

The Blessings of Serving as a Stephen Minister

Since 1975 nearly a half million Christian men and women from all walks of life have trained and served as Stephen Ministers in their congregations. Most decide to become Stephen Ministers as a way to help hurting people in their congregation and community—but very quickly discover that God gives them amazing blessings in return.

How to become a Stephen Minister

A Stephen Minister is a caring Christian lay person who, on a one-to-one basis, listens, understands, accepts, and prays for and with a care receiver who is working through a crisis or tough time. A potential Stephen Minister will receive 50 hours of training, continue to meet twice a month for supervision and continuing education and make an initial commitment of two years. After training, the Stephen Minister will meet with an assigned care receiver an average of one hour per week.

If you are interested in becoming a Stephen Minister, please contact:

Jennifer Taylor Cox 410-729-5599,
email jtaylorcox@severnaparkumc.org.

- Or -

Rev. Martha Meredith 410-987-4700
email mmeredith@severnaparkumc.org.

Stephen Ministry began in 1975 when Dr. Kenneth C. Haugh, a pastor and clinical psychologist in St. Louis, Missouri, trained parishioners to help meet the needs for care in his congregation. The ministry was so successful that other congregations became interested, and Haugh founded the Stephen Ministries organization. Since then more than 10,000 congregations have become involved in Stephen Ministry. They represent over 150 Christian denominations and come from all 50 states, 10 Canadian provinces, and 21 other countries.



About the Stephen Ministry logo

The Stephen Ministry logo is intended to convey what Stephen Ministry is all about. The logo consists of a cross and circle together with a broken person and a whole person. The logo's most dominant feature is the cross of Jesus. It reminds us that Christ is at the center of Stephen Ministry and all Stephen Ministry relationships.

The broken person behind the cross symbolizes the brokenness in our lives, a person in need of healing, a person in need of Christ's love and care. The whole person, a person who has received the love and care of Jesus, stands in front of the cross because it is only through the cross of Jesus that we are made whole. The circle symbolizes both the wholeness we receive through Christ and God's unending love for us. God's love surrounds us, holds us, heals us, with the cross of Jesus at the center of that love. The logo is designed to show that the path from brokenness to greater wholeness is through Jesus Christ and the ministry of Christ's people, including the ministry of Stephen Ministers. **"Christ caring for People through People."**

STEPHEN MINISTRY



SEVERNA PARK United Methodist Church



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Everyone goes through difficult times. Having someone to care, to listen, and to share God's love can help you get through the confusion, stress, or loneliness you may be experiencing.

Stephen Ministers provide care when:

- The divorce papers have been served and the bottom falls out of your life.
- The last child honks the horn and drives away—and the house suddenly seems incredibly empty.
- You arrive home following the funeral service and the emotions you've held at bay come crashing in on you.
- The relationship has ended but the wounds are still bleeding and painful.
- The doctors have said, "There's nothing more we can do."
- The door has slammed shut for the very last time.
- The phone call you dreaded most, happened.
- You realized the hands on the gold watch you received at your retirement party move more slowly than you ever imagined.
- The nursing home director shakes your hand and says, "Welcome to your new home."
- The gavel goes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away.
- The baby has arrived, putting more demands on you than you ever dreamed possible.
- You find the pink slip inserted with what is now your final paycheck.
- Your family and friends have heard your story one too many times, but you still need to talk it out.
- Your loved one cannot remember who you are.
- Your life is in transition and you feel over

Who will Benefit from Stephen Ministry?

Everybody benefits from Stephen Ministry. Those receiving care from Stephen Ministers benefit because they receive prayer and support throughout the crises they face. Stephen Ministers benefit through the spiritual growth they experience from being involved in meaningful ministry. Most of all YOU will benefit from the knowledge that special care is available to you should you need it.

In addition, you now have a place where you can refer a friend, neighbor, co-worker, relative, or anyone else you know who is going through a difficult time so that they can receive special care when they need it most.

Stephen Ministry Multiplies Our Christian Caregiving

Our Stephen Ministers at SPUMC work together with our pastors to reach more people with Christian care than the pastors can by themselves. People who receive care from our Stephen Ministers:

- Receive quality Christian care,
- Deepen their relationship with our Lord,
- Grow in their desire to participate in Christian community,
- Come to value ministry from another lay person, while continuing contact with the pastor.

Stephen Ministry enhances SPUMC's outreach by:

- Creating a caring ministry outreach, where many are offering God's love and care in intentional, systematic ways;
- Enabling our entire congregation to grow as a warm, loving, nurturing community, where people are cherished and cared for in Jesus Christ;
- Identifying our congregation to our community as a place where people's needs are taken seriously.

How Did Stephen Ministry Get Its Name?

Stephen Ministry was named after St. Stephen, the first lay person commissioned by the Apostles to provide caring ministry to those in need. (Acts 6)

About the Leaders of SPUMC's Stephen Ministry

Stephen Leaders are pastors, church staff, and volunteers who have completed the Stephen Series Leader's Training, and are commissioned to our congregation.

In Galatians 6, Paul tells us to "carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." At SPUMC our Stephen Ministers have been trained and organized to do just that.

How You Can Contact SPUMC's Stephen Ministry

Do you, or someone you care about, need a little extra support during a time of loss, loneliness, struggle, confusion, or despair? If it would be helpful to have someone walk and talk with you or your friend during this troublesome time, just contact:

[Pastor Martha Meredith Phone: 410-987-4700](tel:410-987-4700)

[Or Jennifer Taylor-Cox Phone: 410-729-5599.](tel:410-729-5599)

They will talk with you or your friend and prayerfully assign an appropriate Stephen Minister.

Confidentiality

You can feel free to share with your Stephen Minister without worrying that anyone else will know about it. Trust is essential to a caring relationship, what a care receiver tells his or her Stephen Minister is kept in the strictest confidence.