

## **PRESBYTERY OF SCIOTO VALLEY**

### **Syllabus Lay Certification Program**

#### **Introduction to the Old Testament**

2 courses, 3 classes each course, of 3 hours each for a total of 18 hours

An introductory and critical survey course on the Old Testament to give students an idea of the flow of the history, geography, people, and theological development of the Old Testament. Time will be spent developing a sense of the historical background and major themes of the Old Testament as well as a general overview of the contents of the books of the Old Testament. A basic understanding of the Old Testament's literary genre will be discussed: history, poetry, prophetic, literature, apocalyptic; as well as basic hermeneutical/exegetical skills for interpretation (context, genre, historical, setting of the book/passage, how the text has been interpreted in, and used by the church).

As time is available in this or additional Old Testament courses, attention can be given to study of particular books in more depth or developing exegetical and hermeneutical skills, the development of the canon or other related subjects.

#### **Evaluation**

Accountability for an introductory Old Testament Course will include one or more of the following:

- 1) development of a time line of the history/flow of the Old Testament;
- 2) review of the section of the Old Testament (Pentateuch, History, Wisdom Literature, Prophets, etc.) and their flow/contents;
- 3) Participants will write papers on the subjects to be covered in class and will do at least one exegetical paper.

#### **Introduction to the New Testament**

2 courses, 3 classes each course, of 3 hours each for a total of 18 hours

An introductory and critical survey course on the New Testament to give students an overview of the development, time-line, geography, people and themes of the New Testament. Time will be spent developing a sense of the historical background of the New Testament and the order of its writing, the development of the literary genre therein (Gospel, history, letters, apocalyptic literature), and the roles these played in the early church; as well as basic hermeneutical/exegetical skills for interpretation (context, genre, historical, setting of the book/passage, how the text has been interpreted in, and used by the church), and a discussion of the critical and theological importance of the New Testament.

As time is available in this or additional New Testament courses, attention can be given to study of particular books in more depth or developing exegetical and hermeneutical skills, the development of the canon or other related subjects.

#### **Evaluation**

Accountability for an introductory New Testament Course will include one or more of the following:

- 1) development of a time line of the history/flow of the New Testament;
- 2) review of the section of the New Testament (Gospel, Epistles, History, Apocalyptic etc.) and their flow/contents and major themes;
- 3) Participants will write papers on the subjects to be covered in class and will do at least one exegetical paper.

## **Preaching**

2 courses, 3 classes each course, of 3 hours each for a total of 18 hours

A specific preaching course that focuses on the Old and New Testament and offer the participants training in the practical skills needed to develop a sermon from a text. Focus is on selected texts from either of the testaments. There will be class participation and critical help from the responses, with emphasis as much on delivery as on substance.

This course will focus on the many aspects of sermon preparation, resources for sermons, kinds of sermons and styles of preaching, the cycle of the Christian year, and the lectionary (using it and diverging from it).

### **Evaluation**

Review/accountability comes in the writing and delivering of a series of sermons to class members and instructor.

Final examination will be in front of members of the Certified Lay Professionals Committee. Successful students may be certified as Lay Preachers.

## **Reformed Worship, Liturgy, Planning and Sacraments**

3 courses, 3 classes each course, of 3 hours each for a total of 27 hours

### **Worship and Sacraments, 2 courses**

These two courses will look at the essential elements of *The Directory for Worship* (part of the Book of Order). Using the *Book of Common Worship*, it will look at the elements of worship and cover the skills needed in planning and leading worship, speaking, reading Scripture, choosing hymns, etc. It will also introduce some of the resources available in planning of worship.

These courses explore the sacraments of our church through historical, theological and liturgical considerations. It looks at what Reformed Theology and *The Directory for Worship* say about the sacraments.

### **Special Worship Services, 1 course**

This course will look at the essential elements of *the Directory for Worship* as pertaining to services for other than Sunday mornings, such as funerals and weddings. Also, the course will look at practical advice on the things that pop up in congregational life.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation in these courses is authentic and "real-to-life." Evaluation includes: involvement in class discussions and activities; planning and presenting (in both worship bulletin and worship script form) a worship service utilizing the concepts and guidance presented in the *Directory for Worship*, the course readings and class discussions; reading scripture incorporating concepts presented during class; providing written or spoken responses to case studies involving worship issues ("Would you baptize ...?" Or "Would you serve communion...?")

