



Elder Valerie Young Synod of South Atlantic Synod Executive and Stated Clerk

Valerie Young has served at the Synod level in multiple positions since 2004. Most recently, as Synod Leader and Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Sun since 2017.

She received a bachelor's degree in Organizational Development from the University of North Texas where she also studied alternative dispute resolution and mediation. She completed her Certificate in Executive Leadership from McCormick Theological Seminary in 2014. Over the years she has resourced committees, worked with presbyteries in transition and leadership searches, focusing on supporting leaders in their role and encouraging them to live out their call more fully to the glory of God.

Speaking about her call to Mid-Council ministry, Valerie says, "I am called to Mid-Council service as a partner in ministry where courageous and vulnerable leadership is valued and encouraged. For me, Mid-Council ministry is not so much about staying within a particular box, but about equipping presbyteries and congregations to proclaim the gospel in word and in deed, and to be attentive and responsive to the needs of our communities. I seek ways and places to engage that may stretch those boundaries, knowing that we may not always succeed, but we will surely learn. Still, we continue to love and do good where good is most needed."

Valerie is a Ruling Elder who has actively served the denomination in multiple Cursillo communities, on the Ruling Elder Advisory Team to the Office of the General Assembly, the NEXT Church Strategy Team, the Steering Committee of the Association of Mid-Council Leaders, and most recently, as a Co-Moderator of the General Assembly Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability.

Valerie is married to avid disc golfer, John Young, is a proud mother of Tasha Wheeler and is BGE (Best Grandma Ever) to "Beamer," and is a camper, hiker, furniture up-cycler, and DIY enthusiast.

What the Search Committee has to say...

"As Christ's Church and our Synod continues to significantly evolve, Valerie is uniquely equipped and experienced to lead us into the future. I'm confident that God has called Valerie to us 'for such a time as this.'"

Rev. Dr. David Shelor, Tampa Bay, Synod Moderator and Search Committee Chair

"We are fortunate to have a talented, experienced, and dedicated Synod leader who can take the reins of the Synod of South Atlantic and provide pastoral care to our Presbyteries and congregations. Valerie Young is called to Mid-Council leadership, and we look forward to having her walk with us as we discern God's will."

Kenneth L. Whitehurst, Ruling Elder/Commissioner, Presbytery of Greater Atlanta

"With a sparkle in her eye and holy mischief up her sleeve, Valerie is precisely what our Synod needs. She understands our connectional system, has worked within it for decades, and relishes a hearty challenge. Unafraid of hard questions, she asks them with insight and courage. In addition, she listens fiercely and imagines deeply. I believe she will be a tremendous gift to our Synod and those who serve within it."

Rev. Debra Tregaskis, Executive Presbyter, Flint River

Elder Valerie Young Statement of Faith

“God’s unconditional love is freely offered through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As humans, we all fall short. This is what makes God’s grace so wondrous; That God persists in loving and caring for us, whether we ask for it or even choose to recognize it. We can never earn God’s love, and yet it is always there. Just as the Holy Spirit is always present, guiding us and providing direction. We must choose to listen.

Blessed with free will, we make the choice to live in response to God’s commitment to us as faithful, grateful, and loving individuals, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with and for the reconciliation of the world. If we do not love our neighbors, we cannot claim to love God. In loving our neighbors, we are called into relationship with them. Called to live in the love of Christ, focusing our energy and efforts so singularly upon the love of Christ that an atmosphere of mutual love and respect permeates all our activities.

I believe Jesus is the Son of God and my Savior. He lives and speaks directly to us through the Holy Spirit. It is through the interpretation of scripture that the Holy Spirit teaches us our purpose as Children of God. I trust in the sovereignty of God. I believe that it is by the grace of God that I am who I am, where I am – not by the power of “Me”, but sometimes despite me.

My hope is in Jesus Christ. God, my Lord, brings me through. God has brought me here and prepared me along the way, in every way for where I am at this moment. Being called to seek and do God’s will for my life and the lives of others, often requires setting myself aside so that God’s will may be done on earth.

As the priesthood of all believers, we are called to pray for one another, speak God’s truths as interpreted through the work of the Holy Spirit, and to serve of our gifts and talents. Recognizing and honoring each other’s unique gifts, skills, talents, and points of view, acknowledging that “the body does not consist of one part, but of many”, seeking God’s will involves being in community, discussing and discerning within the context of our shared relationship in Christ. We are called to serve without fear of failure, knowing our limitations as humans, and the possibilities for success with God’s help. I have a responsibility to fulfill God’s mission for my life, in my Church, and in the world.

We do not now, nor will we in our time on earth, have all the answers. But we rely on the one true God that does, knows our right path, directs, and re-directs us accordingly. We are called to be a Faithful Witness, passionate about the health and fruitfulness of our ministries that model the uniqueness of being a Reformed witness in this part of God’s creation, as well as the wider world, as we heed the call to ‘do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.’”

What she says about leadership and change...

“I believe that in today’s Church and society, being a Leader is to be leading change. We are a denomination and nation in constant transition. Yet, so much remains the same.

Sometimes, leading can mean being out front setting the path. Other times, it can mean empowering others to take action that is theirs to take. That often means being courageous in holding those in the system accountable. It is also about vulnerability and admitting flaws and complicity so that others can feel comfortable doing the same.

I see myself... where I can use my creativity to serve as an advocate for people and ministries; as a partner in ministry, leading with authenticity, integrity, and love; as a connector, bringing people and congregations together, attentive to their future, as well as the past; as one who leads out of abundance; and as one who accompanies people and congregations on their journey.

I value transparency and adaptability, and I feel called to building and sustaining systems that are nimble. The world moves quickly, and our systems should be able to adapt and keep up.”