

## OUR ORGANISATION

### The Local Branches

The local branches are the basis of Church of Sweden Youth.

Anyone who shares our vision is welcome to join a local branch.

A local branch within a congregation may consist of only one youth group while others consist of all the children and youth within the congregation, for example the children's choir, children's groups or a teen bible study group.

### The Districts

The Church of Sweden is divided into 13 dioceses. These 13 dioceses are paralleled by what we call our 13 districts. The district's function is to be the link between the local branches and the national organisation. The districts are also responsible for helping the local branches with such things as information, and leadership education. Furthermore, the districts arrange camps and other opportunities for the members to meet.

### The National Level

Church of Sweden Youth has a national organisation the purpose of which is to support the districts. The national level is also responsible for making sure that the guidelines decided on by the Major Annual Meeting are followed in the two-year period between each such meeting, for example by initiating projects, co-operation with other organizations, publications and leadership education.

The national level consists of a president, a national board, elected at the Major Annual Meeting, and a national office. The office is located in Uppsala and employs 11 people.

The Major Annual Meeting is held every second year and it is the legislative assembly of Church of Sweden Youth. The local branches are invited to send 1-3 representatives, according to their number of members.

## A PLACE FOR GROWTH

Church of Sweden Youth is the organisation for children and young people within the Church of Sweden.

By becoming a member of Church of Sweden Youth you will experience Christian fellowship in every possible way. Church of Sweden Youth wants to be a place for growth where you are allowed to be yourself. And, perhaps above all, having fun while serving God!

Welcome!

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## OUR SYMBOL

Church of Sweden Youth has a common symbol, an open circle with a cross. There are several ways of interpreting the symbol but the Cross is always at the centre.

The Cross – the truth and the life. The ring around the Cross – Mother Earth, a whirlwind and a flame.

The symbol embodies the Trinity. Christ and the Cross, the Creator and creation and the Spirit as a whirlwind and a flame.

The ring is still open. This could be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, it is welcoming more people and secondly the ring is not complete since the world is not yet united.

# CHURCH OF SWEDEN YOUTH

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Salut



## INTRODUCTION

Church of Sweden Youth is a movement within the Lutheran Church of Sweden, for children and young people.

The movement is characterised by its multiplicity of activities. There are many ways to work for God by singing or playing, working with environmental issues, working with charity or renewing the forms of worship. Whatever your choices are, there is room for you in Church of Sweden Youth.

Our members are between the ages of 0 and 30, but Church of Sweden Youth also welcomes people over 30 as non-voting "adult members". Young or old – we believe everyone has a mission to fulfil. In 2008 we had about 15 000 registered members of different ages, and are reaching many young non-members through our open activities.

## BACKGROUND

Church of Sweden Youth was founded on January 1. 1993. Before this date the child and youth work within the Church of Sweden was organised by two different organisations. Gradually the organisations started co-operating and the idea of a new, single organisation started growing.

## OUR AIM AND VISION

Church of Sweden Youth is a democratic movement of children and youth in The Church of Sweden. With Christ at the centre and baptism as the foundation, we want to serve all of God's creation, and be a fellowship in the congregation in which we can grow in faith and responsibility.

### **A Democratic Movement**

Church of Sweden Youth is a democratic movement in which all members hold the right to vote and all are of equal value. We strive for a simple democratic form that increases participation and ensures that every voice is heard.

For us, democracy includes feeling safe and involved in the group, and having faith in your own abilities to contribute.

Church of Sweden Youth gives young people a voice within The Church of Sweden.

Church of Sweden Youth has two types of annual national democratic meetings. Every other year each local branch of the organisation sends



representatives to what is called the Major Annual Meeting, with a participation of about 300-500 members.

Between the Major Annual Meetings a Minor Annual Meeting is held. District representatives represent the local branches from the 13 districts, a group of about 50 members. These meetings are consultative; consequently, they have no power to act on their own.

### **With Christ at the Centre and Baptism as the Foundation**

Church of Sweden Youth has Christ as its centre where the open fellowship brings young people to faith. Worship and Bible studies are important parts of our movement. In the Holy Communion we find strength in our mission to fulfil God's creation.

For us, Jesus is an example on how to live. We strive to live in this world as disciples, who meet people in the spirit of love.

We believe we are all responsible for teaching young people about the Christian faith. We see baptism as a gift and we want to pass it on to those who are not yet baptised.

Baptism is not a pre-requisite for membership in Church of Sweden Youth but we hope that by being part of our organisation you will eventually want to become baptised.

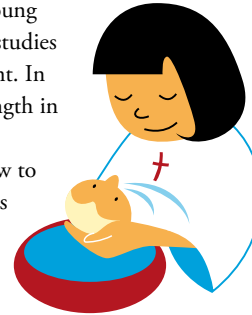
Church of Sweden Youth encourages young people to work for the renewal of worship, where young people's faith, feelings, words and music are expressed. At our democratic annual meetings or our national conventions, that are held every other year, we try to emphasise worship services created by young people.

### **To Serve All of God's Creation**

We are part of God's Creation and cannot exist without the creation in its entirety. Church of Sweden Youth deals with issues concerning the environment, peace and solidarity.

In nature we experience the beauty of God's creation and we are alarmed by the way we humans destroy what was given to us. By outdoor activities and environmental work we try to encourage young people to take responsibility and work towards a whole creation where humans live in peace with nature.

Another aspect of restoring God's creation is the reconciliation of people. Church of Sweden Youth believes that one step towards reconciliation is meeting people, both far and near.



When people meet and learn about each other a great step towards reconciliation is taken. For this reason, Church of Sweden Youth supports exchanges with fellow young people.

Our movement tries to be environmentally friendly by using products that are environmentally safe. For instance, whenever we meet we encourage people to bring their own cups in order to prevent waste by using paper cups, and other types of disposable materials.

Church of Sweden Youth is involved in the on-going debate on issues of justice, Fair Trade and how we as consumers can change the world with our everyday choices.

### **A Christian Fellowship in the Congregation**

Church of Sweden Youth is part of the local congregation within the Lutheran Church of Sweden through our local branches.

It is important that young people are involved, able to make an impact, and take responsibility in the local branches and in the congregations. In 2008 we had about 500 local branches throughout the Church of Sweden.

We encourage our older members, those between 18 and 30, to run for office in church elections. As we believe young people are important for the democracy and the decision-making process in the congregations we are active in the struggle for a rejuvenation of church politics.

### **To Grow in Faith and Responsibility**

Church of Sweden Youth provides space for growth. Children and youth have the right to act on their own terms and not solely on the terms of adults. In order to grow as Christians it is important that young people are given space for their faith and their questions on life.

We try to be innovative in the work with spreading the Bible to young people, for example through our ecumenical web site

[www.bibelsajten.nu](http://www.bibelsajten.nu) We also encourage our members to use their own words and music at worship.

We spend much effort trying to work with democracy since it is important to give young people the necessary tools for participation.

