The Certificate of Applied Urban Ministry program is a professional development certificate program designed by the faith communities of Niagara Falls and Buffalo in cooperation with Niagara University. The course design is conceptualized as a “mini-seminary.” Its purpose is to develop a set of applied skills to make pastors and lay Christian leaders more effective in efforts to animate and lead their communities. Instructors are selected from different denominations and areas of expertise in order to bring a comprehensive view to church leadership, faith, and the people who support their churches.
Effective Communication for Ministry: Gospel Preaching and Writing Skills Development
Learn effective communication in both the church and ministry. You will be provided with an overview of communication theory, practical communication approaches to spreading the Gospel, and polishing your skills.
Instructor: Rev. Sarah Berck, Ph.D., assistant professor, Houghton College
Tuesday, Feb. 17 — 6-9 p.m.

Survey of the New Testament
In this survey, you will receive an overview of the original content and context of the New Testament. The book of Mark will be the starting point of the life and ministry of Jesus, a Palestinian Jew. Additionally, you will learn how the evangelists, Peter, Paul and John portrayed his teachings. You will see the church come to life as told in the book of Acts. Finally, as this survey unfolds, you will gain a contemporary perspective on how to apply the New Testament teachings to your everyday life.
Instructor: Rev. David Wurster, Ph.D., pastoral counselor, Samaritan Counseling Center
Thursday, Feb. 19 — 6-9 p.m.

Comparative Theology
The purpose of this course is to explore major religious traditions both historically and theologically, seeking to determine where they converge and where they differ from Christianity on such perennial issues as death, meaning, the issue of the ultimate mystery, the overcoming of suffering, etc. By course end, students will have a greater understanding and appreciation of the spiritual path of others.
Instructor: Dr. Amelia Gallagher, assistant director of religious studies, Niagara University
Thursday, Feb. 26 — 6-9 p.m.

Marketing and Public Relations for Your Church
Marketing and public relations are extremely important components of success in any business or organization. This workshop teaches the basic elements and tools of marketing and how to develop a coherent strategy.
Instructor: Jeff Paterson, executive director, Niagara Cerebral Palsy
Tuesday, March 24 — 6-9 p.m.

Preaching the Good News: Homiletics
Have you found it challenging to preach the message of Jesus in today’s context? Learn how some of today’s greatest preachers craft and deliver their sermons to meet their congregational needs. You will learn how to use the tools of the trade. Also, you will better understand the preaching event.
Instructor: Rev. Arthur Boyd, pastor; Second Chance Ministries, Buffalo
Tuesday, March 17 — 6-9 p.m.

What is Spiritual Counseling?
The human being and family today are analyzed from many professional points of view (biological, sociological, legal, economical, religious and mental health). The Spiritual counselor understands these disciplines but engages people more holistically. The counselor walks with people into their faith-life stories to help unpack the baggage that may interfere with their journey. In this way people may proceed on more solid ground for more balanced living. This joint journey may be short or long depending on the client’s needs and desires.
Instructor: Rev. Ervin Brese, S.T.M., D.Min., professor emeritus
Tuesday, March 24 — 6-9 p.m.

Effective Electives Counseling — students choose four of eight electives
Starting a Non-profit Entity for Churches
Churches and faith-based organizations represent a growing trend in local community development initiatives over the past several years. Many nonprofit entities are designated as federal entities that qualify churches and other faith-based organizations for tax breaks and other funding strategies. The other profit-making businesses and groups are not eligible for funds. Foundations and other grantmaking agencies seek for nonprofit (501c-3) status as a requirement for fundraising development and applications for proposals. In this course, participants will learn the necessary elements to develop a nonprofit entity.
Instructor: Stephanie Cole Adams, Esq., Niagara University
Thursday, April 9 — 6-9 p.m.

Building Sustainable Relationships
One responsibility of a church leader is to make the church environment a place where productive relationships can be developed and nurtured. A successful church is one that capitalizes on its members’ diverse talents, viewpoints and experiences to foster inspiration, creativity and synergy. Discuss strategies to leverage diversity, promote opportunities, contribute to organizational excellence, and develop mutually beneficial partnerships. All these strategies will help create long-term growth and organizational sustainability.
Instructor: Ken Edmond, field practicum coordinator, SUNY Buffalo State
Thursday, April 16 — 6-9 p.m.

Community Organizing 101
You will learn how to build capacity and shared power by identifying community problems and developing their desired solutions, as well as mobilizing the people, resources and structures that can make those solutions possible. Learn about the fundamental strategies available to churches and neighborhood groups to address community problems, as well as the principles and rules of community organizing. You will also learn how to define an action strategy and how to develop an action plan.
Instructor: Dr. David Taylor, director, Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M. Institute for Civic Engagement at Niagara University
Thursday, April 21 — 6-9 p.m.

Glossary of Terms
Gospel — the good news of Jesus’ life, ministry, death and resurrection.
Homiletics — systematic study of the art and science of preaching.
Homily — a speech that is read from the pulpit during a worship service.
Preaching — the verbal expression of the religious truth to a congregation.
Preacher — a person who preaches.
Rev. — the abbreviation for the word “reverend.”
Subsequent — coming after; following.
Noteworthy — remarkable; remarkable.
Preparation — the act of preparing.
Application — the act of applying.
Qualification — something required or necessary.
Instructor — a teacher.
Preacher — a person who preaches.
Rev. — the abbreviation for the word “reverend.”