

# INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING

# HANDBOOK



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in effective ministry***

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## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Institute for Learning (IFL) is to increase the knowledge, skills, and faith of individuals in the local church, and also to encourage and prepare them to answer God's call in their lives, as church members, church leaders, certified lay ministers, and ordained pastors seeking enrichment. IFL provides opportunities for people in American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire, as well as interested people from other churches within and outside the Region, to become more knowledgeable about Christianity, to become effective Church leaders, and to receive the education needed for becoming a Certified Lay Minister.

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The program is designed for individuals who desire training to enhance their spiritual development as they exercise their ministry skills, whether they are church members or Church Leaders. The program focuses on essentials and practical training for ministry. These Programs of Study seek to provide participants with theological and Biblical foundations, as they reflect on their Call to Ministry, and the nature of that ministry. Particular emphasis is given to equipping men and women for a holistic ministry in the small New England Church. IFL is primarily designed for those who have busy lives and multiple responsibilities, but want to grow in knowledge and grace.

A full time course load is considered two (2) credit courses at a time.

## **HISTORY**

The Institute for Learning, formerly the Institute for the Laity, was authorized by and is under the oversight of the Department of Professional Ministry of the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire, as assigned by the Trustees of ABC VT/NH, and approved by the Congregation of Churches. In 2012 IFL became an affiliated organization. IFL is implemented by a Governing Board consisting of representatives from Associations and organizations in the Region.

## **LEVEL ONE: FOUNDATIONS**

### **Eligibility**

All are invited to take Level One courses, which provide basic Biblical and theological skills that are helpful for all church members and anyone interested in Christianity.

### **Registration for IFL Courses or Workshops/Sessions**

Interested persons may take courses or attend a session as a workshop through registering. A person may register in one of four ways:

- \* on-line [www.instituteforlearningvtnh.org](http://www.instituteforlearningvtnh.org)
- \* e-mail: [iflvtnh@gmail.com](mailto:iflvtnh@gmail.com)
- \* telephone the Director or Chair of the Governing Board
- \* mail to the Director or Chair of the Governing Board.

A **Registration Form** (see appendix) may be filled out at the first class or before, and payment is made at that time.

### **Application to Enroll in Level One: Foundations in Christianity Program**

Anyone desiring to earn a Certificate in Foundations in Christianity must complete an application, submit references, pay a non-refundable fee, and meet with the Director. The applicant is then invited to register for a course. Upon the successful completion of that course, the applicant is invited to be interviewed by the Governing Board, and be accepted into the Certificate in Foundations Program.

Upon receipt of their application, applicants are eligible to apply for scholarships. When they are accepted into the Program, they are given a mentor, a support group, and a record of their Program of Studies is kept on file in the Region Office.

### **Admittance into the Foundations Program**

The Chair of the Governing Board will send a letter notifying the applicant of acceptance into the Foundations Program.

## Acceptance of Transfer Credit

Enrollees in Level One may bring in four of the 6 required courses from an accredited institution. Two courses must be taken for credit through IFL in order to earn the Certificate in Foundations.

For alternative ways an applicant might meet Level One requirements, and to see competencies to be met in Level One, see the appendices.

## Requirements for earning a Certificate in Foundations

Completion of six courses or their equivalent:

IFL101 Spiritual Formation

IFL102 The Bible

IFL103 Theology

IFL104 Church History

IFL105 American Baptist Churches

IFL 106 On Being Church

### **GOAL and PURPOSE OF LEVEL ONE**

The goal of this Program is that upon successful completion of Level One, each participant will have given evidence of being a Christian growing in faith and practice and a vibrant member of a faith community.

### **Graduation**

Upon satisfactorily completing the six required courses, the graduate is awarded a Certificate in Foundations at the Annual Gathering of the ABC V/NH.

Those applying to Levels Two and Three must show how they have met or are meeting the requirements of Level One.

***Completing Foundations courses is a requirement of any specialized course of study in Levels Two and Three.***

## **Course Descriptions**

### **IFL101 SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

While spiritual formation and growing spiritually is a lifelong process, this course covers the basics. Participants examine and practice the spiritual disciplines. A historical overview of conversion, baptism, and soul liberty will be discussed. Each participant will examine and articulate his or her own conversion experience and baptism. The roles of covenant, character, ethics and a Christian world view are also covered.

### **IFL102 THE BIBLE**

An introduction to the entire text of the Bible with an initial exposure to considering the varied and interdependent nature of the individual books themselves. Includes the history of how we got the Bible, various interpretations, and study tools.

### **IFL103 THEOLOGY**

This course is an introduction to basic concepts of systematic theology, as well as other forms of theology. Topics include God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, good and evil, heaven and hell, human nature, God's salvation plan, the church, communion, baptism, and the end of the world. Creeds, covenants, and statements of faith will be used to introduce Christian doctrine.

### **IFL104 CHURCH HISTORY**

Where are we today in relation to the history of Christianity? What has happened in the last two millennia, and where are we going from here? What can we learn from church council decisions and the writings of our church fathers and mothers?

### **IFL105 AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES**

What it means to be an American Baptist in Vermont and New Hampshire. How we connect with American Baptists throughout the United States, and worldwide Baptists. Principles, practices, and history will be covered, as related to the local church and personal experience. The region course on ABC Polity provides partial fulfillment of this course.

### **IFL106 CHURCH (On Being Church)**

What is church? Why belong to a local church? Is it necessary? What does membership entail? Each participant will take a spiritual gifts inventory and complete a related task. What does it mean to "Love your neighbor?" What do the words *evangelism*, *missions*, and *outreach* mean? How does church relate to society or the culture?

## **LEVEL TWO: CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

### **GOAL and PURPOSE of the Program**

Those who complete the Church Leadership Program are equipped to be a Church Leader in a specific area of church life.

### **Eligibility**

Most applicants are active members of American Baptist Churches in Vermont and New Hampshire. However those from other regions or denominations are invited to apply as well. They are expected to meet basic literacy and communication requirements, unless alternative arrangements are made. They also are expected to give evidence of a background and character suitable to the leadership position for which they are seeking to become qualified.

### **Application**

Those who wish to take Level Two Church Leadership courses must fill out an application for the Program, obtain recommendations from the Pastor and the Chair of the Board of Deacons (or equivalent) of the American Baptist Church (or other church) where the applicant attends or is a member. Upon receipt of the letters, the Chair of the Governing Board will schedule an interview of the applicant by the Director and/or Chair. At this interview the program will be explained in greater detail. The applicant is then invited to register for one course. Upon the completion of that course, the applicant will then be invited to meet with the Governing Board to share his or her Christian experience, church involvement, call to leadership, ministry experience and goals. Following the interview the Governing Board will vote on admitting the applicant into the Church Leadership Program.

The Institute for Learning supports church-based ministry and every effort should be made by applicants to receive a recommendation from the church leaders (pastor and chair of Deacons (or equivalent)) in the church where the applicant is a member. When this is not possible or appropriate an applicant may substitute the Pastor's recommendation and the recommendation from the Chair of the Diaconate with recommendations from two people other than the

Pastor and Deacon, with prior approval from the Chair and Region Minister, who will arrange for an in-depth interview with two people appointed by them.

Anyone preparing for a Certificate in Church Leadership is expected to have high moral standards, must complete the Conduct Disclosure Statement, and agree to a Criminal Records check.

### **Admittance into the Church Leadership Program**

If the applicant is accepted into the program, he or she will be notified in writing by the Chair of the Governing Board. Those who apply to the Program are eligible to apply for scholarships. They are provided with, a mentor, a support group, and a record of their Program of Studies is kept on file at the Region Office.

### **Course Requirements**

In addition to meeting Level One competencies, the participant completes IFL201 Church Leadership and at least one course in a particular field of church life such as:

*Christian Education, Deacon Ministry, Evangelism and Outreach, Women's Ministry, Men's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Leading Worship, Music Ministry, Missions, Trustee and Church Property, Pastoral Relations, Moderator, Clerk, or Church Finance.*

The curriculum for specialties will be determined collaboratively by the participant, Director, and Instructor. The curriculum includes Supervised Ministry in the field of choice.

