

## **Rostered Minister Reference for Lay Ministry Training Program**

*Thank you for serving as a reference for an applicant for the Lay Ministry Training Program in the Northeastern Iowa Synod. Please complete the final page of this form and return it to Pr. Kristen Rod at the synod office. The form may be emailed to [rodk@neiasynod.org](mailto:rodk@neiasynod.org) or mailed to the Northeastern Iowa Synod, PO Box 804, Waverly, IA 50677.*

### **What is the Lay Ministry Training Program?**

The Holy Spirit is at work in the Church lifting up local leaders to serve congregations when an ordained pastor is not available for an extended period of time. We believe this training program is one way of coming alongside the Holy Spirit in this time.

The full program consists of two layers— a Formation layer, which focuses on practical ministry skills, and an Academic layer, which focuses on topics like Bible, Church History, and Lutheran Theology.

Participants who complete both layers of this program will become Certified Lay Assisting Ministers (CLAMs). Certified Lay Assisting Ministers are equipped to serve in the life and ministry of their congregation and the larger Church, and may be authorized to serve as Synod Authorized Ministers (SAMs) when a need arises.

- *In the ELCA, a Synod Authorized Minister (SAM) is a person who is not ordained to Word and Sacrament ministry (pastors) or one of our full-communion partners, and has been authorized by the Bishop of their synod to preside over the sacraments in a particular place (typically one congregation or parish) for a particular length of time (typically one year).*
- *Certified Lay Assisting Ministers may also serve one or more congregations alongside an ordained minister, but they will not preside over the sacraments unless they have received a SAM authorization.*

## **What might a SAM or a CLAM do?**

The primary responsibility of the SAM in a congregation is to plan and lead worship, equipped with basic scriptural understanding, Lutheran theology and worship practices. SAMs and CLAMs ministry may also include:

- Leading worship at care facilities and assisted living units
- Hospital and homebound visitation/communion
- Funerals
- Teaching Confirmation classes
- Congregational administration

## **Who is eligible?**

A well-qualified applicant will be someone who has demonstrated leadership in their congregation and has been received by their congregation as an accepted leader. They will have a good sense of the local context/community and a heart to be connected to the larger church through the Northeastern Iowa Synod and the ELCA.

An applicant may commit the time to begin serving as a worship leader while they are going through the training (potentially 15-20 hours/week). They will be humble of heart and serve for the sake of their congregation not for their own glory.

## **What should I be mindful of in my reference?**

SAMs are not expected to take the place of ordained clergy in our congregations. Nor do we expect them to have the depth of training and experience of those who are ordained. The expectation of the Northeastern Iowa Synod is to provide basic training in Lutheran theology, exegesis, preaching, worship practices, and teaching. Demonstrated leadership, awareness of boundaries, confidentiality, organization, and collegiality are qualities of the applicant we are most interested in. Where you can, please include examples of when you have witnessed these qualities exhibited in the applicant.

## **Rostered Minister Reference Form**

Name of Applicant

Name of Reference

Email

Phone

Address

Relationship with Applicant

What strengths and gifts for SAM or CLAM do you see exhibited in this applicant?  
(200-250 words)

Please identify growth areas for this applicant. (200-250 words)

How do you imagine the congregation responding to and working with the leadership  
of the applicant? (200-250 words)