



# The Patio News

## Special Edition

PASTORS: Rev. Dr. Peter Buehler,  
Rev. Judith Muller, & Rev. Anne Shelton

**Extra  
Extra**

### Meet Your Candidate for Associate Pastor

A Personal Message from Erik

Grace and peace to you, members of the First Presbyterian Church of Santa Barbara,

The journey of calling a new pastor into the life and ministry of your congregation rings with significance, energy and excitement. My first word to you is, Congratulations! The faithful and diligent work on the part of your congregation promises to bear fruit in the coming season of mission and ministry. The people and parts of your congregational life that I have gotten to know have filled me with gratitude. How wonderful that your faithful journey as a congregation is filled with such a rich heritage of long-standing disciples of Jesus Christ, and is brimming with the opportunity to continue welcoming more onto FPCSB's road of discipleship. I treasure the gift of every life story, and am grateful for the opportunity to know yours better. The passion of my heart and life desires that we deepen our roots in God's redemptive love, so that we know and live the grace of Jesus Christ, for ourselves and for the world, more fully each day.

With joyful appreciation,

*Erik Wiebe*

# Erik Wiebe



# Erik's Biography

Erik was born in Southern California and lived most of his youth in Tustin. The son of a music professor/choral director and an RN who specialized in postpartum care, Erik and his two older sisters were surrounded by a loving, musical, faithful and caring home. During second grade, his dad became the Director of Worship at Irvine Presbyterian Church. For the next ten years this church became the community of faith in which Erik encountered the people who would help teach, shape and mold his life of discipleship, worship, and servant leadership.

His college of choice, Gordon College (New England's version of Westmont!), continued him on the path of learning to live fervently with the united passions of academics and faith. There he met Kate, among many important lifelong relationships established at the school. They were married and were thrilled to fly to Oxford, England for their final year of undergraduate coursework with Gordon's prestigious Oxford Studies program. Returning to the U.S. to start their M.Div. degrees at Princeton Seminary, they started a family and also wove in a year-long ministry internship in Tampa, FL, as well as another Masters degree in Ethics for Erik.

Moving just north of Chicago to start simultaneous PhD degrees at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Erik is now a candidate in his degree program in Theological Ethics, and has enjoyed the process of publishing his first book, a volume co-edited with a former professor and colleague, entitled *In Search of Self*. Additionally, Erik was Director of Worship and Discipleship Formation at First Presbyterian Church of Wilmette, where he served until very recently.

Erik enjoys running roads and trails as part of his fitness routine, and is also a lifelong soccer player, and enjoys the occasional pickup game. He is a backpacking and camping enthusiast, and loves cooking, woodworking, and general handyman problem solving.

A cyclist all his life, Erik has a passion for two wheels, from early years riding BMX, to moun-

tain biking in college, to his newfound joy and success in road cycling. The past three years in Chicago, he had the privilege of riding for the MS Racing Team, which raised awareness for multiple sclerosis. This coming August, his sister, Louisa, and he will ride the Pan-Mass Challenge, a 2-day 150 mile ride from Boston to Provincetown which raises funds for cancer research. Louisa's 4 year old daughter, Sephine, has been battling Rhabdomyosarcoma since October of 2010. Erik looks forward to continuing to combine his passion for cycling with such worthy causes.

With continuing passion for issues of faith, personhood, and the unique challenges posed to us as disciples in the 21st century, Erik's life of ministry and commitment to constructive and caring pastoral work in a parish setting forms the core of how he understands his place and his work in the world. By God's grace, and surrounded by the dynamic and joyful life of his family, friends, and community, Erik desires to continue growing in understanding, faithfulness, and love.

## Highlights of My Faith Journey:

Even though I was mostly a good kid who followed the rules and listened well, my friends and I could be a handful in Sunday School (sorry Mrs. Webb!) and church activities (really, you don't want to know how the macaroni got onto the ceiling). Highlights, even before I knew they would be so, were the myriad faithful adults who made space enough for me to laugh and have fun, while also showing me that, because Jesus Christ gave them something worth living for, they could treat me as the genuine, thinking, feeling person I was, and patiently show me that I had something glorious worth living for, too.

