



With deepest gratitude and respect, I write today to announce that Rev. Dr. David Kersten, Vice President for Church Relations and Dean of the North Park Theological Seminary, has made plans to retire from full time service to North Park, effective August 1, 2022.

We heartily congratulate Dave on this well-earned milestone, his thoughtful planning for this important transition -- and profoundly thank him for a long and valued career of service that has brought so much to the Evangelical Covenant Church, to our Seminary, and to North Park University.

Dean Kersten was installed as the Seminary's 11th Dean in the fall of 2012. He had served as a Covenant pastor to congregations in Alabama, Florida, Washington and Minnesota, and then for 11 years as executive minister of the Department of the Ordered Ministry in the ECC.

As Seminary Dean and VP for Church Relations for the past 10 years, Dave has helped shape a generation of vocational leaders for the whole church and a generation of people answering God's call to Covenant ministry in particular -- in all, more than 400 Christian leaders called, equipping them to more effectively serve various roles in vocational ministry.

The Kersten Decade has been the most innovative in our Seminary's rich history. Under Dave's leadership, the Seminary partnered with the ECC and several ECC regional conferences to create the convenient and affordable Ignite program of cohort distance learning. Our Master of Arts in Christian Formation equips youth pastors, camp directors, adult educators and others to invite the Holy Spirit into the lives of the people and communities they serve. Dual degrees are available in partnership with the School of Business and Nonprofit Management. And the School of Restorative Arts (SRA) at Stateville Correctional Center, and at Logan Correctional Center for women, offers a master's degree in Christian Ministry to free and incarcerated students who study together. SRA is a model of innovation that exemplifies our mission and beautifully realizes all three of our distinctives. Now, in partnership with Provost Michael Carr, Dean Kersten is reimagining and redesigning undergraduate Christian Studies so that our students will have the benefit of our Seminary's exceptional faculty, programmatic resources, and missional ethos.

We will miss Dave's wisdom, collegiality, and pastoral presence on our campus and as a member of the President's Cabinet -- and we wish him all of God's blessings in retirement, particularly the gift of time with his wife, Sandi, and their children and grandchildren.

Since our institution's founding 130 years ago as the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant College and Seminary, theological education at the Seminary has been at the center of mission for the denomination and for our school. With endorsement from the Board of Trustees, Mr. Jay Carstenbrock, Vice Chair of the Board and Chair of the Seminary Committee, will join me in organizing a search for a new Vice President for Church Relations and Dean of the Seminary and we will announce the details of that process soon.

Plans are also being made to fully celebrate the legacy of Dean Kersten during this academic year. Please join me in congratulating Rev. Dr. David Kersten C'77 S'82 DMin'97 on his outstanding service and leadership.

Sincerely,

Mary K. SurrIDGE
President