

## What is Stephen Ministry?

It is a ministry by which lay people are trained as Stephen Ministers to provide confidential, distinctly Christian care. Such care might be provided to persons going through significant life events like the death of a loved one; losing a job, starting a new job or moving into a new community; the birth of a child; a divorce or new marriage; a significant change in health or dealing with a chronic health condition.

This type of care-giving is grounded in Scripture. In Acts 6, the early Church was feeling some 'growing pains' as the community of believers increased in numbers. Some were feeling that their physical needs were being neglected, so the leaders appointed seven people, including a believer named Stephen, to attend to those needs while the apostles focused on their ministry of preaching and teaching. These seven were in no ways "second class" ministers. Theirs was a crucial ministry that flowed from recognition that all people have gifts to serve, but each in different ways.



The logo on the right captures what this ministry is all about. It tells the story of a care receiver's journey from brokenness to wholeness through the transforming power of Jesus. The most dominant feature is the **cross of Jesus**. It reminds us that Christ is at the center of all that we do. The **broken person** behind the cross symbolizes how we are all people broken by our own sin and imperfections. The **whole person** in front of the cross signifies the wholeness we encounter through the transforming power of the cross of Jesus. It is only through Jesus and his life, death and resurrection that we who are broken are made whole. The **circle** is a symbol of God's eternal and never-ending love for us. This love surrounds us, holds us, and heals us with the cross of Jesus at the center of that love.

## How can someone receive care?

Care Receivers are identified by various means and screened by Pastor Al, our Referrals Coordinator, so that they can be matched with the best possible Stephen Minister. If you're dealing with a life issue and you think you'd benefit from having someone listen to what you're going through, please speak with one of our Stephen Leaders – Connie Babcock, Cheryl Coddington, Dennis Hanson, or Pastor Al. They can answer any questions you might have and help you discern whether a Stephen Minister might be appropriate.

## How can someone be trained to give care?

We are always on the lookout for someone God may be calling to serve as a Stephen Minister. We offer occasional 'open house' type events to recruit potential ministers. Care givers must be willing to make a two year commitment, which includes the initial 50 hour training (usually from early January to late May each year) as well as twice monthly supervision and continuing education after that. If you have the gift of listening and caring for others, please call one of the leaders to find out how you might become involved.