



Presbytery Rules

WPR 1.11 FAITH COMMUNITIES

*Endorsed by Pastoral Relations Committee 09/2020
Adopted by Standing Committee 18 November 2020*

PREAMBLE

WPR 1.11.01 Faith Communities are regulated according to UCA Regulations (as at January 2015) 3.9.2.

These rules have been developed to clarify the expectations of the Presbytery in respect of Regulation 3.9.2. (c), relating to the “oversight of the Presbytery”.

RATIONALE

WPR 1.11.02 Whilst the paucity of Regulations regarding Faith Communities allows flexibility and creativity in the formation of these communities, well-understood rules should apply:

- Each will need to comply with expectations of the Presbytery to ensure that the values of the Uniting Church SA are adhered to.
- Some of these communities will require an Australian Business Number (ABN) and will need to register as a charity with the Australian Charities and not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).
As they will not be legal entities in the own right, the Presbytery and the Synod of South Australia will need to be able to access all relevant information that impacts the Church.
- Compliance in matters of work, health and safety, employment law and financial management will also necessitate mutually agreed expectations.

PROCESS

- WPR 1.11.03
1. A grouping of people seeking to be recognised as a Faith Community will write to the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee making this request. Included in the letter will be:
 - a. reasons for the request
 - b. a stated willingness to work with the polity and ethos of the Uniting Church in Australia
 - c. a brief history of the group
 - d. any supporting material about the mission, vision and values of the group.
These may include statements of purpose, behavioural covenants.
 - e. an explanation regarding the financial arrangements for the group.
Where appropriate this will include a budget and a financial statement.



2. The Pastoral Relations Committee will appoint people to liaise with the group to accompany them through the recognition process and to maintain regular contact with the Faith Community.
3. The liaison people will bring a report to Pastoral Relations Committee who will then make recommendations to the Presbytery Standing Committee.
4. The requesting group may be invited to make a presentation to the Pastoral Relations Committee and/or the Standing Committee as part of this process.
5. Presbytery Standing Committee makes the determination.
The Pastoral Relations Committee will have pastoral oversight of the Faith Community.

RECOGNITION OF A FAITH COMMUNITY

- WPR 1.11.04
1. On the recommendation of the Pastoral Relations Committee, the Standing Committee will make the decision whether or not to recognise a Faith Community.
 2. Where recognition is granted it will normally be for a five year period.
 3. Recognition beyond the initial period will only take place after a review/consultation on the life and witness of the Faith Community.
 4. This review/consultation would normally provide opportunities for consideration of whether a Faith Community should become a congregation, remain the same, make significant changes to its mission, leadership and structure or cease to be recognised.

OVERSIGHT MECHANISM

- WPR 1.11.05
1. The Pastoral Relations Committee will normally act on behalf of the Presbytery with regard to oversight of Faith Communities.
 2. Other lines of accountability may be established through a Presbytery Minister, or a designated Ministry Centre within the bounds of the Synod of South Australia.
 3. Where these other lines of accountability are established it will always be the case that the annual report to the Presbytery will be provided to the Pastoral Relations Committee and that reviews/consultations will be held under the auspices of the Presbytery.
 4. A Memorandum of Understanding will be prepared between the Presbytery and each Faith Community (see 1.11.6 below).



5. Along with details about the life and witness of the relevant Faith Community, the annual report from each Faith Community will include a copy of the audited financial statement of the Faith Community.

These statements are to be prepared as detailed in Regulation 3.8.7 relating to “Congregations, Councils or other bodies”.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A FAITH COMMUNITY

- WPR 1.11.06
1. A Faith Community will be expected to “order its life under the oversight of the Presbytery, so as to encourage its participants, develop its mission, and be accountable for its resources, and may seek the guidance of the Presbytery about possible ways to do so.” (Regn 3.9.2.(c))
 2. A Faith Community will contribute to the life of the wider church in some way or demonstrate its connectedness to the wider church in clear ways.
 3. A Faith Community may designate a participant to attend meetings of the Presbytery (Regn 3.9.2 (d)).

This person is able to attend and participate in meetings of the Presbytery but is not a voting member.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

- WPR 1.11.07
- A Memorandum of Understanding between each Faith Community and the Presbytery will be prepared detailing:
- a. The Faith Community’s acknowledgement of its adherence to the Basis of Union and the Constitution of the Uniting Church, the Covenant with First Peoples, UCA Safe Church policies, and its commitment to deepen its members discipleship of Jesus Christ.
 - b. The names and contact details of a leadership team of three people, one of whom is to be nominated as the Treasurer.
 - c. Commitment to keep appropriate records of finances, financial decisions and property matters and to provide a report annually to the Presbytery or at other times when requested by the Presbytery.
 - d. Agreement to comply with all Regulations of the Uniting Church pertaining to the management and administration of property where it is the case that the Faith Community has beneficial or custodial use of a property.



Extract from the Regulations

FAITH COMMUNITIES

- 3.9.2**
- (a) A Presbytery may recognise as a Faith Community a grouping of people who;
 - (i) are seeking to explore the implications of faith in God, gathering in order to serve the community and/or nurturing one another in faith; or
 - (ii) are worshipping together and seeking to relate to the Church for nurture and support, and
 - (iii) apply to the Presbytery to be recognised as a Faith Community.
 - (b) A Faith Community may include confirmed members of the Church who hold their membership in a Congregation or who have their membership recorded with the Presbytery.
 - (c) A Faith Community will order its life, under the oversight of the Presbytery, so as to encourage its participants, develop its mission, and be accountable for resources, and may seek the guidance of a Presbytery about possible ways to do so.
 - (d) A Faith Community may appoint leaders from its participants and may designate a participant to attend meetings of the Presbytery.
 - (e) A Faith Community may apply to the Presbytery to be recognised as a Congregation. A Presbytery may request a Faith Community to make such an application.
 - (f) A Presbytery may cease to recognise a Faith Community.
-