### **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Completion of eight courses:
- 101 Spiritual Formation
  - 102 The Bible
  - 103 Theology
  - 104 Church History
  - 105 American Baptist Churches
  - 106 Being Church
  - 201 Church Leadership
  - 202 Specialty Course

B. One year of participation in a Support Group.

C. A minimum of 4 meetings per year with his/her Mentor, by phone or in person. These meetings are documented.

D. Completion of 12 weeks, a minimum of 2 hours per week of Supervised Ministry with a pastor in good standing with the ABC. The supervision is by someone qualified in the area of specialty.

E. At least 3 satisfactory presentations to the congregation, support group, or another organization in the area of specialty. The presentation is reviewed and discussed with the Instructor and documented.

F. At the end of the program, the enrollee must present to the Governing Board a summary of his or her experience and evidence of competency. A presentation in person is not required.

## **Course Descriptions**

### **IFL 201 Church Leadership**

Examine Church Leadership and skills of effective leadership. Discuss small group skills such as those for boards and committees. Learn elements of strategic planning, decision-making, accountability. Learn rules of engagement that are fair and equitable (Biblical procedure).

### **IFL 202 Specialty Course**

The participant, with the help of the Instructor, conducts a self-assessment to determine strengths and areas where growth is needed. A strategic plan with benchmarks is established, and regular evaluations are used for reviewing and planning. Ten hours of contact time with the Instructor.

Independent Study options for Church Leadership may be submitted for approval by the Director or Governing Board. Options include –

- Week long workshops
- Special courses or workshops from other institutions

## **LEVEL THREE: CERTIFIED LAY MINISTERS PROGRAM**

### **GOAL and PURPOSE of Level Three**

The Certified Lay Ministers Program is designed to prepare participants for effective pastoral ministry in the local church. In the ABCVNH Region this is considered a commissioned level of ministry awarded by the Region.

### **Eligibility**

Applicants must be active members of a Church, and be in good standing. They are expected to meet basic literacy and communication requirements. They must give evidence of a background and character suitable to the position of Pastor.

### **Ethics**

Anyone preparing to enter the Certified Lay Ministers Program is expected to have high moral standards. Applicants must fill out the Conduct Disclosure Statement and agree to have a Criminal Records Check.

An applicant or graduate of the Program shall not seek to become Pastor of his/her home Church, shall seek to support his/her local Pastor, and does not seek to undermine that Pastor's leadership.

### **Application**

Those who wish to take courses in the Certified Lay Ministry Program must fill out an application for the Program, and obtain recommendations from the Pastor and the Chair of the Board of Deacons (or equivalent) or equivalent where the applicant attends or is an active member.\* (Exception: Pastors who are already ordained may take these courses for enrichment and professional development.)

Upon receipt of these letters, the Chair of the Governing Board will schedule an interview with the Director. The program will be explained in greater detail at this interview. The applicant is then invited to register for one course. Upon the completion of that course, the applicant will be invited to meet with the Governing Board to share his or her Christian experience, church involvement, call to ministry, ministry experience, and goals. Following the interview the Governing Board will vote regarding admittance into the Program.

The Institute for Learning supports church-based ministry and every effort should be made by applicants to receive a recommendation from the church leaders (pastor and chair of Deacons (or equivalent)) in the church where the applicant is a member. When this is not possible or appropriate an applicant may substitute the Pastor's recommendation and the recommendation from the Chair of the Diaconate with recommendations from two people other than the Pastor and Deacon, with prior approval from the Chair and Region Minister, who will arrange for an in-depth interview with two people appointed by them.

### **Admittance into the Certified Lay Ministry Program**

If the applicant is accepted into the program, he or she will be notified in writing by the Chair of the Governing Board. Applicants are eligible to apply for scholarships.

Those who enroll in the Program are given a mentor, a support group, and a record of their Program of Studies is kept on file at the Region Office.

### **Course Requirements**

Completion of twelve courses

- 101 Spiritual Formation
- 102 The Bible
- 103 Theology
- 104 Church History
- 105 American Baptist Churches
- 106 Church (Being Church)
- 201 Church Leadership
- 202 Specialty course
- 301 Ethics and Moral Character
- 302 Pastoral Leadership and Administration
- 303 Leading Worship and Preaching
- 304 Lifespan Pastoral Care\*

\*In order to complete the course in Lifespan Pastoral Care, the enrollee must complete twenty hours of Pastoral Care or Visitation under an appointed Supervisor.

## **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. Support Group Meetings**

Attend at least 75% of the Support Group meetings over a period of two years, and make at least 3 satisfactory presentations before the group in class or during support group meetings.

### **B. Aptitude Assessment**

Complete an aptitude assessment, supervised by the Mentor/Sponsor, Instructor, or Support Group Leader, and present evidence of such to the Governing Board.

Attending the Center for Ministry fulfills this requirement.

### **C. Supervised Pastoral Ministry**

Complete 24 weeks of supervised ministry for a minimum of 5 hours per week. Supervised Ministry in or through a local church, usually ABC, under an ordained pastor with an ABC recognized ordination.

### **D. Certification Paper**

After completing course requirements for the Certified Lay Ministry Program, the participant must prepare and present a paper to the Governing Board. The certification paper covers the following topics:

- A description of the student's Christian Experience;
- Call to Ministry;
- Future Plans for Ministry;
- Statement of Doctrine which addresses the following subjects: Scripture, God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, Church, Christian Life, Christian Hope: Eschatology, Human condition and salvation, Ordinances.

If the Governing Board finds the paper and presentation satisfactory, the participant will be recommended to the Department of Professional Ministry for certification, The Region conducts a commissioning ceremony during the Annual Gathering of the ABC/VNH

## **Course Descriptions**

### **IFL301 ETHICS AND MORAL CHARACTER**

High moral character is essential for a pastor. There is public trust in a member of the clergy. A pastor wields a measure of public power in the community, within the church, and with individuals, because a pastor is seen as representing Christ and a Christian view. Criteria for leadership are outlined in Scripture (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1:5-9). This course examines ethical issues faced by pastors.

Students taking the Boundaries course offered by the region will partially fulfill the requirements for this course

### **IFL302 PASTORAL LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION**

The pastor serves as the spiritual leader of the church and demonstrates the ability to lead a congregation. One of the pastor's roles is to assume some measure of responsibility to supervise or facilitate what happens in the life of the church body. Child safety, financial management, and building maintenance make up part of the life of the church. Paid staff as well as volunteers need to be guided and held accountable to keep the church a safe, healthy, and law-abiding place. Even in a church that practices congregational polity, where every member is a minister and has equal voice and vote, "the buck stops here" at the pastor's office unless something is clearly spelled out differently in the By Laws or Scripture. Giving guidance, providing oversight without micro-managing, and involving the church in a team approach that reflects the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-27) are skills needed by a pastor, who serves as coach and quarterback. This course provides the basics of pastoral leadership and administration.

### **IFL303 LEADING WORSHIP AND PREACHING**

Regular public worship is the climax of church life, and special services such as weddings and funerals play a key spiritual role in family life. The pastor is the leader of worship and preaching. As “people of the Book”, the Bible is central to worshipping, and a pastor is expected to be able to explain and inspire God’s people through preaching and the worship service. This course provides the nuts and bolts of organizing a worship service, preaching, and performing various services such as communion, baptism, weddings, and funerals.

### **IFL304 LIFESPAN PASTORAL CARE**

A pastor is a shepherd. While many think the primary task is to preach on Sunday morning, most of a pastor’s work is caring for the lost and those in need, through prayer, pastoral care and counseling, visitation, phone calls, emails, and appointments during office hours. Some of pastoral care is set up formally through appointments, but many times it happens through working together, sharing a meal, or a crisis. The pastor relates to the faith to all ages of the lifespan by articulating theories of development, especially spiritual development and developmentally appropriate practices. In order to complete the course in Lifespan Pastoral Care, the enrollee must do twenty hours of Pastoral Care or Visitation under an appointed Supervisor.

