

**Don't just give  
Be the gift  
Volunteer**



**First Central  
Congregational**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

36th & Harney Streets | 402.345.1533 | [www.firstcentral.org](http://www.firstcentral.org)

Revised November 2015



# Ministry Teams Directory

Are you looking for a way to be involved,  
to reach out to your neighbors or  
effect change in your community?

Do you want to develop friendships for mutual care,  
fellowship and support?

Do you feel passionately about issues  
such as hunger, shelter, education or social justice?

Here at First Central, you will find many opportunities  
to use your skills, talents, background and  
enthusiasm to make a difference.

Dear Members, Friends, and Visitors,

Each of us has gifts to share. Some are painters, others accountants. Some are excellent at showing compassion, while others like to cook. A few of us are gifted with organizational and planning skills, while others are great singers.

Part of our journey is discerning what our spiritual gifts are and, then, how we can use them. At First Central we help one another grow spiritually, and one way is through our Ministry Teams.

Our Ministry Teams provide opportunities to explore our gifts and to use them in service to a larger mission and vision. We can connect with people who share our interests and passions. We can participate at our level of availability and can gather with others to “do” ministry rather than spend lots of time in meetings talking about it (unless that’s your thing). These teams provide flexibility and opportunities for innovation, creativity, and growth. They are also a great way to connect with people who aren’t members of this church, as partnerships are built with others in the community to achieve our goals.

In a congregation that highly values freedom, these teams fit our theology. The true governance of the church rests with the members acting together as they discern the call of God.

Explore this book as a way to help discern your gift and how you are being called of God to share in the life of this church. Hopefully your involvement will bring fellowship and friendship, and will, ultimately, lead to the satisfaction that comes from a job well done, because we believe that the work of this church is helping to change lives and make the world a better place.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Scott", written in a cursive style.

**Rev. Dr. E. Scott Jones**

## **Spirit Given Gifts:**

### **Go where your gifts are; there you will find God**

Apart from many useful and practical reasons for discerning your Spirit given gifts, the most profound reason is simply that your gifts are the place where God is closest to you in your life. Go where your gifts are and you will be closer to the source of those gifts – God. Can't find God in your life? Chances are you haven't found your true gifts either.

First Central has identified a Spiritual Gifts Inventory which can help you to identify your gifts. Please ask for a copy in the church office, or go to [www.spiritgivengifts.com](http://www.spiritgivengifts.com) for a link to the online questionnaire. After you've completed the survey and gained insight into your gifts, we have literature which tells more about each gift. (These descriptions can also be found at the website above.) The 22 gifts can be divided into four categories (see below), and for each team in this booklet, we've indicated one or more categories. If you'd like to discuss your Spirit given gifts and where they might find a home among our ministries, please see someone on the *Matching Members to Ministry Committee*.

#### **Practical, Personal, Hands-on, Behind-the-Scenes Gifts**

**Assisting** – is focused on assisting one or more **individuals** who are leaders, organizers, teachers, etc.

**Crafting** – is focused on using **skills** such as gardening, property maintenance, professional, technical or trade.

**Creativity** – is focused on all forms of **artistic** creativity and expression.

**Mercy** – is focused on personally helping those in **need**.

**Service** – is focused on helping **groups** or projects around the church.

#### **Nurturing, Caring, People Oriented Gifts**

**Encouragement** – is focused on **short-term**, as needed, moral encouragement of others.

**Faith** – is focused on having **personal trust** in God, which may or may not lead to helping and supporting others in direct ways.

**Hospitality** – is focused on being comfortable meeting **new people** and providing a warm welcome and inviting space.

**Mentoring** – is focused on **longer-term** support for faith development.

**Multiculturalism** – is focused on being comfortable in a **difficult culture**.

### Leadership Gifts

**Knowledge** – is focused on the ability to gather and organize **information** and ideas. This may be done for others to use.

**Leadership** – is focused on the quality of communications and **relationships** so that groups work for a common purpose.

**Organization** – is focused on the ability to **coordinate** all the details for a program or project to be successfully accomplished.

**Teaching** – is focused on the ability to help others **learn** and understand.

**Vision** – is focused on clarifying the **goals**, outcomes or purposes for a group, program or project.

**Wisdom** – is focused on the ability to provide **insightful** yet practical solutions to complex, conflicted or puzzling situations.

### Personal Faith Gifts

**Discernment** – is focused on an above average ability to sense personal **motives** and hidden agendas.

**Evangelism** – is focused on being comfortable talking with others about one's **faith**.

**Faith** – is focused on having an above average **trust** in God in all circumstances.

**Giving** – is focused on an above average **generosity** with one's money.

**Healing** – is focused on improving or restoring **health**. It may or may not involve prayer, but is focused exclusively on healing.

