

# Speak Out!



We serve because  
He first served us.

One of the most unexpected things Jesus ever did must be the moment before His arrest and crucifixion when He washed His disciples' feet in the upper room. Before teaching with words, Jesus wanted to teach with His actions:

*Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. (John 13:3-5)*



What might it mean that the Savior of the world, God come in flesh, offers this shocking display of humility and servanthood? What might it tell us about who God is and what God desires from humanity in relation to the world? The Apostle Paul reflects on these very questions when writing to believers in Philippi. Drawing upon what many think was a preexisting Christian hymn, Paul writes that Jesus:

*Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;  
rather, he made himself nothing  
by taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.  
And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:6-8)*

Jesus' incarnation reveals the depths of God's being to us, a being marked by selfless love and striking humility. The Savior comes to serve. And this is why Paul writes, immediately before, "in your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus" (2:5). Jesus Christ's followers are, unsurprisingly, supposed to look like Jesus, and humble service should feature prominently in that similarity. When the Apostle John writes, "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19), it might not be bad to apply that by also saying, "We serve because He first served us."

In this issue of *Speak Out* we explore service, considering the amazing ways God serves us in Christ and what it looks like to overflow with gratitude in service to others. As we read the stories here, I hope we are encouraged and also inspired to step forward in service for God's glory on earth.

Matt Erickson  
Senior Pastor, Eastbrook Church



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## Save the Date: Serve Sunday!

Save the date for our first-ever Serve Sunday, taking place on Sunday, May 3. The whole morning will be geared around serving, from Pastor Matt's message, to the God Stories and videos in the service, and we will even be having a ministry fair in the Main Lobby!

Make sure to save some time on May 3 to stop by the booths in the Main Lobby, where members of each Eastbrook ministry will be available to meet you, let you know more about their ministry area, and share how you can join in on what God is doing here at Eastbrook!



SERVICES Sundays @ 8, 9:30 & 11 am  
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# GET TO KNOW AN EASTBROOKER: Alicia Borris

Serving may not always look the way you'd expect it to. In fact, you may not ever see some of the service that happens behind the scenes.

Alicia Borris certainly is a familiar face in our church community—she has attended Eastbrook Church since her childhood, including spending many of her school years as a student at Eastbrook Academy. If you have small children, you may also recognize her from her role leading in Lambs on Friday mornings. But another one of her roles is largely unseen (although its impact is far-reaching): she serves as Eastbrook's Administrative Data Specialist, a role that spans across ministries and touches every person who comes to our campus.

Let's meet Alicia and get to know her and the work she does better.

## WHEN AND HOW DID YOU FIRST COME TO EASTBROOK?

My name is Alicia (Rumbaugh) Borris, my parents raised my sister and me at Eastbrook Church. Our family has been here since 1990. This place has been a constant throughout my life and my walk with God. A large part of my childhood took place on this campus and that shaped me in many ways. I learned how to pray, heard Bible stories, took communion, and accepted the Lord as my savior all for the first time here. When I left the Academy, aged out of Sunday School, and did not have scheduled time to study the Bible structured into my week, I always had the foundation of everything I learned here to help me navigate my life and my faith.

## HOW ARE YOU INVOLVED AT EASTBROOK?

I serve in Lambs School with the 2- and 3-year-olds whose moms attend the Friday Women's Bible Study, which I've been doing for a few years now after moving there from teaching preschool on Sundays. I have loved being involved with Lambs, seeing the joy of the Lord spread through those little children as we sing and dance on Friday mornings!

When I saw an opportunity to get more involved working for the church, I applied for my current role as Eastbrook's Administrative Data Specialist. My job is to oversee our church database and all that it entails, ensuring that all of our data is consistent, up-to-date, and trustworthy. The most rewarding part of my job is knowing that even the most mundane task I complete is being completed to serve the Lord and create opportunity for our Church to grow.



## WE'RE TALKING ABOUT SERVING IN THIS ISSUE—HOW WE ARE CALLED TO MULTIPLY OUR TIME AND TALENTS FOR THE GOOD OF GOD'S KINGDOM HERE AT EASTBROOK. WHAT ROLE DO YOU PLAY IN RELATION TO SERVICE/SERVING?

