



“We are all broken people and it is only through the cross of Jesus that we can be made whole.”

#5: Building Blocks #3 (Stephen Ministers) & #4 (Lookouts)

(by Myron & Kendra Kirkpatrick)

Stephen Ministers: So, you may ask, exactly what is a Stephen Minister? To quote the umbrella organization Stephen Ministry-St. Louis, “Stephen Ministers are lay congregation members trained to provide one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or relocation [to name a few]. Stephen Ministers come from all walks of life, but they all share a passion for bringing Christ’s love and care to people during a time of need. Since 1975, more than 600,000 people from more than 14,000 congregations and other organizations have been trained as Stephen Ministers.”

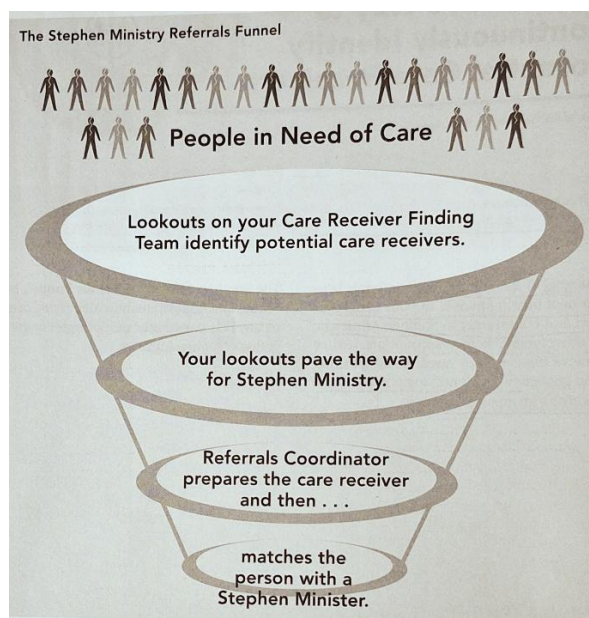
That’s the official line. To put it in everyday, Mesquite, Nevada language, this is where the rubber meets the road – Stephen Ministers are well trained Christian Care Givers who each meet one-on-one with a single Care Receiver of the same gender for approximately one hour per week for as long as required for that person to work their way out of the mud pit of life and back onto solid ground. Stephen Ministers have heard and accepted Christ’s call to care for their fellow men or women who are struggling with life’s challenges, whatever they may be. They have been trained in-house for 50 hours by well-trained, local Stephen Leaders, using proven, professionally developed Stephen Ministry materials. Everything they do with and in regard to their assigned Care Receivers is **completely, totally, 100% confidential**, accessible only by the Pastor and the senior Stephen Leader(s) who administer the program and are subject to the same confidentiality standards. And in their work they always keep this in mind: **“I am just the Care Giver; God is the Cure Giver. My job is to listen to you, ask leading questions, offer emotional support, ask more questions, and then meet with you again next week to repeat the process – for as long as needed. It is God’s job to lead you, the Care Receiver, to the solution for your problem as you continue to work through it with me.”**

There is so much more that could be asked and explained. We will have informational videos and other materials for the congregation in the weeks ahead. In the meantime, just stop, call, text, or email Myron (at 541-398-1960; mk65517@gmail.com) or Kendra (at 541-398-2336; kendrak65517@gmail.com) and we will be happy to answer your personal questions and address any concerns. There are also a few retired MUMC Stephen Ministers in the congregation (Liz Gramm, Nancy Mae Rowe, Sue Taylor, and Barb Schlesinger specifically) who have volunteered to talk with anyone who is interested but would like to get a second opinion. We expect to begin recruiting and interviewing those interested in becoming Stephen Ministers after we complete our online Stephen Leader training on March 10th and are commissioned sometime in April. Then, following an organizational and planning meeting or two and those much anticipated summer trips, we plan to begin the first 50-hour local Stephen Minister training class in November. Given holiday interruptions, your training would probably end around next March 15th. **So if you are interested in becoming a Stephen Minister (no commitment is required yet), please don’t wait until mid-March to let us know. The list is now up to seven (5 men + 2 women) in addition to ourselves, and we need to know what to expect so we can begin planning meeting space, preparing a budget, etc. More = Better!**

