

# MISSIONS SEND GUIDE



**PROCLAIM  
& EMBODY  
THE LOVE OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
IN THE CITY &  
IN THE WORLD**



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*For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

*How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in?*

*And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?*

*And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?*

*And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?*

*As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*

*(Romans 10:13-15 NIV)*

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### *The Great Commission*

*Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

*(Matthew 28:16-20 NIV)*

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# INTRODUCTION

Eastbrook Church has a long and vibrant history of reaching out to our city and world.

In the early 1980s, under the leadership of our founding pastor Dr. Marc Erickson, Eastbrook sent a team of members to rebuild and staff a hospital in Somalia. This early work stretched our church family, but it helped establish our core missions philosophy and values as we sought to be a church involved in God's Great Commission.

When Pastor Marc retired fifteen years ago, he passed the leadership to Pastor Matt, who shares the same philosophy and vision for missions. And so we have continued to build on the foundation established early in the life of the church.

Over the past four decades, we have sent more members to Asia, the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, and the ends of the earth. Along the way we have also walked alongside foreign nationals who are leading mission efforts to their unreached neighbors, welcomed international students and immigrants to the Milwaukee area, and expanded our efforts to meet the needs of a hurting city.

Through this journey, we have learned a lot, made our fair share of mistakes, and have seen God move miraculously among the unreached and lost.

The purpose of this Send Guide is to capture the wisdom we've gained and pass it on to those who aren't yet involved in Eastbrook's mission program, or those seeking to become Eastbrook Field Workers.

If you are looking for a list of policies, this is not your guide. But if you are curious about why we engage in local and international outreach, then you will find this guide helpful. Along the way it also answers some questions about "what," "where," "who," and "how" as well.

By sharing the wisdom we've gained and the philosophy behind our efforts, we hope to help you understand Eastbrook's missions program better. More importantly, we want to invite you to join us on the journey and to help you find your place.

As you read, look for key areas where you feel led to learn more or get involved, and if you have any questions, please reach out and ask.

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### *Jesus Sends out the Seventy-Two*

*After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.*

*"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.*

*"When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'*

*(Luke 10:1-9 NIV)*

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# OUR VISION FOR EASTBROOK MISSIONS:



## DOORWAY

Wherever we find ourselves, we have an opportunity to enter the lives of those who are far from God. Visiting a neighbor, providing food to the hungry, caring for the sick, welcoming the stranger, or speaking truth in love to the lost are not ends in themselves, but doorways into something greater: mutual relationships.



## RELATIONSHIP

By walking in relationship with others, we share our stories, our hurts, and our strengths. If we know God, we will see God's image in others, and if we understand God's great love for those He's created, we will desire to share the love of Jesus Christ to those who haven't yet experienced it.



## TRANSFORMATION

Because we have seen how God answers prayer, we begin to pray for other people's deepest needs. Where they are broken, we seek God's transforming power to redeem, restore, and reconcile them to Himself so that they can experience wholeness in relationship to God, themselves, and others as we have experienced it ourselves.

Proclaiming and embodying the love of Jesus Christ to other people through mutual relationships is God's plan for missions, whether those other people are in our own family, our neighborhood, or the farthest ends of the earth.



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*Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"*

*He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

*(Acts 1:6-8 NIV)*

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# CORE VALUES OF EASTBROOK MISSIONS:

## HARD PLACES

As we read in the Gospel of John, God did not merely send His son out of love, but He sent Him into a challenging context. He sent him into a Roman-occupied, religiously-oppressed, culturally-ambivalent, and economically-im-poverished context. It was a hard place. That is why we at Eastbrook have chosen to go to the hard places in our city and our world: those places where we find the unreached, unchurched and under-resourced.



## SPIRIT-LED

Even after answering the call to hard places, we are still tempted to work out of our own efforts, desires, and dreams. That is why we at Eastbrook yearn for the Holy Spirit to lead us just as He led the early church in Antioch (Acts 13:2-3). We want to be a church body whose efforts and mission can only be explained by the power of the Holy Spirit.



## PRESENCE

In Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of the introduction to the Gospel of John, we see that Jesus became man and, "moved into the neighborhood" to bring people back to God and to fullness and wholeness. God's mission strategy is not about scale and size, but of incarnation and presence. We live this out by focusing on workers and local churches who are in-person, long-term, on the field, in the hard places.



## SERVING TOGETHER

In John 17, Jesus tells his disciples that the reality and truth of the Gospel will not be understood because of our eloquent speech, well-defined strategy, or abundant resources. Rather, the Gospel will reveal its truth and power when believers are united as one (John 17:20-23). This unity is not merely philosophical or theological; it is hard-earned and comes from deep, abiding relationships. That's why Eastbrook's missions program is based on strong relationships. We strive to walk intentionally and closely with each other no matter where we serve.



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*Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.*

*The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.*

*(Acts 13:1-4 NIV)*

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# KEY TERMS

## **Mission Fund**

When people donate money to Eastbrook Church, they can choose to give to the general or the missions fund. The purpose of the mission fund is to help fulfill the Great Commission in our city and world.

## **Field Worker**

A field worker is an Eastbrook member who is sent and supported by Eastbrook Church to serve long-term and full-time overseas to fulfill the Great Commission.

## **Sending Agency**

Sending agencies are parachurch organizations that help send field workers. They provide training, in-country supervision, logistical support, and spiritual direction and care.

## **Sending Church**

Most sending agencies require their workers to have a sending church. When Eastbrook serves as a sending church, it becomes the spiritual authority over a field worker and is responsible for praying regularly and ensuring the vibrancy and wellness of the field worker and their family. Eastbrook also provides financial support to workers for whom it serves as the Sending Church.

## **Focus Group Area/Focus People Group**

Historically, Eastbrook has focused its missions efforts on certain underserved or unreached areas of the world by sending teams and field workers to the areas, supporting local church work there, and praying that God would make Himself known among the people there.

## **National Worker**

A national worker is a person from one of our focus areas or focus people groups who Eastbrook Church knows well and who is supported by Eastbrook to serve long-term and full-time in their specific field to fulfill the Great Commission.

## **Partner Church**

A partner church is a local church in one of our focus areas that Eastbrook knows well. We are committed to visiting, encouraging, and supporting the church as they mobilize workers from their own congregation to reach out to their city and the world.

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*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

*But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says:*

*“When he ascended on high,  
he took many captives  
and gave gifts to his people.”*

*(What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)*

*So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

*(Ephesians 4:1-13 NIV)*

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# KEY MINISTRY TEAMS & COMMITTEES

To help support and empower Eastbrook Church to reach out to the city and world, we have the following teams and committees.

*Two groups oversee all the local and international missions activities of the church:*

**The Missions Staff Team** is composed of pastors and support staff who provide pastoral care, oversight, and logistical support to our members as they serve in our city and world.

**The Missions Committee** includes the Senior Director of Missions and appointed leaders who discern the places locally and internationally where God is leading Eastbrook to work, the field workers God wants us to send overseas, and the national workers and ministries God wants us to support. The Missions Committee also oversees the Mission Fund and discerns how God would have us use those funds locally and internationally.