**Justice** – is focused on an above average ability to see **underlying causes** and connections for social, economic, political and environmental relationships.

**Prayer** – is focused on an above average **time** spent in prayer. It may include prayers for healing, but will not be focused exclusively on healing.

*Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.*

**John Wesley**

## **Congregational Care Ministry Teams**

### **All-Church Retreat**

The All-Church Retreat (aka Intergenerational Retreat), is our big yearly get-together as a church family out at Platte River State Park. It's a weekend full of fun, fellowship and good eats, involving everyone, from the youngest to the oldest. Help plan, publicize, and organize the outing. This is a great team for those who want to be involved in a short-term project rather than an ongoing activity.

CONTACT: Judy Bouma, Deb Kirwan

Gifts Categories: Practical, Leadership

### **Befrienders**

Befrienders are families and/or individuals of the church who are interested in building a meaningful relationship with other members of the church. The goal is to establish a caring Christian presence in someone's life. The individuals that desire a Befriender may be individuals with no family close by, are unable to make it to church, or would just like to share their talents and interests with others.

Befrienders are asked to make a one year commitment. Befriender activities vary according to individual needs but may include such things as sending cards, making phone calls, visiting, listening, and transporting.

CONTACT: Sally Lewis

Gifts Categories: Nurturing

### **Called To Care**

Volunteers assist temporarily incapacitated members by preparing meals, providing transport to medical appointments and other errands.

CONTACT: Sara Sharpe

Gifts Categories: Nurturing

*Help thy brother's boat across and lo! thine own has reached the shore.*

**Hindu Proverb**

**CEO (Congregationalists Eating Out)**

A social group of all ages that enjoys dinner and fellowship at local restaurants once a month. Group members alternate deciding the location and sometimes an activity.

CONTACT: Carol Vogt

Gifts Categories: Nurturing

**Church Van**

Volunteer drivers provide transportation for those unable to attend worship and other church activities, such as CEO dinners, youth group projects, thrift shop pick-ups and deliveries. No special license is required to drive the 15-passenger van.

CONTACT: Alan Bucknam

Gifts Categories: Practical

**Conversational Dinners**

Held several times a year, these pot luck dinners bring together members old and new for good food and friendship. The dinners are held in the church parlor or at homes of volunteers. The team coordinates diverse attendance, assuring that, by dinner's end, no one will be a stranger.

CONTACT: Val Himes

Gifts Categories: Practical

**Eves**

Women are invited to enjoy the company and wisdom of other women of the church. Activities include chatting, snacking, and occasionally solving world problems. This community exists to care for each other, enhancing spirituality through conversation, community, chocolate chip cookies and sometimes wine.

CONTACT: Cherie Ferber, Sara Sharpe

Gifts Categories: Nurturing

*If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one.*

**Mother Teresa**

### **Friends and Family**

Coordinates weekly Sunday coffee hours, special receptions, installations, Lenten dinner and annual meeting luncheons. Most people actively participate in F & F activities. Truly, many hands make light work.

CONTACT: Chris Steffen

Gifts Categories: Practical, Nurturing

### **Funeral Care**

First Central supports grieving families by hosting receptions following funeral services. At the family's request, a team of individuals organizes the set-up and serving of refreshments for funeral guests. Food is usually catered or provided by church members.

CONTACT: Val Himes, Sue Arkfeld

Gifts Categories: Nurturing, Practical

### **Health Team**

The health team advocates, provides resources and educates the congregation and the community in related health needs and issues. The goal of the health team is to support each person in the congregation in achieving optimum holistic health.

CONTACT: Sue Cassiday, Parish Nurse

Gifts Categories: Practical, Leadership

### **Prayer Chain**

Requests for prayer come through the Pastor, the church office, as well as individuals. The coordinator contacts team members, who spread the word through a 'phone tree' style communication of emails and phone calls. Anyone willing to add others to their daily prayers is welcome to take part.

CONTACT: Joan Eddy

Gifts Categories: Nurturing, Personal Faith

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

**Margaret Mead**

### **Thanksgiving Dinner**

First Central has a decades-long tradition of serving an annual homemade Thanksgiving meal to members and their families the weekend before Thanksgiving. The meal is shared family-style in the church parlor. Everyone who has even a brief moment to spare can be part of this special church tradition.

