

Speak Out!

the
FUN
issue!



**“I came that you
may have life—
and have it
abundantly!”**

John 10:10

One verse I return to time and again comes from the pen of the Apostle James: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows" (James 1:17). This simple statement reminds us of a few things simultaneously. First, it puts in focus that God is a gift giver, generously sharing out of His abundance into our lives. Second, this God is both personal in generosity and awesome in power, reigning over all the earth but also over the wondrous lights of our sun and the far-flung stars. Third, in all these things, God does not change but is consistently the same.



As we enjoy the warmth of summer, I hope we can pause to savor the good gifts of God that are all around us. And as we do that, I hope we remember that our God is unchangingly awesome in power but also steadfastly tender in love toward us. Throughout this issue of *Speak Out!* may the goodness and joy of God cascade over the summertime of our lives.

Matt Erickson
Senior Pastor, Eastbrook Church



This epic photo of Pastor Matt hiking the Ice Age Trail was taken this past December by his son, David. Read more about Pastor Matt and our other Pastors on pages 5-6.

Just for Fun!

Because we're calling this Summer 2024 issue of *Speak Out!* "The Fun Issue," let's get you warmed up with a little game. Can you spot the 3 differences between the real stained glass in the Worship Hall and our rendering below?



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ANATOMY OF A SERMON

by Rachel Shuster

We may not think too hard about much of what we've come to expect at church on a Sunday morning; you might know certain songs by heart, or recognize rhythms in the liturgy of prayer, worship, and preaching. Whether listening in person or watching online, the congregation receives a message which they can follow along on a printed outline. That's what we see, the end result of weeks' worth of work, but how do we get there? If you have ever wondered about what goes on behind the scenes of a Sunday sermon, here is your guide. Senior Pastor Matt Erickson walks us through the process, from choosing a topic to delivering a message to our Eastbrook family.

START HERE

PLANNING



Picking a sermon series involves a lot of study and narrowing of focus. Sometimes I gather feedback from the staff, things going on in culture, or a topic that seems relevant to where we are. A lot of sermon series have come out of specific conversations I'm having with someone that make me realize: it might be good for us to take the whole church through this discussion. I keep ideas in the Notes app in my phone so I can add new ideas anytime. I try to balance between topical and a walk through the Bible; a series like the one that we're in now (1 Corinthians) is a combination of those.

TEAM TIME



Once I've charted out a sermon series, I'll send that to Liz Carver and Pastor Femi Ibitoye so they can start brainstorming ideas for design and worship. We don't have a set preaching team, but I establish one for each series. I might reach out to specific people to preach on a certain text or certain week. I give that group a week-by-week breakout of the text, the topic, and any special elements happening in the services—if there's Communion or Child Dedication, we're trying to think all those things out and coordinate them.

APPLICATION



When I put together Discussion Questions, I'm usually trying to think, how could this be used in small groups or for individual study? I know I can't touch every learning style, but I'm trying to rotate it: some things that are informational learning, some things that are "put it into practice" with people, some that are reflective for oneself. I usually have a memorization piece, but sometimes that doesn't really work very well. I'm trying to spread that around over the course of a series.

RESOURCING



I pull together whoever's preaching in a specific series and we'll study some basics of that book or topic. When was it written? Who wrote it? What was it addressing? What are we trying to accomplish? We do this so that we're coming at our individual weeks out of the same place. I also usually give people a recommended study resource guide. I'm kind of a geek, so I have a bibliography I make for every series: some books I or other staff members might have that the preaching team is welcome to borrow, books the Milwaukee County Public Library System has to check out, etc.

A LITTLE HELP FROM A FRIEND

Since retired pastor Jay Thorson started attending Eastbrook a few years ago, he's been in the backdrop of each series pulling together notes related to the topic, as well as preaching considerations for each week. He's also willing to meet with members of the preaching team if they have questions about it or want to dig into it more deeply, so that's been a real gift to our team!