*Two groups guide and serve city-based missions:*

As a church in the city of Milwaukee, we understand that we live in the midst of a lot of need, and we recognize that a lot of our members are actively serving the community. The task of **The City Outreach Committee**, composed of staff and appointed leaders, is to filter requests for support that come from outside the church and from Eastbrook members. In other words, the committee discerns how the church can keep in step with where God is moving in the community and among its members.

**Local Outreach Ministry Teams** are groups of Eastbrook members who serve together regularly and long-term in specific ministries supported by the Missions Committee, such as the International Student Ministry Team, the Food Pantry, the International Community Center, and the Bread of Healing Clinic.

*Two teams help support specific work overseas and specific field workers:*

As the missions program grows at Eastbrook, we are building new **International Missions Focus Area Teams** with staff and appointed leaders tasked with diving deep into relationships within narrow geographical areas or people groups to help Eastbrook discern where God is moving and how Eastbrook might invest ourselves there.

The church members in each of our International **Field Worker Care Teams** walk alongside an Eastbrook field worker in order to provide holistic care, regular prayer, and frequent visits while the worker is overseas, as well as logistical support when the worker is on home assignment.



# PRE-FIELD SECTION

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HOW DO WE KNOW SOMEONE IS  
READY TO BE SENT?



## KEY CONCEPT: FAITHFULNESS

In a parable in Luke 16 Jesus tells us a story that demonstrates a simple truth. He values faithfulness over the scope or scale of results. Many times in missions we start by measuring future workers through the lens of impact or achievement. But God is calling us to something far deeper.

Take a look at the stories in the book of Acts. Read it through and compare the times when the apostles' actions had a large impact out of their own actions compared to moments when the Spirit moved and brought transformation. Was the story about the acts of the apostles, or the acts of the Holy Spirit?

Our call as Christians is not to a busy life, but rather a faithful life in step with God's Spirit and His movement. At Eastbrook, we discern an individual's readiness to serve as a field worker based on their faithfulness to God, others, and the gifting and growth in themselves.

When discerning whether to commission a new Field Worker, we first ask, "Are they faithful?" before we ask about geography, strategy, agency, or people group.

To understand more of what we mean, take time to reach Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of Galatians 5:13-26 in The Message Bible on the next page.

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*It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love; that's how freedom grows. For everything we know about God's Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as you love yourself. That's an act of true freedom. If you bite and ravage each other, watch out—in no time at all you will be annihilating each other, and where will your precious freedom be then?*

*My counsel is this: Live freely, animated and motivated by God's Spirit. Then you won't feed the compulsions of selfishness. For there is a root of sinful self-interest in us that is at odds with a free spirit, just as the free spirit is incompatible with selfishness. These two ways of life are contrary to each other, so that you cannot live at times one way and at times another way according to how you feel on any given day. Why don't you choose to be led by the Spirit and so escape the erratic compulsions of a law-dominated existence?*

*It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on.*

*This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit God's kingdom.*

*But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.*

*Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way. Among those who belong to Christ, everything connected with getting our own way and mindlessly responding to what everyone else calls necessities is killed off for good—crucified.*

*Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives. That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original.*

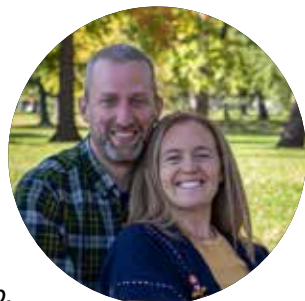
*(Galatians 5:13-26 The Message)*

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*"You go first."*

*"No, you."*



*We were newly married and both had hearts for going overseas long-term. The first step to our plan was to live in Europe for a semester for Megan's internship, and go from there. During that semester, it came time to discern where God was leading next. We committed to praying individually for guidance for what's next, and I headed out for a hiking trip so we could both spend time with God. Several days later during the trip I felt clarity. I found a pay phone (yes I'm that old) in the next town and called Megan. It turns out we both had our answers from God.*

*I took a deep breath. "Ok. You're not going to believe it, but I think we're supposed to go back to Milwaukee." "That's crazy, because that's exactly what I was led to as well."*

*That moment was just one in a longer journey that involved us both walking with God and learning more about Him through Scripture, our church family, and our own experiences. We'll be the first ones to tell you, we aren't perfect and don't look to us as the ideal image of a Christian—thankfully that's why we have Christ.*

*But we have learned an important lesson that is echoed across Scripture and the history of Eastbrook Church. What God is most interested in is not our address, or what we can do for Him, but rather how strong is our connection is to Him. Do we know Him?*

*Following that phone call, God sent Megan and me to Milwaukee and almost a decade later sent us out overseas and then back again. Through that time He has sent us to work in the corporate world and nonprofit world, in vocational ministry and lay ministry. And everything in between. All of which had one thing in common – our addresses and our job titles proved to merely be temporary.*

*What is eternal, is God's relationship to and with us. And we are thankful that He has time and again reminded us of that.*

*Don't believe me? Take a moment and read Matthew 7:21-23 and reflect on Jesus' words.*

*—Dan Ryan*

# KNOWING GOD

Many conversations regarding mission start at the strategy level. We talk about the Biblical strategies that Jesus and the apostles used in the New Testament. We map out regions on the globe. We target specific areas or people groups. And so much more.

This can translate to our initial conversations with potential field workers as well. Where are you thinking of serving? What agency are you going with? How much support are you needing? All these questions are important, but they aren't the most important.

The most important question for any Christian is, how is their relationship with God?

***An Eastbrook Field Worker is someone who is a Christ-centered disciple who is walking humbly with God daily, seeing the fruits of the Spirit in their life, and following His leading.***

The specific spiritual disciplines or gifting that an individual demonstrates will vary, but the common thread we expect to see is that the person is deeply committed to walking with God.

As Jesus said, building from this point is like building on solid rock, laying a good foundation. Living overseas and serving as a field worker will bring many storms: emotional, spiritual, physical, and many more. Without the foundation built on a deep relationship with God, we are building on sand.

Questions that a potential field worker can anticipate from us are some of the following:

- What does it look like for you to have a relationship with God?
- Who is Jesus Christ to you, and how does He inform how you live your life?
- What does it look for you to walk with the Holy Spirit?
- How do you approach Scripture, and what role does it play in your personal faith and growth?
- How have you grown to understand that God is leading you to missions?

These are just examples of what we would discuss with you. Don't look for these specific questions to be on an application form or sent in email. We prefer to work through these topics within the context of relationship with each potential worker. Over coffee or a meal, in shared time in our homes, while serving together in ministry, or any of the other ways we get to know you by you being a member of Eastbrook Church.



