CHRIST CARING FOR PEOPLE THROUGH PEOPLE has been Stephen Ministry's motto throughout its 50-year history. Stephen Ministers will be blessed by reflecting on this motto from time to time, especially as they prepare to meet with a care receiver.

CHRIST

In Revelation 22:13, Jesus says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." Jesus encompasses all of human history, including our personal histories and our work through Stephen Ministry. What matters most in Christian caregiving is not what we do but what Christ does in and through us. We are as much care receivers as caregivers. We can give to another only what we ourselves have received from Christ.

CARING

We learned in training that God is the Curegiver, while we are caregivers—but even our caregiving is not something we do on our own. We need Christ caring through us. Because the risen Christ is present with us always (Matthew 28:20), we embody Jesus' care. We see Christ in our care receivers, and we want our care receivers to see Christ through us.

FOR PEOPLE

Christ cares for the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. Christ died and rose again for us and the people we are called to care for. Jesus tells us, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:12–13). This is what Jesus has done for us and our care receivers. We want those we care for to receive God's shalom, healing, and wholeness.

THROUGH PEOPLE

We are the people the Holy Spirit has called and equipped for Stephen Ministry. We are to be God's channels and instruments, bringing Christ's care to those who need it. As St. Francis prayed, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace," so we pray, "Lord, make me an instrument of your care and compassion."

This motto is a source of faith and humility for us as Stephen Ministers: *faith* that Christ is necessary and sufficient for every need in our lives and ministry, and *humility* because "it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). We depend not on ourselves but on Christ every moment of our lives, especially in our caregiving.

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