PRESENTATION



The manuscript also helps our production team, because I have cues for when a slide is supposed to come up. The on-screen visuals are usually a layer that I bring on at the end of message development, although occasionally there will be a sermon that relies on them really heavily. There might be a "supporting" image—if it wasn't there, you won't lose much. Other times I really utilize something, like a map of where Corinth was, explaining all of the different beasts in Daniel using a chart—those are places where the screen becomes a tool or a resource.

WRITING



Personally, I study out a sermon two weeks ahead of time. Thursdays are my study day. I start the day studying for the message that's two weeks out, and then I'll pick back up the outline and discussion questions that I worked on the previous week and turn them into the message for the coming Sunday. I've found that allows me to ruminate on a passage for a week after I've studied it, thinking through, what does this really mean for our particular church? What does this passage mean to someone in one life situation or another, someone who's older, younger, married, single, coming from another country?

PRACTICING



I've found that I'm internalizing the message as I'm writing. Sometimes I'll read parts of it out loud to see if it flows, but I'm rarely practicing the whole message out loud. The messages I practice most are the shortest—Good Friday, Christmas Eve, Easter—because it's really hard for me to be succinct to 10 minutes and have a clear point come through! I would never encourage other preachers who aren't regularly preaching to not practice because I think you need to hear it out loud. You figure out what works for you.

DELIVERY



I think this is a fascinating discussion to have with preachers: what do you bring up to the platform to preach from? I think as a preacher, you just find the way that works for you. I used to use a really dense outline, but now I write out a script and I take it on an iPad up there with me. For me, the manuscript can be thrown out while I'm preaching; it's not something I'm rigidly handcuffed to. It's like jazz: you have a lead sheet, but the improvisation can go off of that and come back around.

DID YOU KNOW? You can access every sermon on Eastbrook's digital platforms! Watch a video and download outlines (including discussion questions) at eastbrook.org/sermons or via the Eastbrook App (look under Resources). You can also subscribe to the Eastbrook Sunday Sermons Podcast wherever you listen!



WHAT'S IN YOUR BIBLE?

by Jessica Eckert

Picture a diver's first time jumping off the high dive. The anxious anticipation upon climbing each rung of the ladder, the walk across the board; the bending of the knees, the moment of faith where the decision is made to jump. The exhilaration, the plunge, the reemergence above the surface!

Here at Eastbrook, each of us is on a journey to knowing Him personally; some may be exploring the faith, others may be new to trusting in the saving work of Jesus on the Cross, many may be wrestling with God for answers to questions, and several may be in a season of walking faithfully with Jesus.

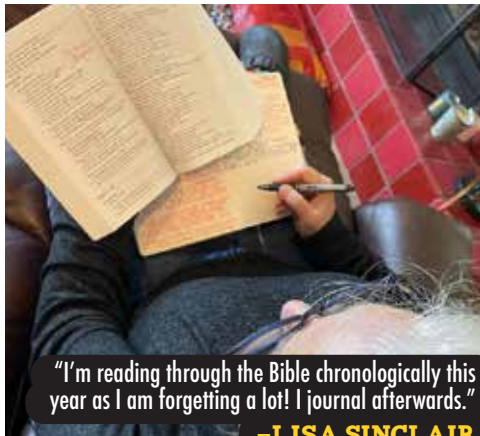
One way we engage with God is through diving into the Bible. According to the unique ways we are all made in His image, we may choose different ways to experience Scripture. Some spend time with God in the morning, others in the evening, and still others throughout the day. Some pray Bible verses, while others are inspired by the passage of Scripture to pray for specific things. Some listen to the Bible while others read it on their phones and yet others read a physical copy. There are a plethora of ways God meets with us—praise Him!

