

IFL 106 Church (On Being Church)

Summer 2019

Instructors:

Rev. Linda Bolton: "The Church IS the People"

Rev. Linda Overall: Spiritual Gifts and their significance to you and to the church

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

What is church? Why belong to a local church? Is it necessary? What does membership really mean? Each participant will take a spiritual gifts inventory. How do we "Love our neighbor? How do we reach out and "go you into all the world"? What would it mean for a church to reach out and/or develop a mission? How does church actually relate to culture, society and touch your immediate community's lives?

GOAL/PURPOSE

This is not a course "on" church history. This is a course is designed to challenge our thoughts and our understanding of what it means to, "Be a Church!" Through our journey together, we will consider what it really means to be a healthy, high functioning member of a local Body of Christ. We will be widening our vision of knowledge to include both local and worldwide understanding of "Being Church" from both a traditional and non-traditional perspective. What was the interplay between Judaism and the early church? "How did that influence the way the first believers "did church"? How are our present "churches doing and, finally, what might Church look like in the future? The course seeks to prepare the participant with crucial insight regarding the true mission of "Being Church" by embracing the "Great Commission." We will discuss some of the challenges facing the church today as it struggles to remain faithful to the Gospel and relevant to those in society. What challenges are we facing? How will we, as the Body of Christ, meet them? What will the church of tomorrow look like? How do we, as leaders, move the church that we have to the church it needs to be?

OBJECTIVES

The participant will:

1. Describe and compare what "church" means through Biblical study of the New Testament early church described in Acts. Study the developing teachings on the church in Ephesians and Philippians. Evaluate the church based on Revelation 2 & 3.
2. Communication with the church is often troublesome, frustrating or totally lacking. The importance of good communication between the boards, the pastor, and the congregation is vital. Information sharing through phone calls, text, email, announcements in the worship service, the bulletin, the newsletter, social media, the annual report and meeting minutes are crucial. The congregation should be fully aware of all financial information and issues. The importance of working on listening skills, honoring different opinions and speaking respectfully and working through miscommunication will be discussed.
3. Consider different church models: non-denominational, "church without walls," church for the un-churched, home church, mega-church, store-front or church, and others you may wish to include. Would the following be necessary and how might they be the same or different? Church vision, mission statement (what is the purpose of the church?), develop a strategic plan with others to set goals, strategies and tools for evaluation, consider issues of church recruitment and community needs. Define and describe how each

church would be able to provide outreach, community service, and evangelism. What missions would you intend for this local church to minister, i.e. homelessness, drugs or alcohol, foreign missions or other based upon your setting? How would you decide? How would you lead your church body to decide? What resources are available in any given setting?

4. Describe and identify spiritual gifts as they relate to the church and to self. How are you able to develop these gifts for others to increase the church ministry/mission vision? How do they impact the global mission of the church?
5. "Being Church," define your church membership. How and/or what is required to become a member of your new church? Renew membership? Transfer membership? Lose membership? What are the rights, privileges and obligations of being a member? What would church membership look like in a non-traditional setting/church?
6. How to maintain "Being Church" in today's diverse world is a reality churches are facing now. Describe how your church can influence cultural influences on: urban, rural, ethnic, aging population, gender issues, and Gomorra-like city or town. Describe how church buildings impact the culture and beliefs of the church. Considering the different types of churches you have experienced, describe their strengths and weaknesses.
7. Conflict anybody? Promote a Comprehensive Character-Building Church; Describe a Scriptural model of church discipline, How to deal with sin and conflict; summarize a Biblical view of sexual activity. Know sexual boundaries and other ethical principles outline in the Bible; maintain accountability. Learn how to deal with moral failure including pastor, church leaders, staff, and members. Know and understand the state the laws regarding abuse and reporting requirements.

ASSIGNMENTS (EVALUATION)

Describe "Being Church" by contrasting the churches from Acts, Ephesians, Philippians, and Revelation with our churches today. (Prepare paper in advance and present during class).

Read Discover Your Spiritual Gifts and How to Use Them and take the Spiritual Gifts Inventories in the book (there are 2), and you must also complete the assessment forms found toward the back of the book. You must complete them all on separate sheets provided in the books given to you (You will receive them at the end of the first class), and come to class with the completed sheets and the book. You should be prepared to discuss your experience, and be prepared to participate in a mock experience of how to use this method in your church. Please do not use another inventory or do this assignment ahead of receiving the book. It is important that all participants use the same materials.

Bring to the first session some communication examples from the church you attend such as a newsletter, the church bulletin, minutes of a meeting, annual report, church mission statement and job descriptions for those serving on boards/committees.

There are 4 required books in the bibliography: Gender Roles and the People of God by Alice Matthews, So You Don't Want to Go to Church Anymore, by Wayne Jacobson and D. Coleman (these you need to purchase and are readily available on Amazon (including used!)) The other 2 books will be provided for you; Discovering your Spiritual Gifts, and Everyone a Minister. You should make every attempt to have BOTH read before attending the first class. In addition, you should read 2 required articles: The Ark of the Covenant and Israel and the Church (both found in the bibliography) and available online at no cost. The other books in the bibliography are highly recommended and you should select several to read in order to enrich your preparation for class and the various things you will encounter in ministry.

Before you attend the first class, prepare and bring a one-page paper with your concerns, plaudits, issues about the church today to be presented at the class.

You will prepare a paper for Rev. Bolton, and it will be due and emailed to her before the second class session. This paper will discuss at length how what you learned during her class has impacted you; how you will use that information in your ministry, and how you will use it to form a healthy functioning church. It should be no less than 2 typed pages and no more than 3.

You will read "Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts and How to Use Them" and complete the spiritual gifts inventories and other questionnaires in the book. Please DO NOT WRITE IN THE BOOK. USE THE SHEETS PROVIDED (they are inserted at the appropriate pages) and bring both the book and the completed sheets to class.

You will prepare a paper, not more than 2 pages long (double spaced) which explains how you seeing spiritual gifts impacting your view on roles in ministry, defining your ministry and that of a church, and how/if they have an impact on the church of the future. It is important that you express your opinion whether or not you agree with the leader. This paper must NOT be a regurgitation of what was taught. Evidence of personal integration of the materials is required for a passing grade. It is a Pass/Fail assignment and is due to Linda Overall no later than October 20th and should be submitted by email.

SCHEDULE

Following are the dates and times for IFL "Being Church" –

The first class will be taught by Rev. Bolton. It will meet at the Gilmanton Community Church on Saturday, August 24, 2019 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please bring your lunch. At this meeting you will receive the materials you need to prepare for the second meeting.

The second class will be taught by Rev. Linda Overall and will also meet at the Gilmanton Community Church on Saturday, September 28, 2019. We will meet from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please bring your lunch. Also be sure to bring the book you were given at the first session as well as your copy of the inventories that you have completed. It is imperative that you do the work assigned before coming to the class. During this class we will discuss the relationship between the Great Commission and Spiritual Gifts, and have some time for an overall discussion and "wrap-up" for the class.

We both look forward to seeing each and every one of you. We are praying for you and for these classes. Enjoy your reading! Blessings, The Two Lindas