

## **Lay School of Religion**

### **Classes offered**

#### History and Polity

This course will study the origins and formation of the UCC and the principles that govern our covenants together, looking at local church, association and conference structures, as well as the national structure, also exploring our sense of mission and ministry, and UCC resources available to strengthen our churches and pastors.

#### Evangelism Seminars

This course will explore ways to engage in effective Evangelism for the XXI Century

#### Liturgy and Worship

How can we make worship relevant in our fast-paced, media-driven, visually-oriented world? Have you ever wondered why, in some cases, a fifteen minute worship service can feel like two hours and in other cases, a two hour worship service can feel like fifteen minutes? In this class, we will address how best to do this in each of our churches, without compromising the core values of our faith and traditions. We will also discuss the biblical foundation and history of worship, as well as various styles of worship, and, since one size and style does not fit all, how we can discover what will be most effective with the people with whom we minister.

#### Introducing the New Testament: the Gospels

The purpose of this course is to equip the student with a basic understanding of the various books and authors of the New Testament, as well as a working knowledge of theological concepts and life applications. Students will go beyond Bible study to develop a deeper and richer appreciation of the New Testament, which, along with its companion, the *Hebrew Scriptures*, form an important foundation within the Christian faith.

#### Exploring the New Testament – Acts, St. Paul and Letters, Revelation

The New Testament class, will explore and discuss all of the letters of the New Testament and the apocalypse of Revelation. What are we to make of Paul's apparent contradictions of himself? What is Paul's unique place in founding the church? What does it mean to be called to live as our Lord Jesus? Join the class and discover what God has to say to us, to you.

#### Exploring the Hebrew Scriptures, 1 and 2

Why should I study the Hebrew Scriptures, commonly known as the Old Testament? What difference do those old stories make for our faith as Christians? Isn't the New Testament more important to us since it's about Jesus? Have you ever heard, or perhaps even asked these questions? Well, the truth is, the Hebrew Scriptures are important to us as Christians. In fact, they are just as important as the New Testament. The Old Testament is important because it is the foundation that the New Testament is built upon. Understanding the New Testament begins with understanding the Hebrew Scripture. These classes will seek to reveal the importance of the Hebrew Scripture stories and scriptures for us as Christians. This class is ideal for lay leaders, Faith Formation teachers, Bible study leaders, and anyone who desires to know more about the Bible Jesus used.

## Stewardship Seminars

To examine how we move from Annual Fund Raising to a Life of Giving.

## Christian Theology, Ethics & Morals

What is Theology? Why must we study it? So many questions, so few clear answers! And why is it important that our faith seek to reflect and understand? What does Theology have to do with worshipping God and growing as followers of Christ? In this class we will read, reflect, listen and discuss how Christians might relate their faith to their everyday life experiences. We will also discuss the challenges of understanding and living our Christian identity in a multi-faith world.

## Pastoral Care

This is an introductory course in pastoral care that addresses foundational communication skills that include: active listening, the importance of body language and pastoral presence. Because pastoral care is interwoven throughout every aspect of ministry it will be discussed from the biblical, theological and psychological perspectives. Exercises based on Clinical Pastoral Education models (CPE) will assist in the development of personal self-awareness and sensitivity to the emotions of others.

## Preaching

The joy and challenge of preaching creates an opportunity to bring the ancient Biblical stories to life, relating them to this time and place. This practice demands that the individual, read the Bible, study the history and impact of the ancient socio-economic culture, and research resources that reflect a broad base of theological perspectives. Using a variety of different communication skills, the preacher is challenged to bring a cohesive message to life that resonates with the hearts of its hearers. The ultimate goal is to shine the love and hope of God's love onto the path of those who prayerfully seek to learn, grow and align their daily lives as faith-filled followers of Jesus the Christ. Faith Formation Class

## Faith Formation

We use the term *faith formation* instead of Christian Education because what you explore and practice in this class is much more than Sunday School or Church School. Faith formation encompasses the whole life and work of a local congregation, includes infants through the most elderly and everyone in between, and delves deeply into the grist of our faith: scripture, statements of belief, and the ministry of fashioning people into their faith.