

Speak Out!

ANNUAL REPORT
2023-2024



LOOKING BACK:

Give Thanks to God for
What He Has Done!



A NOTE FROM PASTOR MATT

One of the most striking things within the Gospel accounts is the starkly swift response the first disciples give to Jesus. There are few stronger accounts of this than that of Peter, Andrew, James, and John:

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him.
(Matthew 4:19-20)

That's it. These first disciples listen to Jesus, they leave whatever else is around, and begin to follow Jesus. That rhythm—listen, leave, follow—is a fundamental pattern of the transformational disciple-life. We are exploring this right now in our series, "Following Jesus," and it has been our emphasis for the last two years at Eastbrook. We want to be a church that grows disciples.

When I look back at the last year, I am so encouraged by how God has been at work within our life as a church. In fact, page after page of this annual report issue of *Speak Out!* tells the story of God in our midst. I hope you see and hear within each statistic the breath of the Holy Spirit moving within us to grow and stretch us to become more like Jesus for God's glory.

I also wonder how you or I might look back over the past year to reflect on our own life of discipleship? How have we seen God grow us, correct us, stretch us, deepen us, work through us, and more? Don Whitney, a professor and pastor, offers a series of questions to help us consider our life with God that I have found helpful — perhaps they might prompt reflection over your past year and prayer over your coming year with God:

- Do I thirst for God?
- Am I governed increasingly by God's Word?
- Am I more loving?
- Am I more sensitive to God's presence?
- Do I have a growing concern for the spiritual and temporal needs of others?
- Do I delight in the bride of Christ?
- Are the spiritual disciplines increasingly important to me?
- Do I still grieve over sin?
- Am I quick to forgive?
- Do I yearn for heaven and to be with Jesus?

As I look into this coming year, I have high anticipation of how God will grow us as disciples both individually and as a church community. Please take time to prayerfully read over these pages, giving thanks for how God is at work among us, and asking God to continue growing us in ways that bring Him the greatest glory as we seek to fulfill our church's mission of "proclaiming and embodying the love of Jesus Christ in the city and in the world."

In Christ,

Matt Erickson
Senior Pastor, Eastbrook Church

TABLE OF CONTENTS

03

DISCIPLESHIP: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
AN INTERVIEW WITH PASTOR JIM CALER

11

GET TO KNOW AN EASTBROOKER
2023-2024 MINISTRY RESIDENTS
MACKENZY PERRY & CURT CLEMETSON

05

WALKING WITH GOD, TALKING WITH GOD
PRAYER WALKING TAKES ROOT IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF EASTBROOK

13

IMPROVING WITH AGE
A NEW COMMUNITY FOR OLDER ADULTS
BLOSSOMS ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

07

PRESS "SEND"
HOW EASTBROOK MISSIONS PARTNERS WITH AND COMMISSIONS FIELD WORKERS

14

25 YEARS AND COUNTING...
EASTBROOK ACADEMY REACHES A MAJOR MILESTONE IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

09

FACILITIES FACILITATE MINISTRY
STRATEGIC VISION DRIVES EASTBROOK'S PLANS FOR CAMPUS SPACES

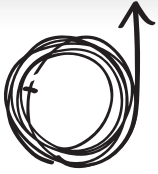
15

2023-2024 FINANCIALS
WITH A NOTE FROM COUNCIL PRESIDENT WALLY JOHNSON

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DISCIPLESHIP

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? AN INTERVIEW WITH PASTOR JIM CALER

If you didn't have the word "discipleship" on your Annual Report bingo card, you missed out!

The concept of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus took center stage at Eastbrook this year. While discipleship has always been part of our mission as a church, this past year, Eastbrook's leadership decided they wanted to go a step further, and really dig into how we're accomplishing this task in order to do it most effectively.

To help bring clarity to present-day programming and identify where we can improve future efforts, the entire Eastbrook congregation was asked to take an anonymous survey last fall to gauge — both as individuals and as a whole church — where we are in our discipleship journey, and where need for growth may exist (visit eastbrook.org/leadership for a breakdown of survey results). Church leaders spent much of the rest of the year in conversation about the results and what they mean for our community moving forward.

Along with other leaders, Pastor Jim Caler—Senior Director of Adult Ministry—has led the charge to facilitate those conversations. Let's hear his reflections on the feedback, and thoughts about potential next steps.

Q: Why was discipleship something we wanted to focus on as a church community in 2023-2024?

We've always known some of the ways Eastbrookers grow in their relationship with Jesus, but to nail down specifics was important to focusing our direction. How do we create a systematic approach that could invite people into every possible option for growth — even something they might not naturally go to?

The initial tool to figure this out was the Discipleship Survey. We wanted to make sure that we actually knew what we were talking about instead of making assumptions that weren't true.

We also wanted to focus more on the idea that there are stages of growth when it comes to discipleship. We do this in every other area of our life: we talk about emotional development, intellectual development, social development, but we need to talk more about spiritual development. As a parent, I know there are stages of

growth in my kids and milestones to look for. The same kind of thing is spiritually relevant — there are signs that show when people are growing closer to Christ and so we've put a lot of time and effort into developing a Discipleship Pathway that will help us grow at every stage of discipleship.

