

**American Baptist Churches of New York State
Lay Study Program**

MINISTRY THROUGH THE SMALL CHURCH

A Brief Course Description

This course is designed to familiarize students about the unique opportunities and challenges of ministry in the small church. The course will guide the student through the theological, relational, and organizational aspects of small church ministry as well as provide the tools necessary to carry out the tasks unique to the small church.

Expected Outcomes

- Students will learn what constitutes a small church based on various studies and resources.
- Students will learn the basic theological and relational dynamics in small church ministry.
- Students will learn how the various ministry and organizational tasks of the church are carried out in context of the small church including: a) Worship, b) Pastoral Care, c) Leadership, d) Writing and modifying Bylaws and Constitution, e) Finances, f) Weddings and Funerals, g) Christian Education.
- Students will learn about how each small church has a unique mission and is a vital part of the work of the Kingdom of God.
- Students will learn to deal with a variety of small church challenges and opportunities including: a) Conflict management, b) Overcoming disappointment and Negativity, c) Innovative Pastoral Leadership models including bi-vocational and shared pastor ministry, d) Getting outside help including consultation services and denominational resources, e) Overcoming "institutionalism."

Class Expectations

- Students taking the course for credit will read the assigned readings and complete the written assignments, including a reading report and a final paper.
- Students are expected to participate in class discussions.
- Students taking the course for credit will attend at least eight out of the ten classes.

The expectation is there will be 20 hours of class time. The course is usually set up as ten classes which are two hours long. A short break may be included in the middle of the class time. Classes may be designed to include a variety of learning experiences, including but not limited to: interactive lectures, presentations, and group discussions. Modifications to this structure may be done at the discretion of the instructor.

Suggested Resources

Indispensable Guide for Smaller Churches by David Ray. Pilgrim Press, 2003.
Other resources will be recommended by the instructor when the class is held.