

Synodically Authorized Ministers

What is a SAM?

SAMs are synodically authorized ministers who have completed an 18-month formation program and been certified by the bishop of the NC Synod to serve in small congregations which can't call an ordained pastor due to geographical or financial constraints.

Why is the SAM Certification Program important?

This program supports the work of the bishop who is charged with providing pastoral leadership in congregations. That work is made more challenging when congregations are small, remote, or have limited financial resources. SAMs who are trained and certified for ministry will be available for these congregations.

How will I be supported in this program?

SAM candidates will be accompanied by the leadership team and paired with a mentor for support, guidance, and encouragement.

After being certified, can I serve anywhere?

No. Certified SAMs serve at the discretion of the NC Synod bishop. They are placed in a specific congregation for a specified timeframe. A covenant is signed by the SAM, the congregation, and the bishop detailing the relationship. The covenant can be renewed. Once the timeframe has concluded the SAM will end their relationship with the congregation.

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 during formation. Pastors will serve as supervisors after SAMs 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.

NC Synod

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North Carolina Synod

Frequently Asked Questions



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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)

First Steps

Where should I begin?

Begin with a time of intentional discernment. Talk with your family and friends about what you're feeling called to do. Visit nclutheran.org/sam to explore the information and resources that are available to help you learn more. Seek God's guidance in your discernment through prayer. Identify your favorite verses of scripture and think about why they are important to you and how they may impact your ministry as a SAM.

Who should I talk to about becoming a SAM?

The first step is to talk with your pastor about your interest in becoming a SAM. If your pastor is not available, contact your congregation council. If they are not available, contact the Rev. Pam Northrup, chair of the SAM Leadership Team.

Why do I need support from my pastor and congregation council?

Your pastor and congregation council will be asked to attest to your membership in an ELCA congregation and share the ways that you have been active in the congregation.

When should I contact the SAM Leadership Team?

After you have spoken to your pastor and congregation council, reach out to Pam so that she can help you discern if this ministry might be a good fit for you and guide you in the next steps.

The Application

What paperwork needs to be completed?

You'll need to complete the SAM Application and a biographical essay. The prompts are included in the application.

Where do I find the SAM Application?

Visit nclutheran.org/sam and click on the Application area. Be sure to download the application before you begin.

What information will I need to provide on the application?

Your personal information like address, phone numbers, birthdate, and email. You'll identify the congregation where you are a member. You'll provide information about your family, education, and employment.

Will I need to sign a release?

Yes, you'll be asked to sign an authorization and release so that the SAM Leadership Team can complete a background check and make a referral for a psychological evaluation.

What is the application fee?

The non-refundable application fee is \$200. This will cover the cost of the background check, psychological evaluation, and other administrative costs.

Other Details

Will I need to provide references?

Yes, you will need to download the reference forms from the SAM webpage and give the documents to the people you've asked to complete them on your behalf. There is one for your pastor, congregation council, a member of your congregation, and a person who is not part of your family. Each will return the completed form directly to the SAM Leadership Team.

Will I need to participate in an interview?

Yes, after the SAM Leadership Team has received and reviewed all of your entrance materials, they will schedule the Entrance Interview.

What's the SAM Certification Program cost?

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%).

When can I start the certification program?

We use the cohort model for the training. Each cohort will begin at the same time and remain together until the end of the program (see the schedule on the synod website).