## METHODS OF STUDY

Courses are offered in the following delivery formats:

### **Traditional setting:**

Believing that Christians are relational, courses are offered in a traditional format when there are five or more participants who meet with the instructor at a cluster site, often a **local church** or library. Traditionally classes are taught monthly, usually on a Saturday.

Churches in the same geographical area or association are encouraged to band together to form a cohort group that goes through the program together.

Pastors are encouraged to teach the courses in their own churches as part of their adult education program.

**Course intensives** meet for the prescribed hours over a short period of time, usually a weekend or 3-day event. Participants remain on-site for 3-5 days as classes are held all day and in the evening. An entire course may be taught in one weekend. Participants complete readings ahead of time, and assignments are due later.

### **Course scheduling**

All courses are 2-credit. When taken in the above formats, a minimum of 10 contact hours per credit for 20 hours per course is required. Participants are expected to spend an equal amount of time on readings and other assignments, so should commit to 40 hours for each course.

Typically classes are scheduled monthly, either five class sessions of four hours each or four class sessions of five hours each. Some meet over a period of eight months for two and a half hour sessions. The instructor sets the schedule based on the needs of the participants and the instructor's availability.

### **On-Line:**

Participants may be brought together through courses **on line**. Or the Instructor may choose a hybrid approach, combining on-line instruction with several class meetings.

### **Directed Study:**

When there are fewer than five participants, the instructor may offer a **Directed Study**. In a Directed Study the Instructor and participants set their own schedule and site, with more flexibility.

**Independent study** is designed for independent learners who are self-motivated. Independent Study can be self-paced around the learner's schedule. Some finish quickly, others take longer. Each person sets his or her own pace. Courses can be completed at home or at the location of choice. There is no travel requirement. This is especially helpful for those who live in isolated areas. Independent Study may be completed through a **correspondence** course that includes a syllabus, readings, outlines, and assignments. Assignments may be discussed with the Mentor. Another form of independent study uses audio and video tapes of lectures, with accompanying readings, outlines, and assignments, such as the Dimensions of the Faith and Sem-Link courses provided by Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. For Independent Study there are no class hours of instruction. The course is completed when the work is done.

## **COSTS and FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

A registration fee is required before or at the time of the interview with the Governing Board for those enrolling in a program. In addition, an annual fee will be charged to all enrolled students, until they have completed their program.

No one need drop out of the Program because of financial need. There are several sources of financial assistance. To apply for financial assistance, fill out an application for Scholarship.

The fees are set annually by the Governing Board and checks should be made out to the "Institute for Learning".

### **Mentors (also called Sponsors)**

As we study Biblical methods of instruction, the model of Paul and Timothy comes to mind. Also Elijah and Elisha, Moses and Joshua, Samuel and Saul, Naomi and Ruth, Priscilla and Aquila with Apollos. (For women: Titus 2:3-4 ...the older women are to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women.) Perhaps better than formal

training in a classroom setting is that close relationship between Mentor and Mentee. Mentees benefit from an on-going relationship with an experienced pastor, who will take an interest in the Mentee's goals and progress.

The IFL Governing Board provides each enrollee with a Mentor who gives support and encouragement, following the guidelines set by the Institute for Learning. Enrolees or Mentors may petition the IFL Governing Board in writing if a change is necessary.

### **Qualification for Mentors**

An ordained member of the clergy in good standing with the ABC will be asked to serve as a Mentor for participants in the Level Three Certified Lay Ministry Program.

During the first year in the Program the enrollee explores the meaning and value of having a mentor. A support group meeting is dedicated to discussing the mentor advantage of the Program, with stories of previous mentors. The enrollee is exposed to positive mentor/mentee relationships in the Program. By the end of the first year the enrollee is assigned a mentor. The Vice-Chair of the Governing Board contacts the proposed Mentor, at which time contact information is given to each of them, guidelines are provided, and questions answered. The Vice-Chair contacts the Mentor annually in order to receive a progress report.

### **Guidelines for Mentors**

The Mentor and Mentee meet a minimum of four times each year, eight times a year is recommended. Mentees are encouraged to contact their Mentors by telephone or e-mail when they need advice or encouragement.

A good starting meeting is a get-acquainted session to share personal testimonies, ministry experiences and goals. Ministry goals (what the mentee hopes to get out of the mentor relationship) should be set up and reviewed periodically.

The Mentee should take a spiritual gifts inventory to clarify and confirm his or her gifts for ministry, the results of the inventory then become the focus of one of their meetings.

Since the primary role of a Mentor is to provide encouragement and support to the Mentee who is pursuing the required courses and seeking to prepare for more effective ministry, the Mentor should discuss the Mentee's progress in course work. Practical lessons learned and ministry experiences engaged in will be recurring topics of conversation. Mentees are expected to engage in ministry opportunities at their own churches or beyond, as they have opportunity during the year. They report such experiences and the courses they have completed or are currently working on in a Student Annual Report form which is mailed to them in January. The participant should show the Annual Report to the Mentor, who signs off that the work has been completed. At that time the Mentor/Mentee relationship is reviewed and new goals set.

The Mentor's Report Form is filled out by the Mentor and mailed in (see attached). It is a one-page form on which the Mentor verifies how many times the Mentor and Mentee have met during the previous year, and conveys any observations, concerns or recommendations for the good of the program. The Mentor may choose to discuss this Annual Report with the Mentee in January, or mail it directly to the Chair of the Governing Board.

Mentors are always welcome at the three Governing Board meetings held each year, and may ask to have items put on the agenda for the meeting. (third Saturday of August, November, and April)

Once the participant completes the required courses, he/she prepares a Certification Paper, and presents it before the Governing Board. The Mentor is requested to read and review the Certification Paper and make observations or recommendations to the Mentee before it is presented to the Board.

The Mentor is invited to attend the Governing Board meeting to observe the Mentee's presentation.

When the Department of Professional Ministry recommends a graduate for Certification as a Lay Minister, the Region Minister performs a commissioning ceremony at the next Annual Gathering of the ABCVNH, and the Mentor is invited to participate in that ceremony.

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## **Support Groups**

Support Groups meet on a monthly or quarterly basis to provide peer support, encouragement and fellowship. The Support Group meetings provide times for sharing experiences, encouraging one another, and developing ministry skills. Each group determines when and where it will meet, sometimes on a weekday evening over a brown bag supper.

The Support Group Leader guides discussion, or asks a member of the Support Group to do so, and coordinates presentations.

Suggested topics of Support Groups:

1. Program of Studies and Setting Goals: Three levels and goals of each. Methods of delivery. Individual plans for completion.
2. IFL Program overview. How Support Groups reflect what Clergy Groups provide after Certification of Lay Ministers. What should and should not be discussed with peers.
3. Mentors: What is a mentor? How are mentors valuable throughout one's ministry? Reports from mentors and mentees.
4. Handbook (This may take more than one session): Academic policies. IFL Structure, Policies and Procedures.
5. Role playing and case studies on topics chosen by participants and led by participants.

All participants in Level Three are required to attend at least 75% of the meetings of a Support Group.

## **Academic Policies**

### **Attendance**

The Institute for Learning is a two-way commitment: IFL agrees to offer quality courses and help students receive scholarships. Participants agree to attend and complete assignments. IFL is not a diploma mill. Participants earn college-level credits by attending classes and completing assignments. In order to receive credit for a course, a participant must have attended 75% of the classroom hours and complete at least 75% of the assignments. A passing grade is based on attendance and the completion of assignments at a C level or above. Attendance affects grades. A student who has missed a class or classes should not expect to earn an A, and is responsible to

complete all assignments, including assignments for missed sessions.

### **Absentees**

The instructor is not expected to provide contact hours for students who miss class. It is recommended that students who have to miss a session ask a peer to record it, take notes, and collect hand outs. This is NOT the responsibility of the Instructor. Even when missing a class, participants are still responsible for the assignments. Where available, students may use on-line classes to make up for missed classes.

### **Grading**

Grading is as follows: A,B,C, and Unsatisfactory.

