

Becoming a Synod Authorized Minister (SAM)

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin: Vetting, Training, Mentoring, Supporting, Evaluating

Step 1 There is an identified need. The congregation has experienced a long vacancy without an ordained pastor. No interim pastors are available. A congregation is unable to call a pastor, share a neighboring pastor or secure regular supply pastor. The need is recognized by congregational council.

Step 2 A lay person is identified. A respected lay person is identified as having potential gifts to provide leadership for the congregation. A form to request for this individual to become a synodically authorized minister is submitted to the synod office.

Step 3 Interviews. This person meets with the bishop or synod minister for an initial conversation and if appropriate then this individual will submit a faith statement and interview with members of the Synod SAM Support Committee.

Step 4 Training. Following these interviews the Synod SAM Support Committee will recommend an appropriate training program and a mentor will be assigned. (Mentor expectations?) Please note that the lay person can begin lay school at any time. Some begin long before there is a request. These additional courses beyond the lay school curriculum are designed especially for SAMs; Introduction to Lutheranism 1 and 2, Preaching for Lay People, and Basic Pastoral Care for SAMs.

Step 5 Contract. A synod minister will work with the congregational council to create a financial contract for the SAM. The congregation will complete a background check.

Step 5 Synod Council Vote. The synod council will vote to approve an individual to become a SAM upon the recommendation of the Synod SAM Support Team and the Bishop.

Step 6 SAM Support. It is expected that a SAM will meet with a mentor and participate in continuing education throughout their service as a SAM. It is expected that a SAM will attend synod sponsored learning events including boundaries trainings, the fall retreat, winter learning events and synod assembly as they are able. It is expected that the SAM will participate in the monthly conference gatherings and SAM support group as they are able.

Step 7 Evaluation. SAMs will be evaluated annual by the bishop or a member of the Synod Sam Support Team. The council president will be invited to participate in this evaluation. A record of this evaluation will be kept on file at the synod office.