

**GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS OF
Synodically Authorized Ministers “SAMS”
Northeastern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran church in America**

The Northeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA has developed a program of authorizing, training and holding accountable lay people to serve as Synodically Authorized Ministers through its Bishop. Where Ordained Pastoral Leadership is not available for a period of time, lay persons who interview with the Bishop, take the prescribed training (may be concurrent with Appointment) and agree to be accountable to the Bishop and our Constitution and the congregation being served by a SAM.

SAMS are lay people who have demonstrated theological and biblical literacy, good people skills, are able to preach in front of others, are humble in spirit and respect the Ecclesiology, Confessions, Theology and Accountability and healthy boundaries of this church They will often have already attended a number of theological and biblical courses and agree to take the specific training drawn up for SAMS themselves. This training is done currently through six courses (at Joy Ranch, South Dakota)

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| -Bible | -Worship | - Administration and Stewardship |
| -Confessions | -Pastoral Care | -Preaching |

The current cost for each of these courses is \$300.00 which congregations seeking a SAM are happy to invest in, as they are not – at this point- sharing in the costs of a regularly called ordained pastor.

SAMS understand they are not pastors. They do not refer to themselves as pastors and correct others who do. They honor this reality and at the same time know that they function like pastors in their setting, and in their setting only. Their appointment is to time and place only; they are not free agents to “serve” Communion or other pastoral acts elsewhere. SAMS are not “counselors” and do not provide counseling.

An Appointed/Recognized SAM:

- Agrees to live in accordance with the values stated in the ELCA document “Vision and Expectations.”
- Grows in faith and knowledge through 1) The prescribed SAM courses and 2) continuing education yearly
- Understands they are accountable first to their Bishop, Mentor-Pastor, and congregation.
- Displays evidence of mature Christian faith and commitment to Christ and the Church, Synod and congregation they serve in.
- Shows an enthusiasm for the work of this Church and disseminates it’s wider ministry information
- Is diligent in education others concerning the distinction of various roles and titles

- Preaches the gospel and administers Baptism and Holy Communion in their congregation only.
- Attends the Conference Pastors and All Conference meetings on a regular basis
- May officiate at weddings in the congregation they serve only, with permission from the Bishop
- Provides regular worship opportunities and bible studies for the congregation
- Provides pastoral care for the congregation members
- Provides first communion instruction, confirmation classes, and attends all congregation and council meetings
- Has regular conversations with his or her Pastor-Mentor
- Installs congregational members serving in a leadership capacity
- Provides ill and home-bound visitation and communion
- Attends the Annual SAM meeting at the Synod Office with the Bishop
- SAMS do not wear collars; A simple white Alb and cross are the prescribed garb for worship.

When Appointment to serve a particular congregation has concluded, the SAM must adhere to accepted policy concerning leaving a congregation. The SAM must not interfere with or complicate the new ministry of the incoming leader of the congregation.