I manage the database; so, I help with organizing serving opportunities and serving schedules. A church of our size needs to be organized to function, and the database does that for us.

The database that we use is appropriately named "Church Community Builder," or CCB for short. I believe that my work helps us do just that—build a greater church community. The database is of course a tool to help our staff work efficiently, but also to help us reach members of our church and make it easy for everyone to get more involved and find resources. One of the ways it does that is by syncing with our wonderful app (which you can download on Apple or Android—visit [eastbrook.org/app](http://eastbrook.org/app) for download links!)

## IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU FIND GOD POURING INTO YOU, AS YOU ARE BEING ASKED TO POUR INTO OTHERS?

We've all heard it, but it couldn't be truer: the more you talk to God the more you hear from Him. Working at the Church has strengthened my relationship with God because I find myself talking to Him more throughout my work day, simply because I'm in His house and the place where I met Him so many years ago.

## IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SAY TO YOUR EASTBROOK FAMILY?

If you ever get a suspicious-looking message that says it's from Eastbrook, remember this: Pastor Matt would never ask you to email him your contact information—but I would! ■

# STORY

## Growing Vegetables and Disciples

by Steve Kiskunas



Steve, teaching the Container Gardening Class at Holy Grounds this past March.

In addition to traditional “God Stories” (tracing God’s hand throughout the life of an Eastbrooker), we also want to share smaller snapshots of His faithfulness and provision —“God Moments,” if you will, like the story you’ll hear below.

For nearly two decades, Eastbrook has hosted a Food Pantry on site twice a week, where we provide emergency food to over 500 families each year. A portion of the fresh, healthy produce provided to members of our community is locally grown right on Eastbrook’s campus! The Food Pantry Garden operates seasonally, but volunteers like Garden Coordinator Steve Kiskunas are always thinking of fresh ways to invite more people into their work.

I work in West Bend as a telescopic handler product manager for Manitou Group. Telescopic handlers are construction forklifts with extendable arms. I am joyfully married to my wife, Beth, and we have three children, Joseph, Sarah and Anna. Beth and I live in Belgium, WI and we first began attending Eastbrook while students at UW-Milwaukee in the 1990’s! We returned in 2016, becoming members in 2019.

The Food Pantry Garden grows and donates fresh garden vegetables to the Eastbrook Food Pantry. The Garden was founded on the belief that the community could benefit from fresh, local produce. To provide that produce, we harvest and do much of our work early Saturday mornings and Monday evenings before the pantry opens. All work is provided by volunteers and we appreciate home grown donations—we even have a program called *Grow and Give* for church members with excess harvest to donate those vegetables to the Food Pantry.

To promote the *Grow and Give* program, we offer an annual Container Gardening Class to share our experience with growing vegetables in planters on the deck at Holy Grounds. This program is open to all and normally offered in March.

Within the new Food Pantry choice layout, customers can choose the garden produce they take home. We asked the pantry personnel if the customers took all of the vegetables and the answer is yes, all the donated vegetables find a home with the Food Pantry customers.

I was invited to help with the garden in 2020 and now manage the garden

program. Each year I am reminded of the gift of creation as we start hundreds of plants by seed indoors—plants that will grow and then be transplanted into the garden when the time is right. Personally, working in the garden with the plants and the volunteers provides me with a wonderful sense of peace. There is also great joy knowing that our efforts are helping the community through the Food Pantry.

I am very thankful for the volunteers. Helping out in the garden is a great way to meet other church members as you are pulling weeds next to one another. Also, we appreciate the donation of the raised beds by Navtej Singh as part of his Eagle Boy Scout project. They are a welcome addition to the garden.

Anyone looking to help in the garden—for an hour or longer!—can contact me at [s.kiskunas@manitou-group.com](mailto:s.kiskunas@manitou-group.com). Pick up information about our *Grow and Give* program in the Main Lobby today! ■

Have a God Story or “God Moment” that you’d like to share in a future issue of *Speak Out*? Know somebody you’d like to nominate? We’d love to hear from you! Email Rachel Shuster at [rshuster@eastbrook.org](mailto:rshuster@eastbrook.org).



