

## Is Your Congregation

Struggling to call a full or part time pastor due to limited finances?

Located in a place where there is a limited number of supply and interim pastors who can provide consistent leadership?

Worried about its future and afraid that without a consistent pastor you won't survive?

Longing for pastoral leadership to care for your members and lead worship?

Willing to receive an authorized and approved SAM to provide weekly worship, pastoral care, and more?

**If so, we invite you to prayerfully consider requesting a Synodically Authorized Minister.**

## Does Your Congregation

Have someone who is willing to enter the SAM formation process so that they can be authorized to serve your congregation?

## 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](mailto:sams@vasynod.org)

For more information:



[vasynod.org/synod-authorized-ministers](http://vasynod.org/synod-authorized-ministers)

**Virginia Synod, ELCA**



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## Congregations and Synod Authorized Ministers

### What is a SAM?

SAMs are Synod Authorized Ministers who have completed an 18-month program and have been approved by the bishop of the VA Synod to serve in small congregations that can't call an ordained pastor due to geographic or financial challenges.

## Is a SAM Right for You?

A Synod Authorized Minister may be right for your congregation if:

- You're a small congregation and are unable to fund a full-or part-time pastor.
- You're located in a geographic area where there aren't ordained people who can serve as a supply or interim pastor.

If one or both of these situations describe you, then having a SAM may be a good solution for you!

## SAMs Are

**MEMBERS.** They are active members of ELCA congregations in the Virginia Synod.

**TRAINED.** They have completed the 18-month formation program and have been approved and authorized to preach, plan and lead worship, administer the sacraments, and provide pastoral care in a specific congregation.

**TRUSTWORTHY.** They are committed to adhering to the Definitions and Guidelines for Rostered Ministers.

**WILLING.** They are willing to serve at the discretion of the bishop of the Virginia Synod.

## Receiving a SAM

Be open to receiving a SAM when a member of the VA Synod's staff mentions the possibility to you.

Prayerfully consider how the SAM can serve your congregation. Talk with congregation members to enlist their support and acceptance.

When a SAM is assigned to your congregation, be sure to complete the SAM covenant making it clear what the congregation expects of the SAM and what the SAM expects of the congregation. The covenant will be sent to the SAM Leadership Team.

Commit to praying for the SAM and their family. Make every effort to welcome and support them.

## Compensation

SAMs are compensated by the congregation they serve, and the compensation for each worship service they lead should be between \$200 and \$300. The SAM Leadership Team is developing guidelines for additional SAM compensation.

## Identifying a SAM

Is there someone in your congregation who is a recognized leader with gifts for ministry?

If so, this person may be willing to be trained and approved as a SAM. Speak with this person and invite them to prayerfully consider serving as a SAM.

Once trained, the person may be authorized to serve in your congregation or in another congregation in the synod.

Sometimes a person may sense a call to be trained as a SAM. They may initiate a conversation with their pastor and congregation council.

The sponsoring pastor and congregation council should submit a recommendation for the candidate to the SAM Leadership Team.

## Program Costs

The non-refundable application fee is \$50. This fee covers the background check and administrative costs.

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%).