

## Church Order II

Chair: Jason Ruis

Reporter: Todd Kuperus

### ***In Loco Committee***

#### ***I. Materials***

- A. Neland Avenue CRC *In Loco* Committee Report, pp. 317-48
- B. Council of Delegates Supplement Report (section I, D), including appendix B, pp. 634, 712-13
- C. Council of Delegates Supplement Report (section I, K), including appendix E, pp. 636, 755-58
- D. Council of Delegates Supplement Report (section II, G, 5), including appendix N pp. 643, 794-95

#### ***II. Privilege of the Floor***

Paul De Vries, chair and William Koopmans

#### ***III. Recommendations***

- A. That synod adopt the following with regard to the *In Loco* Committee:
  - 1. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to the following members of the *in loco* committee: Paul De Vries, chair; and Josh Van Drunen.
  - 2. That synod instruct Neland Avenue CRC to immediately rescind any and all decisions to ordain officebearers who are in a same-sex, sexual marriage/relationship, thus nullifying any current or future terms of such officebearers.
  - 3. That synod instruct Neland Avenue CRC to uphold our shared denominational covenants and procedures as laid out in the *Church Order* and the Covenant for Officebearers.
  - 4. That synod instruct Classis Grand Rapids East to guide the Neland Avenue CRC congregation and leadership into alignment with the biblical guidelines affirmed by Synod 2022 regarding same-sex, sexual relationships.
  - 5. That synod instruct the members of the denomination to recommit themselves to the methods and processes that we have adopted in the Covenant of Officebearers and the *Church Order*.
  - 6. That synod declare the work of the Neland Ave CRC *In Loco* Committee completed
  - 7. That synod thank the *In Loco* Committee for their work.
- B. That synod create a new *In Loco* committee to continue the oversight of Classis Grand Rapids East and Neland Ave CRC in complying with the synodical decisions of 2022.

1. We recommend that at least two members of the 2022 *In Loco* Committee be included, and that the remaining members be appointed by synod.
2. Evidence of this compliance will exist of the following:
  - a. A letter of repentance by Neland Ave CRC to the churches of the CRCNA acknowledging their breaking of covenant, and seeking reconciliation.
  - b. A public written statement from Neland Avenue CRC through the Office of General Secretary acknowledging their commitment to recommendations B & C in the *In Loco* Committee Report 2023.
  - c. A public written statement from Classis Grand Rapids East through the Office of General Secretary acknowledging their commitment to recommendation D in the *In Loco* Committee Report 2023.
  - d. These documents must be completed by December 31, 2023.
3. If the new *In Loco* committee has judged that Neland Ave CRC has not met these compliance expectations, then Classis Grand Rapids East must enforce discipline of noncompliant officebearers under the supervision of the *In Loco* committee, according to Articles 82 to 84 in the *Church Order*.
4. If the new *In Loco* committee has judged that Classis Grand Rapids East has not met their compliance expectations, then no delegates from Classis Grand Rapids East will be seated at Synod 2024 and until a future synod has determined that compliance has been met.

*Grounds:*

- a. Neland Avenue CRC and Classis Grand Rapids East are important parts of the denomination and are our brothers and sisters in Christ. We want to see them restored to full fellowship with the CRCNA.
  - b. It is vital to maintain confessional unity in the CRCNA.
  - c. “Church discipline for correcting faults” is one of the “marks of the true church” (Belgic Confession, Art. 29).
  - d. “Having heard the instructions of Synod 2022, Neland Avenue CRC has determined not to comply.” (*In Loco* Committee Report 2023, Recommendation D, Ground 1).
  - e. “Classis Grand Rapids East is in the best position to disciple its congregations and officebearers, even when no formal appeal has come from a member of the congregation and even as appeals to a broader assembly are being adjudicated. The fact that this has not happened is not promoting the spiritual well-being of Neland Avenue CRC or the other churches. As of March 2023, Classis Grand Rapids East has not complied with the instruction of Synod 2022.” (*In Loco* Committee Report 2023, Recommendation D, Grounds 5 and 6).
- C. That synod declare this to be its re response to Overtures 52, 65, 72, and 78.