

Congregational Care and Justice

Chair: Rev. Brandon Seaver
Reporter: Rev. Michael Saville

IX. Response to Overture 10: Reaffirm Authority of Local Consistory in Baptism

A. Materials

Overture 10, pp. 357-362

B. Recommendations:

That synod not accede to Overture 10.

Grounds:

1. While Church Order (Article 55) recognizes that the administration of the sacraments in the local church is "upon the authority of the consistory," this does not preclude broader assemblies (ie. classis and synod) from addressing baptismal practices in the churches. Church Order (Article 28b) recognizes the ecclesiastical authority of a broader assembly in "those matters which concern its churches in common." Since the administration of the sacraments in accordance with the confessions and church order is a matter that concerns "its churches in common," it is the proper subject of a broader assembly's authority.
2. Synod 2024 recommended, "actions for demonstrating repentance," when churches have directly contradicted the synod's decision regarding unchastity. The actions noted are only to be viewed as indicators of repentance, and ought not to be viewed as statements - whether inferred or implied - about the authority of the local consistory granting baptism. (Acts of Synod 2024, pp. 891-92)

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