



Youth and Young Adults:
Invitation to Participate as Voting Members of
the 2013 Greater Milwaukee Synod
(and future assemblies)

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At the 2009 Churchwide Assembly, amendments to the constitutions, bylaws and continuing resolutions of the ELCA were adopted to allow for expanded roles for youth and young adults in the governance in all expressions of our church, including the synod assembly. The goal is that at least ten percent of the voting members at a synod assembly would be persons who are youth (not yet 18 when elected/appointed) and young adults (between the ages of 18 and 30 when elected/appointed.) Language supporting this goal has also been incorporated into the governing documents of the Greater Milwaukee Synod.*

As the Greater Milwaukee Synod fully lives into this goal, congregations are to have conversations with the youth and young adults in their midst. Please consider electing/appointing a young person as one of your voting members if you do not already do so. Lifting up and empowering young people to serve is part of the calling of every congregation!

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN for this year's Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly?

You have the opportunity to identify youth and young adults who will represent your congregation as voting members at this year's Synod Assembly. You have the opportunity to move the Greater Milwaukee Synod towards becoming more fully the body of Christ, representing all ages and generations! (In 2012, we had 5 youth and 25 young adults attend as voting members. We also had youth and young adults attend as registered visitors).

Below, you will find information to assist you and your congregation in inviting, selecting and supporting your youth and young adult voting member for the 2013 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly.

■ A youth or young adult attending the 2013 Assembly as a voting member from your congregation; will be encouraged to sit with the members of your congregation and will have the same schedule as all other voting members, with a few minor exceptions:

- At the close of each Assembly day, youth and young adults are invited to join together to debrief the day at the meeting area beside the hotel's pool (this is located behind the lobby and is not the same as the Water Park). These debrief times will include visits from Bishop Jeff Barrow and others who are interested in our young leaders. The youth and young adults will also be given Water Park

bracelets to use during free time in the evenings.

- When youth and young adults arrive at the Assembly, they should look for the special Welcome Table for youth and young adults who are a voting members or attending as registered visitors.
- It is our hope that each youth/young adult attending the Assembly for the first time would have an adult mentor—someone who is also a voting member from your congregation and has previously attended an Assembly. This could be a rostered or lay leader. This adult's role is to support the youth/young adult during the event, answer questions, explain the business at hand, and offer encouragement for full participation.
- Make sure ALL of your congregation's voting members have copies of the schedule, reports and documents. If possible bring the congregation's voting members together before the Assembly to review the schedule, resolutions and documents which are posted at www.milwaukeeesynod.org.
- Set a date for your voting members to present a report to the congregation following the Assembly. Include your youth and young adult members!
- Youth who are 17 and younger are the legal responsibility of the congregation. Permission and medical forms and all other critical documents for responsible and safe participation are the responsibility of the congregation. They will also need to fill out the synod's medical form which can be downloaded at www.milwaukeeesynod.org.
 - Youth who are 17 and younger will be housed in a “youth block” of rooms in the hotel, which will be chaperoned by Pastor Matthew Short and Kate Mattson, the synod Coordinator for Youth and Family Ministry. Young Adults have the option of rooming in the “youth block” or in general housing. Youth and Young Adults rooming in the “youth block” will be expected to sign and honor a covenant.

Frequently Asked Questions Concerning Youth/Young Adult Voting Members:

How do we select a youth or young adult voting member?

- Follow the procedures set by your congregation. You are also encouraged to seek out and invite young persons for whom you think this would be a positive experience.
- Invite or nominate a young adult from your congregation who is home from college. What a great way to reconnect!
- Youth, ages 16-17, whom you might seek out may not be the most “visible” persons in your youth group or congregation. Who are those young people who like sense and order, are curious about how things work, ask questions, and like to make things happen?

Youth are in school and not available.

- Yes, our assembly falls at a time when some youth have finals or graduations. But for many, this is not true. Ask! With enough notice, many youth are willing to plan for a day away. Our young people are bright and involved in many activities that take them away from the classroom. A congregation may provide a letter on church stationary that many schools accept for an excused absence. Bishop Jeff Barrow is also be happy to provide a letter for schools upon request.

Will the youth understand the process for business?

- All youth and young adult voting members and visitors are invited to attend a welcome forum from 4-5pm on Thursday, May 30, 2013. Youth and young adult coordinators are planning ways for the participants to get to know each other and to learn about Synod Assembly.
- The youth and young adults will also be invited to nightly debrief sessions at the meeting space adjacent to the hotel pool, where they will be encouraged to ask questions and discuss the issues at hand.
- Young people are often some of the most articulate voting members, speaking with energy, insight, and passion on the issues at hand. They are up to the challenges of Robert's Rules of Order.
- Each congregation sends *voting members* to the Assembly not *delegates*. Each voting member does not represent his/her congregation, but rather comes together with others to make up an assembly of the church that votes its conscience in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In my former synod, the youth had their own convo along side the Assembly. Why does the GMS not provide this type of gathering?

- At baptism the assembled say, *“We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's creative and redeeming word into all the world.”*
- Our young people, like our elders and God's children in every generation, bring unique gifts, experiences and insights to the Assembly.
- Youth are the church of today – not the church of tomorrow, just like our elders are the church of today – not the church of yesterday.
- An important part of the discipleship process is mentoring and leadership development. Being an integral part of the “Big Church” is often a faith-forming and career shaping experience.

Our church has already decided on voting members, and we did not include youth or young adults.

- You are encouraged to bring along youth and/or young adults as full-time visitors. Each congregation is allowed to bring one youth or young adult as a full-time visitor. Youth or young adult full-time visitors will be able to register at a 50% discounted rate.
- Scholarships are available through the synod office to help with the \$100 registration fee for youth/young adult full-time visitors. Please contact Kate Mattson, Greater Milwaukee Synod Coordinator of Youth and Family Ministry for more information: kate@milwaukeeesynod.org or cell phone: 262-290-8931.
- They may not be voting members, but they are allowed voice during business meetings (please see attached resolution passed on March 16, 2012 and extended for the 2013 Synod Assembly), can see how the Assembly operates, and get to know other people their age who are interested in how our synod and the ELCA makes decisions. Hopefully, these same youth and young adults will be included as your congregation's voting members in 2014.

Need more information or have questions?

Contact Kate Mattson, Greater Milwaukee Synod Coordinator of Youth and Family Ministry: kate@milwaukeeesynod.org or call her cell phone number: 262-290-8931.

*Amendments and additions to the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions were approved at the Churchwide Assembly in August 2009 allowing for expanded roles for youth and young adults in the governance in all expressions of this church. The Greater Milwaukee Synod voted in June 2011 to approve the following Continuing Resolution to guide implementation for the Synod:

+S6.04.A11.

It is the goal of this synod that at least 10% of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. Then Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.