

Guidelines

Persons serving as Synodically Authorized Lay Ministers are given authority by the synod bishop to preside over the sacraments in a particular congregation for the period stipulated in the letter of authorization. Celebration of the sacraments outside of that context and time frame is not permitted.

A Synodically Authorized Lay Minister reports to the Congregation Council. The bishop, who oversees the Synodically Authorized Lay Minister, will appoint an ordained pastor to provide supervision.

Synodically Authorized Lay Ministers may wear an alb and cincture while leading worship. Stoles and clerical collars may not be worn.

Synodically Authorized Lay Ministry is a term used by the ELCA and the New England Synod to describe the ministry in which an individual is engaged. It does not carry a title with it. A Synodically Authorized Lay Minister may not use the title, "Pastor" or "The Reverend."

Synodically Authorized Lay Ministry was established for the sake of mission and ministry in particular congregations in a time of need. The Synodically Authorized Lay Minister is expected to maintain membership in her or his home congregation. The position of Synodically Authorized Lay Minister is not permanent.



For additional information about Synodically Authorized Lay Ministry, or for inquiries into the New England Synod's *School of Lay Ministry*, contact:

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Synodically Authorized Lay Ministry



in the
NEW ENGLAND SYNOD

What is Synodically Authorized Lay Ministry?

The ELCA has established guidelines for *Synodically Authorized Lay Ministries* as a way to provide Word and Sacrament ministry to particular congregations when no ordained pastor is available.

A Synodically Authorized Lay Minister is a layperson who is authorized by the synod bishop to serve a particular congregation in which a specific need exists. Such service is for a period of one year and may be renewed annually.

Appointments of Synodically Authorized Lay Ministers are made at the request of – and with the consent of – the congregation to be served.

The individual is authorized after successfully completing the New England Synod's *School of Lay Ministry* or presenting credentials that are deemed by the synod bishop to be the equivalent of the *School of Lay Ministry*.

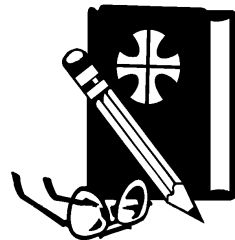
Synodically Authorized Lay Ministers will be under the direct supervision of an ordained pastor appointed by the synod bishop.

The existence of a need for the services of a Synodically Authorized Lay Minister and the appointment by the bishop are what determine the authorization.

Qualifications

An individual who is appointed as a Synodically Authorized Lay Minister must:

- be an active member of an ELCA congregation for at least two years;
- exhibit a mature Christian faith and commitment to Christ;
- affirm the faith and teachings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- possess a high school diploma or equivalent;
- have satisfactorily completed the synodical program of preparation or possess educational credentials that the synod bishop considers to be its equivalent or greater;
- have completed a synodically approved field work experience;
- meet synodical requirements including a psychological examination and criminal background check; and
- be prepared to meet this church's expectations concerning the personal conduct and behavior of persons serving in public ministry.



Preparation

Candidates to serve as Synodically Authorized Lay Ministers will be drawn from among those who have successfully completed the New England Synod's *School of Lay Ministry*, or who have had comparable training. Completion of the *School of Lay Ministry*, however, does not automatically make a person a candidate to become a Synodically Authorized Lay Minister.

The *School of Lay Ministry* is an innovative program designed to give adult students an opportunity to grow in their faith for the purpose of personal spiritual development, biblical enrichment and life-long learning. This program seeks to assist those who have a desire to broaden their faith understanding and expand their skills for service in their local congregation. It is also a means of having an intentional conversation for the discernment of gifts to be used in a variety of ways for providing ministry and leadership within a person's own congregation and community.

The basic course revolves around a two-year cycle. One year includes studies in the Old and New Testaments. The other includes studies in theology, Lutheran confessional heritage and the American religious experience. Students may enter the program at the beginning of either year.

Additional information about the school is available from the New England Synod.