

# STRIDE



**Discover your path. Serve with purpose. Grow in community.**



**HUNTSVILLE FIRST**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# Discover your path. Serve with purpose. Grow in community.

A vital part of the membership path here at Huntsville First - as we grow as disciples of Jesus Christ - is serving, both inside the church and outside in the community. That expectation is based on four foundational Bible passages: Romans 12: 1-8, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 4: 1-16, 1 Peter 4: 8-11. It can be hard to decide where and how we will serve. There are so many good and important ministries. Not even the most dedicated Christian can possibly respond to all the ways God calls. The question is, how shall we choose?

To answer this question, we recommend using our S.T.R.I.D.E. for ministry, which stands for:

- **S**piritual Gifts
- **T**alents
- **R**esources
- **I**ndividuality
- **D**reams
- **E**xperiences

We learn by experience that all people do not fit into the same ministry positions. Every position, and every person, is unique. The purpose of the S.T.R.I.D.E. process is to help you understand how God has created you, and to help you find an area of service that fits you well.

This guide will introduce you to the S.T.R.I.D.E. process, and help you start down the path of meaningful service as you discover your path, serve with purpose, and grow in community. There is much we can't cover here — please consider this the beginning of your journey, not the end!



# SPIRITUAL GIFTS

**In a nutshell, here are some of the things the Bible teaches us about spiritual gifts:**

- Every Christian (including YOU) has one or more God-given spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7)
- Spiritual gifts are given, not for personal improvement or profit, but to serve others (1 Peter 4:10)
- God, not us, chooses which spiritual gifts we receive (1 Corinthians 12:18)
  - We're each gifted to fill a different place in God's service – both envy and ego are ruled out
  - Only as we all do our unique parts will the church achieve its God-intended effectiveness
- The Church operates like our body, with each part doing its special function, and all directed by the Head (Jesus Christ) (Romans 12:4-8)

So which spiritual gifts has God given you? Ultimately, the best way to discover that is to "try out" various service areas. Those areas in which you are most effective, that bring you the most joy, and in which you receive the greatest support and confirmation from fellow Christians will be the ones in which God has gifted you to serve. Use this guide to narrow the options and help you to decide which service areas you want to try out.

Here's an exercise to help you start thinking about which gifts God may have given you. Listed on the following page are some of the gifts identified in Scripture that are often used in service at Huntsville First. Under each gift's name is a word or phrase that indicates its contribution to the church along with a list of words that are often descriptive of people having that gift. You may find some of those words resonating with you more than others. To further explore the gifts you may have, ask one or more Christian friends or family members who know you well to do the same process for you, without knowing your answers.

## **CIRCLE THE GIFTS**

### **YOU MAY HAVE**

(choose all that apply)

#### **ADMINISTRATION EFFICIENCY**

conscientious      efficient  
dependable      goal-oriented  
objective      organized  
thorough

**APOSTLESHIP  
NEW MINISTRIES**  
entrepreneurial      persevering  
cause-driven      adventurous  
adaptable      risk-taking  
culturally sensitive

**DISCERNMENT  
CLARITY**  
insightful      receptive  
truthful      perceptive  
intuitive      decisive  
confronting

**EVANGELISM  
THE GOOD NEWS**  
confident      communicator  
relational      spiritual  
outgoing      challenging  
faith-sharing

**ENCOURAGEMENT  
MOTIVATION**  
supporting      reassuring  
affirming      comforting  
consoling      positive  
challenging



#### **FAITH CONFIDENCE**

prayerful      optimistic  
assured      convinced  
trusting      hopeful  
illuminating

**GIVING  
RESOURCES**  
charitable      depends on God  
generous      good steward  
responsible      resourceful  
disciplined

**HEALING  
WHOLENESS**  
faith-filled      compassionate  
submissive      spiritual  
trusts in God      humble  
power in prayer

**HELPS  
ASSISTANCE**  
available      willing  
reliable      selfless  
pragmatic      servant-oriented  
dependable

**HOSPITALITY  
WELCOME**  
warm      hospitable  
open      inclusive  
relational      outgoing  
friendly

**LEADERSHIP  
DIRECTION**  
diligent      role model  
visionary      activating  
persuasive      inspiring  
influential

#### **KNOWLEDGE AWARENESS**

astute      comprehending  
rational      reflective  
observant      studious  
diligent

**MERCY  
CARE**  
empathetic      kind  
tender      responsive  
sensitive      compassionate  
burden-bearing

**PASTOR-TEACHER  
SHEPHERDING**  
nurturing      protective  
disciple-maker      facilitating  
guiding      instructing  
relational

**PROPHECY  
CONVICTION**  
confronting      authentic  
convicting      uncompromising  
penetrating      compelling  
outspoken

**TEACHING  
INSTRUCTION**  
articulate      authoritative  
analytical      incisive  
practical      teachable  
well-grounded

**WISDOM  
GUIDANCE**  
reasonable      sensible  
thoughtful      wise  
clear-sighted      skillful  
obedient to God's will



# TALENTS

Everyone (not just Christians) is born with natural talents. We also may develop talents in many different ways. God often uses these talents and abilities - things that bring us deep joy - alongside our spiritual gifts.

