

Here is your voting card for the church election on 17 September

Sunday 17 September is the date of the church election in the Church of Sweden. You then have the chance to vote for the groups and individuals who will be making decisions about church governance, worship and activities over the coming four years. Who do you want to vote for?

----- (Inside of brochure) -----

Influence the future – vote in the church election!

What do you want the Church of Sweden to do? The church election is on 17 September. You and all other members of the Church of Sweden will then be the ones who decide on the Church of Sweden's future. All members aged 16 and over have the opportunity to vote in the church election.

Who will you entrust with making key decisions over the coming four years? How should your church fee be used? What should be happening where you live? Which stance should the church adopt? The church election gives you the chance to have your say!

Church of Sweden parishes cover the entire country and they are also found abroad. The Church is present online, in social media, through hospital chaplaincies and in many other places. Our mission is to be there for people, where people are.

The church election involves voting for nomination groups. It works more or less in the same way as voting for parties in the parliamentary elections. You have the opportunity to vote at three different levels: locally in your parish, regionally in the diocese you belong to, and nationally.

*Have you lost your voting card or would you like to know more about the church election?
Read more (in Swedish) at svenskakyrkan.se/kyrkoval*

Major events

Major events affect people's lives. When you are standing with a newborn baby in your arms, when you are in love, or when strife and disappointment hit you, when crises occur or when somebody dies. The church is a fellowship for joy and sorrow, for feeling a sense of belonging with our fellow people and with God.

The church's traditions and rites – church services, Christmas and Easter celebrations, All Saints' Day, baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals – give us space to express gratitude and joy, faith and doubt.

Vibrant cultural heritage

In Sweden there are around 3,400 church buildings managed by the Church of Sweden. Each one has something to say about faith, church services, music and architecture, local history and the people who have lived and live there. It is a unique and vibrant piece of common cultural heritage with roots stretching back more than 1000 years.

Space for children and young people

Children play a central role in the Church of Sweden, and the focus must always be on the best interests of the child. Parishes all over Sweden have a great deal to offer. This includes everything from public preschools to summer activities, choirs, singing for infants, scouts, groups for girls and boys, cafés for parents and much more.

When life is tough

The church is called to listen, provide support and take action, to give people a place where they can bring forth their experiences of vulnerability and need, and to draw attention to injustice. An important part of the Church of Sweden's social work is to offer various forms of counselling – regardless of whether you are in an acute crisis, in the midst of grief or need someone to talk to for some other reason. Deacons and clergy have a duty of confidentiality.

Peace and security

The Church of Sweden is one of Sweden's biggest development aid agencies. In a world where many people are enjoying better lives, others are still fighting to survive and to secure their rights. For this reason, the task of working in the international sphere is self-evident for the Church of Sweden. The Church of Sweden also has activities abroad. In around 45 locations all over the world, there are parishes abroad that provide a safe place where we can enjoy fellowship, attend church services and receive support.

You are needed!

There are many opportunities for those wishing to get involved. Make a donation or work as a volunteer in your parish. There is a great need for volunteers, and in many parishes, you can give your time by taking part in various types of social welfare activities. These can range from supporting people who have made their way to Sweden, making coffee or helping out in a soup kitchen, to going for walks with elderly parish residents or giving guided tours of the church in the summer. By taking care of each other, we can be the church that God calls us to be.

Fact boxes in the brochure:

- More than 40,000 children and adults were baptised in 2016.
- 3,000 of the Church of Sweden's churches are subject to special protection under the Heritage Conservation Act.
- Duty priests are available to take your call. You can call 112 between 9 pm and 6 am every day.
- Each day, the Church of Sweden gives out food parcels to homeless and vulnerable people.
- The Church of Sweden Abroad has activities in more than 100 places all around the world.
- More than 5,000 choirs in the Church of Sweden engage almost 100,000 people.
- The Church of Sweden encounters around 30,000 15-year-olds each year as confirmation candidates.
- The Church of Sweden is part of the ACT Alliance, which consists of 143 faith-based aid organisations all over the world.

The information on the voting card has been translated into a number of different languages. You can find them at: www.svenskakyrkan.se/kyrkoval/languages

----- (Voting card) -----

Voting card – Church election, 17 September 2017

How to vote in the church election

Members of the Church of Sweden aged 16 or over may vote in the church election. The voting takes place in more or less the same way as for a general election. To vote in a polling station (see address above), you must take your voting card or ID with you.

Early voting, 4–17 September

– In locations all over Sweden

You can vote early all over Sweden from 4–17 September. At www.svenskakyrkan.se/kyrkoval you will find a map with all the polling stations and their opening hours. If you have lost your voting card, you should primarily contact your parish, but you can also get a new voting card in other locations. In such case, you will need to provide identification.

– Postal voting

Another way to vote early is to vote by post. For this, you will need a postal voting packet, available from your pastor's or parish office. Mail your vote so that it reaches the diocese no later than Friday 15 September. You must also send your voting card.

– Proxy voting

Proxy voting is similar to postal voting. It can be an option for those who cannot get to the polling station themselves. You need a postal voting packet to vote by proxy (see above). Your proxy will need to take your voting card with them when they submit your vote at your polling station or a ballot drop-off point in the parish/group of parishes.

Voting on election day, 17 September

– At your polling station

The voting card states at which polling station you can vote and its opening hours (see above). You should have your voting card or ID with you.

– At a ballot drop-off point

If you are outside your parish on election day, you can vote at a ballot drop-off point. In that case, you need your voting card.

Are you abroad?

People registered in the population register in Sweden but resident abroad at the time of the election can vote by post (see above). The postal vote should be sent to the Central Board of the Church of Sweden so that it arrives no later than Wednesday 13 September. A new voting card can be issued if necessary. This is sent via the parish abroad.

Your vote affects how the Church of Sweden is governed

There are three elections that make up the church election:

Parish Assembly election – your local election

You elect representatives to the Parish Assembly in your parish/group of parishes. The framework for the activities in your local area is determined here. *White ballot papers.*

Diocese election – regional

The Church of Sweden is divided into 13 dioceses. The Diocesan Council is the highest decision-making body in a diocese. The main task of the diocese is to support the parishes in their activities and management through expertise in several areas. *Pink ballot papers.*

General Synod election – national

The General Synod is the Church of Sweden's highest decision-making body, with 251 members. It makes decisions on joint and overarching ecclesiastical issues. *Yellow ballot papers.*

What can I vote for?

The church election involves voting for nomination groups and their candidates. Groups and candidates are listed at: www.svenskakyrkan.se/kyrkoval. The groups provide the current information about their election platforms. You can vote for three specific candidates by putting a cross against their names on the ballot paper. This increases the candidate's likelihood of being elected and being able to represent you. If you do not put a cross against any specific person's name, your vote will go to the nomination group.

If you have lost your voting card

If you have lost your voting card, you can get a new one (known as a duplicate voting card). Contact your parish in the first instance. You can also place an order via www.svenskakyrkan.se/kyrkoval or the Church of Sweden's Election Service, tel. +46 (0)18-16 96 00. Your new voting card will be sent to the address at which you are registered in the population register.