

SAMs and a Unified Roster

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly voted to combine our three lay rosters in one for Ministers of Word and Service. The fourth roster is Ministers of Word and Sacrament, also known as pastors.

Folks have wondered how Synodically Authorized Ministers fit into this. The operative word is *Synodically Authorized* Ministers, as in the synod authorizes. The Ministers of Word and Service and Word and Sacrament are on the roster of the ELCA and are recognized across the sixty-five synods. Synodically Authorized Ministers are prepared and authorized by the synod they live in.

The Alaska Synod established a program of training and equipping qualified lay persons for congregational-based ministries of preaching, sacraments and worship leadership, and where appropriate, providing leadership for bible study, catechetical instruction, visitation and spiritual growth.

The ELCA recognizes that certain congregations are in situations where--by reason of geography or economics--they find it impossible to support the ministry of a full-time or part-time ordained pastor. The church makes provision for training and approving "Synodically Authorized Ministers." In most instances, these persons will already be members of the congregations to be served. But they also may be persons residing in areas adjacent to the communities where the ministry will be conducted. In either case, however, Synodically Authorized Ministers serve at the request of the bishop and are under the supervision of an ordained pastor.

The Alaska Synod encourages people to participate in the SAM training as preparation for lay preaching, teaching and leading. This training has been offered in the Southeast Cluster by cluster pastors. In the Knik and Southcentral Clusters, the training has been by independent study with a sponsoring pastor.

Congregations benefit from multiple people engaging in adult education. Classes in Hebrew and Christian Scripture, Worship, Pastoral Care, Reformation History, and Theology are often completed in two-three years. Use of SAM education in the life of your congregation will vary depending on the individual and the congregation. See our [synod website](#) for more information.