# MEMBERS ON MISSION

Diana Otterbacher

Serving doesn't only happen on a church campus—many Eastbrook members are living out their faith across our city and world. One "Member on Mission," Diana Otterbacher, has followed God's call into challenging places, reflecting Jesus' own ministry of love in difficult contexts. Let's meet Diana and see how God is at work through her.

## TELL US ABOUT YOUR MINISTRY.

Four of us represent Eastbrook at the Milwaukee Women's Correctional Center every Wednesday night, where we lead a two-hour Bible Study. We have been privileged to be welcomed by the Department of Corrections for over fifteen years and are careful to follow their guidelines while they allow us to teach the Bible without restrictions or scrutiny. We also have a separate team who leads a Saturday night church service at the Center once a month.

## HOW DO YOU SEE GOD AT WORK HERE?

Jesus is in prison. Jesus is with the poor in spirit and the broken hearted. Most of the ladies who come to our bible study have a church background and it's an honor to observe their growth in faith, hope, and love. Our bible study inmates are the salt and the light and the yeast in what can often be a severe place, which houses about 100 women and staff.

## WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT SERVING?

After being in leadership for so many years, I am content to serve alongside the capable leadership and energy of the younger women on the team. We come from different denominational backgrounds, which enriches our approach to discussing scripture. Our team of four is my 'small group.' I am thankful for this time in my life, equally yoked with these brilliant sisters in Christ.

## HOW DO YOU SEE GOD USING YOUR UNIQUE GIFTS AND TALENTS?

I have always enjoyed leading small groups. As a retired United Methodist pastor, I am grateful to have a place to practice my pastoral and teaching gifts. I'm 81 years old and like to encourage the younger women with the promise that God's blessings have no expiration date. Some of them feel that they've lost so much good time, but I can assure them that by walking closely with the Lord, there's a fulfilling life ahead. After being widowed for many years, I was recently married again in my old age and that gives the women hope for their futures.

## WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE IN YOUR ROLE?

Meeting in the prison cafeteria, we share life stories, joys and concerns, prayer, worship, and delving into scripture with our incarcerated sisters in Christ. While it can be disturbing to hear the women divulge their pain and suffering, I am able to identify with them as I have endured my own dark valleys of betrayal, loneliness, and rejection.



The sentences vary from months to years, but women typically finish at the Center in about 18 months. During that time, we develop a friendly relationship with each other, so we say goodbye and never hear from them again, entrusting them to the Lord. Rules prevent volunteers from contacting women after their release. We feel helpless and worry and pray for those who leave prison with no friends or family support and must fully rely on God. Sometimes their first stop is a homeless shelter or a short stay at a hotel with no plans beyond that.

## HOW HAS GOD GROWN AND TRANSFORMED YOU THROUGH YOUR SERVICE?

The time and structure of weekly Bible study allows us to really experience "church" where two or three gather together in Jesus' name. I hope it is a model for the ladies so they will know what to look for when they are outside and looking for a church.

We are impressed with the prison guards who interrupt their routines and happily greet us each week and quickly do everything they can to kindly facilitate our equipment and arrangements. The guards have a difficult job and strict rules to follow, so I think we bring them a little joy as well.

While being in prison is certainly no picnic, many inmates establish healthy, Christian friendships. We often hear the women say that their time "inside" was just what they needed to turn their lives around and break free from the chains that bound them "outside." Their bodies are healed with regular meals, sleep, and the absence of harmful substances. For those who cooperate, counseling, accountability, and addiction programs are available to them. Once outside, many of the women will go on to be effective witnesses of God's grace. ■

# TAKE SHAPE

## HOW PRACTICING OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS CAN TRANSFORM OUR THINKING ABOUT CHURCH

An Essay by Daniel Kremer

This issue of *Speak Out!* is full of stories about the folks who sit across the aisle from you on a Sunday. Just like you and I, they are disciples. Just like you and I, they are fearfully and wonderfully made. Their stories appear here because they have stepped out in faith to figure out how to use their uniqueness to serve God's kingdom. They are examples of the fact that who we were created to be determines what we were created to do.