LET'S EXPLORE HOW A FEW FELLOW EASTBROOKERS SPEND TIME IN THE WORD:



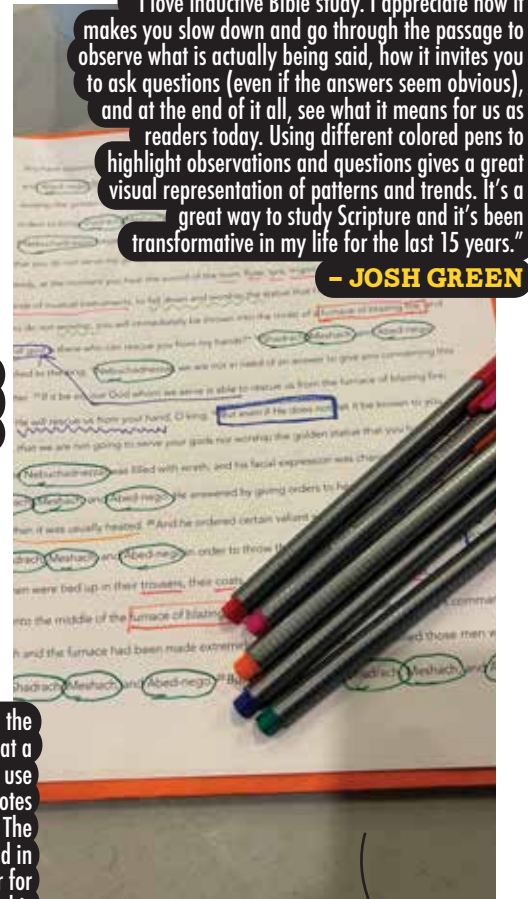
"I find a quiet 10 minutes every morning and meditate and pray using the Lectio 365 app. God continues to meet with me in the quiet places, often revealing His provision for me for the day."

-ASHLEY BODE



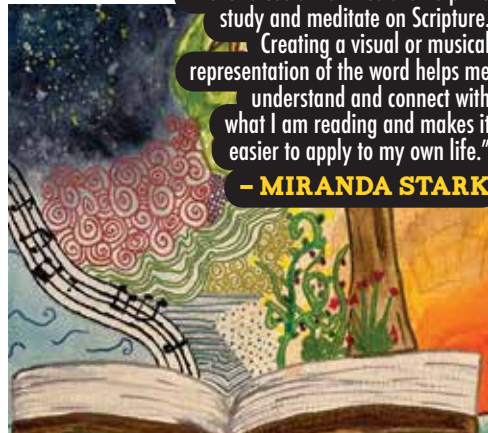
"I'm reading through the Bible chronologically this year as I am forgetting a lot! I journal afterwards."

-LISA SINCLAIR



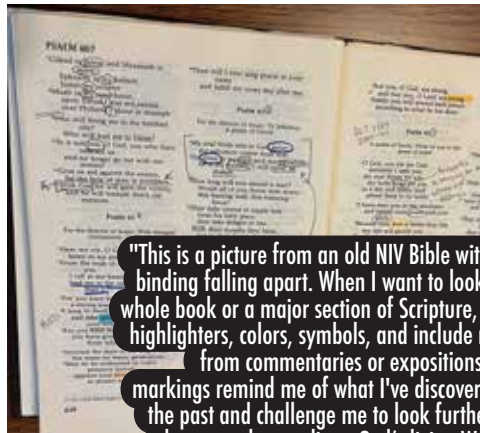
"I love inductive Bible study. I appreciate how it makes you slow down and go through the passage to observe what is actually being said, how it invites you to ask questions (even if the answers seem obvious), and at the end of it all, see what it means for us as readers today. Using different colored pens to highlight observations and questions gives a great visual representation of patterns and trends. It's a great way to study Scripture and it's been transformative in my life for the last 15 years."

