



Stephen Ministry Celebrates 50 Years!

Stephen Ministries was founded on November 3, 1975, which means this year marks the organization's 50th year. Founded in 1975 in St.

Louis, international Stephen Ministries is celebrating its 50th year of equipping God's people for ministry!

Stephen Ministry offers a proven and effective way to organize, equip, and supervise a team of congregation members—called *Stephen Ministers*—to provide high-quality, one-to-one, Christ-centered care to people in the congregation and the community experiencing life difficulties.

Stephen Ministry was organized at the Church of the Pines in 2005; then Pastor Gary Cole and lay person Holly Nash went to St. Louis to be trained as Stephen Leaders. They returned to Church of the Pines and trained 12 persons to be Stephen Ministers, who were commissioned in March 2006. Currently we have 2 Stephen Ministers: Ted and Gretchen Voigt; Holly Nash remains the Stephen Leader.



Church of the Pines—Stephen Ministers Commissioned in March 2006.

Who's Involved in Stephen Ministry?

Stephen Leaders are church staff, lay leaders, and pastors trained to provide ongoing leadership for their congregation's Stephen Ministry. They are equipped for this key role through the Stephen Leader Training Course offered by Stephen Ministries St. Louis.

Stephen Ministers are congregation members trained by their Stephen Leaders to offer care to people who are hurting. A Stephen Minister typically has one care receiver at a time and meets with that person once a week for about an hour.

Care receivers are individuals in the congregation or community who are going through a crisis or life difficulty. Potential care receivers first meet with a pastor or Stephen Leader, who assesses their needs for care and matches them with a Stephen Minister. The caring relationship lasts for as long as the need persists.

The Blessings of Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministry multiplies blessings throughout the church and community.

- Congregations carry out Christ's commandment to "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12 RSV) in a powerful and practical way.
- Pastors have a team of gifted, trained, and committed lay caregivers ready to minister to hurting people.
- Laypeople nurture and use their gifts in meaningful ministry, growing spiritually as they serve others.
- People who are hurting have a caring Christian presence to provide emotional and spiritual support.

In short, Stephen Ministry helps carry out the mission of the church.



"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

- 2 Corinthians 1:3

**Church of the Pines
Stephen Ministers—2025**
(From the left) Holly Nash, Stephen Leader, Ted Voigt, and Gretchen Voigt.