*"For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."* (Romans 12:4-8)

**THE GREATER GOOD OF THE WHOLE BODY MUST ALWAYS TAKE PRIORITY OVER THE NEEDS OF ANY SINGLE PART. THIS IS A "KINGDOM MINDSET."**

In contrast, regrettably, in this day and age the decision to attend church can often be governed by an individualistic mindset. Like going out for a bite to eat or a morning coffee, the consumer decides where to go based on how well the provider meets the need. If the experience at a particular church falls short of the attendee's standards, they may

decide to leave. This consumer-driven approach may make sense when we're shopping for a new car, but it doesn't work when we are talking about our spiritual lives.

The consumer says, "My church isn't meeting my needs!" But the mature Christian asks, "How can I meet the needs in my church?"

A growing disciple should be asking, "Does this church continuously point me to Christ and encourage me to step out in faith in new ways?," and a mature, Christ-centered disciple should be asking, "How am I participating in fulfilling the mission of the church?"

With that comparison in mind, let's address one of the ways believers can move from spiritual infancy to mature followers of Christ: by discovering and practicing our spiritual gifts.

**ONE OF THE WAYS WE CAN MATURE IN FAITH IS BY DISCOVERING OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS.**

Every human being has been created by God with natural strengths and abilities. Some of us are great bakers, while others are great bankers, or brokers, and so on. Just as a carpenter is skilled with his hands, a church leader is likely to have traits like charisma, leadership and vision. But, the abundant life that Jesus talks about in John 10:10 involves much more than simply using our natural skills to glorify God. Beyond these natural abilities, Christians also have special gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit.

Pastor and theologian John Piper defines

a spiritual gift as "an ability given by the Holy Spirit to express our faith effectively for the upbuilding of another's faith." The Apostle Paul writes that the various gifts are given "to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:12). In other words, our Heavenly Father has granted each one of us a special unique form of expression in order to encourage our fellow believers and the Church.

There are many spiritual gifts listed in Scripture, though scholars say these lists are not exhaustive (check out 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 to explore for yourself). You can take an online spiritual gifts assessment to get a sense for what your gift may be — Eastbrook even offers one for free on our website and app! Try it. Discuss the assessment results with a trusted friend or family member. Pray that God would help you evaluate your strengths with "sober judgment" (Romans 12) to clarify what your gift is and how He would have you use it. God may be calling you into something deeper and more exciting than you ever through the Christian life could be—He may even be calling you out of your comfort zone! In truth, it is easier to discover your gift through ministry than to discover your ministry through your gift; in other words, you may need to step out in faith and serve to reveal what gifts God has given you.

Here at Eastbrook, Pastor Jim Caler uses the acronym SHAPE when teaching about spiritual gifts. SHAPE stands for: Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences. In other words, SHAPE describes how you are fearfully, wonderfully, and uniquely made. Each of these five aspects of our lives work together to

remind us that God gave each of us desires and talents for a reason: to glorify Him and encourage His people.

Another way to look at this is that God gives us natural gifts (heart, ability, personality, experiences) and spiritual gifts like those we find in Scripture. Both our natural giftings and our spiritual gifts work together to bless others.

Once you discover your gift or gifts, then the real spiritual adventure begins. Some of us might find our spiritual calling by serving in some capacity at a church or parachurch organization. But there are countless other creative paths that lead to building up the body of Christ.

## **BUT REMEMBER, THE GOAL IS NOT TO MAKE MUCH OF YOURSELF OR YOUR ABILITIES, BUT TO GLORIFY GOD AND SERVE HIS CHURCH.**

Let me give two examples from my own life. I have a knack for writing (I hope!) and Eastbrook publishes a magazine. So I am applying my spiritual gift of faith and my natural talent for words in order to encourage my local church through *Speak Out!* My other spiritual gift is hospitality, which my wife and I apply together with the physical gift of our home and our natural abilities for cooking good food to encourage our church family. So on the one hand I am serving within the structure of my local church, and on the other hand I'm serving people directly out of my home.

Jeff Hernandez is a member of Eastbrook Church who has served in several different ministries. You might see him leading worship or singing in the choir on a Sunday morning. I asked Jeff about his spiritual gifts, and he shared how he intentionally prioritized finding and practicing his gift of encouragement, and how he continues to practice it still.