- JOSH GREEN



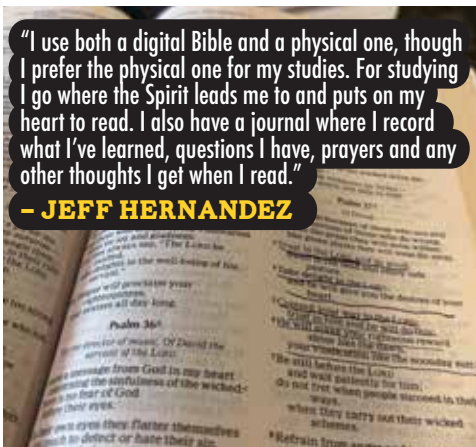
"I love to use art or music to help me study and meditate on Scripture. Creating a visual or musical representation of the word helps me understand and connect with what I am reading and makes it easier to apply to my own life."

- MIRANDA STARK



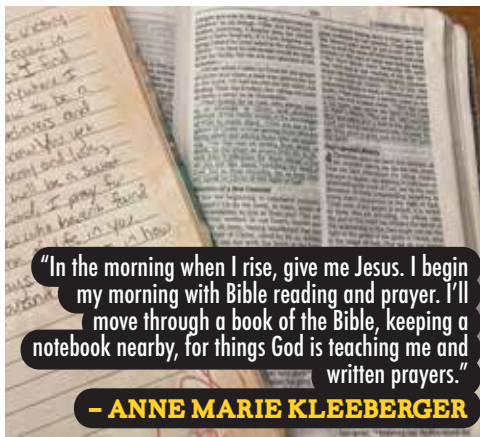
"This is a picture from an old NIV Bible with the binding falling apart. When I want to look at a whole book or a major section of Scripture, I use highlighters, colors, symbols, and include notes from commentaries or expositions. The markings remind me of what I've discovered in the past and challenge me to look further for deeper understanding. God's living Word is new every time we meet Him there."

- CATHY WILLIAMS



"I use both a digital Bible and a physical one, though I prefer the physical one for my studies. For studying I go where the Spirit leads me to and puts on my heart to read. I also have a journal where I record what I've learned, questions I have, prayers and any other thoughts I get when I read."

- JEFF HERNANDEZ



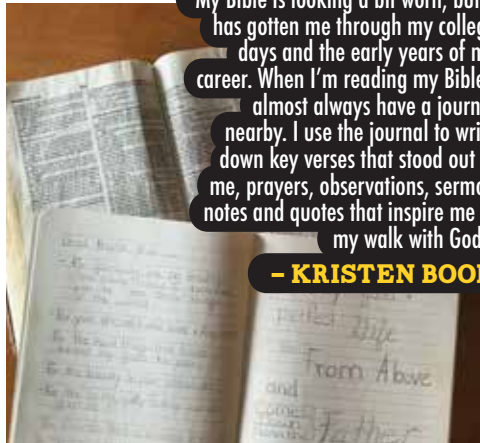
"In the morning when I rise, give me Jesus. I begin my morning with Bible reading and prayer. I'll move through a book of the Bible, keeping a notebook nearby, for things God is teaching me and written prayers."

- ANNE MARIE KLEEBERGER



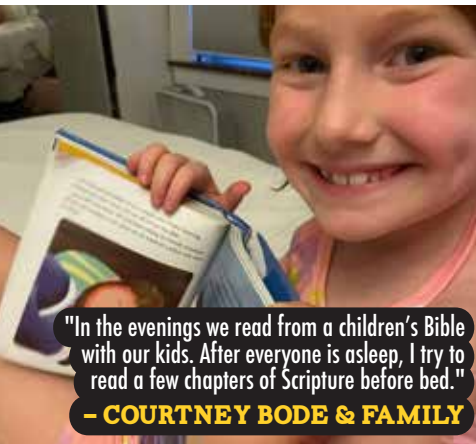
Arlene's grandmother taught her how to knit & crochet as a child. When her hands move, it helps her concentration: "I've been called out in the past for not paying attention [to the sermon], but it's very much the opposite. One week I forgot my project and I had to sit on my hands!"

