

## Church Order

Chair: Rev. Jay Crossen  
Reporter: Rev. Aaron Thompson

### I. Response to Overture 11 and Overture 13

#### A. Materials

Overture 11, pp. 363-364

Overture 13, pp. 367-369

#### B. Recommendations:

1. That synod instruct all classes to reaffirm the covenant for officebearers at one classis meeting each year. The form of reaffirmation is up to the discretion of the classis. However, first time delegates to classis are to sign. This requirement replaces the requirement of Synod 2024 that all classes re-sign the Covenant for Officebearers on a yearly basis.

##### *Grounds:*

- a. There is no distinction of weightiness among the signs of reaffirmation, with each communicating the same level of agreement. Options for reaffirmation may be signing, standing, the raising of a hand, or any other observable sign as determined by classis.
- b. Re-signing the covenant does not involve remaking the covenant but is a way to reaffirm the covenant that already exists.
- c. For officebearers/classes who may be concerned about the act of regularly re-signing the Covenant for Officebearers based on the final statement – “To be signed by professors, ministers, commissioned pastors, elders and deacons *when ordained and/or installed in office*” – this provides flexibility for a classis to determine another form of reaffirmation.
- d. This matches the regularity for reaffirmation set by Synod 2024.

2. That synod encourage all classes to reaffirm the Covenant for Officebearers at each classis meeting. The form of reaffirmation is up to the discretion of the classis.

##### *Grounds:*

- a. *Encouraging* rather than *instructing* classes to reaffirm the covenant at each meeting demonstrates a posture of gentleness and hospitality by inviting them

into the joyful practice of regularly reaffirming commitment to our confessions rather than demanding it *because we say so*.

b. Scripture provides clear precedents for regularly reaffirming covenants as a valuable part of church life, such as the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

c. Each classis meeting is attended by a different grouping of delegates.

d. The practice of reaffirmation at each classis meeting is to be a celebration of that which unites us and can be observed as an act of worship.

e. This is already the practice of some classes. Synod's encouragement is an endorsement of their current practice.

3. That synod declare this to be its response to Overture 11 and Overture 13.

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