How did you feel about survey participation, and what stood out to you from the results?

The survey facilitators were impressed by the high rate of participation from our congregation, so that was reassuring. I think anecdotally, we feel like we did miss some key groups within the church, and there's a whole range of reasons why. But there were enough responses in each "category" for our results to be considered reliable.

One of the biggest takeaways was a high desire for more instruction on evangelism. Some of that is in how we talk about it. We talk about evangelism a lot, just not necessarily using that specific word. We talk about "neighbor-

ing,” loving people, sharing your faith...so I think there’s an opportunity for instruction and clarity in this area.

Another interesting set of results was about folks’ perceived sense of belonging. Some responses indicated that people felt like they could come here and belong, but there was also feedback that others didn’t feel they were getting accountability-type relationships within Eastbrook.

That initially confused us, but as we talked through it with the survey consultants we identified a few possibilities for that sentiment. Our Small Groups are great at what they do, but I think there’s a point where people need to be challenged to go further. We were also getting an indication that we have people who have been part of the church for a long time whose [Small Groups and other relational] groups have changed. People have moved away, people have died, people have left the church, and in doing that, their closest relationships are no longer here. It’s like restarting for them, and that can be harder in some ways than a new person coming into the church getting connected and developing relationships.

How has this feedback informed conversations among leadership? What might it mean in terms of planning for next year, or next steps?

In terms of Small Groups, we’re talking about some things that we could challenge our existing groups to do: new curriculum focused on growth rather than just connection, or going beyond sermon discussion. While that can be good and helpful, there might be things that we just don’t get to that might be better for that particular group — a marriage study, a parenting study, or some other discussion-oriented resources that could really help them go further.

In addition to groups, we’re planning to offer a similar type of new curriculum in Sunday Adult Class this fall [The Disciple’s Way]. So look out for that!

I’m also reworking our Core Classes [Eastbrook 101, 201, and 301] to focus around our Discipleship Pathway. What does it look like in each stage of growth to interact with Scripture, or pray, or serve? How do we share our life with others? Once we enter the Christ-centered stage of discipleship, what do we do as leaders to invest in others? To continue to invest in ourselves? I’m excited about it!

What do you want to say to people who are early in their discipleship journey, or maybe not even sure what this means?

It depends on the person, what their approach to life is. Are they readers? Do they need to have a reason for everything, and look for resources to find those? Do they prefer one-on-one conversation over group dynamics?

One-on-one conversations are, a lot of times, the best. I would also encourage people to check out some of the resources offered by groups like Alpha [videos, discussion series, online courses]. You don’t have to be in a group to interact with those, and that’s a good place to start.

Someone who’s in the early stages of growth — who probably isn’t going to come to church or be anywhere involved with Eastbrook unless they’re coming along with someone — can still simply listen when they do come. If someone is actively exploring their faith, their next step would just be coming to a class or committing to be part of something.

Last fall we did this survey to get a snapshot of discipleship at that time. So what’s next for us?

We’re looking into tools people can use individually, more of a personal spiritual growth assessment that could be ongoing, and people could choose to respond to their results however they want. We probably will come back to a church-wide survey, but not for a couple of years, to give these things we’re working on a chance to take hold and see what difference they make. ■

34
PEOPLE BAPTIZED

49
SMALL GROUPS, 7 NEW!

446
PEOPLE IN SMALL GROUPS

80
PEOPLE IN SUPPORT GROUPS

112
MEN AT THE FALL RETREAT


439
ADULTS IN WEEKLY STUDIES

130
NEWCOMERS ATTENDED A SMALL GROUP CONNECT EVENT

Walking with God, Talking with God

by Rachel Shuster

PRAYER WALKING TAKES ROOT IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF EASTBROOK



If you interacted with Eastbrook's Lenten devotional this spring, you may remember a series of entries and accompanying videos introducing spiritual disciplines. One of the disciplines discussed was prayer walking, a spiritual activity near and dear to Eastbrooker Christina Winrich's heart. After returning to the states from a number of years of field work in Japan, Christina has made it her mission to bring this practice to our church family through a number of workshops and resources.

Here, she reflects on what makes prayer walking so unique, and what she hopes Eastbrook has learned from a year of walking and talking with God.

Q: If somebody doesn't know what "prayer walking" is, can you describe it in a sentence or two?

It's praying while walking, walking while praying. Talking to God while you walk, walking while you talk to God. Praying anywhere and everywhere is excellent and important, but prayer walking has some unique blessings because you're outside. For example, if you're interceding in your neighborhood, you might see something that you didn't know about in a nearby yard, or you might run into a neighbor, which likely won't happen when you're praying in your living room! It's by no means better than another form of prayer, it's just different.

Where does this practice come from?

Many years ago, someone asked me why we should engage in prayer walking if it's not in the Bible. For me, "pray without ceasing" would include walking — but I did think it was interesting pushback that just because the phrase "prayer walk" isn't in the Bible that it's not something Christians should do. That got me going back to

Scripture, looking at what the Bible says about prayer, and I believe that there are examples of this practice!

