

The Why

Among the 190 congregations of the North Carolina Synod are small congregations who are unable to call a full- or part-time pastor because of financial or geographical limitations.

These congregations often depend on supply and interim pastors for worship leadership, preaching, pastoral care, and congregation support.

The NC Synod recognizes the significance of these small congregations to their members and communities. Therefore, the NC Synod is launching a program for the formation and placement of Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAM).

Synodically authorized ministry is intended to assist the ELCA and the NC Synod to respond pastorally and effectively to emerging opportunities in Christ's mission where it is not possible to provide a minister of Word and Sacrament.

We believe the Spirit may tug at the heart of SAMs to inspire them to consider a formal rostered call in the ELCA. When this happens the SAM will work with the Rev. Sara Ilderton, assistant to the bishop, to consider their next steps.

SAM Leadership Team

The SAM Leadership Team consists of rostered ministers who give of their time and expertise to guide SAM candidates during the formation and placement process. Their work is supported by rostered ministers who mentor SAMs after they have been placed.

The Rev. Pam Northrup serves as chair of the SAM Leadership Team and is the first point of contact. The Rev. Sara Ilderton, assistant to the bishop, works with the SAM Leadership Team.

Interested?

If you are interested in learning more about the SAM Certification Program or becoming a SAM, please contact:

Pam Northrup at 919-987-0102 or
ncsynodsam@gmail.com.

CONTACT US

NC Synod

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North Carolina Synod

Introducing the SAM Certification Program



Synodically Authorized Ministers

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (NRSV)

The What

Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAMs) are identified and equipped persons for service in congregations as described by the ELCA constitution (7.31.09) and administered by the ELCA Conference of Bishops.

SAMs may be invited by the Office of the Bishop or identified by the congregation and endorsed by the Office of the Bishop.

SAMs are assigned by the NC Synod bishop and authorized for certain leadership functions in specific synod-related locations for a specified length of time. SAMs will be paired with a supervising pastor for as long as they serve.

While leading worship, it's appropriate for a SAM to wear an alb; but not clerical collars or stoles. SAMs should be called by the title *minister* or SAM.

SAMs must agree to attend boundary training, complete continuing education, and abide by ELCA guidelines.

Compensation

SAMs are compensated by the congregation in which they serve at the rate of \$22 an hour plus mileage for presence at congregation council meetings, pastoral care, etc., and \$150 for each worship service they lead. Deacons serving as SAMs are compensated at the rate of \$25 an hour and \$175 for worship.

The Who

SAMs are active members of an ELCA congregation for at least one year with a commitment to remain an active member. They:

- Complete an application form, provide references, and receive affirmation from their congregation council.
- Demonstrate a sense of call, spiritual maturity, leadership skills, commitment to the ELCA, and a willingness to learn and serve.
- Make a commitment to successfully complete the required formation.

Deacons may be appointed to serve as SAMs with sacramental privileges that are bound by location and time.

Program Costs

- The application fee is \$200. This fee covers the psychological evaluation, background check, and administrative costs.
- The anticipated program costs are estimated to be \$2,000 over the 18-month period.
- The cost for the program should be shared between the sponsoring congregation (75%) and the SAM candidate (25%).

The How

The process of becoming a SAM includes similar steps as the traditional ELCA candidacy process, but is not officially part of the ELCA process.

ENTRANCE: Candidates will be entranced into SAM Candidacy after completing the application, psychological evaluation, background check, and entrance essay. The SAM Leadership Team will review the documents and schedule an entrance interview. The entrance interview will be conducted by a panel.

FORMATION: The formation process is 18 months and consists of retreats and online courses. Candidates will complete study in Lutheran Theology & Confessions, Bible, Preaching & Worship, Pastoral Care, Discipleship & Leadership, and governance. During formation SAMs will be accompanied by their entrance panel and a mentor who will read evaluations and provide support.

APPROVAL: The panel will do a final approval interview. The approval decision will be forwarded to the bishop who, in consultation with the synod council, may certify the candidate.

AFTER-APPROVAL: Each SAM will be paired with a mentor/supervising pastor. They are expected to meet together monthly as long as the SAM is serving in a congregation.