January 29, 2025

**Re: Overture Classis Huron from First CRC Owen Sound**

On today’s date First CRC church council voted to approve the following overture (initiated and moved by John A. Tamming, elder) and to forward it to Classis Huron.

**OVERTURE**

That synod add the following caveat to the Covenant of Office-bearers:

*Notwithstanding any past synodical decisions, if a prospective office bearer cannot bring him/herself to detest same sex intimate relationships, such a person may nevertheless i) sign this covenant in good faith; and ii) still be considered eligible for church office.*

**Background**

1. The Covenant of Office bearers must be signed by all office-bearers in the CRC.
2. The Covenant requires office-bearers to fully agree with the creeds and confessions, including the Heidelburg Catechism as formulated by the church.
3. Lord’s Day 41 of the Heidelburg Catechism mandates that we “detest” unchastity
4. Synod has deemed unchastity under Lord’s Day 41 include same sex intimate relationships (“SSR”).
5. Therefore, as it presently stands, prospective office bearers are required to detest SSR.
6. To detest is defined variously as *to loath, to hate, to despise, to feel intense and often violent antipathy toward* (eg: Merriam-Webster).

**Grounds**

1. As present, office-bearers are not just required to agree that SSR are not God’s intended plan for his children.  They are not just required to share in a theological or ethical objection towards SSR.  Rather, they are required to adopt an emotional and psychological posture of active loathing towards any and all same sex relations. It is manifestly unfair to disqualify office-bearers who cannot bring themselves to summon such antipathy towards same sex relations, either in the abstract or as entered into by their friends and family members.
2. Those who have entered into SSR in the past have often been the victims of hate and violence.  It is wrong for the church to mandate for its leaders an emotional posture towards SSR which suggest or hints at in any way violence or antipathy.

**Submitted by the Church Council of First CRC in Owen Sound, January 30, 2025**

Anita Prange Anita Prange, First CRC Owen Sound Clerk of Council