-ARLENE HERMANN



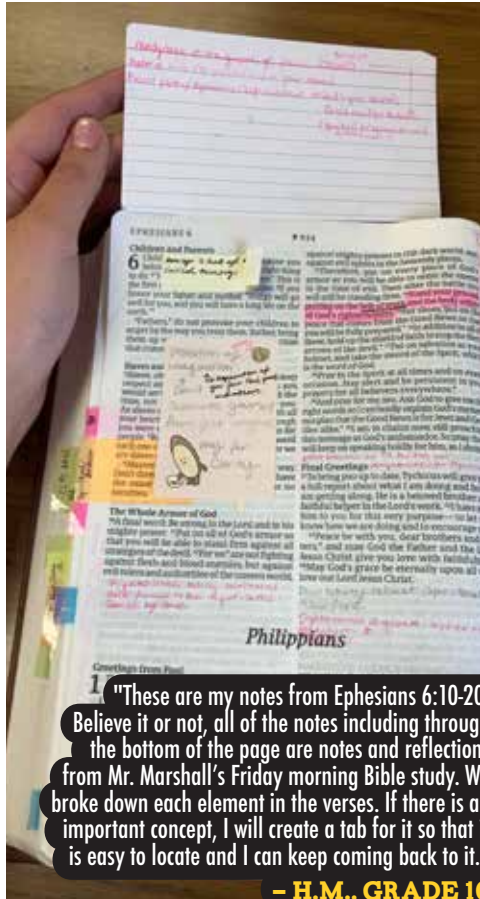
"My Bible is looking a bit worn, but it has gotten me through my college days and the early years of my career. When I'm reading my Bible I almost always have a journal nearby. I use the journal to write down key verses that stood out to me, prayers, observations, sermon notes and quotes that inspire me in my walk with God."

- KRISTEN BOOK



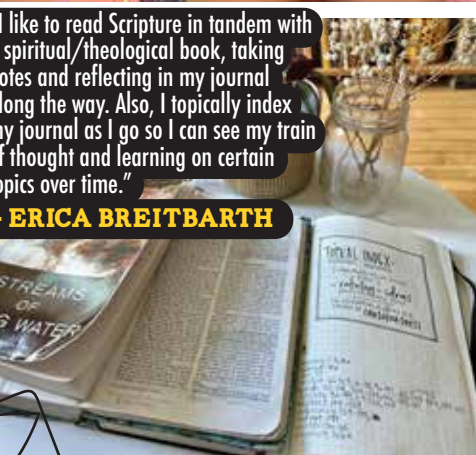
"In the evenings we read from a children's Bible with our kids. After everyone is asleep, I try to read a few chapters of Scripture before bed."

- COURTNEY BODE & FAMILY



"These are my notes from Ephesians 6:10-20. Believe it or not, all of the notes including through the bottom of the page are notes and reflections from Mr. Marshall's Friday morning Bible study. We broke down each element in the verses. If there is an important concept, I will create a tab for it so that it is easy to locate and I can keep coming back to it."

- H.M., GRADE 10



"I like to read Scripture in tandem with a spiritual/theological book, taking notes and reflecting in my journal along the way. Also, I typically index my journal as I go so I can see my train of thought and learning on certain topics over time."

- ERICA BREITBARTH

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS AS YOU DIVE INTO YOUR TIME WITH GOD:

Would access to a Bible be helpful?

- Download an app such as Bible, She Reads Truth, BibleProject, Lectio 365, or download the Eastbrook App and find a Bible under "Resources."
- Pick up a physical copy under the chair in front of you in service.

Would it be beneficial to know what to do once the Bible is open?

