

## *The Sierra Pacific Synod Youth Committee*

# CONSTITUTION

### **Mission Statement**

We are a youth-led, inclusive group of Lutherans who lead fun, innovative retreats that seek to unify our community and encourage cultivation of faith. We are composed of high school leaders and adult assistants who strive to be , creative, and supportive disciples of Jesus Christ. We welcome all.

### **ARTICLE A - NAME**

The name of this organization shall be: Sierra Pacific Synod Youth Committee. Hereby referred to as the “Synod Youth Committee,” “SPSYC,” or “committee”

### **ARTICLE B - PURPOSE AND FUNCTION**

1. The purpose of this committee is to provide a structure through which the youth of the Sierra Pacific Synod shall be able to:
  - a. Share in the oneness of Christ by proclaiming through word, deed, prayer, and fellowship the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord.
  - b. Inspire the youth of the synod to witness to all in the name of Christ.
  - c. Assure that the voice of youth is heard in various arenas of decision making in the Church.
  - d. Encourage and support one another in participation of all the expressions of the Church.
  - e. Model and mentor participants to be innovative in ministry.
  - f. Seek to study and act on local, national, and global issues from a theological perspective.
  - g. Share an inclusive environment.
  - h. Be a place of kinship and collaboration for the youth of the Sierra Pacific Synod.
  - i. Practice being faithful stewards in the Church.
  - j. Cooperate with other boards and offices of the church, ministries, and youth-serving agencies in planning and implementing programs, publications, and events to empower young people in their faith.
2. These purposes shall be implemented through at least 6 in-person gatherings each calendar year, at least 3 of which are open to non-member youth/children of the Sierra Pacific Synod, focusing on persons in grades 3-12.

## **ARTICLE C - ORGANIZATION**

1. Authority
  - a. The Synod Youth Committee shall be accountable to the Synod Council.
  - b. Any items not provided for by this constitution shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.
  - c. This constitution may be amended at any meeting of the committee by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the delegates present.
  - d. Amendments to the constitution shall also be ratified by the Synod Council.
2. Youth Members
  - a. There will be no less than 13 and no more than 31 youth members of the committee.
  - b. Are active members of an ELCA congregation within the geographic boundaries of the Sierra Pacific Synod, and will affirm their baptismal covenant.
  - c. Must be in grades 9-11 at the time of their election.
  - d. Will adhere to the SPSYC Covenant.
  - e. Will not be denied right of membership or restricted from participation in the committee on the basis of race, ability, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, primary language other than English, or socioeconomic status.
  - f. Will contribute to the ministry of the committee by actively participating in the planning and leadership of events.
  - g. Will build collaborative relationships among the youth of the synod, focusing primarily on the congregations of their home conference when applicable.
  - h. Will vote at Synod Assembly.
3. Youth Member Positions
  - a. There will be up to 18 Youth Members on the committee who are elected from the conferences of the Sierra Pacific Synod.
    - i. Priority will be given to elect two youth from each of the 9 conferences in the synod.
    - ii. Priority will be given to represent more than one congregation in each conference.
    - iii. Priority will be given to youth whose home congregation is within the bounds of the conference from which they are being elected.
    - iv. Will be responsible for relationship building and outreach in the conference from which they are elected, or to which they are appointed.
    - v. Will serve a one year term beginning on the date of their election.
    - vi. May be re-elected for up to two consecutive terms.
  - b. There will be up to 9 youth who are elected from populations that are under-represented in the ELCA
    - i. Will publicly identify as a person of color, primary language other than English, LGBTQ+, or a person who is differently abled.

- ii. Will be responsible to one of the nine conferences of the Sierra Pacific Synod for relationship building and outreach, though the conference assigned may not be their home conference.
    - iii. Will serve a one year term beginning on the date of their election.
    - iv. May be re-elected for up to two consecutive terms.
  - c. One youth will be elected to the position of President.
    - i. Will convene and facilitate the meetings of the committee, and make a public report of the committee at the Synod Assembly.
    - ii. Will have served at least one year on the Synod Youth Committee at time of election.
  - d. One youth will be elected to the position of Vice President
    - i. Shall act in the absence of the president, assuming the responsibilities of the President.
  - e. One youth will be elected to the position of Secretary
    - i. Shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings and make those minutes accessible to the Synod Youth Committee within three weeks of the meeting.
    - ii. Shall send advance notices reminding all members of upcoming meetings.
  - f. One youth will serve as the Synod Council Youth Representative
    - i. This youth member is elected to serve on the Synod Council at the Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly.
    - ii. They will liaise between the Synod Council and the Synod Youth Committee.
    - iii. They are elected and governed by the Synod Council constitution.
- 4. Adult Assistants
  - a. Shall be utilized to assist, guide, and advise the Synod Youth Committee in its ministry and to assist the implementation of any meetings or events sponsored by the committee.
  - b. Are active members of an ELCA congregation within the geographic boundaries of the Sierra Pacific Synod, and willing to affirm their baptismal covenant.
  - c. Must be 21 years old at the time of their election or appointment.
  - d. Will adhere to the SPSYC Covenant.
  - e. Will not be denied right of membership or restricted from participation in the committee on the basis of race, ability, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.
  - f. Will contribute to the ministry of the committee by actively participating in the planning and leadership of events.
  - g. Will build collaborative relationships among the congregational leaders of the synod, focusing primarily on the congregations of their home conference when applicable.
  - h. Will be nominated by the Executive Committee as needed and appropriate and approved by the Youth Committee by a two thirds vote.
  - i. Will have terms renewed annually by a simple majority vote.

