
**A Decade of Dedication –
A Brief History of Stephen Ministry
and Avon Congregational Church’s Commitment**

Stephen Ministry began in 1975 in St. Louis when the Rev Kenneth Haugk trained nine lay people in his congregation to help with pastoral care in his church. Other churches began to ask Rev Haugk to train lay people and the Stephen Ministry program was born. Today, Stephen Ministry is a not-for-profit organization based in St. Louis. There are now Stephen Ministers in thousands of churches in the United States and around the world.

The care of a Stephen Minister does not replace the visits and care of a church’s pastor. With a Ministry program in place, a church has the resources to provide more of God’s loving care to members of the congregation.

The Stephen Ministry program of Christ-centered caregiving started at our church a decade ago in 2000. Council approved and Avon Congregational Church formally joined the Stephen Ministry Program after church representatives researched and observed the program at Southington Congregational Church. Betsy Van Loon attended Stephen Ministry Leadership training in Seattle, Washington in the summer of 2000 and returned to teach two Stephen Ministry classes. Each Ministry training class is 50 hours long and is taught by a trained leader. In addition to Betsy, two other church members attended the leadership training program: Ann Price and Sue Fyten.

Former ministers and leaders since 2000 include: Ann Price, Darlene Gordon, Sharon Friedhoff and Sue Fyten. Our current ministers are: Betsy Van Loon, Dick Lytle, Gail Alvord, Lynn Emery, Sue Crowther and Sue Macy.

Our ministers have provided countless hours of loving care to care receivers in our church over the past decade. Ministers help care receivers with many issues such as aging and dying, anxiety after natural disasters, military deployment, and the pain of poor relationships within the family and the challenges of caring for disabled children.

The Second Decade

Stephen Ministry at Avon Congregational Church is entering its second decade of caring ministry. If you feel the call to become a Stephen Minister or Stephen Leader, please contact Pastor Ken Fuller or Betsy Van Loon. We are actively seeking new ministers and leaders for our program. New ministers will need to commit to the 50 hour training program which is available locally. The Vally Community Baptist Church has graciously provided an invitation to ACC members to train as Stephen Ministers starting in January, 2011. Vally Community Baptist is also a Stephen Ministry Church. A new Stephen Leader will need to commit one week of dedicated time to attend a Leadership training course. Courses are taught in various major cities around the United States. **Please also contact Pastor Ken or Betsy Van Loon if you feel the need to have the care of a Stephen Minister.**

What is Stephen Ministry?

Each Stephen Minister:

- ~ Receives 50 hours of training conducted by a trained Stephen Leader.
- ~ Makes a commitment of a minimum of two years to the program.
- ~ Meets confidentially with their care receivers one on one for at least one hour each week.
- ~ Meets regularly for small group supervision and a time of prayer and mutual support.

A Care Receiver is a person:

- ~ In a time of crisis or chronic distress.
- ~ Who needs someone to really listen as they talk through their difficulties.
- ~ Willing to welcome one on one Christ centered care into their lives.

To Avon Congregational Church,

The Worshipful Master, John Miller, the officers, and Brothers of Frederick Franklin Lodge #14 than you for the warm welcome we received on June 20th.

It has been a long custom of the Worshipful Master of a lodge to choose a church where the brothers may attend in celebration and fellowship on St. John’s Day.

Making it more memorable is knowing that Right Worshipful Brother Ken is part of the Craft and extremely proud of Masonry and its good teachings.

Frederick Franklin Lodge #14 looks forward to returning in the near future.

Frederick Franklin Lodge #14

Music in the Future

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Palm Sunday (April 17, 2011) will feature the recipients of the Jill Titus Memorial Music Scholarship from Drew University in a concert that will take place at 2:00p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

The Farmington Valley Bell Festival will take place Sunday, May 1, 2011; place to be announced.

Return Your Choir Music!

All choir members past and present are asked to return their music that may have been brought home to practice. We are short on music for new members.