“We were looking for a less pretentious worship experience, and St. Mark felt like a caring and progressive worship environment. We are eternally grateful for the loving support that St. Mark members have shared with us.”

BACKGROUND: A love of music brought Michelle and Eric Wright together, and they’ll celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary on May 8!

Michelle was born in Montebello, CA, and eventually moved to Westminster, where she graduated from La Quinta High School. She began playing the violin age 9. She received her BA degree from UC Irvine with a major in anthropology and a minor in music.

Music became her career, and she managed and directed the Orange County Junior Youth Orchestra and Southern California Junior Youth Symphony from 1991-2010. She led tours for both groups to Australia, New Zealand, the Czech Republic, Vienna, Salzburg, Prague, Great Britain, and Paris. She is a former president of the Orange County Suzuki Association. Michelle continues to teach music and has organized Suzuki Festivals at St. Mark for the past three years, giving children from age 3 to 18 the opportunity to perform in a group.

Eric was born in Nashville, TN, and went through grade school, high school and college there, graduating from the Peabody College of Education at Vanderbilt University with a bachelor’s in music education. He then enrolled in the Master of Music Education graduate degree program at University of North Texas State, and later at the University of Southern California. In 1988, he had the exciting opportunity to perform in the percussion section for the National Opera Competition at the Paris Opera House in Paris, France. He also played in the orchestra for the winner’s final concert.

After Eric returned to the United States, he taught at the Irvine Conservatory of Music in Residence program at Irvine Valley College. Michelle was also attending the program! They were married at the Corona Del Mar Community Church in 1993.

Eric worked for many years as a dual research associate in brain research at the Bonney Center for Learning and Memory, and the Physics Department at UC-Irvine. While at UCI, he created
the Remi Gassman Electronic Music Studio in the Fine Arts Department. His next position was chairman of music at Tarbut V’Torah, a Jewish community day school in Irvine. In 2004, he left that position to help care for the Wright’s daughter, Miyoko, who was born three months premature with a severe heart condition.

FINDING ST. MARK: Eric was raised a Baptist, and Michelle grew up in the Buddhist faith. While living in Corona del Mar, Eric discovered St. Mark, and says, “We were looking for a less pretentious worship experience, and St. Mark felt like a caring and progressive worship environment.” The couple joined the church in 2004 and has been active in the congregation. Eric has served as an Elder on Session and on the Worship Commission. Michelle enjoys working with the Sunday School classes. Eric also occasionally plays drums at our Saturday and Sunday morning worship services, and at our Meet Me at Muldoon’s gatherings.

FAMILY LIFE: Miyoko is now 14 years old and loves to sing! The family enjoys going to Sea World, the San Diego Zoo and museums in Los Angeles. They also attend Japanese festivals, such as Obon (the Festival of Souls, honoring one’s ancestors), and Nisei (annual festival celebrating Japanese American culture and history). Eric is a fan of the Golden State Warriors basketball team, and Michelle roots for the Los Angeles Dodgers.

What a joy to have such a talented family sharing their gifts with our St. Mark family!