*I've been a member of Eastbrook Church for forty years and a member of the Missions Committee for thirty-five. In those years, I've walked joyfully with Eastbrook's international field workers and Eastbrook-supported national workers. I've served them, prayed for them, and advocated for them with what I've been given. They are some of my most precious relationships and closest friends. Their examples have shaped my decisions and determined the arc of my life.*

*But I'm only one of many at Eastbrook over the years who have counted it a privilege to know and love the people we support in missions. When I sit in missions committee meetings, when I sit in Sunday morning prayer classes, when I sit with the women who pray regularly on Thursday mornings, my heart sings because I'm at home among my people.*

*At Eastbrook, we decided early on that relationships matter and that relationships needed to be the heart of our missions program. We don't just hand out money and bless people as they go on their way. We take time to know them and join them in their work. We send them out from the church, support them as a church, send people from the church to visit them, and welcome them home to the church when they need rest. And we do all this not just to build up our workers but to build up the church. Our aim is to grow together in our service to Jesus Christ and to make Him known in all the earth.*

*I'm reminded here of an old story about William Carey, the father of the modern missionary movement who went to India in 1793. When he was commissioned, Carey famously said to the men who sent him, "I will go down into the pit if you will hold the ropes." I'm certain that as his friends "held the ropes," they not only supported Carey, but they built up their muscles to serve God well in the other spheres to which He'd called them.*

*I'm grateful for members of Eastbrook Church who have taught me that the success of a missions program is the relationships between the workers and those who send them. And I pray that members who come after me will "hold the ropes" for others and will deepen their relationship with Christ as they do.*

—Mari Chevako

# BEING KNOWN BY EASTBROOK

One of the strongest values Eastbrook has in missions is relationships. These deep, authentic relationships take time to develop. They cannot be rushed. Due to that, Eastbrook has set a very high bar for who qualifies to be sent as an Eastbrook Field Worker.

***Eastbrook Field Workers must be an Eastbrook Church member for at least two years prior to their request to be sent, and will have been a part of our church family for at least five years prior to requesting to be sent.***

This is a high bar to being sent, but experience has taught us the wisdom in this.

We have unfortunately seen the downsides of what happens when we send field workers without properly establishing a mutual relationship over time with Eastbrook leadership and members. These workers have had a higher likelihood of challenges on the field, particularly within their own teams and agencies. Our heart is to see every worker experience wholeness and health while serving overseas, and we are limited in our ability to do so without a vibrant relationship with each worker.

But there is far more to this relationship than just avoiding pitfalls.

We have seen our deep relationships with field workers sustain them through incredible challenges persevering for the long-term. Through such journeys we have seen God move in incredible ways and bear fruit in the lives of those previously unreached by His Gospel. Many times, these journeys are only possible due to the time and effort put in by the worker prior to leaving for the field to build lasting relationships with our church family.

If you are wondering what this type of relationship looks like or how to get started, we encourage you to read and reflect on verses such as Galatians 6:2 or Ephesians 5:21. Or read the story of the church of Ephesus in the book of Acts, and Paul's relationship with them.

And if these examples were not enough, we ask this question- if you have not personally experienced and lived in a Gospel-centered, Spirit-animated local church community, then what are you planning to help build when you serve overseas?



*“Have you ever thought about becoming a pastor?”*

*That was the question several people asked me as I neared high school graduation and considered what to do with my life. It was a strange question, especially for a kid who just a few years before was living the “good life” apart from God and inviting others to do the same. But when a sense of emptiness seized my life, I eventually had a profound encounter with God at sixteen that changed my life’s direction, and it was evident to others.*

*So when I began thinking about what and where to study in college, an older guy from church asked whether I had prayed about what God might want me to do. The idea was totally new to me, but I took it seriously, praying for God’s direction. Pretty soon after that, person after person began asking me that question: “Have you ever thought about becoming a pastor?”*

*At one point, I expressed my frustration to an older mentor, asking why so many people would feel okay talking about me behind my back.*

*“What do you mean?,” he asked.*

*“Everyone is asking me the same question,” I replied, “and I can’t believe that you’re all trying to force me to become a pastor.”*

*“But, Matt, I haven’t talked to anyone,” he said, “Maybe it’s not gossip but God’s guidance.”*

*That insight set me on a path eventually leading to where I am today. I never really thought about becoming a pastor, and wasn’t sure what it meant to be one, but I took the first step of obedience. Year upon year, experience by experience, mentor after mentor, God began to shape me toward and then refine me within my calling.*

*I’m sure you’ve experienced that as well. God graciously stretches us through new experiences to see what our spiritual gifts are (or what they might not be). God places people in our lives to encourage us and also correct us when we need it. God helps us understand how we are uniquely made so we can live out of our true God-made selves and not according to others’ expectations or desires.*

*God leads, we respond. We yield, God shapes. Ears and hearts open, we follow God step by step, and, by His grace, grow into His calling for His glory.*

*—Matt Erickson*

# GROWING IN GIFTS AND CALLING

*As Eastbrook Church, we expect our Field Workers to have a growing understanding of how God uniquely made them, what gifts He has given, and how He is leading each person to participate in His Great Commission.*

The apostle Paul wrote at length in his letters to the early church about the value in the diversity of God's family, particularly in regards to gifting and calling. This is most clearly laid out in his letter to the church in Corinth. Take time to read and reflect on the passage in 1 Corinthians 12:4-31.

One aspect of what Paul writes about fits into the category of aptitude. These are the skills and interests that come easy to us. Think about the core subjects of our early schooling – sciences, math, literature, language learning, and physical education. Some of these come more naturally to you than others. God uses these aptitudes in unique ways on the mission field. For example, those with a keen ability to learn languages can provide expertise in Bible translation. Those with gifts in science can serve in medical missions.

Another aspect is of personality. In our current day and age, this has included things such as Strength Finders, Myers-Briggs, Enneagram, and many others. We don't endorse a particular one of these but find them useful in helping future workers understand their own preferences and patterns that their personality carries. This can be helpful in navigating ministry and team dynamics as well as finding field work that best fits these.

And finally, Paul also writes about spiritual gifts. To be an Eastbrook field worker, we do not require the manifestation of spiritual gifts in the field worker's personal life, but rather look for an openness to and understanding of how God's Spirit works in Scripture and around the world today in His church.

Finally, we see in the New Testament that even with all three of these factors being clear, the apostles still awaited the clear calling provided through the Holy Spirit to be sent out into missions. The best example of this is in Acts 13 when the church at Antioch prayed and the Spirit moved to set apart and send out Paul and Barnabas.

Calling is not an individual exercise, but rather one best done in community. While you may experience a personal call from God directly, it is only within a church community that this call can be heard, discerned, and confirmed.

As you are probably already seeing, each of these steps in this section are woven together in an inter-connected process of relationship with God and one another.