CONTACT: Pam & Terry Beranek

Gifts Categories: Practical

### **Women's Fellowship**

Women's Fellowship supports the work and fellowship of the church. All church women are considered members and invited to attend the monthly meetings. These meetings are held the 3rd Friday of the month at 12:00 in the church parlor. Women's Fellowship projects include bake sales, the Cookie Walk, funeral care, wedding coordination, and other important events in the church's life.

CONTACT: Joan Eddy

Gifts Categories: Nurturing

## **Congregational Outreach Ministry Teams**

### **Community Garden**

First Central maintains a community garden for members and neighbors. Volunteers encourage people to plant in the garden each spring and coordinate sharing of the harvest through weekly sales in the parlor. (Proceeds support the Community Garden project.)

CONTACT: George and Val Himes

Gifts Categories: Practical

*One is not born into the world to do everything but to do something.*  
**Henry David Thoreau**

### **Corn This Way LGBTQ Emerging Leaders Summit**

This summit, co-sponsored by the Queer Nebraska Youth Network and the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network Omaha Chapter (GLSEN) is held at UNO in the spring and brings together youth (24 and under), their teachers, advisors and mentors from across Nebraska. A day of education, empowerment and leadership development includes a resource and opportunity fair. First Central participates in the resource fair.

Contact: Jim Ogden

### **Crop Walk**

An annual, nationwide UCC fundraising walk to help fight world hunger. First Central has participated by recruiting walkers, signing up supporters, and/or conducting a food drive.

CONTACT:

Gifts Categories: Personal Faith

### **CrossOver Prison Ministries**

Volunteers serve a Monday dinner followed by Bible Study. Volunteers are needed to provide the meals, and to be visitors, mentors and correspondents for prisoners transitioning back into the community. The team provides daypacks containing basic necessities (donated by the congregation) to those being released.

CONTACT: Jeannie Bates

Gifts Categories: Personal Faith, Nurturing

### **Evergreen Thrift Shop**

Our thrift shop is located on the courtyard level of the church. It is run by volunteers who collect, sort, price and sell donated merchandise. The shop is currently open Wednesdays through Fridays 10AM - 2PM and Saturdays 10AM - 1PM. Each May, volunteers coordinate a Super Sale of books, plants, art and crafts. The sale is open to the public and proceeds support the church.

CONTACT: Sam Pfeifer

Gifts Categories: Practical

*Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,  
Nothing is going to get better. It's not.*  
**Dr. Seuss**

### **Fair Trade Coffee**

Be one of the monthly donors for only \$40 a year and you support small farmers receiving a fair wage plus this initiative helps fund the United Church of Christ coffee house for active military personnel..

CONTACT: Randy Solberg

Gifts Categories: Personal Faith

### **First Lutheran Food Pantry**

Non-perishable food items donated during worship the first Sunday of each month are taken to the First Lutheran Church Food Pantry where they are distributed to those in need.

CONTACT: Barb Switzer, Rita Grossenstein (Christmas Item collection: Kerrie Kleppin-Winn)

Gifts Categories: Personal Faith

### **Freedom Writers / Amnesty International**

A project of Amnesty International, the letter-writing campaign brings awareness to the changing status of political prisoners and others being held unjustly around the world. A volunteer initiates and publicizes the campaigns.

CONTACT: Bob Vassell

Gifts Categories: Personal Faith

### **Habitat for Humanity**

Want to help provide housing for those who need it? Participate on the worksite or provide lunch and refreshments for the builders.

CONTACT (Build): Lou Lamberty

Gifts Categories: Practical, Personal Faith

### **Heartland Pride**

Participate in the annual Pride event. Represent First Central at a festival booth or walk in the parade. An Open and Affirming Church, First Central supports the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

CONTACT: Rita & Tina Grossenstein

Gifts Categories: Personal Faith

*We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give.*  
**Winston Churchill**

### **Labyrinth**

The meditation labyrinth on the church patio is a duplicate of one at Chartres Cathedral outside of Paris that dates to 1200 or 1230 CE. It is available for use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Volunteers maintain the labyrinth.

CONTACT: Daryl Malena

Gifts Categories: Personal Faith

### **Neighbors United**

An interfaith organization offering a community meal and hospitality every Saturday at First Baptist Church. NU reaches out to those in need utilizing the assets of the neighborhood. Volunteers provide and serve a Saturday meal four times a year and offer hospitality in the form of conversation, reading to the children, art sessions, playing music, etc.

CONTACT (Community Meal): Rita Grossenstein, Val Himes

Gifts Categories: Practical, Nurturing

### **Panera Bread Distribution**

Volunteers collect unsold bread and rolls from the Panera Bread store on Saddle Creek Rd twice a week and deliver them to organizations such as Siena/Francis House, Boys Town and Liberty Elementary School.

