



## **EQUIPPING THE CALLED**

LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

**Samford University Center for Congregational Resources FALL 2026**  
**ONLINE | 6-Month Asynchronous Course**

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides practical leadership development for clergy and lay leaders serving in rural and small-town churches. Through a biblically compatible, systems-thinking lens, participants will engage with theological insights, leadership strategies, and personal reflection to strengthen their congregational and community impact. Emphasis is placed on managing self in anxious systems, equipping others, and navigating complexity in relationships and culture.

### **COURSE OUTCOMES**

By the end of this course, participants will:

1. Demonstrate reflective leadership through personal awareness, spiritual formation, and emotional maturity.
2. Strengthen interpersonal relationships by understanding family and congregational systems.
3. Equip and empower lay leaders with practical tools for ministry.
4. Develop strategic plans for community partnerships.
5. Navigate cultural and political complexity in ministry settings.
6. Present a capstone proposal for microgrant funding.

### **TEXTBOOKS & RESOURCES**

There is no required textbook. All readings, videos, and quizzes will be provided within the online Canvas learning platform.

## COURSE STRUCTURE & EVALUATION

This course consists of **five modules**, each taking approximately one month to complete. Lessons and assignments should be completed during the module's designated month, and students are free to complete the work during times that work for their individual schedules.. Members of the CCR Staff will be available via email throughout the six-month period to answer questions as needed at [resource@samford.edu](mailto:resource@samford.edu)

The Center for Congregational Resources will host a live orientation session via Zoom on **Thursday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> from 12:00 – 1:00 pm**. All registered students will receive an invitation to the meeting which will offer an overview of how to access course materials in Canvas. We encourage students who are available to join the virtual session. The session will be recorded and uploaded to Canvas for the convenience of those unable to attend the live session.

Each of the five modules contains four related classes. The structure of each class is as follows:

- One Expert Content Video (approximately 30 minutes)
- One “Pause” awareness activity
- One required Reflection Journal entry
- One 10-question quiz

At the end of each module, students will complete a profile assignment, resulting in practical application of the material from the previous four classes. On average, students should allot 2-2.5 hours per week to complete the classwork, a total of 8-10 hours per month for each module. There are five modules to complete over a six-month period (allowing extra time during the holiday season.) **The deadline for completing *Equipping the Called* is February 28, 2027.**

In addition, students will complete a **Final Capstone Project**. This reflection paper should represent each participant's individual learning and how they hope to implement what they have learned through *Equipping the Called* into the life of their congregation. *Equipping the Called* is a non-credit leadership program. All assignments will be graded on a **Complete/Incomplete** basis in Canvas. No final grades will be assigned.

Participants who complete the entire course within the allotted time are eligible to submit a proposal for a **Micro-grant Ministry Award** on behalf of their local church in the amount of \$3000. Micro-grant awards are limited to one per church and should be used to support local church ministry efforts. Multiple members of the same church may individually complete the course, but the CCR is only able to accept one micro-grant award proposal per congregation. Micro-grant ministry award proposals must be approved by the church's senior pastor. **Submission of a micro-grant application does not guarantee funds will be awarded.**

## MODULE OVERVIEW

### **September 2026 - Module 1: Personal Development**

*Objective:* Deepen spiritual formation and manage self effectively.

*Deliverable (choose one):* Worship/Preaching Plan, Budget, Operational System, Pastoral Care Guide

### **October 2026 - Module 2: Relational Development**

*Objective:* Strengthen relationships while maintaining differentiation.

*Deliverable:* Church Family Diagram with Timeline + Triangle Mapping

### **November 2026 - Module 3: Resilient Ministry Tools**

*Objective:* Equip and empower lay leaders through practical delegation and leadership development.

*Deliverable:* Develop Criteria for Lay Leadership in Your Church

### **December 2026/January 2027 - Module 4: Community Partnerships**

*Objective:* Explore your church's role in the community; identify opportunities for collaboration.

*Deliverable:* Community Profile (census data, conversations, partnerships)

### **February 2027 - Module 5: Navigating Complexity**

*Objective:* Lead with clarity in cultural, political, and racial tension.

*Deliverable:* Case Study of a Divisive Issue + Strategy for Staying Connected

## FINAL CAPSTONE PROJECT

Upon course completion, students will present a proposal for how they would use Micro-grant ministry award funds to enhance leadership or community engagement. This project synthesizes learning from all modules and serves as the program's final deliverable. (If multiple students from the same church participate in Equipping the Called, students may either complete the final capstone project as individuals or as a group.) PLEASE NOTE: Only one micro-grant award application will be considered per church, and the church's senior pastor must approve the congregation's official application.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### **Technology Requirements:**

Participants must have access to consistent internet access and a computer. Canvas will be the primary learning platform.