

PROPOSAL 2

FREE USE OF CHURCH FACILITIES FOR FUNERALS THROUGH THE UNITING ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA (CONGRESS)

Covenanting Commission

That the Synod:

1. Note the long held commitment to the Covenant between Congress and the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia
2. Write to all Church Councils within the Western Australian (WA) Synod encouraging them to offer the free use of their premises when requested by Congress for the purposes of funeral related activities.

Rationale

As an expression of the Covenant relationship the Synod of WA holds with Congress, the Covenanting Commission would like to see congregations open the use of their facilities free of charge, if required, to Congress for funeral services and gatherings when available.

We have seen the positive impact this action has on grieving families in the Aboriginal community when congregations have chosen to waive regular hire costs.

Funeral costs are, unfortunately, an all too common pressure on Aboriginal families given the lower life-expectancy rates still faced by Aboriginal people. It is therefore a great blessing to be able to provide the Aboriginal community access to Uniting Church facilities in their time of grief. It is often the case that Aboriginal families struggle to pay for funeral expenses and this small gesture is very welcome relief at a stressful time. It is a special and well-received ministry of reconciliation.

While the Uniting Church does not have a formal arrangement with Congress in regards to waiving regular fees for use of facilities, the Covenanting Commission views the act as an expression of our covenant relationship with Congress.

We hope that congregations will welcome this initiative as an opportunity to be a blessing to the WA Aboriginal community in a small but important way.

Mover: Rev Robert Jetta

Secunder: Rev Steve Francis

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