

MUMC Stephen Ministry Information

What is Stephen Ministry?

Stephen Ministry is a ministry in our congregation in which trained and supervised lay persons, called Stephen Ministers, provide one-to-one confidential Christian care to individuals facing life challenges or difficulties.

Where did it all start?

The Stephen Ministry was started by Kenneth Haugk, in 1975 and is headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. As a pastor and clinical psychologist in St Louis, Missouri, he was able to multiply the caregiving in his congregation and expanded it to more than 13,000 Stephen Ministry congregations. More than 75,000 pastors and lay leaders from those congregations have been equipped as Stephen Leaders. More than one and a half million people have had a Stephen Minister to walk with them through their troubled times.

Why the name Stephen?

The name Stephen comes from St. Stephen, who was the first lay person commissioned by the apostles to provide caring ministry to those in need as recorded in Acts 6.

Who is involved?

Pastors are the primary caregivers, but there is no way pastors can meet all of the needs for congregational care. God has called all of us, not just the pastors, to minister to one another. Stephen Ministry multiplies this ministry by turning pastors into equippers, so they can enable lay people to provide caring ministry as well. Pastor Paul Craig serves as the lead pastor supporting our group.

Stephen Leaders oversee and direct our Stephen Ministers. They recruit, train, organize and supervise the Stephen Ministers. Many of our Stephen Leaders also serve as Stephen Ministers.

Care Receivers are the recipients of Stephen Ministers care. Trust is essential to a caring relationship, and Stephen Ministers are to be trusted. Confidentiality is one of the most important principles of Stephen Ministry. What a care receiver tells his or her Stephen Minister is kept in strictest confidence.

Stephen Ministers serve as caregivers. They are caring Christian friends who listen, understand, accept and pray for and with care receivers who are working through a crisis or difficult time.

Stephen ministers are not counselors; they are trained lay caregivers. Their role is to listen and to care – not to give advice and counsel.

Stephen Ministers are also trained to recognize when a care receiver's need exceeds what they can provide. When this happens, they work with their care receivers to help to help them receiver the level of care that they need.

How can someone receive care from a Stephen Minister?

If you or someone you know could benefit from the care of a Stephen Minister, you can:

- Send an email to Stephenministry@Matthewsumc.org and one of our Stephen Leaders will contact you.
- Contact Richard Martin, Carolyn Pearlman, or Cheryl Sherard our Stephen Leaders who coordinate referrals can help you get started. Any of our other Stephen Leaders or Stephen Ministers would also be happy to assist you through the process.
- Brochures about our Stephen Ministry are available at the Welcome Desk.
- If you want to talk about getting a Stephen Ministry for someone else, please make sure to get his or her permission to discuss this first.

How can someone become a Stephen Minister?

Begin by talking to one of our Stephen Ministers Leaders. They can tell you more about the ministry and provide you with an application.

Candidates complete an application, interview, and background check prior to being accepted into the class.

Applications should be received by **January 7, 2025** to enroll in the class starting on **January 31, 2025**.

Aer your completed application is received, you will be invited to an interview with a Stephen Leader.

If accepted into the training class you will receive a welcome letter with detailed information about the class including class schedule, assignments, and meeting locations.

A seventy-dollar donation is requested to cover the cost of training materials. This can be paid at the first class session. Scholarships are available if needed to cover the cost of the training materials.

When does the next training session start?

The next training session starts on **January 31, 2025** and runs through **March 29, 2025**. New Stephen Ministers will be commissioned in **April 2025**. If we have candidates for Stephen Ministry attending from other churches, they will also be commissioned by their church.

The impact of Stephen Ministry has been tremendous. People who otherwise might slip trough the cracks are coming face to face with the love Jesus through our Stephen Ministers. Our new class will help us touch many more lives with God's love.