Au = Audit

I=Incomplete

W= Withdrawal by the student

Participants must earn C or higher in order to receive credit. They may re-take a specific course no more than two times.

Instructors may use + and -, at their discretion.

All students must receive one of the grades listed above. Grades should be turned in to the Director or Chair within one month of when the course ends and/or final assignments are due.

### **Auditing**

Auditing is allowed for all but correspondence courses, at the discretion of the instructor. (Correspondence course materials may be purchased without registering for a course.) The instructor sets the rules for auditing regarding participation. "Audit" literally means "listen" and historically auditors were allowed to sit in and listen but not allowed to speak. Each auditor should inform the instructor of his/her status as auditor and ask for guidelines before the course begins. Auditors attend at least 75% of the classroom hours for each course, but do not turn in assignments, and do not receive credit or a grade. Audited courses do not meet the requirements of the three Programs. However they do appear on the Program of Studies transcript. The Governing Board will periodically review and set the fee for auditing a course.

## **Incomplete**

An Incomplete may be granted at the discretion of the Instructor to those students who have a named reason for not completing the course by the due date. The reason is usually an issue of health, a last minute emergency, or a scheduling conflict.

An extension may be granted by the instructor for up to 6 months. At the end of the extension the Incomplete becomes Unsatisfactory. The Instructor needs to record the date of the extension on the Grade Report form. The grade change is done at the Administrative Level without further notification. The Instructor may or may not wish to remind the student before the deadline arrives.

Students who have had two Unsatisfactory grades are not allowed to register for further courses until they earn a passing grade in at least one of the Unsatisfactory courses.

## **Withdrawal**

A student may request to withdraw from a course. This request needs to be in writing to the Director, and needs the approval of the Instructor, shown by signing the request. A withdrawal must be submitted before the last class. A student cannot withdraw after the course is finished.

## **Appeals Process**

Anyone who is not satisfied with his or her grade or any competency assessment may contact the instructor within 6 weeks of receiving the grade, and if not satisfied, the participant and instructor meet with the Director. If still unsatisfied, the decision may be taken to the Chair of the Governing Board. The determination of the Governing Board is final. Every attempt will be made to be both fair and supportive.

## **Scholarship Policy**

Students are expected to fund their own program. However, scholarship monies may be available through IFL and other sources. Students may access scholarships by applying directly to the IFL board and other scholarship granting organizations. If you have further questions, information is available through the Director and/or the region office.

Failure to meet IFL participation requirements for meetings with support groups and mentors will render IFL members ineligible for IFL scholarships and endorsement for scholarships by other

organizations such as the Northern Baptist Educational Society, American Baptist Women, and Silver Bean. Failure to meet these requirements will also render the IFL member unable to receive a certificate of completion until the requirements are met for the intended periods of time.

### **Student Conduct**

Participants are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects high moral, ethical and spiritual standards of honesty and integrity. When using the work of someone else, including the Bible, citations are expected. Any student suspected of academic dishonesty may be brought before the Governing Board and be removed from the Program.

Any participant, instructor, or mentor who has been accused of criminal behavior or a violation of the Code of Ethics may be removed from the Program, provided he/she has been contacted and invited to a fair hearing by the Governing Board.

A participant in the Lay Leadership Program of Studies cannot apply for a pastor position in his or her own church, nor should any participant attempt to undermine the ministry of the pastor in one's home church. The ability to be supportive of one's pastor is a condition of continued enrollment in the Institute for Learning.

### **Transfer of Credits**

Participants may bring transcripts from other institutions for analysis by the Director. Decisions of the Director may be appealed to the Governing Board. Enrollees in Level One may bring in four of the six required courses from another institution. Two courses must be taken through the Institute for Learning. Enrollees in Level Two Church Leadership must take at least two of the Level One requirements through the Institute for Learning and show competency in all Level One courses. They may transfer in their specialty area (IFL202) provided it is approved by the Governing Board. Enrollees in Level Three Certified Lay Ministry must take at least three of the Level Three courses through the Institute for Learning. Any exception must be approved by the Governing Board. Any enrollee wishing to take a course outside the Program needs prior approval in writing from the Director and/or Chair of the Governing Board.

## **Certified Lay Minister Status**

Completion of the required IFL program of studies results in a recommendation by IFL to the Department of Professional Ministry that the Region commission the graduate as a Certified Lay Minister. Status as a Certified Lay Minister is granted by the Region, not by the IFL.

## **Placement**

While the Institute for Learning does not offer placement services, recommendations from Instructors, the Director, Chair of the Governing Board, and Board members are given weight within the Region and at the Region Office. Information about those enrolled in the IFL Program is kept at the Region Office in case of openings, whether volunteer or paid.

Completion of the Certified Lay Ministry Program does not guarantee pastoral placement.

Earning a Certificate in Lay Ministry is not the same as ordination and does not automatically confer ordination status. The Institute for Learning cannot ordain or commission anyone. Ordination is a function of a local American Baptist Church under the direction of the Department of Professional Ministry. The Institute for Learning does not provide ordination or local ordination within the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire.

The States of New Hampshire and Vermont have their own requirements for officiating at weddings. IFL does not grant any kind of standing for officiating, but provides the educational preparation. Standing is granted by the local church and the state of residence or where the ceremony is performed.

## **Annual Review**

Each enrollee in the Institute for Learning will review the previous year's progress by submitting a report to the Chair of the Governing Board in January/February. An Annual Review Form will be sent out to each participant to complete and return. The annual fee may be included when the form is returned. Each Mentor will also be asked to complete and return an Annual Survey for each enrollee whom he or she is mentoring.

## **Certificate of Completion**

Participants who have completed the programs of study coursework for Level One: Foundations and Level Two: Church Leadership will be awarded a Certificate by the Governing Board and be recognized at the next Annual Gathering of the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire. Those who complete the entire Level Three: Certified Lay Minister program, including the course work, Supervised Ministry, Certification paper, and all other requirements, are recommended to the Department of Professional Ministries for Certification by the Region and, if approved, will be recognized at the next Annual Gathering of the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire.

## **Length of time allotted for completing the Program**

Completion of any of these certificate programs should take from 3 to 5 years. A maximum of fourteen years will be allowed for completion.

## **Withdrawal and Removal from the Program**

A participant who is no longer actively taking courses may withdraw from the Program by writing a letter to the Chair of the Governing Board. Those who cease to be active for five years may be removed from the Program by the Chair of the Governing Board. Any participant who has violated the ethical standards of the Institute for Learning will be removed from the Program by vote of the Governing Board, provided that participant has been given notification in writing and has been invited to speak on his/her behalf to the Governing Board. Notification of removal from the program will be provided to the Region Minister and Department of Professional Ministry as well as the individual. Once a graduate has been certified as a lay minister by the Region, IFL no longer has jurisdiction to remove that standing. Since certification is by the Region at the recommendation of the Department of Professional Ministry, removal of that certification is also by the Region at the recommendation of the Department of Professional Ministry. The only time a graduate might lose an earned diploma or certificate is if evidence surfaces that the academic work was not that of the graduate, in which case

a decision is made by the Governing Board after listening to both the graduate and those presenting the evidence. The Governing Board then informs the Department of Professional Ministry, which may decide to remove certification.

### **Reinstatement into the Program**

In order to be reinstated in the Program, a former participant must write a letter to the Chair of the Governing Board making that request, be interviewed by the Director, and be approved by the Governing Board.

## **Confidentiality of Records**

### **Transcripts**

Participants will be given a copy of their transcript upon request. A transcript may be requested by anyone with prior approval in writing of the participant.

## **POLICY ON CONFIDENTIALITY**

All of the following documents are open to the public, in or outside the Region: Current IFL By Laws, Current Handbook, Minutes of Governing Board meetings, List of officers and terms, Director's Resume, Strategic Plans by Year including Budgets, Annual Reports, Annual Financial Reports, course Syllabi, and course Handouts.

All of the following documents are confidential: **Personnel evaluations** may be reviewed by the Chair of the Governing Board, the Region Minister, and the Chair of the Department for Professional Ministry with the understanding that information is shared on a Need to Know basis. All personnel have the right to look in their own files, and to add comments if they so choose. Personnel evaluations are kept for 10 years and then destroyed.