*At age seventeen, I went on my second overseas short-term mission trip to Mexico, serving children in Spanish through daily Bible lessons, songs, games, and friendships with the local church. During a worship time one night in Mexico, I committed my life to full-time ministry.*

*I was eager and dedicated. In the years that followed, I read the Word each day, let go of my desire to be an architect, found a Christian college to attend, and was discipled and started discipling others. During my freshman year of college, I recommitted my life to full-time ministry, decided to study Christian Formation and Ministry, and spent the following summer working in an orphanage in Peru.*

*Yet, I still had so much to learn, not only about God, but about myself. In the forthcoming years, I had to come to terms with the abusive household that I grew up in, pressing into Christ to find healing, forgiveness, and deep love in His presence. Not only did I learn to forgive those who had hurt me, but I brought my feelings of rejection and abandonment to God, so He could love me in those hurt places.*

*I had to face how I wanted to heal and serve others sometimes out of a broken place—to be seen, to be the one in control, or to feel special. I had to let go of getting my identity in what I did “for God” and find complete rest in my identity as a daughter of my Father—no matter what I did or did not do for Him. True maturity in Christ comes when we face who we really are—not who we want to be. We bring our brokenness, our wounds, our past and we let Christ shine His light into these deep places.*

*Sometimes as those who are eager to serve for Christ, we have to remember He wants to do the work first in us—of making us into His beloved sons and daughters, letting go of pride, control, achievement, perfectionism, and resting in the good and beautiful love of Christ.*

*We all have blind spots and weaknesses, God knows this and He is gentle with us. He wants us to admit these to Him, and completely rely only on His love. With minds wide open to our own faults and hearts wide open to the deep love of God, we find the only solid place from which to minister to others.*

—Kelly Erickson

# MATURING THROUGH OUR STORIES

Each of us carries the image of God and our unique imprint of it that makes up our personality and gifting. Unfortunately, each of us also grows up and lives in a fallen world. These two factors play out throughout our lives to form our own personal story.

As this story unfolds, we can receive the gift of love, care, joy, and growth. But this story can also contain tragedy, trauma, loneliness, loss, pain, and everything in between.

Our stories teach us how to react to the world, and while we each have giftings and strengths to offer, we also develop hurts, habits and hang-ups that can hinder our growth and journey. Some are obvious to us, and some remain hidden in our blind spots.

***An Eastbrook Field Worker is someone who is intentionally walking with God and others to learn from their story, identify their blind spots and weaknesses, and grow in maturity and wisdom in these areas.***

We do not demand perfection, but we will delay commissioning an individual to serve as a field worker if we discern that they are not engaged in this important spiritual work. Eastbrook Church is blessed by being connected to an excellent network of spiritual directors who can walk alongside people. We also have a wealth of maturity and wisdom among our church family who can also be on the journey with future field workers.

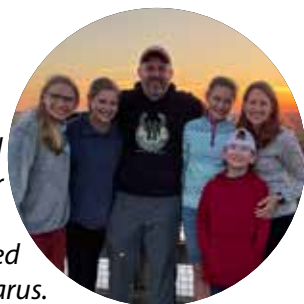
We do not have a prescribed path or model that our field workers must follow, but we are looking for the fruit of maturity and wisdom to be growing in their lives.

We take this area of discernment very seriously, because we have seen first-hand how the challenges and intensity of serving overseas has shown to amplify these areas in field worker's lives. It has led to challenges within families, teams, and communities that have hindered the worker and many times resulted in the worker returning home pre-maturely.

Our goal is to ensure each field worker has laid a strong foundation of faithfulness in this area so that it can enable them to serve well wherever and however long God calls them.



*We both started attending Eastbrook in college and were encouraged early on to attend Missions Prayer Class. This birthed in us an eagerness to be a part of what God was doing in the world. Nate graduated and spent two years serving college students in Belarus. When we got married upon his return, we never thought we'd stay in the US for long.*



*In our waiting for opportunities overseas, we participated in Friday nights at the Meyers. Following the lead of so many Eastbrookers, we moved furniture, taught driving lessons, shared meals and planned adventures to befriend international students.*

*When our family was growing and the international language center opened, we took turns helping with English and visiting new refugee arrivals as they set up their households here. Over the first decade of our marriage, we actively pursued multiple overseas openings and the doors would always close.*

*And yet the story God is writing is more beautiful and interconnected than we can imagine. It's not dependent on our physical location as the needs abound everywhere we look. We've never returned to live overseas, but we started praying over the Horn of Africa weekly. God then moved a Somali family onto our street. Students we've fed around our dinner table have returned to the states and our kids "just happened" to have an opportunity to serve their kids in Sunday school.*

*Working at Bread of Healing brings Jewel back in touch with internationals for whom Eastbrook has cared in the past and now they entrust their relatives into our clinic's care. Hosting an Afghan student in our home for the last year and a half has allowed our family to serve together. We've endured the awkward conflicts of shared living space, celebrated new milestones, video chatted with a family we've never met in person and grieved losses together.*

*We don't know what the next chapter holds or who we will meet or with whom we may reconnect, but God's story is continuing to be written. We've been challenged to obey His leading and surrender our plans, but what we've gained from seeing God at work in individual lives around us has been invaluable.*

—Nate & Jewel Matfke

# SERVING OTHERS

Throughout the New Testament, we as Christians are clearly called to serve the church and our community. We see that Scripture says this call does not wait until we have a specific title or job description. We are all called to serve wherever we are. Eastbrook Field Workers are simply Eastbrook members who have been called by God to do this serving in a different geographic location.

***To be commissioned as an Eastbrook Field Worker, there must be an established history of regular service among the Eastbrook Church family, and in our outreach ministries.***

We set this expectation because there is wisdom that can only be gained by being actively engaged in serving others- particularly those outside of our church family. To be a well-prepared field worker, we expect that you have grown in this wisdom.

Many times, when we first reach out to the hurting, broken, and lost of our city, we do so from a place of compassion. That compassion leads to action to simply “do something.” We start by focusing on activities and events.

But as we continue to serve and reach out, we begin to see that doing something for someone is not the end goal, but rather being with someone. The central truth of God’s mission strategy comes into focus: incarnational relationships.

And as we journey in these relationships, we learn just how deep and complex the echoes of the Fall are in our world and in the lives of people we now call friends. And this knowledge and experience bring us deeper into God’s heart for the world, and into a deeper dependency on God’s Spirit to move in miraculous ways to bring healing and wholeness to the lives of those we are walking alongside.

This process of developing this wisdom can be fast-tracked. It is gained through walking in relationship with others, and we expect every Eastbrook Field Worker to demonstrate this wisdom as they serve others among us.



*Sending others is Godly, Biblical and essential! God our Father sent His Son, Jesus sent out His disciples, and the Antioch church sent out Paul and Barnabas. What does sending look like today? Is it just financial support? No, it can be so much more!*

*God has led me and my husband, Gene, to support field workers in a variety of ways. One family needed to sell their house before going to the field; I got to know them as we helped paint the siding! We also loaned them our van when they came to the U.S. for short visits. This past February, I got to take their children snow tubing and play broom hockey with them during their first experience of Wisconsin winter.*

*Last year, I was able to bring two empty pieces of luggage when I visited several of our workers overseas. This really blessed them! Another time, I visited a worker on the field even before I knew her well, and had the joy of seeing her in action in her element. Now, we welcome her into our home whenever she visits the U.S.*

*Years ago, a worker couple shared their need for a vehicle with my life group. When I heard how much it would cost, I thought, "That's a lot of money!" But that night, God reminded me of a missionary who'd wanted to raise funds to give goats to people in the country where he worked. He announced in church that he wanted to "sell" 35 goats. People responded so well that the goats were all sold after the first service! That gave me an idea: What if we divided the vehicle into smaller parts and asked people to "purchase" those? We tried that plan, and many people joyfully gave. After a few months, our friends had the funds to purchase the whole vehicle!*

*Recently, I've had the privilege of being on a Care Team for some field workers. We meet monthly to encourage and pray for the workers and one another; we also pray as special needs arise. Our relationships have grown, and we've seen God in action, moving mountains because of our united faith!*

*Sending others is relational, but first and foremost, it's prayerful. Whether I hear of a need in the Missions' Prayer Class on Sundays, during Women's Global Prayer on Thursday mornings, or from a worker directly, I know God will take it from there. We get to use what He's blessed us with—our giftings, time, and resources—to send others. I can't wait to experience more ways of sending!*

—Liz Kohli

# SENDING OTHERS

Eastbrook Church is active in sending and supporting field workers around the world. Every Eastbrook member is invited to participate in this effort, and potential field workers are expected to do so.

