

Our Lady of Angels has stepped up response to the call of the Year of Mercy. We are now a Stephen Ministry parish! This one-to-one lay caregiving ministry is named for St. Stephen, one of the first seven laypeople called by the church to assist the apostles in caring for others. (Acts chaps. 6 and 7.)

With the blessing of Fr. Bell and the prayerful support of the parish, four leaders attended an intensive Leader Training Course held in Dallas, in mid-July this year. It was an inspiring, informative and Spirit filled week. Detailed information and implementation plans for the Stephen Series were included in a 35 lb. Leader Training Manual.



Our Stephen Leaders at the Leader Training conference, July 2016

L to R: Cecelia Andersen, Cheryl-Ann Monteiro, Kathleen Hileman and Sue Parker

The Stephen Series is a well-developed and time tested program that equips laypeople to do caring ministry. It lays the foundation for the ministry, provides for training and subsequent supervision of people in basic skills necessary for helping others, and includes ongoing review and evaluation of the system. Through lecture, discussion, and experiential learning, people learn everything they need for this caring ministry. Our congregation will reap many blessings by following the call of Gal. 6:2 'Bear one another's burdens and thus you will fulfill the law of Christ.'

Finding Stephen Ministers is the next step for our Stephen Ministry. Please pray with us for the individuals God is calling to serve as caregivers. 'The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful' Jas. 5:16. Recruitment will begin in the next couple of months through a brief application and interview process. We expect to begin training soon after the middle of January. With your support, we should have a team of ministers ready to provide care by the close of summer 2017.

If you have gifts of caring, encouragement, and listening, please begin to prayerfully consider whether you might want to be part of this exciting ministry. You can explore more about being a Stephen minister here: <https://www.stephenministries.org/stephenministry/default.cfm/917> (video resources included)

https://www.stephenministries.org/PDFs/after_people.pdf

https://www.stephenministries.org/PDFs/NaplesDailyNews_EarthAngels.pdf

https://www.stephenministries.org/PDFs/SMIA_SMyMatchedSuperBowlExperience.pdf

https://www.stephenministries.org/PDFs/RealMen_RealMinistry_RealDifference.pdf

If you think you might be interested or you want to explore your spiritual gifts, talk with one of our Stephen Ministry Leaders or email us at stephenministry@ourladyofangels.com. Also, do take some time to explore these websites: www.stephenministries.org

<http://www.ourladyofangels.com/stephen-ministry> (link to a downloadable application form)