- Invite God through prayer to lead you to what He wants for you in your time in the Bible.
- Ask people you know how they spend time in the Bible.
- If you're not sure where to start, try the Psalms or a Gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John).
- Use the Sunday sermon notes and questions as a diving board to jump into the Bible.
- Investigate a new method, such as Inductive Bible Study, and try it.
- Search for the characteristics of God as you read and write them down
- Notice characteristics of God as you read.
- Recognize the Trinity at work in Scripture.

Would accountability to spend time consistently in the Bible be helpful?

- Who could you ask? What do you need from them? Ask them for it.
- Could you gather regularly to spend time in the Bible with others?

Take the plunge into the Word and allow God to move you. His Spirit is at work whether we see it presently or not! Much like the diver coming back up for air after spending some time below the surface of the water, you'll never be the same! ■

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."
(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

MATCH THE PASTOR TO THEIR FAVORITE SUMMERTIME TREAT:



PASTOR DAN RYAN
(Missions)



PASTOR FEMI IBITOYE
(Worship)



PASTOR JIM CALER
(Adult Ministries)



PASTOR LAURE HERLINGER
(NextGen)



PASTOR MATT ERICKSON
(Senior Pastor)



PASTOR NIC FRIEDENMAKER
(Students)



PASTOR RUTH CARVER
(Congregational Care)

almonds,
cashews, or
peanuts

the twisty Fritos (on
road trips only)

interesting cake
flavors (like berries
& herbs)

red raspberry
frozen custard

pie or ice cream

ice cream

Reese's peanut
butter cups

Because of their title or the fact that they're the faces leading us on weekends, it can feel as though a plane divides pastors from the rest of the church body. One could assume that a pastor's life must be very different, their habits unrelatable. But what if they are just like us—and not just in their snacking preferences?

We asked Eastbrook's seven pastors some fun questions to get a glimpse into their lives outside of pastoral ministry. Hopefully you can see a bit of yourself reflected in their responses.

WHAT ARE YOU READING?

Perhaps we assume that pastors spend their free time reading dense theology books—or even that they all love to read. This is not the case, and there are some who say they do not read for fun (who else can relate?)

Of our pastors who call reading a pastime, all said fiction was a go-to genre. **MATT** enjoys reading a wide variety of fiction; **LAURE** especially loves World War II historical fiction. You can discuss fantasy novels with **NIC** or **FEMI**; thrillers proved a popular genre, especially for **JIM** and **RUTH**. Other well-loved genres: mysteries, criminal law/legal thrillers, memoirs/biographies, and science fiction.

WHAT ARE YOUR SUMMER PLANS?

While many enjoy reading in moments of spare time, spending time outside with friends and family is a popular activity of choice for our pastors.

Lake Michigan is the most popular outdoor spot in Milwaukee. Many of the pastors enjoy spending time at the lake, whether reading on the beach, walking the lakeshore, sitting on a park bench overlooking the lake, or attending one of Milwaukee's many ethnic festivals at the Summerfest grounds.

Other activities our pastors enjoy during the summer months:

- **JIM'S** summers are often busy for his family. His kids are involved in many things: sports and volleyball camps, Vacation Bible School here at church. They also always make time for community, hosting weekly hangouts at a park with anyone who's available to join. Jim and his family

particularly love to play four square.

- **NIC'S** summers are packed with a lot of student ministry-related events, including the annual High School Wilderness Trip, which his whole family attends. He does a lot of backpacking and hiking with the family, and they love having people over for barbecuing and a fire on summer evenings.
- Hiking—especially near water—is also a highlight for **MATT**, who grew up near the Mississippi River. He says Seven Bridges is a beautiful location that boasts both a forest and a beach for hiking. A typical summer evening finds him and his wife eating on their patio, grilling out, and enjoying meals with family. Each summer, he and his family also make time for a getaway.
- **RUTH** and her husband love to spend weekends up north at their lake house. She loves to bike on the Oak Leaf Trail and spend time with her daughters, son-in-law, and grandkids. This summer, she and her husband are taking their youngest granddaughter on a trip, just the three of them.
- A perfect summer day for **DAN** and his family might look like walking to a farmer's market and making stops along the way back home to see neighbors or friends. Stopping at a local coffee shop is a popular detour (bonus points if it's near an ice cream shop!)