Given our 40+ year history of walking alongside our field workers, it can feel difficult as a new member to get involved in sending. Especially if you have a sense of calling to one day become a field worker. Your first step can always be to connect with pastors or leaders in missions to find your place, but we can also recommend you do the following:

- 1. Take the Perspectives Course.** Learn more about the Biblical, Historical, Cultural, and Strategic vantage points of God's heart for the nations.
- 2. Pray for our Field Workers.** Participate in Missions Prayer Class or Thursday Morning Women's Missions Prayer to hear from and pray for our field workers
- 3. Join a Care Team.** Serve an Eastbrook Field Worker throughout the year in a variety of ways alongside other Eastbrook members.
- 4. Go.** Serve on an overseas Care or Short-term or Mid-term Trip to one of our Field Workers to participate in their work and learn from them.

Through these experiences, we have seen our members deepen in their wisdom and experience in missions, which has proven essential for anyone looking to serve full-time overseas.

One of the most common reasons field workers return unexpectedly is due to team or personal dynamics. Serving overseas brings many challenges. We want every one of our Field Workers to enter this work with wisdom and experience so they can endure for however long God calls them overseas. By being involved in sending other field workers, you can be better prepared to navigate these inevitable, but not insurmountable, challenges.

***As a result, an Eastbrook Field Worker is someone who has actively participated in the sending of other Eastbrook Field Workers, and has gained insight and wisdom from this experience.***



# ON-FIELD SECTION

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HOW DO WE KNOW SOMEONE IS  
SERVING WELL ON THE FIELD?



## KEY CONCEPT: HUMILITY

The process of preparing to serve on the mission field can be arduous. It includes discerning one's sense of call, working with a sending church and sending agency, building a network of prayer and financial support, and so much more. If we aren't careful, completing the pre-field stage can create a sense of arriving at the destination, rather than just beginning the journey of being a field worker.

The most seasoned field workers will tell you that getting on the field is indeed just the first step. Once landing in their new context, they had to start language lessons, start serving with a new team and many times a new church, and start understanding the culture and day-to-day realities of their new home.

The key to success in all these areas is not hard work and productivity, while those do matter. The keys to success in Christian ministry, particularly missions, is in fact humility.

Thankfully, we have a clear example of what that looks like in none other than Jesus Christ. Take time to read and reflect on Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of Philippians 2:1-13. As you read each part of this section, return to this passage, and use it as a filter to view the life of a field worker who is serving on the field.

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*If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care—then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.*

*Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion.*

*Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth—even those long ago dead and buried—will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father.*

*What I'm getting at, friends, is that you should simply keep on doing what you've done from the beginning. When I was living among you, you lived in responsive obedience. Now that I'm separated from you, keep it up. Better yet, redouble your efforts. Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God. That energy is God's energy, an energy deep within you, God himself willing and working at what will give him the most pleasure.*

*(Philippians 2:1-13 The Message)*

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*What would we do without prayer?*

*The sweet spot of every day is that trusting place with Jesus, the Lover of my soul. Who else would invite me to bring all my problems to him and let him handle them? Who else will take on my limits? My lack of resources? My finiteness? My weakness? My aging? My failures? My forgetfulness? The list goes on and on.*

*But God, in His infinite love and resources says, "come to me, I will give you rest." That's why I run to Him each day. All that I can't, He can. He lifts the burden off of me.*

*Eastbrook's missions is built totally on prayer!*

*In sorting through memories and stacks of papers this summer, I am reminded of the first missionaries we sent out. They went because God spoke to them and they obeyed. The church confirmed that call and supported and sent them. And always there was a group that committed to stand with them in prayer. I have not seen that fail. That is the whole reason we can look back and rejoice over miracles and fruit together experiencing the faithfulness of God.*

*If we don't give Him our needs in prayer, we won't experience Him and we remain insecure, just bystanders watching other's excitement, but still missing out ourselves. God invited us to bring everything to Him! It isn't limited to missions - your personal life, family, work, neighbors, church, city, country, and the world.*

*Wade into the waters in prayer. Let Him show you how much He wants to get involved with you, that you might begin to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God!*

*—Nancy Erickson*

# CENTRALITY OF PRAYER

To serve as a field worker is to step into a larger story. It is the story of God on mission to restore and redeem humanity. It is His story, and He is the author of it. It is a story that started long before us, and will continue after us. It is humbling to reflect on this. But also reassuring.

In the opening of the Great Commission, Jesus states that “all power and authority” has been given to Him. If that is the case, we should take his invitation to abide in Him (John 15) and let His power and the work of the Holy Spirit be what is our constant companion while we serve on the field.

As a reflection of this, we hold the centrality of prayer to all we do as the most important task that a field worker can do while serving on the mission field.

***Eastbrook Field Workers will consistently invite our church family into prayer as the field worker serves on the field.***

It is the responsibility of the field worker to stay connected and frequently sharing prayer requests with their Care Team. The Care Team will keep key staff and leaders updated on prayer requests so the broader church can pray with and for our field workers through the following channels:

- During worship services through our congregational prayer
- Sunday morning Missions Prayer Class
- Weekday all-church prayer at 6 am.
- Thursday morning Women’s Missions Prayer
- Monthly Eastbrook Prays prayer guide

If a field worker has questions or security concerns, we are happy to work together to make sure we navigate this sensitively for each unique situation.



*The Muslim clerk in the government office made repeated invitations so eventually we set a date. His home was in an area I had not visited, so we traveled together by boat and rickshaw for 90 minutes. As we passed fields, bazaars, small industries, and villages, I wondered if this area had any Christian outreach.*

*Over the following year I asked other agencies if they knew of ministries in this region; no one knew of any. So, we started to pray about what that could mean for us. Then I took a national believer to investigate and identify needs that could be addressed. We settled on a vocational training and ESL program in “Victorytown”, and put in a proposal to the government, who eventually approved it. About three years after that first invitation, we moved to Victorytown—an area with no known believers, church, or sustained outreach.*

*About a month after our arrival, I stopped to buy something at a shop and met a nearby shopkeeper named Kashem. As a young teen he went to Kuwait and worked as a tea boy in a police station. One of the workers was a believer from Egypt who shared the gospel with Kashem. As he came to faith, Kashem got involved in a local international church and was disciplined in that community. His wife back in Victorytown was shocked by Kashem’s news and asked the local imam for a divorce, but lacked the money to make it happen. Kashem then spent a few years in Greece, until visas were no longer available.*

*Kashem came back home to Victorytown where he had no fellowship, no encouragement, and lived with a disgruntled wife. He opened a shop on the east side of Victorytown and tried to provide for his family. One day he saw a foreign man ride by on a rickshaw and wondered how he could meet him. Then the foreigner stopped at a nearby shop, and the introduction was made.*

*Kashem became the key for outreach to Victorytown. His wife came to faith—her baptism in the nearby river was the first of several. The local fellowship met in his home and increased in number. To this day, over fifteen years later, Kashem and his family are active leaders in Victorytown.*

*We marvel at how God worked a plan for Victorytown across many years, involving a teenager working in Kuwait and an American man who accepted an invitation to visit the village home of a government clerk. We should always be on the look-out for where God is already working and acknowledge that we are just one small part in a much larger story. That is the first step to serving humbly cross culturally!*

—Jim Dressner

# SERVING HUMBLY CROSS-CULTURALLY

Building from a foundation of prayer and abiding with God, the next step that is required for field workers is to enter into their new context with humility. First with the humility that we are entering into a story that God has already been writing, and is actively at work.