In Genesis, right after Adam and Eve have eaten the forbidden fruit, the verse says, "God was walking in the garden in the cool of the evening, and they heard His footsteps and they hid." What that verse implies is that walking through the garden was God's regular habit, and Adam and Eve normally walked with Him. From that, we can see that we were created for fellowship with God, to walk and talk with God.

I think too, [throughout] Jesus' whole ministry He was walking all over the land of Israel and Palestine with the disciples and crowds of different people and talking to them. We have some of those conversations recorded in the Gospels... a lot are not recorded, but we know that they did talk, and that's another picture of "prayer walking."

This practice is one that's close to your heart. Why is that? What got you interested in the first place?

My first exposure was over 15 years ago in China, where I was living as a long-term field worker. My organization hosted a short-term prayer trip to an area near where we were working; I went with a whole team of people for maybe a week, driving along the countryside to different locations to stop and pray. It was amazing because the people I was with just loved to pray — they seemed so in touch with God — and at the end of each day, it really felt like we had done something significant, like we had put in a full day's work! That got me hooked.



I wanted to be more intentional about my intercessory prayer life, and this was a great way to do it. I started doing it more regularly on my own with a fellow field worker of mine; that's really when it became more a part of my life.

Beyond intercession, in my own personal prayer life, I often find some of my most significant or intimate prayers with Jesus have been while I'm walking.

We have focused a lot on discipleship this year. How does this practice fit into the broader conversation about discipling ourselves and each other?

The foundational step of sharing the Gospel is prayer. It's in prayer that we connect to God, hear from God, and build our relationship with God. I've heard some people say they don't know what it means to disciple others, or they don't feel qualified to do that. You don't have to go to Bible school to pray, you don't have to be a missionary; prayer is a foundational thing that's within the grasp of anyone to do.

If you start first by interceding for people in your life — your family, friends, neighbors, colleagues — if you really pray for them, God will give you chances to talk about your own walk with Him, about what He's done in your life. In prayer walking, we ask God, "what can I do with you to be part of your plan for this neighborhood where you've planted me?"

Many Eastbrookers participated in a Discipleship Survey this fall, and one takeaway was that some folks feel uncomfortable or unsure about sharing their faith with others. How can this practice help?

I think when we hear the word "evangelism," especially in the West, people think it means cornering someone and forcing them to make a decision in the next five minutes. I don't think that's what the Lord had in mind. Jesus calls us to be a witness, and if we think of legal terminology, a "witness" tells you what they saw and what they know from their own experience.

Anyone and everyone can be a witness. It's okay if you don't know every verse

in the Bible. It doesn't matter that you can't answer every question about Christianity. You can answer for yourself and say, "this is what God has done for me." You can answer about what you do know or understand, even your doubts or the things you struggle with — those things are also part of our witness. If we're praying and asking God for opportunities to witness, He's going to provide them, to see if we can make a difference.

This year, you hosted several trainings to explain prayer walking for Eastbrookers. If people missed out, where can they look to learn more about this practice?

I worked with the Prayer department at Eastbrook to publish a 6-Week Prayer Walking guide, which lives on! You can access that on Eastbrook's website, along with the video I participated in for the Lenten devotional.

I'd also challenge people to just go out for 20 minutes on their own, get in your zone with Jesus! If they do start up a conversation with someone, I encourage them to ask folks if they need prayer for anything. Some people respond to that, and you can pray right then and there in the name of Jesus. That can open a door to share more, it might just be a one-off interaction — but it could lead to many things that we may never see.

I realize a lot of people are not experiencing the sweetness of the Lord in their life personally. This practice can be restful, refreshing. If you're walking five minutes down the street to the store, you can pray! Sometimes I think we short-circuit ourselves, we think if we don't dedicate an hour to it, it doesn't "count" — it doesn't take much to re-route ourselves back to the Lord and get whatever it is we need for the day. You're asking God to show you what's on His heart for the place you're moving through. We're there to walk with God, to slow down with Him. Our eyes are open, our ears are open. ■

22

CHILDREN DEDICATED TO THE LORD LAST YEAR

58

KIDS PARTICIPATED IN FAITHMARKERS LAST YEAR

156

KIDS & STUDENTS WENT ON RETREATS & WILDERNESS TRIPS

277

KIDS & STUDENTS WEEKLY IN SUNDAY SCHOOL

230

KIDS IN SUMMER CAMPS

15

PEOPLE ATTENDED ALPHA

2K

HOURS OF CARE & SUPPORT GIVEN BY EASTBROOK PASTORS



Press “Send”

by Megan Littel

HOW EASTBROOK MISSIONS PARTNERS WITH AND COMMISSIONS FIELD WORKERS

Have you ever wondered how missions happens here at Eastbrook? How do we find, partner with, prepare, and send missionaries — who we call “field workers” — out into areas of need?

Meet Abdi Duale and Kawser Omar. This spring, they visited Eastbrook for their commissioning. Their journey to our church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin involves many of the elements that make Eastbrook so special: relationships, connections, and a heart for introducing God to brothers and sisters around the world.

