



“Love one another ... as I have loved you.” John 13:34

## Stephen Ministry at Providence United Methodist Church:

### WHAT IS A STEPHEN MINISTER?

#### A Stephen Minister...

- Is a child of God who walks beside a person who would like Christian support.
- Is a trained caring, Christian friend who takes the time to really listen.
- Is a lay Christian selected, trained, and supervised by Stephen Leaders to provide effective Christian care.
- Makes a commitment including 50 hours of training, ongoing monthly supervisory meetings, and an average of one 1-hour visit per week with the person receiving care.
- Recognizes and respects that this is a **confidential** ministry.



**The Caregiver Compass is built on Stephen Ministers' promise and training to be compassionate, full of faith, skilled and trustworthy.**

#### **How Does the Referrals Process Work?**

- A person (an adult) – either you, a relative, or a friend – is in need of Christian care.
- The Stephen Ministry Referrals Coordinator learns about this need for care – from a pastor, the person, or a friend, always with the person's permission.
- The Referrals Coordinator talks with the person about Stephen Ministry.
- With the person's permission, the Referrals Coordinator prayerfully assigns a Stephen Minister to meet on a weekly basis with the person.



Stephen Ministers meet with people in a variety of informal settings, including homes, hospitals, private cafes ... maybe just a long walk.

**A Stephen Minister is NOT:**

- A counselor or therapist
- A problem-solver
- A casual visitor

Stephen Ministry is **confidential ministry** -- those receiving care can be sure that their identity and what goes on in the caring relationship will remain private.

**HOW CAN YOU BECOME INVOLVED?**

- Pray daily for Stephen Ministry – for the Leaders and Stephen Ministers.
- Make referrals to Stephen Ministry and tell others in our community about Stephen Ministry.
- Pray for all the care-receivers.
- Receive Stephen Ministry when you are in need of supportive Christian care.
- Inquire about becoming a Stephen Minister if you have the gifts of this type of ministry. Stephen Ministry is for individuals with distinct spiritual gifts of listening, pastoring, and guiding. If you believe you have those spiritual gifts, please contact Stephen Leader, Beth Burns-Craig (770-719-0423), to schedule a conversation about this ministry.

**Stephen Ministers are Caregivers ... God is the CUREGIVER.**

Current active Stephen Ministers at Providence are: Shirley Allen, Carol Axford, Phil Coe, Beth Burns-Craig, Eve Hanie, Vicki Hansen, Warren Huddleston, and Barbara Hudson.

Stephen Ministers currently on sabbatical are: George Axford, Nancy Bankston, Laura Collier, Trent Collier, Linda Hurley, Jana Strickland and Andi Williams.

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**More about Stephen Ministry: (See [www.StephenMinistries.org](http://www.StephenMinistries.org))**

Background: Stephen Ministry began in 1975 when the Rev. Kenneth Haug, Ph.D., a pastor and clinical psychologist, trained nine laypersons at his congregation in St. Louis to be Stephen Ministers. They helped him in providing distinctively Christian care to members of the congregation and community.

The name **Stephen** comes from St. Stephen, who was the first layperson commissioned by the Apostles to provide caring ministry to those in need (**Acts 6**).

To date, more than **9,000** congregations are enrolled in the Stephen Series. These congregations represent more than **100 different Christian denominations** and come from all 50 states, 9 Canadian provinces and 21 other countries.

More than **48,000** individuals (pastors, church staff and laypersons) have been trained as Stephen Leaders at Leaders Training Courses. These Stephen Leaders have returned to their congregations to train more than **450,000** laypersons to be Stephen Ministers. It is estimated that since 1975, Stephen Ministers have provided distinctively Christian care to more than **a million** people through formalized one-to-one caring relationships and have used their care-giving skills to touch the lives of **millions of others** in an informal way.