"I prayed to God and asked Him. It was clear to me that my spiritual gift should amplify my natural gift which is music.

Through that process of praying to God and seeking the counsel of my spiritual mentor and other believers, it became clear that my spiritual gift was encouragement," Jeff explains. He sought the help of God, applied his own wisdom, and sought the wisdom of others.

"God confirmed my own spiritual gift through the encouragement and acknowledgement of other believers," he says. Jeff's faith community was instrumental in helping him discover his gift in the first place, but also in confirming that his work was serving God as he developed his gift.

Jeff adds, "Work hard at it until you improve. Practice it. Use it on a regular basis. Don't let your gift be dormant!"

## **ONCE YOU FIND OUT WHAT YOUR GIFTS ARE, THAT IS JUST THE BEGINNING OF THE ADVENTURE THAT GOD IS LEADING YOU INTO!**

Here are three very practical steps to take after you discover your spiritual gifts: leverage your faith community, pray to God relentlessly, and practice your gifts.

First, do you have a faith community that you can be vulnerable with? If so, they are in the perfect position to help and encourage you in your discovery. If not, consider joining a Bible study or prayer group. Christian community is essential! Christians are commanded repeatedly in Scripture to encourage and strengthen each other (see Ephesians 4:2-4, Hebrews 10:24-25). These are the very people God has gifted you to serve, and on this beautiful journey of faith together, they will be an encouragement to you as well.

Second, ask God for help. The Lord who made you and knows you will not fail to help you discover your gift, use it, be effective with it, and bless others through it. He has prepared specific work for you to do (Ephesians 2:10). And He will help you complete it (Philippians 1:6). Just ask Him and see what happens.



Third, practice your gift. No one ever became successful without hard work. If you are truly serious about developing your gift to glorify God, then you must put in the work.

These steps are simple, but not easy. Faith is often like that. Believe that as you pursue God in this area, your prayers will draw you closer to God, your friends will encourage your spirit, and your practice will bear fruit by the grace of God.

In his book *Contagious Faith*, Mark Mittelberg writes, "We easily slip into a predictable, routine, and sometimes mechanical religious existence. In a word, many of us are spiritually bored. Why is that?" Mittelberg then invites us into evangelism saying, "Increasing your involvement in outreach injects adrenaline into every other aspect of your Christian life."

God is calling all of us out of the consumer mindset that prevents us from being effective members of the body of Christ. He designed us, He has a purpose for each one of us, and one day, He will ask us to give an account for our lives.

## **HE HAS GIVEN ALL OF US TALENTS AND GIFTS, HOW ARE WE USING THEM?**

Let's think about church differently. Let's stop sitting on the sidelines and get in the game! We all have a unique SHAPE to share with the world, we each have a part to play; we are each responsible for participating in God's plan of redemption for the world. Jesus said He will be with you as you go make disciples (Matthew 28:20). This is the call for everyone who believes. ■

If you would like to discover your SHAPE or take a spiritual gifts assessment, visit [eastbrook.org/serve](http://eastbrook.org/serve) or visit the Serve section of the Eastbrook app. You can also sign up for the Eastbrook 301 class with Pastor Jim Caler which addresses spiritual gifts—upcoming sessions can be found at [eastbrook.org/301](http://eastbrook.org/301).



# WHAT'S YOUR *servicing* STYLE?

by Rachel Shuster

**FOLLOW THE ARROWS TO FIND YOUR STARTING POINT FOR SERVING AT EASTBROOK!**



It bears repeating that it is often easier to discover your spiritual gift through ministry than to discover your ministry through your gift! Save the date for our first-ever Serve Sunday, taking place on Sunday, May 3. The whole morning will be geared around serving, including a ministry fair in the Main Lobby where members of each ministry listed here will be available to meet you, let you know more about their ministry area, and share how you can join in on what God is doing here at Eastbrook! ■

**ARE YOU COMFORTABLE WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS?**

- CARE**  
Provide one on one care, or help with one of our support groups.
- ACCESSIBILITY**  
Provide support and care to a child or student with special needs.