



# FCC Membership Biography

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## *Eric and Erica Helander*

Eric grew up in a Christian household in Stillwater, MN, with two older brothers. They attended a small Lutheran church near his home during his childhood, where the seeds of faith were planted and watered.

Erica is a homeschooled pastor's kid from North Dakota, and has one younger sister. At three years old she snuck up to the pulpit during communion, and had to be dragged out while she screeched, "I wanna tell the people about Jesus!" She's not quite so vociferous now, but the sentiment remains.

We both attended Bethel University in St. Paul. Eric studied Psychology and Bible & Theology, and Erica studied Music and Spanish. After having dwelt in slightly overlapping friend groups for most of our time in college, we started dating during our senior year. Straight out of college, we worked the summer as a team of two sealcoating driveways (12-hour days, six days a week, slopping heavy buckets of tar around). It was "relationship boot-camp," and laid a solid foundation for working together as a couple. A year after graduating from college, we got married in July of 2014.

Eric worked a variety of (additional) odd jobs after college in human services, copy centers & mail rooms, insurance sales, and food service. He ended up as an analyst in IT as a result of a reorg, and found a home in technology. He completed a master's in software engineering from St. Thomas and currently works as a software engineer with MHC Automation in Burnsville, MN.

Erica's first post-college job not involving sealcoat was a call center, taking English and Spanish calls about 401(k)s and other retirement accounts. She ended up on medical leave for six months with unexplained migraines, and once the migraines went away, couldn't bring herself to go back to the phones. She found a part-time job assembling jewelry, and discovered that she loves working with her hands. She's now worked as a jeweler for six years, using torches and saws and a variety of sharp things to create and repair fine jewelry for a company in Minneapolis.

Erica worked at Shane Co with Andrew Reidl, who invited us in late 2016 to start attending the Oak Park Heights missional community led by Scott & Kathy Seaborg. God's timing was perfect, because we were able to build deep connections in that group shortly before we found ourselves without a church home.

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About six months after joining the missional community, we visited FCC for the first time on Easter in 2017. We attended regularly for about a year, then decided to actually get involved, and joined the music team and Sunday Serve missional community in 2018.

We deeply value living in community. We lived in our own apartment for a time after getting married; since then, we've chosen to live with various family and friends. For the past five years, we've lived with Eric's parents and brother in Stillwater. Rosie, our 2-year-old miniature golden retriever, keeps life interesting and light-hearted. We also have a flock of 13 ducks who ensure we remain well-stocked with eggs (and work as a very effective alarm clock).

Outside of work, Eric and Erica both enjoy reading, languages, cooking, personal finance, playing board games with friends, and spending time outdoors (especially the Boundary Waters, though we don't get there nearly often enough). Eric dabbles in smoking meat, and Erica enjoys swimming and gardening.

We are in the midst of preparing our lives and house for the arrival of our first child in December.