

Stephen Ministry is Returning to MUMC!

(by Myron & Kendra Kirkpatrick – January 2026)

In case you haven't heard, the process of rejuvenating MUMC's once-vibrant Stephen Ministry program is beginning!

For the past four years we lived in Washington state where we were also members of a Methodist church. During that time, we felt a call to care ministry and attended a local course to become Stephen Ministers. For the next year, until moving back to Mesquite, we each had a Care Receiver. Through weekly hour-long meetings, we walked alongside those individuals as they dealt with challenging personal problems in their day-to-day lives. We believe our care helped them; for certain, it was a rewarding experience for us.

During our previous life in Mesquite, we were members of this church and aware of its strong Stephen Ministry program. Through our continued close relationship with several members of MUMC during our years in Washington, we learned of and were very disappointed by its decline. When we decided to move back to Mesquite this summer, we also decided to do our very best to rejuvenate the MUMC Stephen Ministry program. With the enthusiastic endorsement of Pastor Malakai, Lay Leaders Bruce Reid and Pat Harger, and several of the previous Stephen Ministers, *it is time to begin!*

Please be patient, as this will be a complicated process. Here is the way we see it progressing:

- From January 6 through March 17, 2026, Kendra and I will attend an intensive online training course for Stephen Ministry **Leaders**. We will learn the administrative aspects of the program, but more importantly we will also be trained in the process of **locally training new Stephen Ministers**. During this time, we will be publicizing the program and trying to ensure that all members of the congregation understand Stephen Ministry and how it works.
- During our training program and continuing on to mid-June (when we will leave for two months), we will also be scouting the congregation for three types of people – (a) those who feel any inkling of a call to become a Stephen Minister, (b) past Stephen Ministers who feel called to return to the work, even if only for a limited time, and (c) those who feel a need for the care of a Stephen Minister.
- When we return in late August, we will begin interviewing those who strongly feel they would like to become a trained Stephen Minister as well as any previous Stephen Ministers (from here or elsewhere) who would like to serve again. The individuals to be trained will be identified in October/November.
- Those identified will participate in an on-site **Stephen Minister** training provided by Kendra and me in January-March 2027, after which they will be commissioned as MUMC Stephen Ministers.
- Assuming there are those who desire Stephen Minister care in March 2027, that is when we expect it to be available. All care is confidential, man-to-man or woman-to-woman. *(Note: If time is available and there is need, Kendra and I may accept one Care Receiver each beginning as early as September 2026.)*

We will provide more information as time passes. In the meantime, don't hesitate to learn more about Stephen Ministry at <https://www.stephenministries.org>.