## **Theology and Church History**

2 courses, 3 classes each course, of 3 hours each for a total of 18 hours

### **Church History and Introduction to Christian Theology | course**

This introductory course covers major periods of church history and the essential theological heritage of Reformed Christians. It covers the social/political settings as well as religious and theological developments. It includes a broad survey of church history using the creeds and confession of our church as the basis for understanding some of the major issues that have helped shape the church from the beginning. It seeks to help participants understand what theology is; how we should go about “thinking”, “speaking” and “acting” theologically; what are the sources of our authority and the specific doctrinal content of our faith. The emphasis will be on gaining a basic comprehension of the Christian theological tradition, as represented by a wide variety of major Christian figures.

### **Reformed Theology, | course**

This course will examine doctrines of our faith through the Reformed Tradition. Participants will be able to express key theological beliefs, orally and in writing, including an understanding of God, humanity, sin, evil and salvation, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the church, sacraments, and a personal call to ministry.

### **Evaluation**

Participants shall write a personal statement of faith to be discussed in class and discussed before the Commissioned Lay Professionals Committee. There is a final exam using case studies of theological issues that will be necessary in order to be certified to the Committee of Ministry for commissioning as a lay pastor or educator.

### **Polity**

1 course, 3 classes, of 3 hours each for a total of 9 hours

This course uses the Book of Order and actual case studies to delve into the connection between the spiritual character of the Church and its human organization and system of agreed-upon rule by which it governs itself. It will cover the content of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the make-up of the Book of Order (The Form of Government, The Director for Worship, and the Book of Discipline), the structure and function of the governing bodies, (session, presbytery, synod and General Assembly), and the other governing bodies with which our General Assembly has relationships.

### **Evaluation**

There is a final exam using case studies of polity issues that will be necessary in order to be certified to the Committee of Ministry for commissioning as a lay pastor or educator.

## **Administration and Development**

2 courses, 3 classes each course, of 3 hours each for a total of 18 hours

### **Administration and Development, 1 course**

This course will acquaint the participants with what the church is and what it is about; what administration is and what church development is about; and what participation in the Total Mission Program of the PC (U.S.A.) involves. It will give participants an understanding of how they can enhance the ministry of any church to attract those who are looking for meaning and answers in their lives, and to attract those who would like to teach and make a difference in the lives of others.

### **Small Church, 1 course,**

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the culture of small membership congregations and how the culture instructs us in preaching, conducting worship, doing Christian education, providing pastoral care, dealing with administration, stewardship issues and ministering in the community. The course is conducted in a small membership setting and includes interaction with the people in that setting.

### **Evaluation**

Participants interaction and discussion with instructor on events of the small membership setting.

## **Christian Education**

1 course, 3 classes, of 3 hours each for a total of 9 hours

This course will utilize a variety of learning opportunities and activities to explore and articulate the purpose and nature of the ministry of Christian Education in the church today. This will include: defining Christian Education in the church today; the biblical and theological basis for Christian Education; the impact of human development and learning styles on faith development; available curriculum and resources; skills development in CE program assessment and planning.

### **Evaluation**

Students will be expected to do reading in the field of Christian Education, reflect on Christian Education in specific church settings, and articulate their philosophy of and approach to the ministry of Christian Education.

## **Introduction to Pastoral Care**

1 course, 3 classes, of 3 hours each for a total of 9 hours

This introductory course deals with the needs of both the caregiver and the recipient, with strong emphasis on hospital visitation, boundary issues, ethical concerns, roles and issues, and referrals to other helping professionals. It will focus on particular pastoral care issues, such as conducting pastoral care, hospital visits, and grief counseling,

### **Evaluation**

There is a final exam using case studies of pastoral care issues that will be necessary in order to be certified to the Committee of Ministry for commissioning as a lay pastor or educator.

### **Faith Development and Spirituality**

1 course, 3 classes, of 3 hours each for a total of 9 hours

Using the *Book of Order*, particularly "*the Directory for Worship*", participants learn to lead spiritual formation courses in local congregations according to the Reformed Tradition, as well as enhance their own faith and spirituality. Focus is on prayers and other disciplines of spiritual life. Exercises and techniques for teaching others the elements of spiritual formation will be employed.

#### **Evaluation**

Evaluation is often creative; perhaps asking participants to keep a prayer journal for a period of time, such as Advent, Lent, or specific time period such as a month.

### **Ethics and Sexual Misconduct**

1 course, 3 classes, of 3 hours each for a total of 9 hours

This course will use case studies to discuss duties and responsibilities church professionals have in dealing with parishioners, volunteers and staff of the church, including boundary issues, ethical concerns, confidentiality and sexual misconduct. The Presbytery's Policy on sexual misconduct is the text for this course.

#### **Evaluation**

Participants will be required to sign a statement that they have read and understand the Presbytery's policy on sexual misconduct.