Each instructor's file includes a resume, signed Code of Ethics, contracts for courses, student evaluations, the Director's observation, and the instructor's course evaluations. The Conduct Disclosure form is either in the Instructor's file or with the Region Minister. All information in the individual folders of the **instructors**, including Student Evaluations, is confidential, and the only people having access to them are the Instructor, the Director, the Chair of the Governing Board, the Region Minister, and the Chair of the Department of Professional Ministry, each of

whom shares the information only on a Need to Know basis. Otherwise the information may be shared **ONLY** with the Instructor's permission. Anyone else seeking access or information in them should receive written (email is acceptable) permission from the Instructor.

Each **student** has an individual file which is confidential. Included in that file is the student's application, program of studies, grades, references, scholarship application/approval, annual reports, annual reports by mentor, copies of certificates earned (level one, two, three), and transcripts from other institutions (where used to fulfill IFL requirements). Those having access to student files are the Director, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Board, Region Minister, and Chair of the Department of Professional Ministry. Anyone else seeking access or information in them should receive written (email is acceptable) permission from the student. The application and references are distributed to the Governing Board at the interview, but are considered confidential.

### **Policy of Non-Discrimination**

The Institute for Learning does not discriminate against anyone based on race, ethnicity, age, ability or disability, or gender. Women and men are encouraged to prepare for leadership positions for which they are called and gifted. Diversity is welcomed and equality is promoted.

Participants with disabilities who need adaptations or modifications *must* notify the Institute before the first class. All participants, including those whose primary language is not English, must show a basic proficiency in written and spoken English for Levels Two and Three.

### **Accreditation**

The Institute for Learning uses the requirements set by the American Baptist Churches/USA and by the Ministers Council for Continuing Education Units. The Program is approved by the Department of Professional Ministry of ABC V/NH.

### **Department of Professional Ministry**

The Department of Professional Ministry requires that those seeking standing in ABC V/NH take a Baptist polity course and an Ethics course. These courses form a basis for IFL105 American Baptist Churches and IFL301 Ethics and Moral Character. IFL normally offers IFL105 in the Fall and IFL301 in the Spring.

If attending these courses causes undue hardship because of distance or time, the Department of Professional Ministry may approve a non-credit tutorial. It is understood that IFL does not supervise, approve, or give credit for these tutorials. When there is a question as to whether something is a tutorial under DPM or an independent study course with IFL, the Chair of DPM will clarify the situation with the Director or Chair.

### **Instructors**

Instructors for courses hold a Master of Divinity degree or higher, or expertise in their particular field. They are involved in the life of the church here in the Vermont and New Hampshire Region, uphold the positions of the Institute for Learning and the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire, are of high moral character, and are gifted teachers. All instructors of Level Two courses serve or have served in Church Leadership in the field in which they are teaching, and Level Three courses are taught by ordained Pastors in the Region who have significant experience in the local church.

## **Policies for Instructors**

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

1. Holds an advanced degree (preferably terminal) or expertise in the subject being taught.
2. Has a background in American Baptist Churches in the Region.
3. Has filled out the Conduct Disclosure and signed the Code of Ethics.

### **EXPECTATIONS (RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES)**

1. Instructors follow the guidelines in the Handbook
2. A syllabus is sent to the Director within a week of the first class (preferably sooner). If it can be arranged, the Director and Chair of the Governing Board will meet with the Instructor to go over the syllabus.
3. IFL will provide an orientation to the program for instructors, and the Director will serve as adviser to the instructor.
4. The Instructor agrees to follow the catalog description, goals, objectives and course outline approved by IFL.

### **RECORDS**

The Instructor prepares a class list (see forms) and keeps attendance records. The final grade is recorded on the Class List, copies of which are sent to the Director, Chair of the Governing Board, and the Region Office.

A Grade Report Form/Course Certificate (see appendix) is filled out and signed by the Instructor and the Chair at the end of the course, copies of which are sent to the Student, the Director, Chair, and Region Office.

Students who have an ABPS profile are responsible for sending a copy of the certificate to the ABPS office at ABCUSA headquarters.

If the Instructor believes a participant is failing/unsatisfactory or has withdrawn, the Director or Chair should be notified as soon as possible. The Instructor will send an academic warning to the student, with a copy to the Director, at mid-term if a student is not passing with a C or better. It is the goal of IFL that each participant will successfully complete a course, and support resources will be offered by IFL to failing students.

Instructors for Level One courses must be willing to accept participants who are not able to read, write, or speak clearly. The Instructor may encourage the participant to audit.

### **EVALUATIONS**

1. Instructors will provide evaluations for the participants to fill out, so as to receive feedback and positive suggestions. These evaluations will be turned in to the Director for evaluation of the program, as well as constructive feedback for the Instructor.
2. The Instructor may ask a colleague to visit and do a peer evaluation.
3. The Director or Chair of the Governing Board will observe one of the classes of each course. The visit is usually around an hour, followed by a discussion with the Instructor.
4. The Instructor writes a summary evaluation of the course for the Governing Board.

### **APPEALS PROCESS**

When issues cannot be resolved, they will be brought to the Chair of the Governing Board, and the Governing Board itself has the authority to make final decisions in the event that a problem has not been solved.

### **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Instructors are to make three copies of their syllabi, one for the Director, one for the Chair, and one for the Region Office. Instructors are asked to prepare a packet of handouts they used, as well as notes or other materials, to be kept at the Region Office for future instructors to use as a resource. All intellectual

property is owned by the Instructor, with no copyright restrictions for future IFL use.

### **CLOCK HOURS**

Instructors are expected to use the clock hours set by IFL and approved by the ABC/USA and Ministers' Council Continuing Education units. However, all clock hours do not have to take place in a classroom format. Field trips, Region conferences, and other pertinent activities may be considered in the clock hours.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

The Instructor will explain how to properly document or cite the work of others for each assignment. Graduates of IFL are expected to be honest and have integrity. Plagiarism, or trying to pass off the work of someone else as one's own, may lead to removal from the program. If an Instructor has evidence that a participant has been dishonest, the participant and the Director should be notified.

A confidential record is kept of all reports of academic dishonesty, since there is usually a pattern across courses. The Director and Chair of the Governing Board reserve the right to call a face-to-face meeting with the Instructor and participant, and may recommend that the participant be removed from the Program by the Governing Board.

### **PROCESS FOR HIRING INSTRUCTORS**

1. Resume is on file with IFL.
2. Interview with Director and/or Chair of Governing Board.
3. Approval by the Governing Board.
4. Signed contract.

Instructors will receive a voucher per 2 credit course, to be received when grades are submitted to the Chair. Instructors may designate the form of payment, and partial payments may be negotiated.

### **OTHER ASSIGNMENTS**

Instructors may agree to teach a directed study (2-4 students) or independent study (1 student) and the stipend will be negotiated.

## **Appendix A**

### **Alternative Ways an Applicant might meet Level One Requirements**

1. Take Level One courses offered through the Institute for Learning.
2. Transfer credit from another institution. Transcript analysis by the Director. (see Transfer Policy)
3. Pastors may choose to develop their own Adult Education program in their local church. The Institute for Learning provides a certificate for each participant who completes the Level One program, and credit is earned.
4. The applicant may be interviewed by the Director, using Appendix B in order to obtain a waiver for a specific course.
5. Life experience: a combination of conferences, workshops, courses, and experiences documented by the participant and presented to the Institute for Learning as a portfolio, with a section for each competency. These may be used to waive a requirement.

## **Appendix B**

### **Level One Competencies (Desires and Expectations)**

Upon completion of the Program, each participant will have met the following competencies:

#### **I. SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

- 1.Be converted, baptized and walking with God in a covenantal relationship with and through Jesus.
- 2.Be growing in faith by practicing the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, worship, study, and stewardship of time, talent, treasure and accountability.
- 3.Show Biblical Character: be a person of virtue.
- 4.Be able to articulate the Gospel message and participate in the Great Commission.