CONTACT: Judy Bouma

Gifts Categories: Nurturing

### **Parrish Alternative School**

Edwin Parrish Alternative School runs the Omaha Public School's Expelled Student Program. Volunteers hold a Back-to-School drive to provide new backpacks filled with school supplies for students. The senior graduation ceremony is held at First Central in May. First Central volunteers serve a Teacher Appreciation Luncheon at the school every spring.

CONTACT: Barb Switzer (backpack/school supply drive); Val Himes (graduation event)

Gifts Categories: Nurturing, Personal Faith

*Living is the art of loving. Loving is the art of caring. Caring is the art of sharing. Sharing is the art of living. If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else.*

**Booker T. Washington**

### **Pet Blessing**

Every October we hold a special service on the patio to celebrate and bless our pets and our relationships with them. This is also a great outreach to our neighborhood and community. Help coordinate this community outreach and plan the service.

CONTACT: Scott Jones, Kerrie Kleppin-Winn

Gifts Categories: Leadership

### **Siena/Francis House**

Volunteers serve an evening meal at the homeless shelter at 17th and Nicholas St. on the third Friday of every month.

CONTACT: Gary McConnell

Gifts Categories: Practical, Nurturing

Help provide people who are homeless with desperately needed personal care items. We coordinate the collection and donation of these items.

CONTACT: Karen Garver; (Winter Mitten Tree contact: Sara Sharpe)

Gifts Categories: Practical

### **Super Sale**

This is the big annual event which raises both fun and funds. We sell plants, books, art, food and Thrift Shop items. It takes lots of volunteers and planners—everything from digging plants to sorting books to making sandwiches. Surely there is a role for you?

CONTACT: Cherie Ferber, Laura Mitchell, Sam Pfeifer

Gifts Categories: Leadership, Practical

*When you cease to make a contribution, you begin to die.*  
**Eleanor Roosevelt**

## **Education Ministry Teams**

### **Adult Education**

First Central hosts First Forum, a series of distinguished speakers to lead us in a critical examination of issues in our city, our country and our world. We meet Sunday mornings at 9:15 a.m. Topics include Bible study, history, art, theology or pressing social issues. Volunteers select, organize and publicize the Sunday morning Forums and communicate outside educational opportunities, such as relevant lecture series in Omaha.

CONTACT: Deb Kirwan

Gifts Categories: Leadership

### **Children's Education**

Grand Central Stations is our Sunday school program. We are always recruiting volunteers and looking for new ideas for GCS, children in worship, Summer church school and activities and special events, such as our annual trips to Kamp Kaleo.

CONTACT: Elizabeth Wearin

Gifts Categories: Leadership

### **FCC Book Club**

People who enjoy reading meet once a month in the evening in members' homes (usually the third Thursday of each month) to discuss a book. The books are selected by the members and include both fiction and non-fiction.

CONTACT: Deb Kirwan

Gifts Categories: Leadership

### **Library**

Promotes and maintains the church libraries.

CONTACT: Carol Vogt

Gifts Categories: Leadership

*The miracle is this - the more we share, the more we have.*  
**Leonard Nimoy**

## **Youth Support**

Responsible for oversight, planning and publicity for the Youth Group, confirmation, mission trips and occasional fundraising. We recruit and support volunteers to help with these activities.

CONTACT: Lamar Jones

Gifts Categories: Leadership, Nurturing

## **Ministry Support Teams**

### **Building Maintenance**

Are you a handy person with some free time? Skilled at electrical, plumbing or painting? We always have small projects for members.

CONTACT: Sam Pfeifer, George Himes

Gifts Categories: Practical

### **Creation Care**

Recycling is your passion. You drive a Hybrid. Your reusable canvas bags go with you into every store. You take Ride-Your-Bike-to-Work day very seriously. If any of these statements ring true in your life, the Creation Care team is for you! Help us educate the congregation and lower the church's carbon footprint at the same time by joining this team. Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle - Saving our planet is serious work!

CONTACT: Kerrie Kleppin-Winn

Gift Categories: Practical, Personal Faith, Leadership

### **Communication**

Responsible for communicating to the congregation and the metro area what is happening, and who we are, through a variety of channels, including the website, Facebook, brochures, etc. Developing technology within the church to support this communication.

CONTACT: Mark Winn

Gifts Categories: Practical, Personal Faith

*There are many wonderful things that will never be done  
if you don't do them.*

**Charles D. Gill**

### **Computer and Network Support**

Maintains and supports the church computers, servers and network.

