

# The *intertcom* In Church and Community



## From the Senior Pastor Finding Hope

As I write this, snow is once again blanketing the city and complicating travel plans. More snow is in the forecast despite the calendar declaring that spring will soon arrive. It's enough to make even the most patient among us exhale in exasperation, "When will it end?"



Of course, the weather we've been experiencing may be among the least of our worries especially if we remember our neighbors around the country who have endured much more extreme weather this winter. Drought-busting rain and snow out west have produced catastrophic flooding affecting millions, while extraordinary thunderstorms have rumbled across the south spawning tornados and creating widespread destruction for many.

Winter weather, though, is hardly the sum of all our worries. For instance, there have been more mass shootings in this country than days since January 1; the election cycle is revving up again and exposing us to rhetoric rooted not so much in truth but in its perceived effectiveness in persuading voters; the pressure of inflation in our economy continues to plant seeds of uncertainty; and more.

On top of all this, we are emerging from a global pandemic that undeniably has altered our lives and left

us with the lingering and far-reaching emotional effects of isolation and grief.

And it's Lent—of course it is!—a season of marking time with disciplines designed to remind us of our need for forgiveness and resurrection. ("Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.")

None of this is easy, and the cumulative toll life can have on us should not be underestimated.

But we are not alone—you are not alone. In addition to all

*continued*

## Holy Week and Easter Sunday at Our Savior's

- ♦ Maundy Thursday, April 6: 12:00 and 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary
- ♦ Good Friday, April 7: 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary
- ♦ Resurrection of Our Lord – Easter Day, April 9: 7:00 a.m., Sanctuary; 8:45 a.m., Celebrate Center; 11:00 a.m., Sanctuary; 11:00 a.m., Celebrate Center

## Ministry Spotlight Sometimes...

### ...Stephen Ministry Can Be the Solution

By Chad Mickelson



*Sometimes* life's joyful occasions can take your breath away.

As my kids recently prepared to start their senior year of high school, my mind was racing way ahead of the moment. I found my thoughts fast forwarding to the next spring, wondering what graduation day would bring, and how I would eventually handle things as they left for college, and my wife and I entered the early stages of empty nesting.

I should have been settling in for a lot of enjoyment. The last local theatre production for my daughter. The last high-school bowling season for my son. A lot of "lasts" that are meant to be savored. How could I slow my mind down and make sure this year of turning a page was not too much of a blur?

I considered the Stephen Ministry program at Our Savior's. I have worked to communicate the value of a one-on-one spiritual walk with a Stephen Minister, but having talked myself out of utilizing this valued resource during what I would consider more trying times previously, surely it would be silly to call upon it in this happier circumstance, wouldn't it?

*Sometimes* you need to prioritize yourself, and Stephen Ministry is a beneficial way of doing that. I talked myself into truly believing things I have previously promoted, that a caring relationship is not just for times of trauma and grieving. It is designed for anything that may have your life off track or out of balance. I made the call and asked to have a Stephen Minister assigned to me.

Much like my mind hoped to skip ahead that fall, I will skip ahead now to say a year of plugging into the Stephen Ministry program provided all I hoped it would. It was a wonderful way to work through anxieties of a stressful year, while helping me to appreciate each of the many celebratory moments and enjoy them in the now.

Allow me the opportunity to unpack my year of walking with a Stephen Minister, and highlight some of the elements that make it work so well.

*Sometimes* the success is in the simplicity. As complex and well-structured as the Stephen Ministry program is, using it to obtain the support and care you need is simple and designed for a flexible fit for those in need. My caring partner reached out to me shortly after I made my request, and asked me what I thought was the most appropriate times and locations for our meetings.

Stephen Ministers are well-trained and available to meet on a weekly basis, but I thought once a month might be the best fit for me. It allowed for a much-needed monthly check-in that did not impact a busy year of activities. If the need for more meetings had arisen, the option was available. We opted for the comfort and convenience of Our Savior's couches over coffee, but a Stephen Minister will meet you wherever it is most convenient.

