



So, Megan, Kris, Kelley, Paulette, Joyce, Brent, and Debbie, congratulations! You're done! Except, it's really just beginning for the ministry that God has empowered you to take on in service to your neighbor. However, I think it's still helpful to hear out loud just how committed you have been to getting here today, and it would be helpful for everyone else to hear just how much you had to alter your life around to somehow manage to survive getting her today. Because, we at Divinity required you to basically give up every Tuesday night of your life since September 17. Nearly 50 hours all told in a classroom, sifting through almost a thousand pages' worth of Stephen Ministry Training material, going over active listening and asserting boundaries among seemingly countless other topics. And through it all, we asked you to be open to the holy possibility that you can most certainly be an embodiment of God's compassion. We asked you to be vulnerable. We asked you to believe in yourself, and believe even more so in the Christ who can both weep and rise from the dead. We asked you to fall in love with God even more, knowing that there is absolutely nothing that can happen in this life that is beyond the care of the Divine.

Now, on one of those Tuesday nights, you were asked to listen to a poem written by a modern prophetic writer in Joe Davis. After all, as much as we have filled your mental and actual file cabinets with so many tools to hopefully nourish your future care-giving, we know you are also fully aware that you do not have all the talents and gifts in your spiritual arsenal to take care of everything that you will come across. You will depend on doctors and nurses and physical therapists and counselors and psychiatrists and home health care assistants and family and friends to even more take care of the person you are called to serve with as a Stephen Minister. But regardless of all that, sometimes all you need to do for people who struggle to find anyone else to talk to, or struggle to find anyone who will truly listen, or those who aren't so sure what they are feeling or whether they are willing to share it; sometimes all you need to do in the name of Jesus Christ, is show up. So, just a little refresher on that poem called "Show Up," a portion of it goes like this:

Show up from wherever you are from...

Bring your full self, both your head, and your heart.

Your hands, and your feet.

we all have the ability to be.

Without you, I'm incomplete. Without you, there is no "we".

I need you not just to survive, but to thrive.

Come fully awake and alive with potential and possibility.

I need you to show up...

*You may be hurting or afraid – Show up!
We'll gather healing along the way – Show up!
We will be strong, we will be brave – Show up!
Dream of the world we will create – Show up...
Show up with all your awkwardness, bad habits,
show up with your doubts and questions,
Show up with your wounds and scars, we all have baggage.
But just know that together, we can unpack it.
This is no mistake – you are not here by accident;
You are here to share the stories of your sacred passage.
You are the only you that ever has been.
You are not the magician – you are the magic!
So, show up. This place here, where there is no grace period,
There's only grace, period
Bring your fears and insecurities, let us marvel in mystery.
Let us listen to each other to life with deep, holy listening.
Do you hear it? Do you hear it?
That's the sound of the genuine within you.
The spirit's stirring near you, but if you don't show up,
how can anyone hear you?
Show up, even if you don't know for certain.
You may have to treat the healing which this world is searching.
This grand universe, we are but small workers with a big purpose.
Because of our hearts, widening the circle,
hearts that are open, hearts that are broken,
so a little light can shine through, a little hope for the hopeless...
Don't diss the disbelief, don't miss the mystery,
your history's history, without you, this place is incomplete.
Your feet are speaking loudly by bringing you here.
Your presence is worth more than a thousand speeches.
Your intentions have been made clear...
keep up, read up, look up, don't give up. And most importantly, show up.
Wherever you go, simply know: the spirit of this place goes with you.
So go, readied with sleeves rolled up, always growing, never fully
grewed up.
Ready with all your heart, mind, body and soul – to show up.*

Of course, with all that being said, you and all of us are ultimately here because of the One who showed up in Jesus Christ our Lord, the One who is our Light that will never fade, the One who is our stronghold no matter what life will throw at us, the One whose goodness is meant to be experienced in the very land of the living, right here, right now, including where you Stephen Ministers may go from hospital bedsides to nursing home rooms to restaurant tables or family living rooms, or wherever else. Regardless of where any of you go, Jesus Christ is not waiting for you there, he's making the journey with you, no matter how long it may take, no matter the struggle.

Rest assured Christ has showed up and will never ever leave. And we give thanks that he has not only showed up in Megan, Kris, Kelley, Paulette, Joyce, Brent, and Debbie, but in all of you, to bring even a little light to the world. Thanks be to God, indeed! Amen!

For a version of the full “Show Up” poem, please visit:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9hQVPfKWsA>