Second, is to enter into this work with a humble learning posture. This is a reflection of Paul's statement that he "became all things to all people" so that he could reach as many as possible with the hope of the Gospel. The same is true of Eastbrook Field Workers.

*Eastbrook Field Workers will approach their cultural contexts with humility, leading with a posture of learning, growing in their proficiency in adapting to their host culture.*

There are several key expectations Eastbrook has in regards to what this cross-cultural service looks like:

- **Language.** The field worker will invest time, resources, and effort to become fluent in their host culture's primary language. This usually involves 2-3 years of language learning when entering the field.
- **Cultural Distinctives.** The field worker will regularly work with cultural coaches or cultural translators who will help the field worker learn the differences in culture, and how to adapt to these.
- **Team Dynamics.** Field workers will invest time in healthy team relationships, continuing the process of growing as individuals in their sense of gifting, experiences, and stories, and how to work effectively with others.
- **Local Church.** The field worker should participate in and serve under the authority of the local church, and if it does not exist, to walk with local believers as they grow in leadership and begin forming their local church.

Connecting all these steps is the simple truth that while we are invited to participate in God's mission, it is not on our own shoulders and effort to accomplish it. When we flip this truth, and convince ourselves that it is up to us to save the world, we become vulnerable to many cultural pitfalls that will ultimately cause our time on the field to come to an end.

By walking in humility, staying curious to seeing where God is already at work, like in the life of Kashem, and taking the time to become competent in cross-cultural servanthood, we allow God to move among us and through our field work.



*We moved to Burundi in August 2022. We had been preparing and planning for 18 months prior to our departure. There were so many faith steps to be taken before we left the US. We sold our house, ceased employment with a secure salary and wrestled with our own fears about surrendering all to follow God's call.*

*Our Care Team was there to pray with us, listen to us, organize our yard sale, sell the house and 'strengthen our weak knees' when doubts and anxiety loomed overhead. They were also there to celebrate with us when we saw God answer our prayers for provision and guidance. They faithfully prayed for a house that we could move into, for a car and for schooling for our girls.*

*We may be in Burundi by ourselves but we have never been alone. It is a shared journey.*

*Burundi is the poorest country in the world. There are constant threats to your health, malaria, typhoid and parasites to name a few. When our girls got sick it was very difficult to navigate a new health care system in a different language. We felt very powerless and helpless to know what to do. Our Care Team jumped into action with prayer, phone calls and connecting us with professionals back in the US who could advise us.*

*This year some of our Care Team will visit us to experience life here. They will bring much needed supplies, meet our ministry partners and stay with us. We are overwhelmed by their love and sacrifice as we journey together to pursue what we feel God is saying to us.*

*We are acutely aware that we could never have done this by ourselves. We need the support of our community. Facing the unknown is frightening on your own, but you draw strength, faith and grace facing the unknown in community. While our Care Team may not physically be on the ground with us, we always feel their support and presence. Our Care Team is essential to our ministry in Burundi. Their service to God in this manner is every bit as important to seeing disciples of Jesus in every nation, tribe, people and language.*

*—The Ellefsons*

# THE CALL TO CARE: EASTBROOK CARE TEAMS

The idea of staying connected on a regular, or even daily, basis with your sending church is a new concept that is enabled through advances in technology around communication and travel.

In our early years for our team serving in Somalia, communication was predominantly via mail or the in-person visit of a handful of people. Caring was predominantly done by standing in that gap of communication by regularly praying together for these workers.

In the last decade or so, the monthly printed and email newsletters have been augmented with WhatsApp groups, Zoom calls, regular visitors, and many other channels. This has been a blessing to many of our workers but has not yet been a universal experience. Our goal in the next chapter of Eastbrook missions is to see each Field Worker well cared for by establishing a dedicated team of people to care for them specifically.

Due to this vision, we have set the following expectation for all new Eastbrook Field Workers:

***To see that Eastbrook Field Workers are deeply and wholistically cared for while serving overseas by building and maintaining a strong, supportive, engaged, present, and praying team of people who walk with the worker through their years of service overseas.***

Since the core of the Care Team is relationships, we expected every field worker to invest significant time prior to leaving for the field to build this network of relational support. The Eastbrook missions committee has set the requirement that this team must be in place before the worker is considered for commissioning as an Eastbrook Field Worker.

Once on the field, the Care Team will stay connected in a way that supports the Field Worker, and does not cause undue distraction for the worker's primary task of serving cross-culturally on the field. This usually takes the form of regular prayer times for the workers, without needing the worker to be present each time.

To help both the Field Worker and the Care Team to understand the shared expectations, we have a Care Team Description that is available to any potential field worker or care team to review. Reach out to missions staff for a copy.





*I remember driving home many years ago in the midst of a very stressful season. There was a lot we were involved in—rebuilding a nonprofit, helping with a church plant, volunteering, and starting a family. Each area was inviting us into deeper and more commitments.*



*“Look at the impact I’m having.” I remember saying to myself, almost as a justification for the exhaustion that I felt on a regular basis.*

*And here’s where my story diverges from the normal narrative of this type of lifestyle that leads to burnout. There was no massive conflict. No moral failing that led to disqualification. No clear-cut epiphany. Rather, God used time and presence to teach me a lesson. As I moved through the seasons of life, work, and ministry, I was able to see that some things bore fruit. Others seemed to have no change. And, there wasn’t a correlation between how much effort I put in, and how much fruit it bore. And in that space, God led me back to Scripture.*

*I remember our church taking over a year to move through a sermon series on the book of Acts. In doing so, a clear theme emerged. For example, take Paul’s speech on Mars Hill in Athens. It is such a good picture of a culturally contextualized Gospel presentation. Paul knocked it out of the park. But what was the outcome? Not much. Fast forward a few verses in the story, and the Spirit moved, and entire towns were transformed. This realization led to me rediscovering the invitation to enter rest with God.*

*Beyond the daily times with God, Megan and I also embraced weekly times of stopping and simply not “doing” work or ministry. And in this space, we have felt a shift from measuring our worth in productivity or activity, to measuring it by how in-step we are with God. Think of Jesus’ words in the book of Mark, when He said on the last days people will come touting all the work they did for Him. His response is simple, “I don’t know you.”*

*I want to be known by God, and in order to do that I need to allow God’s rhythms of rest, sabbath, and sabbatical to not be a distant Old Testament law, but rather a real and fruitful experience in my life. And from this shift, I have seen the simplest efforts on my part bear exponentially more fruit because I was in step with Him, rather than trying to piece something together in my own effort, but instead taking His lead and giving space for His Spirit to move.*

*—Dan Ryan*

# RHYTHMS OF REST: FROM SABBATH TO SABBATICAL

It can be a slow building pressure, but most people in ministry experience a sense of the need to be productive or perform. Field workers are unfortunately not immune to this. They have spent months, sometimes years, building networks of financial supports. They have individuals and churches praying for them to be fruitful and see God's kingdom come forth.