#### **II. BIBLE**

- 1.Have a commitment to the authority of the Bible, and a basic knowledge and understanding of how it is organized as the story of God and the people of God.
- 2.Have an understanding of the Gospel as described in the New Testament.
- 3.Have an understanding of the Hebrew Bible and its place in God's revelation.

#### **III. THEOLOGY**

- 1.Have a basic knowledge of basic Christian principles and beliefs such as God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, good and evil, heaven and hell, creation, human nature, God's salvation plan, the church, communion, baptism, and the end of the world.

#### **IV. CHURCH HISTORY**

- 1.Have a basic knowledge of church history (local and universal).

#### **V. BAPTIST POLITY: Background, History and Contemporary**

- 1.Have an identity as an American Baptist, based on its principles, practices, and history, especially in relation to missions and evangelism.
2. How American Baptist Churches engage the culture of Northern New England.

## VI CHURCH (Being Church)

1. Be an active member of a local Body of Christ.
2. Have an understanding of and exhibiting the spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit.
3. Care for others through the Great Commandment and Great Commission
4. Be able to communicate the grace of God in a variety of ways.

## **Appendix C Level Two: Competencies for Church Leaders**

1. Shows leadership skills.
2. Participates in a small group well (boards and committees). Listens and cares about concerns of others. Is able to use strategic planning that includes commitment and follow through.
3. Makes wise and mature decisions that show good judgment using Christian principles, sound theology, understanding of Baptist distinctives and history, honesty and integrity.
4. Follows rules of engagement that are fair and equitable (parliamentary procedure).
5. Participates in accountability, sets personal goals for growth, and reviews them with the Pastor and Mentor.
6. Is involved in missions and evangelism as they fit with the specialty.
7. Participates in the life of the Church: Regularly attends worship, study, and prayer.
8. Has been trained in the specific position he/she holds or wishes to hold in the church. Knows and obeys the laws of the land that relate to the church in the specialty.

### **I. SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

Applies Biblical principles to church leadership.

Maintains a grounded life of faith that permeates his/her leadership.

Demonstrates Christian character, virtue, and integrity as a Church Leader, maintaining a code of ethics specific to the area of specialty and church life.

Uses a Christian world view that resists evil and inappropriate cultural temptations in the area of specialty.

Uses the Sabbath principle in managing church leadership responsibilities.

Leads activities of service to the Body of Christ as well as the community and world, as related to the area of specialty.

Sets an example for others in the approach to these activities, and shows leadership skills.

### **II. BIBLE**

Is able to lead small group Bible Studies related to the area of specialty.

Applies the Bible as an authoritative source and guide for approaching the area of specialty.

Articulates how the Bible influences his/her leadership in the area of specialty.

### III. THEOLOGY

Applies sound theology to the area of specialty and Church Leadership.

Recognizes and discerns both true and false theology.

### IV. CHURCH HISTORY

Studies church history (local and universal) in the area of specialty and understands the biblical and spiritual implications of decisions made, how failures and successes of historic Councils relate to the area of specialty and Church Leadership.

### V. AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES

Applies Baptist principles to Church Leadership and area of specialty.

Participates in keeping the local church faithful to its Baptist principles.

Begins to form a Regional and national network with others in the same area of specialty.

Is aware of and uses denominational resources where appropriate.

### VI. ON BEING CHURCH

Relates spiritual giftedness and call to the area of specialty.

Describes a sense of the mission of the particular local church and how the area of specialty fits into it in both leading and supporting, as part of the body of Christ.

Relates the area of specialty to the Great Commission, missions and outreach.

Describes accountability within the Church regarding those participating in the specialty: How people are held accountable for their actions when they are straying from Biblical principles, especially in the areas of abuse, neglect, integrity, and honesty.

Uses technology in the area of specialty.

## **APPENDIX D: Competencies for Certified Lay Ministers**

### **1. Ethics and Moral Character**

Each of the following is addressed. Recognizing that we belong to a fallen human race, repentance and forgiveness are at the heart of the Christian message, and anyone who has fallen into sin on any of these criteria may show that he or she has taken corrective measures that do not bar him or her from ministry.

1.1 Is a Pastor of integrity and virtue, specifically the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and demonstrates the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control).

1.2 If convicted of a felony, steps for restorative justice have been followed and declared successful. Is free of or managing addictions.

1.3 Financial integrity, both personal and business

1.4 Demonstrates an appropriate use of power: neither abusive nor neglectful physically, sexually, emotionally, socially or spiritually.

1.5 Embraces the policy for the Region as follows: The Region as a whole will recognize candidates for ordination and those seeking recognition of ordination who in the realm of human sexuality practice celibacy or sexual intimacy within the monogamous relationship of marriage between a man and a woman.

1.6 Obeys the laws of the land unless engaged in civil disobedience, in which case the rules of civil disobedience are followed.

1.7 Is free of discriminatory practices such as those based on race, ethnicity, gender, or age. Promotes racial and gender equality.

1.8 Uses language that is wholesome and not demeaning; is not given to name calling, racial or sexual insults.

1.9 Observes confidentiality; is discrete in sharing people's private information on a need-to-know basis; is not given to gossip or spreading rumors.

1.10 Demonstrates honesty, integrity, and authenticity in relationships; is gracious and tactful, building up the body of Christ.

1.11 Treats family of origin, spouse, and extended family well.

1.12 Is an exemplary leader in the community.

1.13 Manages situations where self or others in the body of Christ have violated Scriptural and ethical boundaries. Shows a commitment to accountability, conviction, repentance, forgiveness and receiving forgiveness, restitution, restoration,

and reconciliation; is able to engage in Scriptural church discipline within the flock.

1.14 Articulates his/her call from God, and has it verified by the church (people of God).

1.15 Describes the search process and knows how to negotiate the terms of call; States and embraces the ethical principles necessary to the process;

1.16 Describes the process for obtaining privilege of call, ordination, and standing in the Region.

1.17 Shows an understanding of the Associational Principle (being part of a larger body), by gathering with other clergy in the Region and/or local area, and being involved in Association and Region activities.

1.18 Continues to engage in accountability and learning throughout his/her ministry;

1.19 Abides by the ABC Code of Ethics for Pastors.

1.20 Applies ethical principles that are Biblically sound to decision-making, leadership, and conflicts; is able to articulate more than one point of view in matters of theology, Biblical interpretation and practices, as well as daily life;

1.21 Uses the pulpit and office of minister wisely, not for private gain or to promote personal prejudices (bully pulpit, eisegesis, proof texting).

1.22 Leads a congregation into character-building.

## **2. Pastoral Leadership and Administration**

2.1 Shows an understanding of orthodox Biblical theology, and how to apply it to the life of the church; is able to steer the Church clear of false doctrine, whether in preaching, Bible study, outreach, discipleship, or church decision-making.

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

2.2 Has the tools to assess and develop a healthy congregation in a Northern New England church such as those in Vermont and New Hampshire, which possess unique cultural realities of ministry; is able to read the culture and deal with it in positive ways.

2.3 Demonstrates an aptitude for vision-casting and discerning God's call to a particular local church.

2.4 Demonstrates the skill needed to unite church leaders in a common goal and mission; explains the meaning of a covenant and the place it has in a church.

- 2.5 Articulates the vision, mission, and goals of a church to the congregation in such a way that they understand and share them.
- 2.6 Assists the congregation in developing a gifts-based ministry.
- 2.7 Demonstrates the ability to participate in strategic planning that moves from vision to mission to goals to objectives to strategies to accomplishment to assessment.
- 2.8 Has developed an articulate philosophy of ministry, is aware of personal strengths and weaknesses as a pastor, and applies healthy compensatory strategies.

#### MINISTRY

- 2.9 Leads the church in corporate prayer.
- 2.10 Engages the church in meaningful fellowship and relationship-building.
- 2.11 Leads the church in caring for those in need both in and outside the church.
- 2.12 Leads the church in reaching outside the church to not-yet-believers.
- 2.13 Treats guests and visitors well.
- 2.14 Teaches within the church through preaching, small groups, mentoring, and pastoring the flock.