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY!

As we all know, life is full of transitions: we get new jobs, we move, we might get married or move out of our parents' home. We lose roommates and gain new ones, transfer colleges, begin caring for aging parents, and retire. We go back to school, we complete projects, we learn new things.

Our pastors here at Eastbrook also experience life changes, just as we do. Just like summer rhythms change depending on seasons of life, patterns within our pastors' families differ based on whether they have school-aged or adult children, or for those who are grandparents.

Several of our pastors are entering new stages. One of **LAURE'S**

children became a mother last year, and so **LAURE** is learning to be a grandma! In recent years, she and her husband became empty-nesters. One thing she says has looked different is being able to eat dinner at any time, with newfound freedom in their schedule.

MATT and his wife also recently became empty-nesters and are learning how to parent adult children in love and freedom in this new season. He says they are discovering new hobbies and ways of spending their time now that parenting looks different.

Both of **JIM'S** children will be in high school this fall, and the family will adjust to new transitions and new schedules.

WHERE DO YOU SEEK COUNSEL?

Life transitions are natural times to seek out advice or support. Take a moment to think of someone you look up to or go to with questions—who comes to mind for you?

Our pastors look up to many people: their parents, aunts, old professors, spiritual mentors or directors, former pastors, classmates, field workers, fellow Eastbrookers, friends, bible study partners, small group leaders, their spouses, and each other.

WHAT ELSE DON'T WE KNOW?

Being a pastor is not about constantly being in a spiritual state of mind, having life figured out, or always having deep spiritual conversations. They are always learning, growing, and entering new phases of life. They try new hobbies, grow in old interests, and find so much life outside of ministry and the church.

Here are some things you may or may not have known about our pastors:

- **JIM** loves music and plays the saxophone. He also coaches volleyball.
- A love for music also fuels **FEMI**, whose passion unsurprisingly continues outside of ministry! He likes writing songs in his free time.
- **DAN** enjoys all things outdoors, as well as the satisfaction of finishing a house project, since there is a clear beginning and end, “unlike much in ministry and life.”
- When **NIC** is not outside hiking or backpacking with the family, he loves cooking and is currently learning high heat wok cooking.
- **LAURE** also loves to cook and bake, along with biking or walking with her husband, and crocheting.
- **RUTH** began to crochet in high school, and recently picked it back up! She says she’s in a season of rediscovering old hobbies and making time for well-loved interests, like gardening and playing piano.
- **MATT** is working on hiking the Ice Age Trail, segments at a time. He also loves writing poetry. He describes himself as “sarcastic,” and loves to laugh and joke.

GO-TO COMFORT FOOD?

Not all of our days are filled with sunshine or the hobbies we enjoy. On tough or long days, a meal can play a special role in

offering respite.

Comfort food for **MATT** looks like his wife’s lasagna, a labor of love and time, or ordering Indian takeout. For **RUTH**, salmon, green beans, and potatoes hits the spot. **FEMI** and his family often reach for leftovers from the fridge on long days—usually an easy chicken and rice dish.

NIC loves Indian takeout after a long day, although he also makes a mean curry himself. **DAN** orders pizza from his family’s favorite neighborhood spot. And who hasn’t craved a comforting, warm pasta dish on those days, as **LAURE** does, sometimes stopping at an Italian grocery store for their house-made sauce?

While there is so much more to learn about our pastors, we had to wrap up with one final question:

WHAT WOULD YOU WANT EASTBROOKERS TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR PASTORS?

FEMI says he is so grateful for this community; people from varied backgrounds worshiping God together is a beautiful thing to witness and be part of.