It can feel like "all eyes are on them" to perform.

In this space of pressure, we at Eastbrook invite our field workers back to humility. The humility that reminds us that this isn't our Gospel, but rather God's. It is His mission. And He is accomplishing it. We are simply invited to participate.

To remind and center ourselves on this truth, we invite field workers to abide in God in their lives.

***Eastbrook Field Workers are expected to maintain regular rhythms of rest into their daily, weekly, monthly, annual routines, and set time aside for structured sabbatical throughout their years of service on the field.***

As easy as it can be to ignore this call from a desire to be present and productive, we can also fall into the rigid legalistic adherence to these principles. We hope that each field worker avoids both extremes.

One key step that has helped many of our field workers is to engage in meeting with a spiritual director who can help the individual navigate this tension and direct the worker towards where God is potentially moving in their life, heart, soul, mind, and spirit.

By accessing this or other resources, we hope to see each of our field workers maintain a sustainable and healthy walk with God throughout and well beyond their years of service overseas.



# POST-FIELD SECTION

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HOW DO WE HELP SOMEONE PREPARE  
FOR LIFE AFTER FIELD WORK?

## KEY CONCEPT: STEWARDSHIP

At the center of the idea of finishing well as a field worker is the concept of stewardship.

The apostle Peter wrote, “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms” to the young churches across Asia Minor as he exhorted them to endure persecution (1 Peter 4:10 NIV).

But when it comes to missions, stewardship is oftentimes only associated with financial concerns. In the Biblical sense, stewardship is much more. It includes the relational aspect, spiritual aspect, and so much more. It is a much more holistic view of taking care of what God has given us.

This view is essential as a field worker is preparing for when their overseas service will end. While some field workers enjoy a life-long career in ministry, most field workers will not serve so long, and many of them will return due to unexpected (and painful!) reasons.

The best preparation for either outcome is to continue to live faithfully as one did when they prepared to be a field worker, and to continue in stewarding the finances, relationships, spiritual gifts, and much more that God has granted to them as a field worker.

As a result, Eastbrook has ongoing conversations with field workers in these areas during their overseas work. Our hope is that during each of those conversations, our field workers see our desire to care for them well shines through what can be somewhat pragmatic topics. That is why the last letter of the Apostle John is so fitting to open this section. Read Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase of 3 John, and return to it as you read each part of this section, to keep our heart for stewardship in focus.

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*The Pastor, to my good friend Gaius: How truly I love you!*

*We're the best of friends, and I pray for good fortune in everything you do, and for your good health—that your everyday affairs prosper, as well as your soul! I was most happy when some friends arrived and brought the news that you persist in following the way of Truth.*

*Nothing could make me happier than getting reports that my children continue diligently in the way of Truth!*

*Dear friend, when you extend hospitality to Christian brothers and sisters, even when they are strangers, you make the faith visible. They've made a full report back to the church here, a message about your love.*

*It's good work you're doing, helping these travelers on their way, hospitality worthy of God himself! They set out under the banner of the Name, and get no help from unbelievers.*

*So they deserve any support we can give them. In providing meals and a bed, we become their companions in spreading the Truth.*

*(3 John 1-8 The Message)*

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*My friend, Jan, and I just got together and reviewed our almost 50-year friendship. We were next-door neighbors during seminary. We went out to the mission field about the same time, hopscotching back and forth between Africa and our home-sending church, where Paul and Tim served as social concerns pastors, never seeming to be in the same place at the same time! Jan and Tim spent 30 years in East Africa, and we spent 10 years in West Africa, with many subsequent worldwide ministry trips.*

*We know what it was like to raise support—"so many layers of support"! Our three children needed schooling; two traveled to another country by road, train, and plane for their elementary to high school years. Travel and education were very expensive. We all had asthma and had to take 3-4 years of inhalers with us!*

*Those were the days of leaving for a field you had never visited, trusting God to go before in all of the unknowns. We shopped, packed, and shipped 50-gallon barrels, trying to estimate hygiene needs and four years' growth of children's clothes and shoes.*

*In that era, it was common that only the husband was considered an employee of the mission so that no matter our work, Jan and I didn't earn social security. Paul deferred some wage withdrawals to increase our income and contributed regularly to our retirement fund. Because of this history, our social security payments are less than they might have been. Health emergencies intervened, requiring a U.S. stay and alternating employment between terms.*

*Jan and I recounted God's extraordinary provision for our families. She thinks that they were given 10 cars over their missionary career! We both were fully supported during our service. Now, as we look at planning our funerals and the real possibility of living until we are 90, we wonder if we have enough saved! The estimate of what is needed if you live until your 90s is astounding! Maybe we will die young because of all that tropical disease exposure. But maybe we will live to 100!*

*Today, we agree that we live as we always have, asking God to use us until our dying breath, trusting Him to provide over the time that He gives us, and taking every opportunity to be wise financially in our giving, saving, investing, and working!*

*—Lisa Sinclair*

# PREPARING FOR THE KNOWN: RETIREMENT & TERM ENDING

One of the most unexpectedly divisive questions in missions is, “what does it mean to live a life of faith in the hands of God?”

Some people hold up verses such as James 4:13-15 or Matthew 8:20 to highlight that a life of faith is one that does not rely on human planning or provision. They usually hold up George Mueller and his stories of miraculously answered prayers to provide for his orphanage in 1800’s England. A life of faith is one that does not need to plan because God will provide.

On the other hand, we have seen some organizations burden their workers with requirements for so many layers of support, savings, travel, conferences, and other expenses that their standard of living outpaces their home or overseas context, leading to a growing sense of resentment or entitlement.

Both extremes are unhelpful, and ultimately do not hold up to the test of the broader wisdom of Scripture or our experience at Eastbrook as a sending church. We have found that a helpful lens for how to live a life of faith is the concept of stewardship. And stewardship is something that relies heavily on our contexts.

***An Eastbrook Field Worker is someone who lives by faith to see God provide for their financial needs and is committed to stewarding those resources well through preparing for home assignment, end-of-term, and retirement.***

While the modern concept of retirement is not something we see explicitly cited in Scripture, neither is Bible translation, cars, air travel, the internet, or indoor plumbing, and yet we have found those to be useful parts of our context that we readily utilize.

Preparing for the future involves planning for those transitions in the later years of life as people respond to God’s call. This includes putting in place workers and leadership to take the lead after the worker leaves, as well as planning for personal financial support needed for their “retirement years.” Eastbrook will have regular discussions with field workers throughout their career to ensure that future retirement needs are sufficiently prepared for.

