

Stephen Ministry – The Six Basic Building Blocks (by Myron & Kendra Kirkpatrick)

In our first letter to the congregation, we introduced/reintroduced ourselves to you and spoke of our desire to reawaken our church's once-vibrant Stephen Ministry program. We also sketched out a brief outline as to how this might be done over an 18-24 month period. Then, in our second letter, we wrote broadly about what Stephen Ministry is and where it fits in at MUMC, touching briefly on what it is and what it is not.

With that background, this is a good time to lay out the **six basic building blocks** of a local Stephen Ministry. In doing so, we will also be identifying *for your personal consideration* the team that we will eventually need to launch this ship and keep it afloat. Let's begin by identifying the blocks we currently do have and those we don't. In the list below, the blocks we have are in black font; the blocks we do not have are in red.

- **Block 1 – a Pastor:** We have a Pastor who is new to the concept but sees the value in it and is supportive.
- **Block 2 – Stephen Leaders:** We do not yet have Stephen Leaders to re-establish, lead, and manage the Ministry although Kendra and I are training to become Leaders and should be prepared to assume that role and move forward on the remaining items listed below in mid-March.
- **Block 3 – Stephen Ministers:** We do not yet have any active Stephen Ministers. We do, though, have a small group of retired Stephen Ministers and one retired Stephen Leader who can give advice and moral support.
- **Block 4 – Lookouts:** What's a Lookout? In Stephen Ministry a Lookout is a member of the congregation who has been *specifically trained* to spot, approach, and possibly refer to the Stephen Leaders hurting individuals whom they believe might benefit from the care of a Stephen Minister.
- **Block 5 – Budget:** Stephen Ministry has not been a distinct item in the MUMC budget for at least 10 years. The cost of the training now in progress was paid by donation; however, we do not have an annual budget for the additional costs that will be necessary if we are to progress further in 2026 and beyond.
- **Block 6 – a General Congregation:** This we also have, and importantly, this congregation is *active, caring, and already becoming knowledgeable about Stephen Ministry* – a very sound base to build on!

So... six basic building blocks (a pyramid with the Pastor at the top and the general congregation at the base) are required to build a local Stephen Ministry. We presently have about 40% of them, so we obviously have a lot of work to do! In our next three letters we will discuss blocks (1-2) the Pastor and Stephen Leaders; (3-4) Stephen Ministers & Lookouts; and (5-6) Budget and General Congregation. Please continue to pray for our success.