Building Relationships

Abdi and Kawser, both Somali, grew up in Muslim homes — Abdi in a remote village in Somalia and Kawser in Ethiopia. They became Christians as young adults and wouldn’t meet until years later in Djibouti, where they would also marry. Each has a unique story of how they came to know Jesus, testimonies which have shaped their shared passion for missions and led them to where they are today.

Kawser moved with relatives from Ethiopia to Djibouti as a young woman, where she began to have a series of dreams. In one of her dreams, she saw a shining Cross and knew it had to do

with Christianity. She consulted a Christian woman whom she knew and was given the address to a church. She faced a lot of persecution from her family after becoming a Christian, but says she has “never looked back.”

As a young adult, Abdi moved in with a maternal uncle in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, while he took the entrance exam to attend university. There he found a Bible and began to read. After two years of reading Scripture, he asked his uncle to connect him with a community of believers. One member of that community was Ahmed Haile. This would begin a decades-long friendship between the two families — and ultimately, Eastbrook.

Connecting the Dots

Ahmed Haile was led to Christ in the 1970s by one Dr. Marc Erickson. That’s right, Eastbrook’s former senior pastor and his wife, Nancy, are two of many Eastbrookers who have served in Somalia and other East African countries over the life of the church.

Ahmed came to the U.S. later for further education, and immediately reconnected with the Ericksons, moving to Milwaukee to work at Eastbrook. Here, he would also meet

Martha, his future wife. Martha had joined Eastbrook in 1980, where she was drawn almost immediately to missions. She served on a team of missionaries in Somalia for two years in the mid ’80s; upon her return home, she and Ahmed were married before moving back to Somalia.

Wherever the Hailes went, whether Somalia or Kenya, their mission was to encourage Somali believers and help introduce Muslim Somalis to Jesus. It was during the course of their ministry that they met Abdi Duale — first in Somalia, when Abdi attended a gathering of Somali Christians in their home, and later at the university in Kenya where Ahmed was a professor and Abdi a student.

Abdi and Kawser built a relationship with and continued to stay connected to the Haile family, even after the latter moved back to Wisconsin. The friendship continued when Ahmed died from cancer in 2011; Abdi even translated his book, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*, into Somali.

Years later, Martha connected her friends to Eastbrook through a monthly prayer time specifically for Somali

Christians and Somali ministry around the world. Eastbrook Church has a long history with missions in the Horn of Africa, specifically to reach the Somali people who face a lot of persecution; Abdi and Kawser continue this charge through their service with the SIM Mission Organization in Ethiopia.

Sustaining & Growing Bonds

Abdi and Kawser's evangelistic work has spanned time, location, and various outlets: a Christian fellowship in Somalia that produced programs for a radio station, a coaching ministry in Belgium, during which they also had second jobs to support themselves. Since 2018, they have been part of a SIM team in Ethiopia reaching out to Somalis worldwide through technology — shortwave radio and television programs, social media and the Internet.

In addition to hosting and leading a fellowship in their home in Ethiopia, the couple travels to offer training for Somali Christians in nearby countries like Djibouti and Uganda. During these visits, they have often worked directly with other Eastbrook field workers to encourage and disciple young believers — and our field workers have recognized the gifts and fruitfulness in Abdi and Kawser's lives.

Over time, these interactions and Martha Haile's connection to the couple made Eastbrook's Missions Committee aware of their ministry; the group invited Abdi and Kawser to Eastbrook for the first time in 2022, and several teams from Eastbrook have visited them in Ethiopia since.

As you can see, this relationship has been decades in the making. The bond was most recently strengthened in April, when Abdi and Kawser visited Milwaukee to be officially blessed and commissioned as Eastbrook field workers.

When Abdi and Kawser joined the SIM team in Ethiopia, they did not have a

home church that sponsored them. SIM is an organization: they pray for the couple, help encourage, and organize logistics — but at the end of the day, they are not a church and it is not a community. Eastbrook has helped fill this role.

Abdi describes Eastbrook's support as "gaining a family." The pair express happiness that Eastbrook still has a passion to share the Gospel with the Somali people and build on what has come before.

What Comes Next?

Abdi says Somalis are one of the least reached people-groups and one of the most persecuted groups of Christians. It used to be said that to be Somali was to be Muslim, but this is no longer true; God is moving amongst this people-group, as Abdi and Kawser can personally attest. The duo continuously sows seeds as they send the message of the Gospel out, and say they are seeing growth and fruit.

Martha Haile says she has always held the view that the best people to minister to Somalis are Somalis; intimate knowledge of the language and culture are strengths that Somali missionaries — like Ahmed Haile, Abdi, and Kawser — possess. She says her friends, their hearts, and their ministry team in Ethiopia are uniquely equipped to reach the people they serve.

It's getting harder to send missionaries, but sending and supporting nationals to do missions work is strategic for sharing the Gospel. Eastbrook's support of Abdi and Kawser is a faithful way to continue supporting what God is doing in the Horn of Africa and furthering the Gospel in that region of the world.