At Eastbrook, we understand that “retirement” is a culturally defined notion, yet a reality in the Western world. We also understand that many in vocational ministry do not think in terms of “retiring” from ministry. For both end-of-term or retirement we will define it as the season of life when a missionary worker is no longer working in overseas ministry in a full-time capacity through their respective agency.





*The plane door shut, finally. I took a deep breath and looked at Megan, thankful. Just a few days earlier I was face-to-face with a Christian colleague. He was yelling at me and pointing his finger in my face, “You will tell me every name of your sources or I will put you in prison until you give me those names.”*



*Up to that point, we thought did everything “right.” Sought out mentoring and preparation before leaving for the field. Worked closely with our sending church to confirm we were ready. In country, we positioned ourselves under local leadership in a support role at an institution training the future pastors and leaders of this country’s growing churches. I read the books, and thought we had things figured out But it didn’t go as we planned.*

*Barely a year into our time, we found ourselves in a difficult situation. Allegations of corruption and abuse were shared with us in regards to some of our colleagues. Not just one or two, but multiple. We initially worked to address it quietly and respectfully, but eventually it spilled over publicly and escalated quickly. Soon I received multiple threats of being placed in prison, legal arguments were being drafted to do so, and rumors of threats of physical violence against us started circulating. Our sending church and sending agency said the only wise option was to leave.*

*As the plane took off, my mind drifted to the unknown. Would we ever be able to return? If not, what would we do? How will our supporters respond? Where will we live? And, what does this all mean for God’s will to send us here?*

*Although we were instructed to not speak publicly about what happened, when we returned, we soon found our calendar filling up with pastors, elders, mentors, family, and friends inviting us into their homes and lives. Some hosted us, some encouraged us, some lovingly shared truth with us, others just listened. But together, they were the church. Within all this, there was one group that proved essential—our group of mentors who could be relied on to give honest and open feedback. At they were crucial during this time.*

*It was an incredibly difficult season, waiting for the final word as to whether we could return, which never came. Then Ebola swept through the country and closed the door definitively. But in that space, we were living off the fruits of the stewardship done over the course of the previous five to ten years in building these relationships and walking faithfully in them. That relational work turned out to be the best preparation we did for our time overseas, especially when things didn’t go as we expected.*

*—Dan Ryan*

# PREPARING FOR THE UNKNOWN: CRISES, LOSSES, OR CLOSED DOORS

According to the book *Holding the Rope: How the Local Church Can Care for its Sent Ones* the average length of service for missionaries is between two and four years, with over half of missionaries serving less than five years.

While it is a noble goal to be a lifelong missionary, one cannot rely on that goal being easily achieved. So many factors are outside of the influence of the worker. Team dynamics, security factors, political stability, corruption, mental health, family circumstance, and so much more can unfold around a field worker.

It is essential that field workers maintain the relational support structures that will be there with them through the joys of ministry, but also during the unexpected twists and turns.

***An Eastbrook Field Worker is someone who maintains strong ties with their home church's pastors and leaders as well as their care team so that when challenges arise it can be a shared journey through the unexpected.***

Due to our over four decades of experience sending field workers to hard places, we have seen many of the unexpected turns overseas service can take. We hope that is an encouragement to our field workers, and that we can be counted on to be in step with them no matter what comes.

Jesus Himself warned us that many trials and challenges lie ahead for those who follow Him. And as a result, Eastbrook Church is committed to walking alongside our workers through the darkest of seasons.

By investing the time upfront, and throughout their service, field workers can ensure that they have a robust network of Eastbrook pastors, leaders, and members who will be there when they are needed most.



*Throughout the course of my spiritual journey spanning several years, I've perceived God sowing within me a seed of compassion for the disadvantaged and vulnerable, compelling me to champion the voiceless. This calling was further nurtured through my involvement in Compassion International's child development and sponsorship program in Uganda, alongside their leadership development initiative. Roughly twelve years ago, divine hints began to trace a pathway toward reshaping not only my own life trajectory but also the trajectories of many others. The opportunity to guide ministry efforts, providing training and empowerment to pastors within my local communities in Uganda, deepened my understanding of the shared challenges faced by individuals and church communities from diverse backgrounds, whether residing in rural landscapes or urban centers.*



*Upon my arrival in Chicago, immediate engagement in student outreach on the city streets, evangelism at Pacific Garden Missions, and service at the Chicago Hope Food Pantry afforded me the chance to participate in ministry among both the affluent and the urban underprivileged. This experience further underscored the fact that, regardless of one's location, opportunities to engage in missions are abundantly available, wherever you are. A simple prayer walk through the neighborhood readily unveils a myriad of opportunities waiting to be seized. These opportunities are as diverse as the neighborhoods themselves—some may inhabit opulent communities where poverty is an anomaly, while others might reside in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas. However, the core of gospel proclamation and embodiment transcends the mere act of material giving; it hinges on the cultivation of authentic relationships, wherever you are.*

*It's astonishing to discover that the very skills honed during your international journeys are equally applicable within your own community. It has been a joy to see our church family minister to people with dignity, and the heartwarming stories of people who are grateful to our city ministry posture and approach have been very encouraging and it is truly an honor to journey alongside people.*

*The God who works overseas is the God who works locally. Serve him in both places.*

—Okumu

# ALL MISSIONS IS LOCAL: GETTING (RE)CONNECTED TO THE LOCAL CHURCH

One of the truths in missions is that once you step off the plane, what was once global missions now becomes local missions.

Our field workers find themselves planting or attending local churches, and reaching out to their co-workers, neighbors, and communities in many similar ways that we do here in Milwaukee.

By doing so cross-culturally, each field worker gains experience and insight in how God moves among different people groups, but also how similar His work is around the world. This can be such a gift to the field worker's home church when they return from serving overseas.

***When an Eastbrook Field Worker returns from serving overseas, we expect them to re-integrate into a local church and be active in their own discipleship, community of faith, and reaching out to their new neighbors and city.***

This should be an encouragement for any Eastbrook member reading this Send Guide. That the end point of a field worker's journey is simply and faithfully being involved in the spiritual health of their local community.

With this knowledge in hand, we as church members should live lives that reflect the truth that all Christians are invited to participate in God's mission, wherever they find themselves in their homes, apartments, dorms, workplaces, neighborhoods, and communities.

The mission of God is not for a select few, but we are all called to missional living that proclaims and embodies the love of Jesus Christ.



# APPENDICES – PRACTICES & POLICIES

This Send Guide is meant to provide the biblical, theological, and philosophical foundation for how Eastbrook Church sends Field Workers. There are so many details that build off this foundation.

How does one request to be a field worker? How is commissioning discerned, and for whom? What are the levels of financial support we commit to? When do we intervene and request a field worker transition off the field?

To try to comprehensively answer all these questions in one guide would not be feasible. But operating without these shared practices is also not feasible.

Starting in 2023, the missions leadership of Eastbrook Church is formalizing a series of practices and policies that will be listed as the Appendices of this Send Guide. They will be accessible electronically when complete, upon request.

If in the meantime, if you have any questions, please reach out to our missions staff team.