

2024 RMS Nominations

Row 2

Nominee	Samm Melton-Hill
Lay/Roster	Pastor
Position Nominated for:	Rostered Leader
Occupation	Pastor
Home Congregation	New Beginnings Worshipping Community and Highlands Lutheran Church (Denver, CO)
Membership	2 Years
Sense of God's call	<p>Much of my ministry and sense of call to serving God's people has been informed by the ways in which I have experienced both hurt and healing at the hands of the Church. As a Pastor who didn't grow up Lutheran (or religious in any way), I was an unlikely candidate for ordained ministry. I was much more likely to become a lawyer or welder or truck driver or something else for that matter. And yet, in high school I found my way to a Lutheran church in my area. I often say that I kept coming to youth group because they had pizza and sports and there was (and still is) truly nothing I love more in this world. What I now know is that I found much more than pizza and sports here. This little community helped me discover people that cared deeply about me, who allowed me to ask questions, and who created a space where my doubts were welcome. This was the first community that I understood what love and grace not only meant, but felt like. And yet, it wasn't until years later, as a college student as I found myself navigating the coming out process that I would experience what deep hurt feels like when it takes place at the hands of a community you once thought exuded unconditional love. And so following this deep hurt and as I began Divinity School, I tried so very hard to leave this church. And as I attempted to step away, it was once again a little Lutheran church on the coast of New England that brought me back in. And they didn't do it with a fancy budget and super cool initiatives, but they did it by being present with me, accompanying me in my time of wilderness, and encouraging me in love. In all that I do, I try to ground myself in this story. My own call story reminds me time and time again of why this Church exists and what its purpose in this world is. It is simply put, to love and care for people, especially those who are marginalized and vulnerable. In some ways it mirrors the Rocky Mountain Synod's own mission to "proclaim and embody God's unconditional love for the sake of the world." I feel called to live this story out in all that I do. It is what has led me to being a Chaplain in tough places like the Drug and Alcohol Rehab Center, the Psychiatric Hospital, and the Prison in which I currently serve.</p>

It is here that I encounter the deepest cross sections of God's love and people's pain. I believe strongly that our congregations also represent these cross sections, with the added layer of institutional anxiety as we bear witness to dramatic changes in our own communities and the larger institutional Church. As we navigate these challenges together and seek to listen to where the Spirit is calling us next, I hope to represent the Rocky Mountain Synod at Churchwide Assembly as we discern and vote on policies that impact our own congregations.

Skills/Experiences

Service Activity 1 ELCA Prison and Re-Entry Network (Spring 2023-Present)

Service Activity 2 Innovation and Mission Outreach Board (Fall 2022-Present)

Service Activity 3 Arizona State University, Best Skills, Best Churches (Fall 2023)

Committee**Position****Nominated for:**

Council Position**Nominated for:**

2025 Churchwide
