



Orientation Session

Synod 2021



The Basis of Union

The Basis of Union suggests at least three ways we live as the Uniting Church that are significant:

1. The congregation is the heart of our life, being described as “the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church”, the people gathered for worship, witness and service.
2. Government in the Uniting Church is entrusted to representative women and men, who gather in the various councils of the church to seek God’s will. Those councils are the Congregation, Church Council, Presbytery, Synod and the Assembly.
3. Each Council of the church is charged with particular responsibility and, in recognition of the fact that God can speak through any council of the church, each council is to recognise the limits of its authority and respect the life of other councils. We are not a hierarchical church, but a church in which the various councils share together and work co-operatively in the ministry of oversight.



Responsibilities of the Synod (through the Boards)

- Provides resources to support the ministry and mission of congregations and presbyteries.
- Enables the congregations and presbyteries to do those things which are better done together.
- Takes decisions that nurture the well-being of the church within its bounds and which promote and encourage the mission of the church. In particular, the Synod has oversight of ministerial education, placements, community services, finance and property.
- Represents the church in the political life of New South Wales and the ACT.



Membership of Synod is comprised of:

- The President and Secretary of the Assembly
- The Moderator, the immediate past-Moderator, the Moderator-elect, the Secretary of the Synod and the Property Officer
- Ministers and lay people elected by Presbyteries
- The Executive Directors and Chairpersons of the four boards
- Two candidates elected by the candidates
- Ministers of the Word, Deacons and Deaconesses who are in Synod or Assembly Placements, and are appointed by the Synod Standing Committee.
- Co-opted members
- Members associated with a particular session or presentation



Synod will do a number of things:

- Worship – Opening Service of Worship and Closing of each day
- Bible studies as part of the worship
- Procedural matters
- A report from the Synod Standing Committee.
- Written reports from Boards, Presbyteries, Schools and Synod Committees. This is for accountability, and to let members know what is happening.
- A report on the work of the Assembly
- Proposals will be considered and can come from Boards, the Standing Committee, Presbyteries or members of the Synod.
- Elections and appointments.
- The Celebration of Ministry service is a celebration of ministerial service
- Provide an opportunity to build communities



Manual for Meetings

It should be possible to:

- Simply hold up a yellow card to indicate to the Moderator that you have a question or wish to make a comment to assist the discussion
- Hold up a blue or orange card to indicate how you feel about what is being said:
- Blue indicates that you are “cool” towards what you are hearing and orange to indicate that your feelings are “warm”
- Vote on a proposal by holding up orange for support and blue for lack of support
- Consensus means all the voting members of the meeting have supported the proposal
- Agreement means that after discussion and possible amendments to the proposal those who held up a blue card agree that their concerns have been heard and will agree to accept the proposal

Refer

<https://victas.uca.org.au/download/56/synod-meeting/1382/manual-for-meetings-2>



Working in Discernment Groups

- Your Discernment Group will be provided to you at the Induction on 13 February 2021
- You are asked to be in that Discernment Group when proposals will be discussed following a presentation
- Your Group Leader will give direction to the group about the task they have
- Ensure that all members have a respectful and equal say. For guidance on this refer to Respectful Communication Guidelines in your Synod papers.



Synod Safe Place Chaplains

- On the recommendation of the Synod Associate Secretary, the Moderator appoints Safe Place Chaplains for the needs of the members of Synod. These names will be listed on the Synod App.
- The Safe Place Chaplain for a session will be located at the back of the Great Hall at a small table. Conversations will normally be between the Chaplain and that person.
- Occasionally they may involve the Associate Secretary if there is an issue of safety or conduct.
- Additional information on the Assembly policy can be found in your Synod papers.

