formula of Concord, SD 7) indicate that the proper use of
23 the sacrament includes a unified consecration, distribution, and reception, none of which are to
24 be severed from the other, yet the practice of online or virtual communion would interject a
25 spatial, temporal, and technological gap between the consecration and the distribution and
26 reception, and

27 WHEREAS the Sacrament of the Altar serves to strengthen faith against all doubts (Augsburg
28 Confession XIII) and is “given for a daily pasture and sustenance, that faith may refresh and
29 strengthen itself so as not to fall back in such a battle, but become ever stronger and stronger”
30 (Large Catechism 5.24), while it is incumbent on all faithful ministers of the Gospel to remove
31 all obstacles that create doubt regarding what Christ offers in this sacrament or detracts from it
32 (Augsburg Confession XXIV), and

33 WHEREAS the pastoral office is responsible for oversight of the administration of the sacrament
34 in accordance with the keys conferred upon the pastor by virtue of his call (Augsburg
35 Confession XIV, Walther’s Theses on the Ministry V and VII), and

1 WHEREAS no theological justification for the novel practice of online or virtual communion has
2 existed within the Synod or the Lutheran tradition nor has been advanced in the circles
3 advocating for it on the basis of the principally relevant texts (*sedes doctrinae*) of Holy Scripture
4 or the Lutheran Confessions, and

5 WHEREAS the Sacrament of the Altar has been established by our Lord according to his words
6 of institution, commanding literally “This keep on doing” (Luke 22:19, 1 Cor. 11:24-25) which
7 indicates that this use of the sacrament should be kept according to his institution and that
8 “nothing is a sacrament without the appointed use” as set forth by those same words of
9 institution (FC 7.73) and

10 WHEREAS the uniformity in practice from the foundation of the Synod has long been
11 considered desirable (1847 Constitution, Art I.3, II.4, IV.5, V.14) and remains an endeavor
12 toward which congregations are encouraged to strive (Constitution Art. II.7); therefore be it

13 RESOLVED that the Southern Illinois District reject the practice of online or virtual communion
14 as it is contrary to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions, and let it be further

15 RESOLVED that the Southern Illinois District urge congregations practicing online or virtual
16 communion to cease this divisive practice, and be it finally

17 RESOLVED that the Southern Illinois District submit this resolution as an overture to the 2023
18 LCMS Convention.