## 5. Adult Assistant Positions

- a. No more than 9 adults will be appointed from the territory of the Sierra Pacific Synod.
- b. All Adult Assistants will be members at large with voice and without vote.
- c. One Adult Assistant may be elected to the position of Adult Chair.
  - i. Exercises general supervision of this organization's activities and affairs in collaboration with the Executive Committee and other Adult Advisors.
  - ii. May manage the budget, disbursement, and receipt of funds for the Synod Youth Committee.
  - iii. Is responsible for the appropriate and requisite paperwork for the committee and its participants.
  - iv. May vote to break a tie in any circumstance.

## 6. Executive Committee

- a. The members of the executive committee shall be the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, and the Adult Chair.
- b. Will be responsible for facilitating committee member participation including but not limited to excused absences, adherence of the covenant, and public representation of the Synod Youth Committee.
- c. Must be able to complete one year of service in their position.
- d. Are elected to a one-year term, with the option to be re-elected to a second and final term.

## **ARTICLE D - ELECTIONS**

1. The Synod Youth Committee shall conduct an annual general election.
  - a. All congregations in the Sierra Pacific Synod are invited to participate.
  - b. Each congregation shall be limited to 2 youth and 1 adult vote.
  - c. Members of the Executive Committee will not vote in the general elections with the exception of breaking a tie.
  - d. All youth of the synod shall have voice.
  - e. The elections may occur virtually, or in person by secret ballot.
  - f. The whole assembly at the time of the election shall cast votes for all youth and adult member positions with the exception of the Synod Youth Representative.
  - g. The youth elected from underrepresented populations shall be elected before the youth who are elected from conference territories.
  - h. A majority cast on any ballot shall elect. In the case of no election after the first ballot, the names of the three persons receiving the highest number of votes shall be entered on the second ballot. In the case of no election on the second ballot, the names of the two persons receiving the highest number of votes shall be entered on the third ballot. In the case of no election on the third ballot the youth members of the Executive Committee shall cast votes in the fourth ballot. In the case of a tie in the Executive Committee vote, the Adult Chair shall cast the deciding vote.

2. Executive Committee shall be elected by the members of the Synod Youth Committee at least 24 hours prior to the annual general election.
  - a. All members of the Synod Youth Committee shall be eligible to vote.
  - b. The elections may occur virtually, or in person by secret ballot.
  - c. A majority cast on any ballot shall elect. In the case of no election after the first ballot, the names of the three persons receiving the highest number of votes shall be entered on the second ballot. In the case of no election on the second ballot, the names of the two persons receiving the highest number of votes shall be entered on the third ballot. In the case of a tie, the Adult Chair shall be the deciding vote.
3. Concerning Vacancies
  - a. Any member of the Synod Youth Committee will forfeit their membership if they are unable or unwilling to fulfill their duties, adhere to the SPSYC Covenant, or participate in at least 5 meetings or events in the timeframe of their term, and thus declare their position vacant.
  - b. The Executive Committee shall be empowered to ask any member to end their service before the completion of their term should the member cease to fulfill their duties, adhere to the SPSYC Covenant, or miss more than one meeting or event without an excused absence, and declare their position vacant.
  - c. In the instance of a vacancy, the Synod Youth Committee shall be empowered to appoint a successor to complete the term. Such a successor shall meet the eligibility requirements of the position and be eligible for election to the same office at the next convention if they are within the proper guidelines established by this constitution.

#### **ARTICLE E - SYNOD**

1. The Bishop may appoint one of their associates to be the Bishop's Advisor to the Synod Youth Committee.
  - a. The Bishop's Advisor will not be a voting member of the Synod Youth Committee.
  - b. The Bishop's Advisor may be a participant of all synod youth activities.
2. All youth members shall be voting members of the Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly.
3. Adult Advisors to the youth committee shall not be voting members of the Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly based on their membership or participation in the Synod Youth Committee.
4. Youth from the Synod Youth Committee may represent our synod at assemblies and meetings of the ELCA.
5. The Synod Youth Committee shall present a yearly report to the annual Synod Assembly.
6. Financial support for this Synod Youth Committee shall be the responsibility of the Synod Council budgeting process.
7. The Synod Youth Committee may organize additional funding beyond the Synod Council budgeting process for the operations of their ministry.

# CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

1. The Executive Committee may appoint an IT Leader. The IT leader will be an existing member of the committee. They will be responsible for the technical needs of the committee's functions including but not limited to: tech for retreats, social media accounts, website, and other duties as needed or appropriate.
2. The Executive Committee may appoint a Music Leader. The music leader will be an existing member of the committee. They will be responsible for musical leadership during retreats.