My first tangible and understandable encounter with the forgiveness and love of Jesus Christ happened within the amazing short-term web of relationships, conversations, listening ears, and joyful worship at Calvin Crest, the Presbyterian camp in the California Sierras. During such a mountain-top experience, I was fortunate enough to be given the sage, long-term counsel, "this isn't the end; it's a beginning."

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**Kate**

Kate, whose father is a PCUSA pastor, was born in San Pedro, CA, but spent a majority of her growing up years in Malvern, PA, a small town just west of Philadelphia. There she enjoyed a fun childhood being active in school, playing sports and the cello, and making several friends that she still holds dear today. She is grateful to the countless Sunday school teachers, youth and small group leaders, and faithful mentors, who helped to form her faith from a young age and teach her that it truly does "take a village." Over a decade ago, Kate began formally studying pastoral psychotherapy and traumatology with a focus on resourcing clergy and lay leaders and is now a PhD candidate at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Pastoral Theology, Personality, and Culture. She is also a member of the National Response Team for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and most recently deployed to Tucson, AZ, and Tuscaloosa, AL.

## **Fun Facts about the Wiebe Kids!**

**Jakob** turns 8 on July 1st, and is a kind, insightful and adventurous boy who enjoys making friends and whose favorite places include being up in a tree, on a soccer field, or reading a classic adventure story.

**Dara** is 5 1/2 and very much looking forward to starting kindergarten! She loves to dress with sparkles, flowers, and textures. In most cases, she would rather not be the center of attention, though her spirit blossoms on the dance stage, when playing imaginative games, and providing timely comic relief.

**Kaden** is 2 1/2. His beaming smile and warm hugs bundle together with a growing vocabulary and great laughter. He loves "bally-balls," reading truck stories, and cuddling, and he can identify insects on the sidewalk with unparalleled enthusiasm.

# Erik's Bio continued

Just last year, I dropped in unannounced on one of my former Calvin Crest counselors who is now a pastor in the Seattle area. During the announcements, he saw me, pointed at me, and greeted me by name in front of everybody. That kind of grace leaves a mark.

**Marriage.** There's no other relationship that has such potential to refine, because no other relationship produces such heat and pressure. Kate and I had the chance to start early and were given many excellent mentors and counselors along the way. It's not that we agreed to share life together because we knew each other's entire story and could deem one another "safe enough" for such a huge investment. Yes, we took the time to get to know each other. But for us, marriage opens up ever-more expanding territories that necessitate ever-greater doses of courage, grace, and love to explore together. There's a reason marriage is the metaphor used for God and God's people, for Christ and the church. The bride and the groom need a lifetime to get to know each other.

**Kids.** Nothing is more awesome, terrifying, troubling, trying, and beautiful than children. Every word that I speak and every action that I take with my kids I understand to be an expression of my faith. This is a highlight for me because with my kids, I am so aware of my stumbling when I stumble, and I am so caught off guard by the joy and beauty that I helped to steward, but was not of my own making.

**Friends.** I have been given an enormous wealth in the fellow companions who have traveled with me on some wonderful and exceedingly difficult roads. I know parts of my friends' stories that I might never have known if I didn't have the patience or the listening ears to journey alongside of them. These stories help me to put my own journeys into context, and help to give me a fuller perspective on the kinds of things I experience. In a way, each one of these friends is a highlight of my faith journey up to this point, because our combined stories are encounters with God's grace.

## **On Spiritual Growth:**

Shepherding a community of believers involves strength, sensitivity, and navigational skill. It means a genuine, loving, and compassionate "being-with" the group, as well as an ability to know and help grow the vision that there is nourishment to be found. I am passionate about providing ways in which others might come to discover their own spiritual gifts, and find that it is a helpful tool not only in personal discernment, but in the growth of the learning potential of a group.

## **On Evangelism:**

Evangelism is not often a brazen act of proclamation. It is the actions of a person or persons who do the patient work of "living with" those to whom the good news can be shared.

## **On Teaching:**

There is little else in this world that is more deeply satisfying to me than being witness to the growth of an individual or a group that I have helped to facilitate through creative avenues of teaching.

## **On the Missional Church:**

A missional church is the course alteration, away from *in-church* Gospel, and towards a "living out" of the Gospel in the world and in the network of genuine relationships in which people already find themselves.

## **On What Young Adults and Families Seek:**

#1 – A faith that can change them.

#2 – A faith that lead them and empower them to be part of changing the world.