To help you assess your talents, prayerfully study the list below (which is just a sampling) and check all that apply to you.

## **TALENTS, SKILLS & ABILITIES:** (Check all that apply)

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting/Finance       | <input type="checkbox"/> Good Listener        | <input type="checkbox"/> Set Design/Construction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administration Skills    | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Design       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sewing                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artistic                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality          | <input type="checkbox"/> Sound Mixing            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camera Operator          | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources      | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Coach            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Career Counseling        | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscaping          | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care               | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership Skills    | <input type="checkbox"/> Team Player             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication            | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Knowledge      | <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Skills        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compassion               | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing            | <input type="checkbox"/> Video Production        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Graphics        | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Knowledge    | <input type="checkbox"/> Vision                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computerized Photography | <input type="checkbox"/> Music - Instrumental | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction             | <input type="checkbox"/> Music - Vocal        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling               | <input type="checkbox"/> Organization         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CPR/First Aid            | <input type="checkbox"/> Painting             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Craftsmanship            | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography          |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Communication   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Speaking      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data Entry               |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decorating               |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desktop Publishing       |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drama                    |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary Education     |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Encourager               |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Event/Party Planning     |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitation             |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Service             |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening                |   |  |



# RESOURCES

While “resources” bring to mind finances, they are broader than that. For example, time is one of the most critical elements to consider when looking for a place to serve. Our available time will vary greatly depending on our season of life. A truck and trailer may seem to be only taking up space in the drive, but when an unsheltered family finally finds housing, they are invaluable resources. A lake house can be a retreat setting and a childhood friend turned missionary can be a guest preacher. When we consider all we have around us, resources abound.

Jesus urged us to “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” (Matthew 6:20) In other words, He called on us to find ways to invest our earthly resources in things that have eternal value. This is an important part of our service: how am I using my resources? How could I use them more effectively to advance God’s Kingdom?

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# INDIVIDUALITY

There are many tools that have been used over time to help us understand our personalities (Myers-Briggs, Enneagram), strengths (Clifton Strengths Finder), leadership style (DISC Inventory), and how we think and work (6 Types of Working Genius). These can all be helpful to see aspects of ourselves and help us determine how we can best serve and lead. **Leading@HuntsvilleFirst**, is a leadership development program that can work in this way to help you understand Huntsville First and your role in it.

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# DREAMS

God cares about every need, and every person. Addressing many of these needs or issues around us call for God-sized dreams. You may have sensed God placing a dream (a desire, a passion, an interest, a calling) in your heart. Sometimes those dreams help to define the area or areas in which our gifts can function best.

Dreams may relate to helping a particular people group (e.g. the elderly), advancing a particular cause (e.g. relieving hunger), reaching a particular people or land with God's Good News, participating in recovery ministries, or showing the tangible love of Christ for vulnerable children (e.g. mentoring). Your dreams are another element of your S.T.R.I.D.E. profile that often change based on your season of life or your life experiences. For instance, you may be very passionate about working with teenagers, but when faced with an aging parent with Alzheimer's, find that dream shifting to becoming more focused on helping others cope with similar issues. What dreams do you have and how might that lead you to serving?

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# EXPERIENCE

Good or bad, our experiences have made us who we are today. As we look at our lives through the eyes of God, we come to understand that God's gracious, healing touch can use all of our experiences to prepare us for service. Our pain can help us minister to others in pain. Our success can give hope and direction to others who are failing. All of our experiences— family, work, ministry, relationships, circumstances — are building blocks God can use to equip us to serve, and to bring others closer to God. So review your life experiences, prayerfully ask God to guide you, and then use those experiences to bless others.

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# FINDING YOUR STRIDE

And there you have it — a quick outline of how you can find your S.T.R.I.D.E. for service to God and others, both within the church and out in the world around us. There will always be more to learn, and the real fun of the process comes in actually getting involved in service, being the hands and feet for God and to those whom God loves.

## NEXT STEPS



Our next steps begin with the first ones: Worship in community as regularly as you are physically able; find a small group with whom you can grow in your faith; live into the spiritual disciplines every day to deepen your walk with God.



Prayerfully consider how you can serve at Huntsville First and in the wider community. You may scan the QR code below for a listing of serving opportunities. These can be natural pairings with your spiritual gifts. Indicate a few places you'd be interested in serving. Ask God where and how you can serve.



Talk to a pastor or ministry leader about how you might find a place to serve.



Consider participating in **Leading@HSV1st**, a short-term, leadership development program that introduces folks to the breadth of ministry at Huntsville First.



**[huntsvillefirst.org](http://huntsvillefirst.org)**