

## Are You Someone Who Is...

Interested in serving others and proclaiming the Good News of God's love?

Concerned about small congregations in the synod and wondering how to support them?

Discerning a call to ministry and want to explore the options available?

Currently working in a career where you have space in your life to serve the church in a new way?

Retired, with time to engage in theological study and ministerial service?

Seeking spiritual enrichment but not sure about being a SAM?

Interested in developing a deeper understanding of the Bible, pastoral care, spirituality, leadership, & more?

Sensing a new, or renewed, interest in ministry after being unable to pursue it earlier in life?

A congregation member concerned about the future of your small congregation and wanting to be trained and authorized to serve that congregation?

***If so, we invite you to prayerfully consider becoming a Synod Authorized Minister in the Virginia Synod.***

## SAM Leadership Team

The SAM Leadership Team consists of rostered ministers who give 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. Anna Havron** serves as chair of the SAM Leadership Team and is the first point of contact. **The Rev. Kelly Bayer Derrick**, Assistant to the Bishop, works with the leadership team.



### Interested?

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

Pastor Anna Havron at



sams@vasynod.org

For more information:



vasynod.org/synod-authorized-ministers

**Virginia Synod, ELCA**



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## Becoming a Synod Authorized Minister in the Virginia Synod

*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. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

**(1 Corinthians 12.4-7 NRSV)**

## Becoming a SAM

Prospective SAM candidates may be:

- Invited by the VA Synod bishop or designee.
- Nominated in writing by their pastor and congregation council (or just the council if there is not a pastor serving their church).
- An individual who discerns a call to SAM ministry and initiates a conversation with their pastor and congregation council or contacts the chair of the SAM Leadership Team directly.

## Qualifications

- Be an active member of an ELCA congregation for at least one year with a commitment to remain an active member.
- Demonstrate a sense of call, spiritual maturity, leadership skills, commitment to the ELCA, and a desire to learn and serve.
- A willingness to adhere to the standards, guidelines, and expectations for Synod Authorized Ministers as outlined in the handbook.
- A commitment to successfully complete the required formation.

## SAM Candidacy

Like becoming a pastor or a deacon, becoming a SAM is a multi-step process (which we call "formation") that unfolds over time, with checkpoints along the way. This allows both the SAM candidate, and the Virginia Synod, opportunities for mutual spiritual discernment of the candidate's call to serve a congregation as its minister.

**APPLICATION:** Complete and submit the SAM application, background check, references, and entrance essay.

**ENTRANCE:** The SAM Leadership Team will review the documents and schedule an entrance interview.

**ENDORSEMENT:** About halfway through the formation, lay ministry candidates will be invited into further mutual discernment about serving as a SAM, including personal reflection, mentor evaluation, and psychological evaluation.

**FORMATION:** During formation, SAMs will be accompanied by a mentor and their entrance panel who will read evaluations and provide ongoing 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 approve the candidate for ministry as a SAM.

**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.

## Formation

The SAM program will use the cohort model where candidates move together through the 18-month formation process.

Partnering with Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary and North Carolina Synod, SAM formation will include retreats, online classes, written assignments, reflection papers, case studies, role plays, and sermons.

Courses include:

- Lutheran Theology & Confessions (retreat setting)
- Bible (10 weeks online)
- Preaching
- Worship & Sacraments
- Pastoral Care (6 weeks online)
- Discipleship & Leadership
- Ministry in Context
- Commissioning & Celebration

## Program Costs

The non-refundable application fee is \$50. The anticipated program costs are estimated to be \$2,250 over the 18-month period. The SAM Formation Program costs are split into two parts:

1. theology, bible, preaching, and worship (5 courses) = \$1,500
2. pastoral care and leadership (3 courses) = \$750

The cost for the program should be shared between the sponsoring congregation (75%) and the SAM candidate (25%).