

## **Constitution for the Rocky Mountain Synod Youth Council**

**Mission Statement:** *Youth inspiring youth, empowered by God, to be a valued voice for acceptance, change, and direction for the future of the church.*

### **Article A - Name**

The name of this organization shall be: Rocky Mountain Synod Youth Council. Hereby referred to as the "Synod Youth Council", "youth council", "RMSYC", or "RMS Youth Council".

### **Article B - Purpose and Function**

1. The purpose of this council is to provide a structure through which the youth of the Rocky Mountain Synod shall be able to:
  - a. Share in the oneness of Christ by proclaiming through word, deed, prayer, and community the gospel of Jesus Christ.
  - b. Inspire the youth of the synod to witness to all in the name of Christ.
  - c. Share an inclusive and loving environment with a focus on diversity in race, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, national origin, primary language, physical or mental ability, location, age of youth, and socioeconomic or family status.
  - d. Assure that the voice of youth is heard in various areas of decision making in the church, including but not limited to synod assembly and synod council.
  - e. Be a place for youth within the synod to express their creativity and be innovative in ministry.
  - f. Encourage and support one another in participation of all the expressions of the church.
  - g. Be a place of connection and collaboration for the youth of the Rocky Mountain Synod.
  - h. Seek to study and act on local, national, and global issues from a theological perspective.
  - 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 two in-person retreats, one of which with non-council members from middle and high school, the other being solely the council members. There will be one digital meeting each quarter for the council along with individual team meetings that shall be determined by the team.

## Article C- Organization

1. Authority
  - a. The Synod Youth Council shall be accountable to the Synod Council.
  - b. Any items not provided for by this constitution shall be determined by consensus
  - c. This constitution may be amended at any meeting of the youth council by consensus 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 fewer than 12 and no more than 20 youth members of the council.
  - b. The members are active members of an ELCA congregation within the geographic boundaries of the Rocky Mountain Synod.
  - c. Must be in grades 9-11 at the time of their election.
  - d. Will adhere to the RMSYC Covenant.
3. Will not be denied the right of membership or restricted from participation in the council because of race, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, national origin, primary language, physical or mental ability, location, age of youth, and socioeconomic or family status.
  - a. Will contribute to the ministry of the council by actively participating in the planning and leadership of events.
  - b. Will build collaborative relationships among the youth of the synod.
  - c. Will vote at Synod Assembly.
4. Youth Member Positions
  - a. There will be up to 10 Youth Members on the council who are elected to serve as representatives for each of the conferences of the Rocky Mountain Synod.
    - i. They will be responsible for relationship building and outreach in the conference from which they are elected, or to which they are appointed.
    - ii. They will serve a one year term beginning on the date of their elections. Can be re-elected for up to two additional terms.
  - b. An additional five members will be added to serve at large positions
    - i. They will serve a one year term beginning on the date of their election. Can be re-elected for up to two additional terms.
    - ii. There shall be at least 3 youth who are elected from populations that are under-represented in the ELCA who serve in the at large positions.
      1. Those who publicly identify as a person of color, LGBTQIA+, born outside of the United States, has a primary language other than English, and/or differently abled.
    - iii. There can be up to two young adults who are under the age of 21 at the time of election in the at large positions.