Let's continue to pray for the Somali people in the Horn of Africa and in other regions of our world. Pray for protection for Abdi, Kawser, and their team, and that God will continue to transform people's lives through the connections and relationships they form. ■

1143
HOUSEHOLDS SERVED BY
THE FOOD PANTRY

213
PATIENTS SERVED AT THE
BREAD OF HEALING CLINIC

678
BOXES OF LOVE DISTRIBUTED

272
STUDENTS AT THE ICC
REPRESENTING 25 NATIONS

34
FIELD WORKERS SERVING
IN 17 COUNTRIES

45
PEOPLE WENT ON 8
SHORT-TERM TRIPS

Facilities Facilitate Ministry

STRATEGIC VISION DRIVES EASTBROOK'S PLANS FOR CAMPUS SPACES

by Rachel Shuster



What is the first thing you notice about our campus?

Maybe it's the beautiful stained glass windows lining the Worship Hall, filtering a rainbow of light onto our shoulders as we raise them in worship on Sunday mornings. Perhaps the seasonal landscaping or the clever artistic staging design catch your attention.

But there is a lot that goes into making things happen on campus that doesn't initially meet the eye: repairs, scheduled maintenance like annual inspections, custodial responsibilities, security and safety needs, event administration...the list goes on!

Management of all of these functions — and more — falls under the scope of Eastbrook's Facilities team, a critical arm of the Ministry Services department. That team is now headed by David Wiley, who joined Eastbrook's staff just before the church kicked off its 2023-24 ministry year and quickly hit the ground running.

Senior Pastor Matt Erickson often says the phrase, "facilities facilitate ministry" — a refrain Wiley now frequently echoes and a charge he takes seriously. As Eastbrook's newest Facilities Director, he is working to be thoughtful and intentional in how his team accomplishes tasks — all while remaining on task and timeline.

"I believe that culture comes first, and achievement comes second," he explains. "Having a vision and goals is good, but they need foundation in care for the entity that is Eastbrook."

For example, Wiley quickly learned that Eastbrook's Church and Academy activities share a vision and mission that depend on many collaborative workflows between ministries: coordinating schedules, spaces, and resources. His job is to help create and tweak the systems that make that coordination most effective.

"We're connecting to God through the way we connect to our environment," he says. "There's a lot you can do to

encourage that sacred connection, and there's a lot you can do to discourage it. Some of that happens on the subconscious level when people come in — whether they feel comfortable or want to come back — based on factors that we tend to largely ignore: signage, layout, scents, sightlines. We have to consider, have we put things together in such a way that it's fostering that connection to God?"

In that way, being relatively new has worked to David's advantage: he's in the shoes of those people who are making their initial impressions and judgments. He says it's an opportunity and a challenge to him in this position.

Some of our campus' environmental upgrades are big and visible (see the sidebar for a short list of projects David's team has tackled this year) — but much of what happens is behind-the-scenes. Along with the Church Council, in 2024 the Ministry Services department undertook a Space Utilization study, a survey intended to give us a snapshot of how

Photos clockwise from left: new windows on the A-Wing, the new West Building, the updated Food Pantry, and new fence.

our campus facilities are currently being used and help forecast a vision for what may be needed in the near future and beyond. The study is still underway, but Wiley says the team is beginning to see what could be done and forming a “master plan” of sorts.

That plan relies on the group’s ability to think ahead more than retrospectively. “We take what we have assessed and say, what needs help right now? How should we talk about the future? The more you do, aligned with a big-picture plan, the more efficient you’re going to be,” he explains, adding that the process takes a lot of organization and patience. “It’s a massive team effort, with architects, lawyers, the design team, general contractors... There’s a lot of back-and-forth, because you can go in a lot of different directions to try and find solutions.”

As they do all of this planning work, the space is still getting used and aging, day by day. This can lead to some deferred maintenance — but Wiley says “crisis mode” is no state in which to operate efficiently or cost-effectively.

“I’m learning that in the past, we’ve been very budget-conscious, getting every last mile out of things for years — but that has meant we haven’t always operated with the future in

mind as much as trying to keep up with the present [demands of the campus and its facilities].”

It comes as no surprise that making all of these choices, big and small, is aided largely by faith. Moving forward, the Facilities Director prays that people are mindful of how much planning goes into work on campus before the congregation ever sees “boots on the ground” or experiences new processes that have been implemented.

“There’s actually a lot of alignment between fixing up a bathroom and creating a disciple,” he chuckles. “That might be a stretch for people, but it’s not! We need those things to feel like we’re in a great space, and to invite others into a great space. I think it’s a little more sacred than secular.”

“That’s part of the stewardship of what we’re entrusted to provide: our job is to foster spiritual growth and transformation,” he explains. “I want to honor when they show up: making things make sense with signage, making them safe with traffic flow in the parking lot, and background checks for people watching the kids. It’s about making sure that everybody has an ability to walk through the hallways and enjoy the space that they’re in and connect with God.” ■



Introducing: David Wiley

NAME: David Wiley

TITLE: Facilities Director

YEARS AT EASTBROOK: Just over 1!

