Preliminary Syllabus for: **Transformative Leadership for Smaller Churches**

June 1-5, 2015, 9:00 – 5:30

**Professor:** The Rev. Dr. David Ray (207-563-1032; revdavidray@yahoo.com) Over the last forty years Dr. Ray has been a pastor, author of four books about smaller churches, staff for four denominational conferences, adjunct at a half-dozen seminaries, and coast-to-coast speaker and program leader.

**Course Description for Transformative Leadership for Smaller Churches** (AM 632)

Two-thirds of Protestant churches in North America are smaller (having less than 100 in worship), and the number of smaller churches is growing, not declining. Whether they thrive, survive, decline, or close is significantly determined by how their leaders lead and the way they live out their congregational life. The thesis of the course is that smaller churches are both the right size to be and do all that God asks a church to be and do and they are different from other sized congregations. With this dual thesis in mind, students will be helped to understand the characteristics, dynamics, particularities, practicalities, needs, potential, and possibilities that may be addressed or realized through transformative leadership. Participants will explore a small theology and a body of theory that will provide the foundation for a faithful and effective twenty-first century smaller church. Finally, students will imagine themselves with their gifts as transformative leaders for such a church.

**Books to be read:**


Required plus one of the following...  
Steve Willis, *Imagining the Small Church: Celebrating a Simpler Path*, The Alban Institute, 2012,  
ISBN 978-1-56699-433-0

Dr. Ray will be glad to suggest additional reading that is relevant to particular interests.

**Assessment Expectations:**

1. Read and have a working knowledge of the required book and one of the others.
2. Write three brief (up to ½ page) strategy papers for three areas of church life.
3. Active participation in class.
4. A 10-15 page Ministry Plan describing how you as the pastor or leader of a particular smaller church (preferably a real one) will integrate course concepts, the particular context and culture of the church, your own gifts for ministry, and the size-determined realities of that smaller church that would lead to a more faithful and effective future.

**Attendance Policy:** Class attendance is required, with no more than one absence.

**Office Hours:** Dr. Ray will be available in advance and before and after class for individual consultation.