

SYNODICAL SERVICES I

Chair: Rev. Peter Jonker
Reporter: Rev. Drew Sweetman

I. Response to Appeal 1: Councils of Five Classis Toronto Churches and Classis Toronto

A. Materials

1. Appeal 1, Supplement
2. Communication 10, Supplement

B. Summary

Following Synod 2024, the leadership of Classis Toronto informed the churches of the decisions of Synod 2024 as they related to limited suspension and signing the Covenant for Officebearers. As the October 9, 2024 meeting began, delegates who were from churches under limited suspension and delegates who did not sign the Covenant for Officebearers were not allowed voting privileges. An overture from a member congregation proposed seating as delegates with full voting privileges those from churches under limited suspension. That overture was adopted by Classis Toronto. A second overture from another congregation proposed seating as full delegates those who did not sign the Covenant for Officebearers. That overture was also adopted by Classis Toronto.

Five churches from Classis Toronto (Alliston CRC; Covenant CRC, Barrie; CrossPoint CRC, Brampton; Georgetown CRC; Bethel CRC, Newmarket) joined together to appeal the decisions of Classis Toronto to adopt those overtures in opposition to the decisions of Synod 2024 (*Acts of Synod 2024*, pages 891-892, 928). The appellants are asking synod to overturn the overtures cited above that were approved by Classis Toronto and to instruct Classis Toronto to follow the decisions of Synod 2024. In addition, they are asking synod to 1) declare that all meetings of Classis Toronto from the point in its October 9, 2024 meeting where the first overture was approved were and are unduly constituted and all actions after that point are invalid; 2) disallow the seating of all officebearers nominated by Classis Toronto as delegates to Synod 2025; 3) appoint an *in loco* committee to guide Classis Toronto into compliance.

We want to thank both the appellants and the respondents for meeting with our committee and for engaging with our questions. We also note our appreciation for the pastoral concerns that were raised, especially around the concerns of principle vs. pace.

C. Recommendations

1. That synod sustain Appeal 1.

Ground: The actions of Classis Toronto are contrary to the decisions of Synod 2024.

2. In lieu of the proposed remedies from the appeal, we present the following remedies:

- a. That synod declare to Classis Toronto that, by allowing officebearers from churches under limited suspension to be seated as delegates and by allowing officebearers who would not sign the Covenant for Officebearers to be seated as delegates to classis, their actions are a knowing and intentional violation of the pertinent rulings of Synod 2024 (*Acts of Synod 2024*, pages 891-892, 928).
- b. That synod instruct Classis Toronto to ensure full and immediate compliance with synodical decisions (*Acts of Synod 2024*, pages 891-892, 928).

Ground: "Decisions of ecclesiastical assemblies shall be reached only upon due consideration. The decisions of the assemblies shall be considered settled and binding unless it is proved that they conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order" (Church Order, Article 29).