



Northwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Covenant of Licensure Approving
Synod Authorized Minister**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provides that where it is not possible to provide appropriate ordained pastoral leadership for Word and Sacrament ministry, the synod bishop, acting with the consent of the congregation, in consultation with the Synod Council and the Synod SAM Committee, and in accord with standards and qualifications developed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council, may authorize a person who is a member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to offer this ministry. Such service shall be rendered for one year and is renewable under the sacramental authority of the bishop as the synod's pastor.

A covenant between _____ (Church/Parish)
of _____ and the Northwestern Minnesota
Synod of the ELCA invite you _____ to serve
as a Synod Authorized Minister of Word and Sacrament

from _____ to _____ or until such time as an ordained
Pastor is called to serve this parish, this covenant is terminated by the Synod Bishop, or this covenant is terminated
by the SAM or the congregation with the approval of the Synod Bishop.

Together we will:

- A. Worship the Triune God, proclaiming God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone;
- B. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ;
- C. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs;
- D. Nurture our members in the Word of God;
- E. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives;
- F. Seek to confirm and identify current issues facing the congregation and develop ways of dealing with them.
- G. Nurture the congregation's linkage with conference, synod, churchwide units, and the resources that are available to assist in our ministry.
- H. Live within the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod, and of the congregation.
- I. Follow ELCA guidelines to clearly distinguish a Synod Authorized Minister from Ordained Pastor;
- J. During this next year, we (congregation/parish) will give special attention to the following issues:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

As a Synod Authorized Minister (SAM) of Word and Sacrament you will have the rights and duties to:

- A. Preach the word of God, administer the Sacraments of Baptism and Communion according to the practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and conduct public worship.
- B. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world.
- C. Offer instruction, confirm, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead.
- D. Supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation/parish.
- E. Install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council.
- F. With the Council, administer discipline.
- G. Seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel and strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad.
- H. Impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications.
- I. Endeavor to increase the support given by the parish to the work of the ELCA churchwide organization and the Northwestern Minnesota Synod.
- J. Keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, and submit a summary of such statistics annually to the Northwestern Minnesota Synod. [The secretary of the congregation shall annually attest to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his/her hands in good order by the SAM]
- K. Refrain from involvement in the congregation’s call process.
- L. Refrain from wearing distinctly clerical garb (clergy shirt/collar or stole—but an alb is OK) or using titles (“Reverend” or “Pastor”) that would imply you are an ordained minister.
- M. Accept the mentorship of _____, an ELCA Pastor on the roster of the NWMN Synod;
- N. Seek to follow the recommendations of the Synod Committee overseeing Synod Authorized Ministry;
- O. During the coming year, you (SAM) will give special attention to:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Expectations of Congregation and SAM:

- A. Congregation supports the education and mentorship of the SAM by providing both the time and the financial resources required.
- B. Each year, the SAM will visit with the Bishop and Synod staff to discern whether they are being called to enter candidacy to become an ordained pastor.
- C. Council, SAM and Mentor will conduct an annual review and, submit a renewed covenant or addendum to the Synod Bishop for approval.
- D. SAM will make agreed upon progress toward the completion of the basic educational requirements or toward identified continuing education needs.
- E. SAM and Mentor will meet as spelled out in the SAM-Mentor agreement.
- F. The SAM will attend one of the two SAM retreats offered by the NWMN Synod.
- G. The SAM is encouraged to attend the Fall Theology for Ministry Conference and the Spring Theology Conference.

We, the members of the congregation will:

- A. Commit ourselves to the Gospel of Jesus Christ through faithful participation in worship, learning, witness, service, support, and fellowship activities.
- B. Receive you as our Synod Authorized Minister, under the supervision of the congregation council (or designated supervisor), upholding you in prayer and offering you our love, respect, and good will.
- C. Look to you to preside at baptisms and celebrations of Holy Communion;
- D. Provide for an annual review _____ (end of first year) and evaluation of these agreements;
- E. Provide compensation for SAM as follows:
 - 1. Provide a salary of _____ with payments to be made in equal installments as follows:
Monthly _____ semi-monthly _____ Bi-weekly _____
 - 2. This compensation is based on an average of _____ hours of service per week.
 - 3. Grant paid vacation _____ weeks per year.
 - 4. During your ministry here, grant you continuing education leave and provide \$ _____ toward synod approved educational programs. (\$1,200 first two years, \$700 after)
 - 5. Reimburse you for travel, business, and ministry expenses up to \$ _____ per month. (Reimbursement should be in accord with an "Accountable Reimbursement Plan" in which documentation for expenses is submitted monthly to the treasurer.)
 - 6. SAM retreat costs \$ _____
 - 7. Synod Events (i.e. Synod Assembly & Fall Theological) \$ _____
 - 8. Mentor costs (see mentor agreement) \$ _____

F. Other:

Correspondence to be sent to:

WITNESS OUR HANDS:

_____ (President of Congregation/Parish) Date _____

_____ (Secretary of Congregation/Parish) Date _____

ACCEPTED BY:

_____ (Synod Authorized Minister) Date _____

CERTIFIED BY:

_____ (Bishop NWMN Synod) Date _____

[Please sign and send to the Synod Office for the Bishop's Signature. Copies will be sent to the congregation and Synod Authorized Minister.]