



The Stephen Ministries logo features the cross, a symbol of the struggles through which the Lord overcame the power of hell and made His Human Divine. When we “take up our cross and follow Him” (Mark 8:34) we too go through struggles in which the Lord fights for us and brings us by regeneration from brokenness to wholeness. The circle is a symbol of the Lord’s infinite love embracing all people.

Ministers find direction

for their work in the Caregiver’s Compass. We strive to be compassionate, full of faith, skilled and trustworthy, relating to the four directions in heaven. “The state of goodness corresponding to the east, and the state of truth corresponding to the south are more inward states, while the state of goodness corresponding to the west and that of truth corresponding to the north more outward



(*Secrets of Heaven* 9648). The symbol in the center is formed from the Greek letters X (chi) and P (rho), an abbreviation for Christ (Greek ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ), meaning that the Lord is at the center of everything we do as Stephen Ministers. “Since everything that comes from the Lord looks toward Him, the Lord is the common center” (*Heaven and Hell* 124).



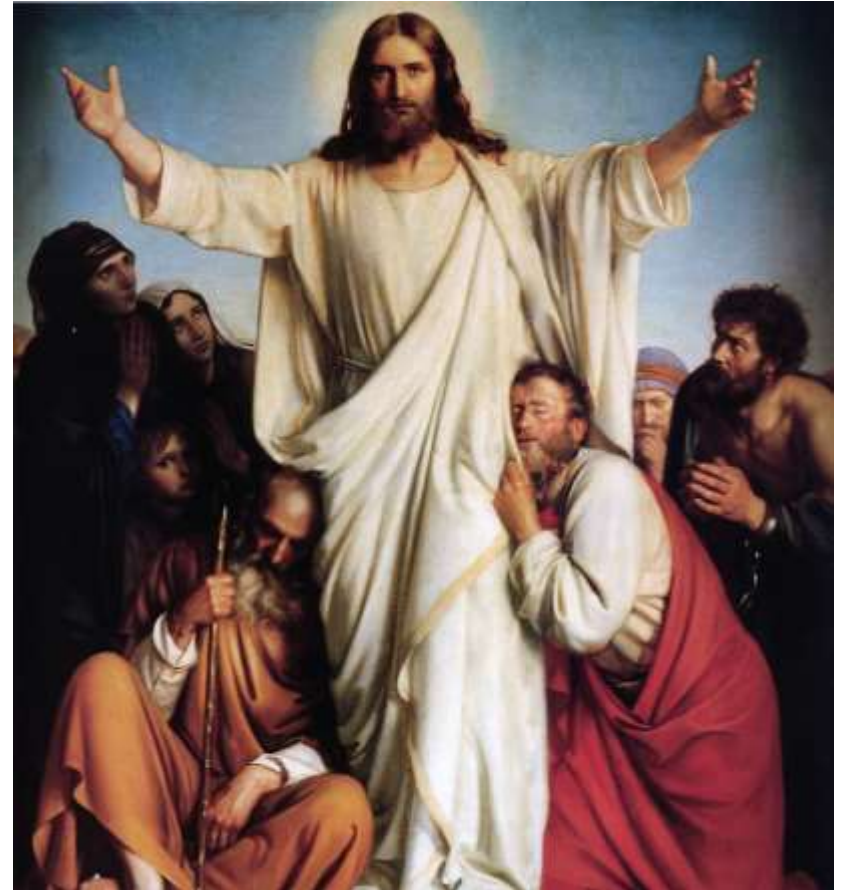
At the Bryn Athyn Church all our training and supervision is done by New Church Stephen Leaders. We bring New Church teachings into our classes and ministry, to keep the focus on the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word. “God loves each and every human being; and because He cannot do good to them directly, but only indirectly by means of other people, He therefore breathes into people His love” (*True Christianity* 457). “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). “In the Word those who practice matters of charity are called ministers” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 128). “To feel the joy of another as joy in oneself, that is loving” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 47). “The Lord acts indirectly through heaven not because He needs their help but in order that the angels there may have functions and duties, and therefore life and happiness” (*Secrets of Heaven* 8719).



Bryn Athyn Church

Stephen Ministry Commissioning Service

April 28, 2024



“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13:34-35

Stephen Ministers Being Commissioned

Paige Austin, Ruth Clauser, Bergen Jungé,
Christine McDonald, Diana Mergen,
Christine Roth, Joan Schemmer, Grayson Zuber

Requests

Pastor: Paige, Ruth, Bergen, Christine, Diana, Christine, Joan, Grayson: the Lord came into this world to comfort and console, to be present with us in all our struggles and temptations, and to heal and lift us up through His Divine Love, compassion, wisdom, and power. As He has comforted you, we now ask you to join in serving Him, and those in our congregation and community who need to be comforted.

As our Lord Jesus Christ has shown His care for you, we ask you to help this congregation grow as a caring community through your own caring ministry.

As our Lord Jesus Christ has revealed His presence to you through the life and faith you have drawn from His Word, we ask you to share your own experiences of your faith in Him and your love for Him with those around you, so that they too may share in the joy that the Lord's presence brings.

Vows

Pastor: Friends, are you prepared to meet these requests that we now ask of you, with the Lord's help?

Stephen Ministry Trainees: Yes.

Pastor: Are you prepared to nurture the skills you have learned and use them in service to others—to support, encourage, build up, and comfort people in all their needs, with the Lord's help?

Stephen Ministry Trainees: Yes.

Pastor: Would the congregation please rise. Members and friends of the Bryn Athyn Community, will you now open your hearts to the ministry of these people and to pray for them, so that they may be effective servants of the Lord?

Congregation: Yes.

Will you accept their ministry when you need help, to allow these individuals to work with you as you face struggles in your life, that you might receive support and help from those who are called with you to follow the Lord?

Congregation: Yes.

The Congregation may sit.

Pastor blesses the participants during "The Servant's Hymn."

Commendation

Pastor: Because you have promised faithfully to serve the Lord Jesus Christ and His people as Stephen Ministers, I commend you to the Lord's care and guidance as you in turn care for others. Work hard. Use the skills you have learned, releasing the gifts and talents the Lord has given you so that you might be a blessing to the people you meet and care for. Continue to study. Reflect upon the situations you encounter. Pray for the people whose lives you are privileged to share. Be free to share your own personal frustrations and needs with others so that you might receive the same kind of care and love you offer others. Act boldly and without fear, for the Lord will keep you and be with you.

About Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministers provide high-quality, confidential, Christian care and support to people experiencing grief, divorce, cancer, job loss, loneliness, disability, relocation, and other life difficulties. Our goal is to be a supportive, caring presence. Each Stephen Minister will spend about an hour a week with someone in need, listening, being supportive, and perhaps praying and sharing a passage from the Word.

Stephen ministers are not counselors or pastors – they mostly provide compassion, listening intently and sharing the sorrows and joys of those they care for, and referring them to other kinds of caregivers as needed. In the early Christian church the apostles became too busy to attend to all the needs of widows and orphans, so they chose Stephen and six others to provide care to those in need, so that the apostles could continue to focus on preaching the Word (Acts 6). Today Stephen Ministers follow the same tradition, providing lay care to people in need so that pastors can continue to focus on preaching the Word.

Stephen Ministries was started in 1975 by the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Haugk, a Lutheran pastor and clinical psychologist. Having little time as pastor to give the kind of care his flock needed, he began training lay people to give high-quality care, combining Christian principles of love for others and compassion, with sound psychological insights and experience. Today over 13,000 congregations from over 180 denominations use the Stephen Series training program to train, organize and supervise over half a million Stephen Ministers.