Thursdays, 6:30-8 at Vancouver Heights UMC - Beginning September 12

5701 MacArthur Blvd - youth room (train with us and serve in your setting)

Stephen Ministry is a lay care giving ministry that supplements [pastoral care](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pastoral_care). The program teaches laypersons to provide one-on-one care for individuals who request support. The confidential care-giver and care-receiver relationship, usually conducted by weekly visits, may continue for months or years. Reasons for requesting a Stephen Minister’s visits may range from grieving the loss of a loved one, experiencing a major illness, going through a divorce, job loss, struggling with substance abuse, or other life difficulties.

SM curriculum provides a formal, structured introduction to human psychology and peer-to-peer counseling. Curriculum materials, which draw on literature from pastoral counselors, Biblical scripture, theologians, and psychologists, cover such issues as assertiveness and honesty, healthy boundaries, confidentiality, and ways to proceed with referral to mental health professionals when appropriate.

The central offices of Stephen Ministry are located in St. Louis, Missouri. Congregations which choose to participate in Stephen Ministry programming pay a fee to the central organization to cover the cost of intensive on-site training of lay leaders. These lay leaders then become instructors for the 50 hours of training for small groups of Stephen Ministers.[]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Ministries#cite_note-Siang-Yang_Tan-5) After this initial training is completed, Stephen Ministers participate in twice-monthly peer-to-peer supervision meetings. Supervision groups, which may be led by a pastor, are an essential component of support for and guidance to lay ministers.

More than 12,000 congregations from 160 Christian denominations are now involved, and are located in the U.S., Canada, and 24 other countries.

The mission of the Stephen Ministries organization is summed up in St. [Paul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_the_Apostle)’s [letter to the Ephesians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle_to_the_Ephesians). “To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12–13). From Wikipedia

Cost for two training manuals is $30.

Training Topics include:

1. The person of the caregiver (Stephen Minister)
2. Feelings
3. The Art of listening
4. Distinctively Christian Caring
5. Process vs. Results in Caregiving
6. Assertiveness
7. Maintaining Boundaries in Caregiving
8. Crisis Theory and Practice
9. Confidentiality
10. Telecare
11. Using Mental Health Professionals and Other Community Resources
12. Ministering to those experiencing grief
13. Dealing with Depression
14. Helping Suicidal Persons get the help they need
15. Bringing the caring relationship to a close
16. Supervision
17. How to make a first caring visit
18. Follow Me
19. Ministry to the Dying and their family and friends
20. Caring for People before, during and after Hospitalization
21. Losses related to Aging
22. Those in Long-Term Care Facilities
23. Those experiencing Divorce
24. Crises of Pregnancy and Childbirth
25. Providing Spiritual Care

For more information, see Pastor Jo Ann pastorjoann2017@gmail.com or visit the Stephen Ministry website.

Christian Caregiving a Way of Life by Kenneth Haugk is available on Amazon and local bookstores. This provides a good starting point.