Lookouts: So once we have this wonderful team of fresh, eager Stephen Minister Care Givers next spring, how and where do we find their customers – tactfully known as “Care Receivers”? Well, they are right here among us and also out there in the surrounding community. And the one thing we will always need in order to become and remain a thriving Stephen Ministry is *lots of eyes on the ground*

and on the lookout for people who are struggling with life's challenges and could possibly benefit from having a caring person walk alongside them as they work their way through life's challenges.

The diagram below depicts the "Stephen Ministry Referral Funnel."



* The "Referrals Coordinator" filter is only found in congregations with many Stephen Leaders. In smaller congregations such as MUMC, this work is performed by the Stephen Leaders.

The "broken man" stick figures at the top of the filter represent people in need of the care required to make them whole through Christ. The funnel below these people represents their pathway to a Stephen Minister. At the top of the funnel is a filter made up of Pastors, Church Staff, Ministry leaders, retired Stephen Ministers, community contacts, and *many, many Church members* who, although they are not Stephen Ministers, feel moved to do something to help those who are hurting. These are the **Lookouts**. First they are lightly trained on how to recognize and approach potential Care Receivers, how to answer their questions, and how to refer them on to the Stephen Leaders. The Stephen Leaders then interview each referral to determine whether the care of a Stephen Minister would be appropriate. If so, and assuming an appropriate unassigned Stephen Minister is available, they would then match the two up and care would begin within a matter of days.

It is impossible to overstate the importance of the **Lookouts** in this process – a handful of Church leaders and Stephen Ministers simply can't be everywhere all the time. ***The ongoing success and growth of our Stephen Ministry will, in large part, depend on our network of trained, passionate Lookouts – individuals who want to extend a hand in any way they can to help others who are struggling in the mud pit of life.*** If you aren't interested in being a Stephen Minister or would like to but aren't sure yet or can't commit to the time requirement, ***please*** consider becoming a trained **Lookout** when the call goes out next spring.



Button identifying those involved with Stephen Ministry to those seeking care.

So much for the Stephen Ministers and Lookouts. Next week, we will discuss the base of the Stephen Ministry pyramid – **the congregation itself**, and **the Ministry's likely budgetary requirement**. Thank you for your continued prayerful support.

Want to Read More? We began posting these letters and other Stephen Ministry information on the MUMC website under the menu heading Ministries/Stephen Ministry in January 2026. Following is a list of the items posted to date and the link to each one on the MUMC website. Press "Control" and click on the link you are interested in to read it online. If you are taken to the Church home page rather than the specific letter, click on Ministries/Stephen Ministry Mission, Vision & Core Values **OR** just Ministries/Stephen Ministries.

Statement of Mission, Vision, & Core Values: <https://umcmesquite.org/stephen-ministry-mission-vision-core-values/>

Letter #1, Stephen Ministries is Returning to MUMC! <https://umcmesquite.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/1.-Stephen-Ministries-is-Returning-JAN-2026.pdf>

Letter #2, The Reawakening of Our Stephen Ministry Has Begun! <https://umcmesquite.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/stephen-2-2.pdf>

Letter #3, Stephen Ministry – the Six Basic Building Blocks: <https://umcmesquite.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/3.-Six-Basic-Building-Blocks-26-0212.pdf>

Letter #4, Building Blocks #1 (Pastor) and #2 (Stephen Leaders): <https://umcmesquite.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/4.-Building-Blocks-1-2-Pastor-Stephen-Leaders-26-0219-1.pdf>

Letter #5, Building Blocks #3 (Stephen Ministers) and #4 (Lookouts): [LINK PENDING](#)