WHAT DREW YOU TO EASTBROOK? The opportunity at Eastbrook was exciting to me because I wanted to serve the city and all its diversity. We’re charged to “love your neighbor as yourself.” Well, who’s your neighbor? Sometimes our neighbor is 15 minutes away, but we won’t get in our car from the suburbs and go find them. Our neighbors are the ones who need our help. Our neighbors are the people who are looking for the outreach. Whether it’s our international ministry, the Food Pantry, the Bread of Healing Clinic, that’s what I see as loving our neighbor, and that’s what I wanted to be a part of.

SUM UP YOUR FIRST YEAR ON THE JOB IN ONE OR TWO PHRASES... “Relationship building” and “culture acclimation.”

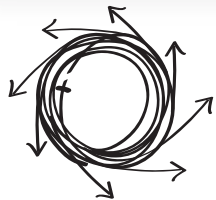
HOW HAS THIS YEAR IMPACTED YOUR LIFE? I’ve never felt closer to God, and a lot of it is that I continue to see Him work through this role. There aren’t a lot of things that are clear, but I have a real peace without any answers. He has given me a lot of confidence for how much He’s working in and caring for all of us. It’s humbling! I’m trying to be open to seeing that fruitfulness happens in ways I wouldn’t expect. That’s been a faith-growing moment for me; we don’t all have to be rockstars for God to do some cool things! The confidence is in our weakness. ■

What’s New?

AN UPDATE ON 2023-2024 CAMPUS PROJECTS

Some of what happens to facilitate ministry on Eastbrook’s campus is visible, but some is not! Take a look at some of the additions, fixes, and refreshes our campus saw this year:

- Installation of the “West Building,” a modular space allowing additional rooms for the Academy to expand their enrollment to 450 this upcoming year!
- Food Pantry renovation to aid new services
- New windows in the A-wing (Eastbrook Academy) & C-wing (Fellowship Hall)
- Parking lot resurfacing, updated parking lot & exterior building lighting
- Updated security cameras installed in pre-existing and new locations, providing for greater visibility across campus
- New seating in the Worship Hall
- Removed trees and replaced fencing around ¾ of the property



Get to Know an Eastbrooker:

2023-2024 MINISTRY RESIDENTS MACKENZY PERRY & CURT CLEMETSON

by David Ibitoye, Eastbrook 2024 Summer Intern

Growing disciples isn't simply about introducing new people to Jesus; it is also a mission of building up the faith of people who already profess themselves as believers. Eastbrook aims to do this in many ways, among them two programs that help young Christian leaders in the development of their calling, character, and competency through contribution to the Church.

Year-Long Ministry Residencies are full-time, paid positions that run from August through July. During the course of that ministry year, Residents become part of the Church staff, assigned to a direct supervisor in a particular ministry area for hands-on experience and mentorship. They also participate in regular development sessions covering both theology and leadership.

In August 2023, two Ministry Residents joined our staff: Curt Clemetson (Adult Ministries & Leadership) and Mackenzy Perry (Missions). Over the course of their time here, both embedded themselves into the everyday life of our church, weaving their unique gifts and perspectives into the work they contributed and the many relationships they built.

Let's help make our big church feel a bit smaller as we get to know Curt and Mackenzy.

Q: What does it mean to be a resident?

CURT: A resident is a full-time position working under one of the Directors on the church staff. We act almost like a shadow, seeing what they do and how to do it. Part of the goal of the program is to help young leaders in discerning their call to ministry.

How did you become a resident at Eastbrook?

MACKENZY: I began attending Eastbrook when I was a student at Ethnos360 Bible Institute — a program I joined because of my interest in missions. I got connected to the church through Miranda, the most recent Missions resident! I really enjoyed Eastbrook's focus on missions and the diversity within the church, so after graduating from Ethnos, I felt called to take on the role of becoming a resident.

CURT: I've been on this ministry journey for about forty years. Most recently, I worked at another church as an intern but didn't feel like I had opportunities to grow in my ability to write sermons, create teaching elements, and speak in front of others. I

found the Eastbrook residency on a staffing website. Almost immediately after starting, I was given opportunities to teach classes on the Bible and was finally able to grow within my passion.

Tell us about some of the work you have done during your residency.

CURT: As a resident with Adult Ministry, I've focused primarily on education for the men and women in our community. I created a Bible study syllabus focusing on the minor prophets for a Sunday Adult Class, and helped teach the Book of Revelation at the Wednesday night Men's Bible study. I've also had opportunities to work with middle school students and even write sermons!

MACKENZY: I've been a resident within the Missions department, specifically the ministry with an international focus. I've worked at the ICC [International Community Center on Milwaukee's South side] teaching English, tutoring in the evenings, helping in the kids' room, and assisting on Friday nights when we focus on international student outreach. I

Can you describe a memorable Eastbrook experience you've had this year?

CURT: I really enjoy working with fellow staff members. Something I like that we all do together is team up each month to prepare food for staff lunches; it's small, but it's a way we can minister to one another and come together in the midst of our individual work. In general, I have also really enjoyed meeting with different people across the church and getting to know them better.

MACKENZY: I was lucky to participate with some fellow church members in the Perspectives discipleship course that Eastbrook played host to this year, and learn about God's heart for the nations while being challenged to make a change. And, like Curt, when I look back and think about how many people I've met and had the chance to know since I started, that's memorable for me, too.

