

## Frequently Asked Questions of the Stephen Ministry

**What is the Stephen Ministry?** The Stephen Ministry is a one-on-one Christian caregiving ministry. Church members can be trained to provide Christian caregiving to those who are experiencing those all-too-human problems each of us face from time to time. It is a new ministry of WUMC and is currently led by trained Stephen Leaders, Nelson and Brenda Perry and is supported by Pastor Michael Turner and the Administrative Council.

**Why do we need Stephen Ministers when we have a pastor?** The pastor simply is unable to provide all the care that people in our congregation need. God knows that, so the Holy Spirit has gifted other Christians in our congregation to be caregivers. No one is going to be forced or manipulated to receive care from a Stephen Minister. They will always have the freedom to say yes or no to offers of care.

**What is the purpose of this ministry?** The Stephen Ministry is “Christ Caring for People through People.” The purpose of the Stephen Ministry is to help bring Jesus’ healing love to people from our congregation and in our community who are in need of care. This fulfills the last portion of our mission statement which states that as a congregation we are “serving God and our community in hands-on ways.”

**Who are Stephen Ministers?** Stephen Ministers are trained caregivers. Confidentiality is mandatory and is strongly emphasized in the training. Each Stephen Minister vows not to jeopardize the confidentiality of their caring relationship

**Where does this ministry happen?** The Stephen Minister and the care receiver decide upon a meeting place. It may be in the home of the care receiver, a park, a restaurant, etc. Also, there will be a private parlor established at WUMC as a mutual meeting place.

**What kind of care do Stephen Ministers give?** A Stephen Minister meets once a week for approximately one hour with their care receiver. Stephen Ministers are not counselors. They are trained to listen and offer Christian love and companionship. Caregiving is a three-person relationship. It involves the caregiver, the care receiver and Christ. The caregiving relationship is always man-to-man and woman-to-woman. A Stephen Minister cannot care for anyone under the age of 18.

**How can someone get a Stephen Minister?** They can contact either Pastor Michael (364-2340) or Nelson & Brenda Perry (364-1053)

**How does one become a Stephen Minister?** You may contact Pastor Michael and/or Nelson & Brenda Perry.

**How does the church support the Stephen Ministry?** Pray for the ministry, ask God’s blessing upon it, ask the Holy Spirit’s empowerment of all those involved, and thank God for the gifts of those involved and their commitment to use their gifts. You may also become a Stephen Minister, become a care receiver or tell others of this ministry. It is not replacing any ministry presently in our church. It is a new ministry for us.