CONTACT: Garret Higginbotham, Deb Kirwan, Don Ferber

Gifts Categories: Practical

### **Interior Decorating**

Keeps the appearance of the interior of the church updated, organized, and appealing to members and visitors, keeping in mind accessibility, church history and traditions, and the best use of space for both the congregation and other people using our building.

CONTACT: Sara Sharpe

Gifts Categories: Practical, Nurturing

### **Garden Team**

If plants are your thing, help maintain and design our flower beds.

CONTACT: Kathy McConnell

Gifts Categories: Practical

### **Lawn Mowing Team**

Do you like to work outdoors? The grass keeps growing, and we need some helpers to keep it cut.

CONTACT: Sara Sharpe

Gifts Categories: Practical

### **Wedding Team**

Do you love weddings? Can you assist a couple in making sure their service is memorable and well run? Want to help coordinate these events for the church and spread the word that this is a great place to get married?

CONTACT: Sara Sharpe

Gifts Categories: Leadership

*I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.*

**Rabindranath Tagore**

## **Worship Ministry Teams**

### **Acolytes**

A valuable but easy way to participate in worship is by volunteering to light the candles or assisting children and teens who do.

CONTACT: Lyn Bouma

Gifts Categories: Personal Faith

### **Arts Team**

You don't need to be an artist, just someone who enjoys the arts and would like to be involved in planning arts events for our church and community.

CONTACT: Joyce Wilson, Bud Cassidy

Gifts Categories: Practical

### **Bell Choir**

Intergenerational choir for people with all levels of musical skill and talent. Plans special performances during Sunday worship services.

CONTACT: Stephen Bouma

Gifts Categories: Practical

### **Communion**

Would you like to serve communion? Or do even more by helping to prepare and set up once a month? Make a great contribution to our worship life by volunteering to be a preparer or server.

CONTACT: Bonnie & Laura Mierau

Gifts Categories: Practical

### **Greeters**

Welcome visitors at Sunday worship. Shake hands, smile, chat and provide information and directions. If you are friendly and know where the bathrooms are, you can help!

CONTACT: Cheryl Roche, Gary McConnell

Gifts Categories: Nurturing

*Some people want it to happen, some wish it to happen, others make it happen.*

***Anonymous***

### **Liturgists**

A great way to be involved in worship is to volunteer to lead the prayers and readings once or twice a year. All ages are welcome!

CONTACT: Sara Sharpe

Gifts Categories: Leadership

### **Sanctuary Choir**

The primarily adult choir performs for most worship services.

Rehearsals are Wednesdays at 7:00 pm. Youth are welcome.

CONTACT: Stephen Bouma

Gifts Categories: Practical, Leadership, Personal Faith

### **Sanctuary Decorating Team**

Want to assist with the visual aspects of worship? We decorate weekly with flowers and paraments and even more for special days and seasons. It is fun, for instance, to translate the Advent theme into images that inspire and provoke reflection. Help us in designing and setting the mood for worship.

CONTACT: Susan Fortina

Gifts Categories: Practical

### **Sound**

Operates sound board for sanctuary events.

CONTACT: Garret Higginbotham, Sam Pfeifer

Gifts Categories: Practical

### **Ushers**

Team recruits and coordinates volunteers to distribute the Order of Worship and pass the offertory plates at Sunday service.

CONTACT: Gary McConnell, Jon Baade

Gifts Categories: Nurturing, Leadership

*I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.*

**Albert Schweitzer**

The **Spirit Given Gifts** questionnaire and other materials were developed and are made available for non-profit use by David Ewart, a retired United Church of Canada ordained minister with an amateur interest in current brain/mind research and physics, and a professional interest in Process Theology, Leadership, and Congregational Development. The resources can be accessed on his website: [www.spiritgivengifts.com](http://www.spiritgivengifts.com).

## **Questions?**

If you have any questions, please contact:

**Sara Sharpe**

Office Administrator

402-345-1533

*Sara@firstcentral.org*

**More Than Welcome**  
**By Nancy Northcutt**

*on behalf of Matching Members to Ministry*

Different paths bring us together,  
varied voices raised in prayer.  
Our community sustains us  
on this journey that we share.

We are neither herd nor flock here,  
feel free to speak your mind,  
for, no matter your opinion,  
loving fellowship you'll find.

We share projects helping others,  
some were made and some were found.  
If your passion seeks an outlet,  
opportunities abound.

We join hands and hearts together,  
sharing faith and friendship, too.  
Here a joyful noise is made by all,  
and, we warmly welcome you.