What are the challenges and rewards of being a resident?

MACKENZY: I think one challenge has been figuring out how to be a "good" resident. What I mean by that is, what does it look like to continuously build different relationships and spread the Gospel in this role? As far as rewards, I would say having the time to build relationships with international students and the refugees we serve through our various Missions ministries. I feel like this year has allowed me to grow in my knowledge of what it's like to be the only Christian in a given area.

CURT: I think about the challenges and rewards in broad terms. It has been

challenging not to get distracted into making this position my "personal vision project," but rewarding in that it has given me a chance to see if ministry truly is God's calling for me. The simple fact that the church offers this role with as many opportunities as possible to find our calling is a reward on its own.

In what ways do you find God pouring into you, as you are asked to pour into others?

MACKENZY: I've seen how spiritual growth happens through relationship with others, and through questions my students have asked me about Christianity that even I originally didn't know the answers to!

CURT: In my own life this year, I've encountered God through the Word, prayer, meditation, my fiancée and other people who have helped guide me.

Now that your residency year has come to an end, what are your next steps and how can we pray for you moving forward?

CURT: I have joined Eastbrook's Ministry Services team as a Facilities Specialist! I would ask for prayer to support my marriage — we are getting married in December, and are praying that my fiancée's family will be able to make it to the wedding.

MACKENZY: I'm planning to teach at Eastbrook Academy as a second grade teacher this fall! I plan to stay in Milwaukee for two more years before potentially continuing on my training at Ethnos 360. I would ask for prayers that I can continue to grow in my faith as I've been able to do this year as a resident. ■

Did you know?

In addition to the Year-Long Ministry Residencies, Eastbrook also offers Summer Internships! High school graduates (and above) become part of our staff in a particular ministry area for the summer months — a very busy time in the life of our community. David, who wrote the article above, worked as a summer intern with our Communications team in 2024! Do you know anyone who may be interested next summer? Send them to eastbrook.org/internships for more information and to find an application.



107
WORSHIP/PRODUCTION
LEADERS SERVED LAST YEAR

111
WELCOME TEAM MEMBERS

196
NEXTGEN LEADERS

173
ATTENDED LEADER LAUNCH

333
SERVING IN LOCAL MISSIONS

41
SERVING IN CARE
MINISTRIES

35
PRAYER MINISTERS
PRAYING AFTER SERVICES



Improving with Age

A NEW COMMUNITY FOR OLDER ADULTS BLOSSOMS

This year, Eastbrook’s Adults and Care ministries teamed up to expand our class offerings for Older Adults. Today, this group within our wider church family consists of folks we might normally call “Boomers,” men and women born roughly before 1965, who desire to serve God faithfully during the second half of life. They can do so many things well with the maturity, patience, and wisdom that their time with God has granted them.

In 2024, Eastbrook offered a Sunday Adult Class titled “Improving with Age,” where participants explored Scripture in community addressing the rewards and challenges of aging, as well as the unique blessings aging Christians bring to our church. These sessions were so popular, that the group elected to continue throughout the summer! Also this year, our annual Living Well Seminar focused on Christian grandparenting (see photo above), and was

followed up by a six-week summer class expanding on the same topic. Around 25-30 “students” joined for each session! Let’s hear what one participant had to say when reflecting on her experience:

“The grandparenting class this summer at Eastbrook provided a wonderful opportunity for seniors to rethink their family roles as ‘intentional Christian grandparents.’

“The classes provided excellent teaching, helpful materials, and time to share and learn from each other. The good attendance showed that this was a welcomed resource for our church.

“It was really beautiful for me to see this group of older adults reaching down two generations to engage in discipleship to grandchildren. I was grateful to God for what I learned and grateful to Ruth and the others who made this opportunity possible.”

- Sally O’Brien, Whitefish Bay

799
CHURCH MEMBERS, 31 NEW!

927
WEEKLY SUNDAY SERVICE
ATTENDERS (IN PERSON)

364
WEEKLY ATTENDERS (ONLINE)

97
NEWCOMERS ATTENDED A
LUNCH WITH THE STAFF

995
DOWNLOADS OF OUR
NEW EASTBROOK APP!

1707
DAILY READERS OF THE LENTEN
& ADVENT DEVOTIONALS
WRITTEN BY 64 EASTBROOKERS

400
PLANTS WERE DISTRIBUTED
ALONGSIDE OUR LENTEN DEVO

25 Years and Counting...

EASTBROOK ACADEMY REACHES A MAJOR MILESTONE IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

by John Schuessler

415

STUDENTS AT EASTBROOK ACADEMY (2023-2024) FROM 290 FAMILIES

Photos from left from the 25th Anniversary Dinner: Nancy Erickson; Manuel Rosado and Pastor Matt Erickson



My wife Dawn and I have worked in a host of ministries at Eastbrook since the late '80s: discipling students from preschool through junior high; leading life groups and choirs; hosting new members for lunch, serving on the church council, teaching in the Eastbrook School of Fine Arts and connecting with our neighbors through basketball. How invigorating to be part of a church family like Eastbrook's!

