



STEPHEN MINISTRY AT UNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Stephen Ministry is a distinctively Christian caring ministry in which clergy and laity work together to provide quality one-to-one care to meet the needs of people experiencing a wide range of life circumstances or crises.

Stephen Ministries St. Louis is a not-for-profit ministry organization with its headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri. It is trans-denominational, serving more than 150 denominations. This worldwide ministry has ties to Stephen Ministry congregations in all 50 states, and numerous foreign countries. The mission of Stephen Ministries is to show the love of Jesus Christ through people.

Stephen Series is a complete system for training and organizing lay people to give distinctively Christian care to people who need it, both in the congregation and in the community.

Stephen Ministers are lay people who have been trained through the Stephen Series in the theology of caring and in specific caring skills.

Stephen Series Logo Everyone is broken in one way or another. Losses, crises, and other painful life events show our brokenness and drive us to Jesus for healing and hope. In this cross Jesus bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. In him we find the healing we need. Stephen Ministers bring hurting people to Jesus' cross, there to find healing and hope. This is the meaning of the Stephen Series motto, "*Christ caring for people through people.*" Stephen Ministers care for the person – God cures.

History of Stephen Ministry In Acts 6:1-7, Stephen is identified as one of the first laypeople set aside to do caring ministry. In 1975, Dr. Kenneth Haugk, an ordained minister and clinical psychologist, picked Stephen as the image for the lay caregiving program he started to meet the needs of his own congregation. The Stephen Ministry program gradually evolved from this initial endeavor, and Stephen Leader's Training Courses were introduced in 1978. Currently, more than 10,000 congregations have trained Stephen Leaders, including Unity Presbyterian Church.

What Stephen Ministers Do

- Provide quality one-to-one ministry as trained, caring church members reaching out to others in time of need.
- Engage in a caregiving relationship that focuses on the unique needs of one person and that lasts as long as the needs exist.
- Receive support guidance, and supervision from Stephen Leaders and from one another in order to continue giving effective Christian care to others.

Importance of Confidentiality

- Confidentiality is an absolute must.
- Stephen Ministers are selected and retained based on their ability to maintain confidentiality in their caring relationships with God's people.

Stephen Ministers as Commissioned Servants

- Willingness to give of oneself in servanthood is vital.
- The level of one's education is not important, but the level of one's commitment to Christ and desire to care for others are very important.
- Stephen Ministers are formally commissioned for service upon completion of the 50-hour training program.

Stephen Minister Training Materials

- Every Stephen Minister uses four essential items: the Stephen Ministry Training Manual; *Christian Caregiving – A Way of Life*; *Speaking the Truth in Love*; and *When and How to Use Mental Health Resources*.
- Some Stephen Ministers are also trained as Supervision Group Facilitators.

Responsibilities of a Stephen Minister

- A 24-month commitment of service to the Stephen Ministry program.
- Attendance at and participation in the 50-hour training program.
- Study of the training materials. Materials are purchased through the church at a cost of \$60 for each Stephen Minister.
- Serve as a Stephen Minister and participate in twice-monthly supervision meetings for about 18 months following completion of training.

The Application Process

Each person wishing to be considered for training as a Stephen Minister should complete a Stephen Ministry Application form and return it as soon as possible.