1. A young adult who has served their full term limit as a youth on the council can serve up to two years as a young adult on the council.
    - c. Entire council must meet at least once per quarter
5. Teams
  - a. Members of the council will be distributed across three teams: Service and Outreach, Worship and Music, and Curriculum.
  - b. Each team shall have a team leader elected by the council who has served with them in the past year.
    - i. Each team leader will be a member of the Executive Council.
  - c. Each team shall have at least one adult advisor.
  - d. Each team shall meet at least once a month.
6. Executive Council
  - a. The members of the Executive Council shall be comprised of the three team leaders, youth representative on Synod Council, and the Faith Formation Assistant to the Bishop, and one additional adult advisor from within the council.
    - i. Will be responsible for facilitating council member participation including but not limited to excused absences, adherence of the covenant, and public representation of the Synod Youth Council.
    - ii. Must be able to complete one year of service in their position.
    - iii. The youth must have served one full year on the council prior to election.
    - iv. Are elected to serve only one one-year term.
    - v. Young adults are not to be elected onto the executive council.
7. Adult Advisors
  - a. Shall be utilized to assist, guide, and advise the Synod Youth Council 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 Rocky Mountain Synod.
  - c. Must be at least 21 years old at the time of their election or appointment.
  - d. Will adhere to the RMSYC 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 Council as needed and appropriate and approved by the Youth Council by a two thirds vote.
  - i. Will have 3 terms renewed annually by a simple majority vote.
  - j. At least one adult advisor will be assigned to each of the three teams
  - k. No more than 5 adults from the Rocky Mountain Synod may serve on the council at one time.
8. Youth Representative on Synod Council
- a. One youth will serve as the Synod Council Youth Representative
    - i. This youth member is elected to serve on the Synod Council at the Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly.
    - ii. They will liaise between the Synod Council and the Synod Youth Council.
    - iii. They are elected and governed by the Synod Council constitution.
    - iv. They are a member of the Executive Youth Council.
    - v. They are required to attend all Synod Council meetings, Executive Youth Council meetings, and the quarterly RMSYC meetings.

#### **Article D - Elections**

1. Term Lengths
  - a. All terms are to be a year long.
  - b. Youth can serve up to three terms, one of which can be a term on the executive council.
2. The Synod Youth Council shall conduct an annual general election
  - a. Every effort to obtain a youth from each conference will be made.
  - b. The year 2019 will select members for the council through the Youth Council Task Force by an application process and members who have served the task force reliably.
  - c. The year 2020 will select members through the current Youth Council for the council through an application process.
  - d. The year 2021 and beyond will have each conference select a youth to serve on the council through an election process to be determined by the 2020 RMSYC.
  - e. In the instance that two or more youth for the council are selected, the one with the highest consensus will be selected to be the conference representative on the general council.
    - i. The next two youth with the highest consensus will be delegated to the “at large” positions.
  - f. “At large” positions for the youth council will be elected by the newly selected council and will include at least three members who are underrepresented in the ELCA such as:

- i. Those who publicly identify as a person of color, LGBTQIA+, born outside of the United States, has a primary language other than English, differently abled.
      - ii. These positions will also welcome up to two young adults out of high school under age of 21.
    - g. The elections may occur virtually or in person by secret ballot.
- 3. Executive Council
  - a. Executive Council shall be selected by the members of the Synod Youth Council at least 24 hours prior to the annual general election.
  - b. The Executive Council will be chosen through consensus by the Synod Youth Council.
- 4. Synod Elected youth
  - a. There shall be one youth who serves on the executive council who is elected by the Rocky Mountain Synod at the annual Synod Assembly.
  - b. This youth is installed at Synod Assembly each year as opposed to the general election held for the other council members.
- 5. Adult Leaders
  - a. There shall be up to five adult positions who serve as assistants to the youth who are selected by the Rocky Mountain Synod at Synod Assembly.
  - b. The final adult position will be the synod staff person assigned to faith formation.
  - c. Each adult leader shall serve a two year term that can be renewed twice
- 6. Concerning Vacancies
  - a. Any member of the Rocky Mountain Synod Youth Council will forfeit their membership if they are absent at either of the in person meetings or have more than two unexcused absences from any online meeting per year and thus declare their position vacant.
  - b. The Executive Council 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, 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 RMSYC 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. One adult assigned to the council will be from the RMS Office of the Bishop, currently the Assistant to the Bishop for Faith Formation.
2. One youth selected at Synod Assembly to serve on the Rocky Mountain Synod Council will be a part of the Executive Council on RMSYC.
3. All youth members shall be voting members of the Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly.
4. Adult Advisors to the youth council shall not be voting members of the Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly based on their membership or participation in the Synod Youth Council.
5. The Synod Youth Council shall present a yearly report to the annual Synod Assembly.
6. Financial support for this Synod Youth Council shall be the responsibility of the Synod Council budgeting process.
7. The Synod Youth Council may organize additional funding beyond the Synod Council budgeting process for the operations of their ministry.