Here we can offer our time and talent in so many different ways, strengthening the one body of Christ in and outside the church walls. And together we make a place that is hospitable to all who have been created in God's image and are in need of His love, mercy and kindness.

This year, we tackle a new challenge. Dawn is now a middle school science teacher at Eastbrook Academy; she

follows me by a semester, as I became a high school English teacher last spring.

Eastbrook Academy is a lively, friendly, and prayerful bunch. The students keep me on my toes with their questions and expectation to learn. The faculty and administrative staff are very supportive and have no greater delight than to see kids thrive. And nothing can compare to seeing the students taking charge of the weekly worship.

The Academy turned 25 this year. Just over two decades ago, the school opened its doors to welcome its very first students, and through all of those years, God has taken care of our scholars, families, and faculty. We thank Him for His faithfulness, and for entrusting us with such an important ministry: using education as the pathway toward impacting lives and developing Christ-like leaders. ■

15

SENIORS GRADUATED

50+

CHURCHES REPRESENTED

40+

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

As evidenced by the stories, details, facts and figures on the previous pages, Eastbrook has a tremendous amount of generous people sharing God-given resources—time, talents, interests, donations, goodwill, knowledge, creativity, etc. Thank you, Eastbrook!



This report is only a small summary of how we as a church community have used and expressed our individual and collective acts of worship to proclaim and embody the love of Jesus Christ in the city and the world! Only God knows the full extent of how these expressions of worship have bolstered His work on earth, both locally and globally.

Giving cheerfully unto God (Matthew 6:1-4 and 2 Corinthians 9:7) is inwardly powerful and deeply soul-satisfying. In Scripture we find amazing stories and encouragements to serve those around us, bear each other's burdens, pass along hope and tested wisdom, share meals and life, and explore a myriad of ways to minister God's grace and love into a hurting world. May this next ministry year be soul-satisfying for you, for those you minister with, and especially those you minister to.

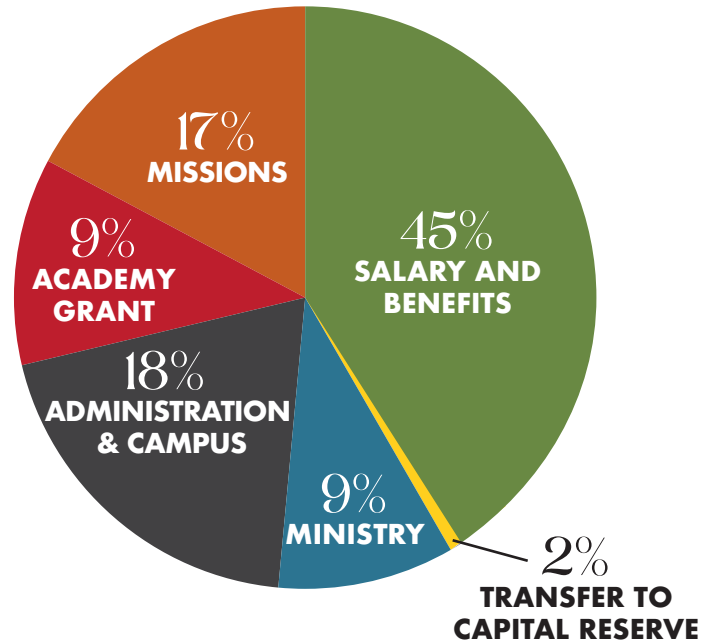
With thanks, for we bear His name.

Wally Johnson
President, Eastbrook Church Council

FISCAL YEAR AT A GLANCE

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| BUDGET | \$3,850,000 |
| RECEIPTS | \$3,757,233 |
| EXPENSES | \$3,690,909 |

2023-2024 EXPENDITURES



2023-2024 FISCAL YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

| | FY 2023-2024 (ACTUAL) | FY 2023-2024 (BUDGET) | FY 2024-2025 (BUDGET) |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| RECEIPTS | | | |
| General | | | |
| General Fund | 2,826,328 | 2,900,000 | 2,900,000 |
| Eastbrook Academy Grant | 350,000 | 350,000 | 350,000 |
| Missions | 580,904 | 600,000 | 600,000 |
| TOTAL RECEIPTS | 3,757,233 | 3,850,000 | 3,850,000 |
| EXPENDITURES | | | |
| General | | | |
| Salary & Benefits | 1,687,932 | 1,867,783 | 1,863,812 |
| Ministry | 356,921 | 340,750 | 336,600 |
| Administration & Campus | 681,459 | 621,700 | 663,900 |
| Eastbrook Academy Grant | 350,000 | 350,000 | 350,000 |
| Missions | 614,597 | 600,000 | 600,000 |
| Transfer to Capital Reserve Fund | 66,324 | 69,767 | 35,688 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURES | 3,757,233 | 3,850,000 | 3,850,000 |

\$91K

THANKSGIVING OFFERING TO COME ALONGSIDE CHRISTIANS IN THE HOLY LAND WHO ARE PROVIDING RELIEF TO THEIR NEIGHBORS IN THE CURRENT CONFLICT

116

FIRST-TIME GIVERS THIS PAST YEAR FOR A TOTAL OF 351 ONLINE GIVERS