#### ADMINISTRATION

- 2.15 Demonstrates the ability to supervise the space and programs of the church so as to make it a safe, healthy, law-abiding and God-honoring place. Is able to describe, assess, perform, and delegate administrative duties.
- 2.16 Ensures that the church follows the laws of the State for non-profit corporations, that By Laws carry the force of law, should be updated in a timely manner, and must be followed; articulates the responsibilities of key groups such as Deacons (or equivalent) and trustees, using both the By Laws and Bible for outlining their duties. Ensures that the church follows federal laws regarding wages and 501.c(3) where applicable.
- 2.17 Guides the church in following appropriate institutional procedures such as having church meetings and an annual meeting, a means for accepting new members and officers, use of accountability and discipline of members and officers.
- 2.18 Ensures the church has a safety plan for the protection of children, as well as prevention of and dealing with violence and other emergencies.
- 2.19 Ensures that proper financial procedures are instituted and followed.

- 2.20 Can read a financial statement and check for accuracy regarding income and expenses.
- 2.21 Ensures that the building complies with laws of public health and safety.
- 2.22 Ensures that communications by telephone, mail, e-mail, text, etc. are tended to and used in healthy ways.
- 2.23 Ensures the collection of church statistics such as church attendance and attendance by staff. With the Clerk, keeps accurate records of baptisms, weddings, funerals, etc.
- 2.24 Managing crises and conflict in God-honoring ways that are ethical and Scriptural.
- 2.25 Leads the church into association with other churches; Has ready access to resources outside the church, including those within the Region and national denomination; states and shows the importance of a linkage with an association and attending clergy meetings.

### 3. Leading Worship and Preaching

The pastor demonstrates:

- 3.1 Biblical literacy: Has a deep understanding of the Bible and applies it to life situations.
- 3.2 the ability to conduct an accurate exegesis of Scripture, including the use of translations and the original languages, based on an accurate apologetics and hermeneutics.
- 3.3 the ability to preach an exegetical sermon that includes an introduction, explanation, application, and conclusion, showing clarity and accuracy of the text's meaning, and demonstrating the skills of public speaking.
- 3.4 a knowledge of different styles of preaching, and discernment of his/her own unique preaching giftedness.

Corporate Worship:

- 3.4 the ability to plan, prepare, conduct, and evaluate a worship service that includes: Prayer and meditation (invocation, pastoral prayer, sermon prayer), Scripture, sermon or homily, explaining the Gospel, an opening (Call to worship) and closing (Benediction) to the service, initiating and concluding the offering, music (offertory, opening music, closing music, sermon hymn, etc.), and any other part of the service (Children's Message, Lord's Prayer, Missions moment, video clips, drama, joys and concerns, etc.).
- 3.5 the ability to articulate the various tasks related to a worship service; to name the person who does it, and what that person does, to state the process for assigning these tasks, orientation and accountability: nursery, music provider, music leader,

greeter, usher, parking attendant, Scripture reader, collection of offering, children's message, candle lighter, producer of the bulletin, refreshments provider, person in charge of heat, fans, windows, lighting, sound system, straightening up the sanctuary afterwards, hanging of banners, flowers, who deals with a crisis during the service, emergency plans, and any other tasks that a particular church requires.

3.5 a basic knowledge of the Christian year and the Lectionary. (Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Passion Sunday, Palm Sunday, Easter, and Pentecost) and appropriate sermon content for each season, as well as holidays such as Thanksgiving, Memorial Sunday, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Children's Sunday, Labor Day, All Saints Day, Valentine's Day, and any other local or national cultural holiday.

3.6 a basic understanding of, and ability to prepare for and administer, the ordinances and rituals of church life, such as: baptism, communion, child dedication, marriage and marriage renewal, funeral, installation of church officers, and installation of church membership.

3.7 a basic knowledge of missions, outreach and evangelism, and how they can be incorporated into the life of the church, including but not limited to, public worship.

3.8 a basic knowledge of learning styles and how they can be accommodated in public worship and teaching.

3.9 the skill of leading a Bible study or Sunday school using sound teaching principles.

3.10 a basic knowledge of how to lead a stewardship campaign.

#### 4. Lifespan Pastoral Care

The Pastor demonstrates the ability to

4.1 teach and model reflective listening, listening to personal stories such as those regarding the end of life when meeting with grieving families.

4.2 guide a couple through pre-marital counseling.

4.3 make appropriate visits for prayer and counsel in homes, nursing homes, hospitals, prisons, etc.

4.4 minister to people of all backgrounds by showing tender care for bruised and hurt lives and a servant heart.

4.5 make appropriate referrals to professionals as needed.

4.6 provide pastoral care to people across the lifespan regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability or disability. This means a pastor's duties may include: 1) preparing families to participate in their child's dedication, and conducting the dedication; 2) helping children and parents discern the best time

for the child's first communion; 3) preparing candidates for a believer baptism, and performing it; 4) helping adolescents and young adults in discipleship; 5) preparing prospective church members for joining the local church; 6) pre-marital counseling; 7) ministering to older people; and 8) meeting the spiritual needs of the sick and dying; 9) being able to help those with addictions, depression, experiencing divorce, and any other situation that comes up in the local church.

# IFL COURSE REGISTRATION FORM



Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Course(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Semester (Fall, Winter, Summer) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you enrolled in a Program of Studies with IFL? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what is the discounted cost? \_\_\_\_\_

Method of payment: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Make checks out to the "Institute for Learning".**

Mail registration and checks with notation of course being taken to: George Keeler, 257 Eastview Cir., Williston VT 05495,

You may email the Registration to [iflvtnh@gmail.com](mailto:iflvtnh@gmail.com)

## **REGISTRATION FOR IFL WORKSHOP or other Session**

Name of Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date you plan to attend: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS where information is to be mailed:

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you text? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of your church: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of your church: \_\_\_\_\_

Your position in your church (member, deacon, pastor, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about this workshop?

\_\_\_\_\_

What are you hoping to get out of it?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your main concern for your church?

## **ENROLLING IN THE INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING**

American Baptist Churches VT/NH

Welcome to the Institute for Learning of the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire! We are excited to support and encourage you as you seek to improve your knowledge and skills and follow your call to ministry.

### **BENEFITS of Enrolling in the Institute for Learning Program**

The Institute for Learning is committed to supporting and encouraging you by setting up Support Groups, assigning a Mentor/sponsor, giving you an Advisory Board and Advisor in the Director, and providing stimulating courses from qualified instructors, as well as scholarships and discounts on the cost of those courses.

To enroll you will need to do the following:

1. Fill out the Application Form including the Conduct Disclosure Form.
2. Obtain two references: Ask your Pastor and Chair of Deacons (or equivalent) to write a reference for you.
3. Write a check for \$50 (non-refundable) to the Institute for Learning.
4. Mail the Application Form, including your narrative (for Levels Two and Three), two references, and the check to Rev. Everett Palmer, Chair of the Governing Board, Institute for Learning, 30 Cherry Street, Belmont NH 03220. \*
5. Within two weeks of having received your Application and References, the Director will contact you to set up an appointment to advise you regarding your options within the Program.
6. After you complete your first course, you will be asked to have a half hour interview with the Governing Board. Regular meetings are three times a year on the third Saturday in August, November, and April.\*
7. The Governing Board will vote on your acceptance into the program, and Rev. Palmer will send you a letter stating the outcome of their decision.
8. Enrollees may complete the program based on the requirements at the time they enrolled or they may elect to use current ones.

*If time is of the essence, you may e-mail the Application and References to [eveupa2@myfairpoint.net](mailto:eveupa2@myfairpoint.net)*

and bring the check to the interview.

Checks should be made out to the “Institute for Learning”.

### **For Applicants to Levels Two and Three:**

On a separate piece of paper handwrite your story that has led up to your present interest. Describe your call to become a follower of Christ, your baptism, and your church experience, including that in an American Baptist Church. Describe the call you are feeling for ministry, and how you intend to follow that call. Be as specific as you can, knowing the Holy Spirit may change things. *(This section will show your ability to communicate in writing, which is important in ministry.)*

If you have physical or mental disabilities that might affect your participation in this program, you must self-identify or disclose at the end of the first class if you wish to have modifications or adaptations.

