



North Park University Selects Rev. Dennis R. Edwards, PhD as Dean of North Park Theological Seminary and Vice President for Church Relations

June 3, 2022

Dear members of the North Park University campus community:

I am delighted to announce today that the Executive Committee of the North Park University Board of Trustees, acting on behalf of the full Board, has unanimously approved the nomination and appointment of Rev. Dennis Robert Edwards, PhD as Dean of North Park Theological Seminary and Vice President of Church Relations.

Rev. Dr. Edwards' appointment has been approved by the Executive Board of the Evangelical Covenant Church and will go before the Covenant Ministerium and the annual meeting of the ECC for affirmation. Rev. Dr. Edwards joins the President's Cabinet, partnering with and reporting directly to the President, beginning August 1, 2022.

As Dean and Vice President, Rev. Dr. Edwards will act as a primary liaison to the ECC in areas related to the education of ministerial candidates, to the ECC's Council of Administrators, Council of Superintendents, Executive Committee of the Ministerium, and Board of the Ordered Ministry.

The Seminary Dean is the senior administrative officer of NPTS, responsible for ensuring effective student learning, advancement of faculty scholarship, and stewardship of financial resources. In collaboration with the University President, the Seminary Dean ensures that the Seminary is an effective and integrated component of North Park University, and that it faithfully advances North Park's mission and identity.

We are very blessed indeed to have Rev. Dr. Edwards with us to embrace this vital, multifaceted portfolio. His faith journey and professional advancement include years of pastoral ministry and administration, followed by a move into theological teaching and scholarship – a gradual transition from the pulpit that has evolved into a brilliant and prolific academic career of research, writing, and professional activity. The Lord has used all of that, and more, in preparing him for this role. I have full confidence in his leadership, his discipleship, and our partnership. I know Rev. Dr. Edwards will continue the Seminary's entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to an exceptional educational experience for each student. I look forward to the innovative thinking and pastoral presence he will bring to the senior team.

Rev. Dr. Edwards, ordained in the Evangelical Covenant Church in 2012, is a highly accomplished New Testament Scholar with more than 25 publications to his credit, most recently on Biblical affirmation that black lives matter. His CV is attached to this message.

He has served as a professor of Biblical studies at eight institutions of higher learning over the past 24 years, including his first academic service to North Park Theological Seminary, when he taught *Mobilizing for Justice* in Spring 2013. Rev. Dr. Edwards joined the North Park community full-time in August 2019, as Associate Professor of New Testament. His extensive professional activities include lectures and presentations, podcasts and webinars, and service on numerous boards and steering committees. He has been a church-planter and a pastor in Brooklyn, Minneapolis, and Washington, D.C.

Rev. Dr. Edwards earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering from Cornell University, where he also played football for a year. He earned his Master of Divinity (Urban Ministry) at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School -- and a Master of Arts, and his Ph.D., both in Biblical Studies, from Catholic University of America.

In this search Rev. Dr. Edwards emerged as the premier candidate for this role, the unanimous choice of the search committee, and was strongly supported by the campus community members participating in the process. I have tremendous gratitude and respect for the diligent, faithful, and prayerful work of our search committee: the Chair, Jay Carstenbrock, Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees; Luke Palmerlee, Director of Seminary Operations; Hauna Ondrey, Associate Professor of Church History; Melissa Vélez-Luce, Chief of Staff; Paul Hawkinson, Associate Professor of Finance and Strategy; Rev. Dr. Mary Miller, member of the Board of Trustees; and Curtis Ivanoff, Superintendent of the Alaska Conference of the ECC and member of the Board of Trustees.

Thanks to their devotion to North Park, we have Rev. Dr. Edwards – ready to lead our foundational Seminary in a fast-paced and innovative environment, and to ensure that it very capably and appropriately addresses the preparation of students for ministry, leadership and service in the Evangelical Covenant Church, and beyond.

Rev. Dr. Edwards will succeed Rev. Dr. David Kersten, who has served as Dean and Vice President for the last decade, leading innovation and progress. Dean Kersten was honored recently with North Park's David Nyvall Medallion for Distinguished Service.

Please join me in welcoming our new Seminary Dean and Vice President for Church Relations, Rev. Dr. Dennis Robert Edwards. His appointment brings joy to our summer and new strength to the leadership of North Park University!

Mary K. Surridge
President

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File attachments:

[Dennis R. Edwards CV.pdf](#)