

# Act on Church of Sweden Act

Swedish Code of Statutes  
**SFS 1998:1591**

Unofficial translation of: Lag om Svenska kyrkan

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Promulgated 26 November 1998

Pursuant to a decision by the Riksdag the following is prescribed.

## **The Church of Sweden as a religious community**

**Section 1** The Church of Sweden is an Evangelical-Lutheran religious community that manifests itself in the form of parishes and dioceses. The Church of Sweden also has a national organisation.

**Section 2** The Church of Sweden is an open national church, which through a democratic organisation and the ministry of the Church carries out nationwide activities.

**Section 3** The Church of Sweden may acquire rights, assume obligations and be party to actions before a court or other authority.

The Church of Sweden's parishes, confederations of parishes (church associations) and dioceses all have the same rights individually.

## **Organisational structure**

**Section 4** The parish is a local unit within the Church of Sweden and comprises the residents of the parish district who are members of the Church of Sweden.

The fundamental task of the parish is to hold services, provide religious instruction and to carry out welfare work and missions.

There may also be non-territorial parishes.

**Section 5** The diocese is a regional unit within the Church of Sweden and comprises the parishes within the diocese district.

The fundamental task of the diocese is to promote and supervise activities within the parishes.

Every diocese is led by a bishop.

**Section 6** The General Synod is the highest decision-making body of the Church of Sweden. The General Synod may not make decisions on individual matters that are up to the parishes or dioceses to decide.

## **Church fees**

**Section 7** Members of the Church of Sweden shall pay a local and a regional church fee.

**Section 8** The parish determines local church fees. If the parish belongs to a church association, the association may determine the whole or part of the fee.

The diocese determines the regional church fee.

### **Church property**

**Section 9** Properties and special investment funds for clergymen's salaries (clergymen's salary assets) serve to contribute to the economic basis for the Church of Sweden's work. Only the revenues on these assets may be used for this purpose.

The clergymen's salary assets shall be managed by the Church of Sweden as independent capital. The Government may decide how the management of these assets is to be supervised.

The capital shall be invested in an acceptable way.

### **The right of access to documents**

**Section 10** Provisions on the right of access to Church of Sweden documents relating to certain activities can be found in the Secrecy Act (1980:100).

**Section 11** In addition to the provisions in Section 10, all individuals have the right of access to Church of Sweden documents. These rights may only be restricted if especially warranted with regard to:

1. the protection of an individual's personal or economic circumstances,
2. the economic interests of the Church of Sweden, or
3. an interest of a particularly important nature.

### **The Church archives**

**Section 12** The archives of the Church of Sweden consist of the documents concerning the Church of Sweden's activities referred to in Section 11.

The archives of the Church of Sweden shall be preserved, kept in order and cared for so as to provide for:

1. the right pursuant to Section 11 of access to Church of Sweden documents,
2. the need for information for the administration of justice and public administration, and
3. research needs.

In the development and care of the archives consideration shall be taken to the fact that the archives of the Church of Sweden form part of the national cultural heritage.

### **Appeals**

**Section 13** The terms for review of decisions preventing an individual's access to such documents referred to in Section 11 shall be determined by the Church of Sweden. Other decisions may also be reviewed to the extent that the Church of Sweden decides.

For final review of matters pursuant to paragraph 1 within the Church of Sweden, a special body shall be established. The chairman of this body shall either be or have previously served as a regular judge.

### **Obligation to provide information**

**Section 14** The Church of Sweden shall provide information to the register referred to in Section 7 of the Act on Religious Communities (1998:1593) about:

1. its statutes,
2. its division into parishes, church associations and dioceses, and
3. the members of the governing board or similar body or of those who are otherwise authorised to represent the Church of Sweden, including their names, postal addresses and civic registration numbers or, if they do not have such a number, their dates of birth. Corresponding information shall be supplied about parishes, church associations and dioceses.

Any changes concerning any of the above conditions shall be reported for registration without delay.

The Government or an authority authorised by the Government may issue instructions about fees in connection with matters pursuant to this provision.

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Directions about the entry into force of this Act will be announced in the Act (1998:1592) on the Introduction of the Church of Sweden Act (1998:1591).

On behalf of the Government

GÖRAN PERSSON

MARITA ULVSKOG  
(Ministry of Culture)