*When you have completed this application, mail it to Rev. Everett Palmer, Chair of the Governing Board of the Institute for Learning, 30 Cherry Street, Belmont NH 03220 or email it to him [eveupa2@myfairpoint.net](mailto:eveupa2@myfairpoint.net).*

*If you have questions, you may call him at 603-524-4725.*

**APPLICATION to the INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING**

American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire

*Revised April 2013*

Date application is mailed to Chair: \_\_\_\_\_  
(to be completed by Chair) Date Enrolled: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of American Baptist Church where you \_\_\_\_ attend  
OR \_\_\_\_ are a member:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address of Church: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number of Church: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email address of Church: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Web site of Church: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Pastor's Telephone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Pastor's email address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Pastor's mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Chair of Deacons (or equivalent): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Deacon's Telephone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Deacon's email address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Deacon's mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Optional) Name of a Church Leader who knows you well and supports your applying to this program *(If other than the two above)*.

Name of Church Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship of this person to you:

\_\_\_\_\_

How long has this person known you?

\_\_\_\_\_

In what capacity has this person known you?

\_\_\_\_\_

Positions you have held in the Church or in some kind of  
Christian ministry: (use additional paper as needed)

Position	(Beginning – End)	Length of time	Years
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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Educational Background

High School: \_\_\_\_\_

Bible School: \_\_\_\_\_

Certificates: \_\_\_\_\_

College (Major): \_\_\_\_\_

Advanced degrees: \_\_\_\_\_

### Employment Record

Type of employment of time	Company	Years	Length
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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List Christian conferences, workshops, and regional or national  
meetings you have attended:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### CHURCH HISTORY

List the churches you have been an active member of:

Name of Church

Denomination

Years of participation:

What was your involvement with this church? (What kinds of  
ministries?)

Reason for leaving:

Name of Church

Denomination

Years of participation:

What was your involvement with this church? (What kinds of ministries?)

Reason for leaving:

Name of Church

Denomination

Years of participation:

What was your involvement with this church? (What kinds of ministries?)

Reason for leaving:

### OTHER RELIGIOUS INVOLVEMENT

List other religious activities you have been involved in (para-church ministries like InterVarsity, national associations, Regional associations, a religious business, Awana, etc.)

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What special abilities, interests, and hobbies of yours are related to ministry?

What is your goal in enrolling?

Enrichment

Professional development

Spiritual growth

Certificate in Lay Leadership specific to

\_\_\_\_\_

To become a Certified Lay Minister

To *prepare* for ordination (IFL does NOT ordain. That is the function of the local church under the guidance of the Department of Professional Ministry.)

To become a chaplain or ministry leader with

\_\_\_\_\_ (senior citizens, military, college, police, fire, marketplace)

To become a missionary to

\_\_\_\_\_.

Other:

Is there anything you would like to share regarding your family?

\_\_\_\_\_

If you are enrolling in Level Three, you will need to sign the Ministerial Code of Ethics for American Baptist Ministers.

# CONDUCT DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Have allegations of misconduct been brought against you for any of the following reasons?

- sexual abuse
- child abuse
- having an inappropriate sexual relationship with a minor
- having an inappropriate sexual relationship outside of marriage
- child pornography
- elder abuse
- domestic violence
- spiritual abuse or bullying
- physical abuse or violence
- financial misconduct, fraud or embezzlement
- theft
- spiritual abuse
- use of or sale of illegal drugs
- driving while intoxicated
- convicted felon
- reckless conduct endangering the lives of others
- reckless driving causing an injury
- dishonorable discharge from the military
- prison time
- Have you lost ministerial standing in another denomination?

If you checked any of the above, mail this form to Rev. Dale Edwards, Region Minister, American Baptist Churches V/NH, One Oak Ridge rd B.3, #4A, West Lebanon NH 03784, and mark the outside of the envelope CONFIDENTIAL. Then arrange a meeting with him (643-4201, [dale.edwards@abcvnh.org](mailto:dale.edwards@abcvnh.org))

# **INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING**



American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire

[www.instituteforlearningvtnh.org](http://www.instituteforlearningvtnh.org)  
[instituteforlearningvtnh@gmail.com](mailto:instituteforlearningvtnh@gmail.com)

Rev. Everett Palmer, Chair  
603-524-4725

## ***GRADE REPORT / COURSE CERTIFICATE***

This certificate is awarded to

upon completion of the coursework with units/credits  
awarded and grade given as described herein.

COURSE TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTOR: \_\_\_\_\_

COURSE LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF COURSE COMPLETION: \_\_\_\_\_

UNITS/CREDITS AWARDED: \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE AWARDED: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTENDANCE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Instructor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Chair of IFL Signature

# CONTRACT FOR INSTRUCTORS

## INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING



Name:

Address:

Telephone number:

E-mail:

I agree to teach \_\_\_\_\_ (course) for 20  
clock hours, beginning \_\_\_\_\_ (date) and  
ending \_\_\_\_\_  
at \_\_\_\_\_ (site).

I have read the Handbook and Policies for Instructors and agree  
to follow them. \_\_\_\_\_

Exceptions:

I have filled out the Conduct Disclosure form. \_\_\_\_

I have signed the ABC Code of Ethics. \_\_\_\_\_

My resume is on file with IFL. \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor stipend: \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be received when grades are  
submitted. Please designate any instructions such as:

*Alternative: I ask that \_\_\_\_ a gift be made to \_\_\_\_ in lieu of a  
stipend.*

Signature of Instructor

Signature of Director

Signature of Chair, Governing Board

# INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING



American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire

[www.instituteforlearningvtnh.org](http://www.instituteforlearningvtnh.org)  
[instituteforlearningvtnh@gmail.com](mailto:instituteforlearningvtnh@gmail.com)

Rev. Everett Palmer, Chair  
603-524-4725

## ANNUAL MENTOR SURVEY

*To be filled out by IFL enrollee:*

NAME OF MENTOR: \_\_\_\_\_

TODAY'S DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF MENTEE: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of meetings when progress in IFL Program was reviewed and discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*To be filled out by Mentor: (Please share this with your Mentee)*

	Low	Medium	High
How do you rate the motivation of your mentee to continue in the Program?	_____	_____	_____

How do you rate the progress of your Mentee?	_____	_____	_____
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How do you rate your Mentee's satisfaction with the courses?	_____	_____	_____
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Are there any concerns about the IFL program that your Mentee has raised to you, and we should know about?

For what leadership or ministry opportunities would you recommend that your Mentee be considered?

Do you have concerns about your Mentee being a leader in a church?

What is the most challenging aspect of being a Mentor?

Do you have any recommendations for improving IFL?

---

Signature of Mentor completing this review.

---

Signature of Mentee indicating that you have read this review.

Mentee comments may be included by writing on the back of this review.

*Return this form to Rev. Everett Palmer,  
30 Cherry St., Belmont NH 03220*

*by January 30.*

## ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE YEAR BY IFL ENROLLEE

*To be filled out by Enrollee in the Institute for Learning Program*

Name of Enrollee: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Date enrolled: \_\_\_\_\_

Courses enrolled in this past year: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Courses you plan to take this coming year:

Courses you have completed so far in your program (*include the year that the course was completed*):

Support Group Meetings you attended this year:

---

Have you met with the Director or Chair of the Governing Board to discuss your progress and future? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you satisfied with your Mentor relationship? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

List positive outcomes of your Mentor/mentee relationship:

What were the challenges of your Mentor/mentee relationship?

Ministry Opportunities you had this past year:

---

Comments on the Program or Courses:

Please make your check for the Annual Fee payable to the Institute for Learning and mail it to:

**George Keeler, 257 Eastview Circle, Williston, VT 05495**

Return this form to Rev. Everett Palmer, Chair, Institute for Learning, 30 Cherry St. Belmont NH 03220 by January 30.