

Media Fact Sheet

Stephen Ministries St. Louis

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History: Stephen Ministry began in 1975 when the Rev. Kenneth C. Haugk, Ph.D., a pastor and clinical psychologist, trained nine members of his congregation in St. Louis to be *Stephen Ministers*. They assisted him in providing Christian care and support to people in the congregation and community who were experiencing life difficulties. These trained caregivers were so enthused about their ministry, they encouraged Dr. Haugk to offer *Stephen Ministry* to more congregations.

Over the next few years, Dr. Haugk traveled to congregations and trained Stephen Ministers. This quickly proved to be inefficient, since he could visit only a limited number of congregations, and these congregations were then dependent on him to train additional caregivers. So in 1978 Stephen Ministries held the first Leader's Training Course and trained the first *Stephen Leaders*—representatives of various congregations who then returned home to train and supervise their own Stephen Ministers. Since then Stephen Ministries St. Louis has specialized in "training the trainers" through the Stephen Series ministry system.

Definition of the Stephen Series: The Stephen Series is a complete system for training and organizing laypeople to provide one-to-one Christian care to hurting people in and around the congregation.

The Organization: Stephen Ministries St. Louis is a not-for-profit, transdenominational, religious and educational organization founded in 1975. The St. Louis-based staff of 40 provides support for the ministry in more than 11,000 congregations worldwide. Dr. Haugk serves as executive director.

The Name: 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).

Stephen Ministry Statistics

These statistics are updated annually on October 1. Statistics can be obtained online at www.stephenministries.org or by calling Stephen Ministries at (314) 428-2600.

Congregations: More than 11,000 congregations are enrolled in the Stephen Series. They represent more than 160 different Christian denominations and come from all 50 states, 10 Canadian provinces, and 24 other countries.

People: More than 60,000 pastors, church staff, and laypeople have been trained as Stephen Leaders at Leader's Training Courses. These Stephen Leaders have, in turn, trained more than 500,000 congregation members to be Stephen Ministers. Since 1975 Stephen Ministers have provided distinctively Christian care to more than a million people in one-to-one Stephen Ministry caring relationships and have also used their caregiving skills to touch the lives of millions of others in informal ways.

The Stephen Series Logo: The logo Stephen Ministry congregations use consists of a cross



and circle, together with a broken person and a whole person. The broken person stands behind the cross, symbolizing the brokenness in our lives as a result of our sin. The whole person stands in front of the cross because it is through the cross of Jesus that we again are made whole. The circle symbolizes both the wholeness we receive through Christ and God's unending love for us.

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How the Stephen Series Works: Pastors, church staff, and lay leaders attend a one-week Leader’s Training Course, taught by the Stephen Ministries faculty, to learn how to implement the Stephen Series in their congregations. These trained *Stephen Leaders* then return home to begin and direct Stephen Ministry in their congregation.

Stephen Leaders recruit and select laypeople from the congregation to serve as Stephen Ministers and provide them with 50 hours of training in Christian caregiving. Topics include listening, feelings, assertiveness, confidentiality, and ministering to people in specific situations such as divorce, terminal illness, grief, and childbirth. Stephen Ministers also are trained to recognize when a care receiver’s needs go beyond the care a Stephen Minister can provide and how to refer the care receiver for additional care.

At the end of training, *Stephen Ministers* are commissioned by the congregation. Stephen Leaders then link each Stephen Minister with a *care receiver*—a person in need of one-to-one Christian care. A Stephen Minister normally is assigned to only one care receiver at a time and meets with that person for about an hour each week.

Stephen Ministers also meet twice monthly for supervision and continuing education. Stephen Ministers initially commit to two years of service, but after those years many recommit to serve additional years.

Terminology: The organization, based in St. Louis, is *Stephen Ministries St. Louis*. The lay caregiving ministry system congregations implement is the *Stephen Series* or *Stephen Ministry*, once it has been implemented in a congregation. The pastors and laypeople trained at a one-week Leader’s Training Course (LTC) to direct their congregation’s Stephen Ministry are called *Stephen Leaders*. The people trained to provide one-to-one care to those in need are called *Stephen Ministers*. Those who receive the care of Stephen Ministers are referred to as *care receivers*.

Important to Note

- Stephen Ministers are not counselors. They are trained Christian caregivers. Their role is to listen and care—not counsel or advise. Please do not refer to them as counselors.
- Stephen Ministry is a supervised ministry. Stephen Ministers engage in twice-monthly supervision to ensure that they are providing the best-quality Christian care.
- Stephen Ministry is a confidential ministry. What a care receiver tells a Stephen Minister remains confidential. Even in supervision, the names of care receivers and specific details are never discussed.
- Stephen Ministers do not make cold calls. They are assigned only to people who agree to receive the care of a Stephen Minister.

Other Ministry Resources

In addition to the Stephen Series, Stephen Ministries St. Louis offers many other resources to enhance congregation ministry.

These other resources from Stephen Ministries include:

- *Christian Caregiving—a Way of Life*
- *Caring Evangelism*
- *Antagonists in the Church: How to Identify and Deal with Destructive Conflict*
- *Caring for Inactive Members*
- *Discovering God’s Vision for Your Life: You and Your Spiritual Gifts*
- *Journeying through Grief*
- *Don’t Sing Songs to a Heavy Heart: How to Relate to Those Who Are Suffering*

Media Opportunity: We hold introductory workshops about Stephen Ministry across the U.S. each year (www.stephenministry.org/workshop). Members of the media are invited to attend these workshops as our guests. Interested media persons can contact our Communications Department at (314) 428-2600.