DAN reminds us that not only are the pastors at Eastbrook surprisingly ordinary, not every conversation is spiritual.

JIM encourages people to not be afraid to reach out to their pastors—they want to be friends and build relationships.

NIC wanted to communicate how much the pastors care about and deeply love the community here at Eastbrook, as they are working to share the love of Christ.

LAURE notes that the pastors are “always in process and they are serious about the things of God and invested in His Word.”

“We are ordinary people. On the journey with Jesus as part of the whole church family”, says **MATT**. It’s an important reminder to see our pastors as they are, like Matt says, “people who experience the ins and outs, the highs and lows of life,” as we all do. “Pastors laugh, they cry, they suffer, they experience joy”.

Pastors... they really are just like you and me. ■



ANSWERS: Femi prefers almonds, cashews or peanuts; Dan prefers pie or ice cream; Matt prefers Keeze's peanut butter cups; Nic prefers road trip Fritos; Jim prefers ice cream; Ruth prefers red raspberry custard; and Laure prefers cake!

SUMMER MIXTAPES

What's your "Song of the Summer?"

Summer is a great time to roll your windows down and crank up the tunes! Why not try some fellow Eastbrookers' favorites?

We asked a few folks who lead worship on Sundays to give us a peek at their summer playlists. Maybe you'll find some tracks for your next road trip or BBQ soundtrack.

ADD YOURS:

Help us build out our summer mixtape: Build your playlist below, or share your favorite worship song on Instagram and tag us @eastbrookchurch!



MY NAME: _____

Currently, I'm listening to:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



GABRIEL DOUGLAS,
DIRECTOR, MUSIC & PRODUCTION; KEYBOARDIST

I have been enjoying artists including Isla Vista Worship, Revere, Israel & New Breed, Martha Munizzi, Cory Asbury, Will Reagan and United Pursuit, and Stephen Day. I think what draws me to these creators is their varying styles of music and how they approach genres with different lyrical structures. Finding inspiration can be challenging because a lot of what you find on Spotify are your big names like Bethel, Elevation, and Hillsong — those aren't bad, but I'm interested in artists from smaller groups who are making good music, so I try to find names I don't know as well, or surf around YouTube.

Because listening to and leading worship music is my job, I find it challenging sometimes to separate the two, so I try to listen to songs that maybe I don't know as well to let myself be inspired!



GABRIELLA BRUNNER, VOCALIST

Some songs I have loved recently include "The Prodigal" by Josiah Queen, "What If" by Matthew West, and "Glorify" by Jordan Feliz. These are upbeat songs with amazing messages!

I normally listen to them on K-LOVE [radio station at 105.3 FM in Milwaukee/Racine], and while cleaning my house.



BRIAN DREGER, ELECTRIC GUITARIST

Currently, I'm listening to:

- "Big Tent Revival" or "RATTLE!"
- Zach Williams
- "Praise On It" or "Show Me Your Glory"
- Planetshakers (will get your toes tapping!)
- "Stoplight Loosejaw" or "Naptime"
- Mark Lettieri

I'm drawn to creators when you can feel the conviction in their music. To me, there's a difference between performing a vocal and singing a song; the message needs to be part of you before you can express it with power. That goes for playing an instrument, too. Being on Worship Teams is a great way to encounter new music, through teammates and leaders. I also find recommendations for my own listening on *newreleasetoday.com*, a website dedicated to new Christian music releases and news.



NDILOMA MUSA, A/V TECHNICIAN

Currently, I'm listening to:

- "I Thank God" - Maverick City Music feat. UPPERROOM
- "Mountains" - Sean C. Johnson
- "Blessings" - Lecrae feat. Ty Dolla \$ign
- "Even Louder" - Steven Malcolm feat. Natalie Grant

I usually listen to these tracks in the car, or when I'm skating at the skatepark. As a hip-hop artist myself, it is really inspiring to see how artists use their voices to glorify the kingdom.