

LAY PASTOR CERTIFICATION

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF NEW YORK STATE

ABC/NYS has made a particular opportunity available to individuals who wish to pursue lay ministry in more depth. Upon satisfactory completion of the process described below and the appropriate affirmation of an individual's gifts and call to pastoral ministry by the local Association and the individual's congregation, lay pastor certification is given.

Certified Lay Pastor is a denomination-wide term for American Baptists who have successfully completed courses of study and who have met defined requirements.

The awarding of a certificate will provide visible and tangible evidence that the individual has satisfactorily completed the lay pastor certification program. The process of meeting certification requirements is ultimately of more significance than the certificate itself. Completion of required course work and the fieldwork assignment will enable the individual to carry out responsibilities in the congregation, the community, and the work place more effectively than before. The church needs such leaders!

At the same time, it must be recognized that certification as a lay pastor is not a step toward ordination. Nor does it bestow any ecclesiastical or legal rights. While new opportunities of service may come to those who complete the program, ABC/ NYS is not in a position to offer assurances or guarantees that such will be the case.

Persons who have completed the program have spoken of inner satisfaction and the feeling of fulfillment it has brought them. Above all, the program enables individuals to be more faithful stewards of the gifts given to them by God and of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

LAY PASTOR CERTIFICATION PROCESS

A candidate will:

1. Earn the Certificate in Lay Pastoral Studies offered by the ABC/NYS Lay Study Program
2. Meet with the Association Committee on Ministry (or a representative member) to discuss certification requirements
3. Maintain active membership in an ABC/NYS church

4. Provide to Association Committee on Ministry names and addresses of three references (current pastor or field minister and two others)
5. Receive through the Association Committee on Ministry the endorsement of local church leadership
6. Submit a paper of 3-4 pages to the Chairperson of Association Committee on Ministry. This paper should describe and reflect your biblical and theological understanding of:
 - ◇ Faith Journey
 - ◇ Understanding of Lay Pastoral Ministry
 - ◇ Understanding of Christian Faith
 - ◇ Personal Commitment to American Baptist Churches (including it's goals and mission).
7. Submit a signed copy of the Ministers Council Code of Ethics
8. Meet with Association Committee on Ministry for final review.
 - a. Certification will be recommended, denied, or postponed for further review and the action taken will be reported to the ABC/NYS Committee on Ministry.
 - b. If the Association recommends certification, the ABC/NYS Committee on Ministry will act on the recommendation.
 - c. Upon approval for certification by the ABC/NYS Committee on Ministry, the individual's Association Moderator and Field Minister will be notified so that an appropriate service can be scheduled in the Association. The Association presents the Certificate of Lay Pastoral Ministry, a Regional Certification.
 - d. If certification is denied and the individual wishes to appeal, a letter of appeal may be sent to the chairperson of the ABC/NYS Committee on Ministry.