

Overview of the Lay Ministry Training Program in the Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA

The full Lay Ministry Training Program consists of two layers.

The Formation Layer

The Formation layer is put together by a collaboration of 4 synods (NEIA, SEIA, W IA, and South Central Synod of Wisconsin) and includes:

Online classes that are put together by the 4 participating synods

- Preaching
- Pastoral Care
- Faith Formation & Christian Education
- Leadership & Administration

Monthly meetings with a mentor (ordained pastor)

An annual practicum retreat

Completion of abuse prevention training [Safe Gatherings](#) (training includes background check)

The Academic Layer

The Academic layer involves participation in one of the following established lay schools through the North Texas North Louisiana Synod

(<https://www.ntnl.org/ministries/plma/description-registration/>) or the Northwestern Synod of Wisconsin (<http://www.layschoolofministry.org/press/>).

The full program is designed so that both layers can be completed at the same time, with a time commitment of two Saturdays a month during the school year. Monthly meetings with a mentor will be scheduled by the participant and mentor.

Note: A class from the Formation layer of the program (Preaching, Pastoral care, Faith Formation & Christian Education, or Leadership & Administration) may be taken without participating in the full Lay Ministry Training program.

Estimated costs (to be shared between the participant and the congregation) :

* Tuition for Academic Lay School (North Texas North Louisiana or Northwest Synod of Wisconsin) \$475/year

* Books & Supplies \$250/year

* Practicum retreat \$200/year

* Mentor stipend \$75/month (\$900/year)

For more information, or to apply, go to www.neiasynod.org or contact Pr. Kristen Rod, rodk@neiasynod.org, 319-352-1414.

Roles for Lay Ministers in the Northeastern Iowa Synod

Participants who complete the full Lay Ministry Training 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