There is no element of "fixing" involved with Stephen Ministry; no effort to find solutions or to force answers. The balm comes simply from the caring time of togetherness, a communal partnership of simply talking, listening, and lifting needs up in prayer.

*Sometimes* talking through internal stress and hearing things

**"Stephen Ministry at OSL shares the love of Jesus Christ by providing confidential, one-to-one, distinctively Christian care to individuals who are experiencing life's challenges."**

spoken brings calm to a situation. You find that by verbalizing some of the worry, you are lifting prayers to God through the assistance of your caring partner.

A specific example I recall is hearing myself discuss specific concerns I had for each of my kids, as they approached the big decision of finalizing their college plans. My daughter's choice would take her to the East Coast, and would require a firm financial commitment. My son's choice would mean living at home for a year or more, requiring less financial investment but perhaps more relational focus. Discussing these decisions with a Stephen Minister allowed me to hear how God was at work in guiding my family along life's journey.

The caring relationship also provides a wonderful listening opportunity. In some cases, a chance to hear about similar experiences your caring partner may have been through. In others, a chance to know that life is also moving forward for them, too. You share the highs and lows of each week or month and you know that you are not alone.

Others are struggling and stressed a bit at times. Others are joyful and celebrating at times. You share the ebbs and flows of life and find healing and renewal in the togetherness.

One fall season, I was anxious and stressed about the journey towards high-school graduation, and seeing my kids take their next steps—leaving me to my empty nest. A fast twelve months and a new fall season later, I had survived the college visits and graduation party, and shed my tears at the college drop-off. It was every bit as fast and furious as I feared it might be. But it was not a blur. It was clear and magical.

*Sometimes* Stephen Ministry can help carry you through times of trauma and heartbreak.

*Sometimes* Stephen Ministry can also help you remember to rejoice and celebrate. ♦

*Chad Mickelson is a Library Coordinator at Our Savior's, and a longstanding proponent of Stephen Ministry.*



*Would you or someone close to you benefit from the help of a Stephen Minister?*

*Contact Pr. Tim Lemme (605-336-2942, ext. 19, or tlemme@oslchurch.com) or Ben Weins, Spiritual Care Coordinator (605-336-2942, ext. 28, or bweins@oslchurch.com), to find out!*

### **From the Senior Pastor**, *continued from page 1*

of the well-qualified mental healthcare providers in our community, this church is committed to connecting faith to everyday life in ways that provide hope and healing for any who are in need. Our pastoral team, our visitation ministers, and our spiritual care ministry team all serve our congregation's mission by extending supportive and compassionate care to those who are struggling under the weight of life's burdens.

A shining example of this is our Stephen Ministry, the benefits of which are detailed in this edition of *The Intercom* by Chad Mickelson as he experienced them firsthand. Please read Chad's story, keeping in mind that the same kind of help he found in his Stephen Minister is available to you and

anyone for whom the challenges of life have become difficult to bear alone.

Remember too, my friends, that spring IS coming, Easter is just around the corner, and burden-bearing hope is real whenever we care for each other. So be sure to ask for help, check up on those close to you, and continue to put your trust in the power of the cross to bear you up each and every day.

In Christ's love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randy".

Pr. Randy Gehring



OUR SAVIOR'S  
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## Worship Services

Saturday Evening – 5:00 P.M., Sanctuary  
Sunday Morning  
Celebrate Worship – 8:45 and 11:00 A.M., Celebrate Center  
Festive Worship – 11:00 A.M., Sanctuary

## Television and Internet

Celebrate: 9:00 A.M., KTTW (cable channel 9; channel 7.1)  
Festive: 1:00 P.M., KSCB (cable channel 30; channel 53),  
Facebook Live: 8:45 and 11:00 A.M.  
Website: [oslchurch.com](http://oslchurch.com)

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