

Classis Grand Rapids East

Greetings, delegates to Synod 2024:

We have noted with surprise and concern the presence of Overture 26 on the agenda for Synod 2024. The overture asks synod to require a letter of repentance from the consistory of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, for defying the decisions of Synods 2022 and 2023. The action in question is the baptism of an infant brought before the congregation by the child's parents, who are legally married within a homosexual union.

While we do not dispute the occurrence of the action, we were surprised, and then we were concerned, to learn the following:

- that Eastern Avenue CRC had received no communication from the congregation in Classis Georgetown which originated the overture,
- that Classis Georgetown endorsed this overture and forwarded it to the Synodical Services Office knowing that no communication had taken place, and, further,
- that Classis Georgetown itself did not directly inform or communicate with the council of Eastern Avenue CRC.

This lacks the mutuality expected both by Matthew 18:15-17 and Church Order Article 80.

In addition, we note that local consistories are responsible for worship and the sacraments (Church Order Art. 52), that children of confessing members ought to be baptized (Art. 56), that confessing members in good standing (not under discipline) have the right to present children for baptism (Art. 59-c), and that discipline of members is the responsibility of the local consistory (Art. 81).

With the foregoing in mind, we respectfully request that Classis Georgetown rescind the overture. In the event that the overture remains on the synodical agenda, we commend the observations above for consideration by synod in its deliberations.

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Robert Arbogast, stated clerk