

*Announcement of the Chaplain of the University of Richmond*  
*From Dr. Edward Ayers*

Dear Members of the University Community:

I am delighted to announce the appointment of The Rev. Craig T. Kocher, Associate Dean of the Chapel and Director of Religious Life at Duke University, as the next Chaplain to the University of Richmond. He will also hold the Jessie Ball duPont Chair of the Chaplaincy. Rev. Kocher has been selected through a national search that included significant input from students, faculty, staff, and others actively involved in the Chaplaincy and following open presentations on campus that were also available by Webcast to members of the community away from campus. I am grateful for the involvement of so many of you in this search process and for the thoughtful comments you provided to me. It has been encouraging to see how much the work of the Chaplaincy is valued and how ambitious we all are for its future.

Rev. Kocher brings a broad range of experience to the University in the areas in which we are eager to see the Chaplaincy continue to develop, particularly in achieving the goals of The Richmond Promise, in which the Chaplaincy has a unique role to play. His work at Duke provides him with a valuable perspective of living in and leading a diverse and inclusive faith community. His warm personal qualities and commitments make him a great match for the Richmond community.

At Duke, Rev. Kocher has helped develop and implement a comprehensive university-wide program of religious and spiritual life; directed the work of 25 religious groups; coordinated 35 campus ministers; helped to oversee the Chapel staff of 25, manage its annual budget of more than \$4M, and serve its congregation of 1,000. He has built relationships with colleagues in student affairs and civic engagement and on the faculty—a spirit of collaboration that has long been a signature of our own Chaplaincy. He has shaped and participated in student service-learning trips and interfaith pilgrimages to Honduras, Turkey, and other destinations abroad; taught undergraduate and graduate courses; and published commentaries, essays, and sermons in a variety of media.

Rev. Kocher recently played an instrumental role in a comprehensive assessment of the place of the Chapel and religious life at Duke. The project examined the evolution of Duke's historical religious identity and designed programming that built authentically on that foundation in ways that respond to the challenges of our world and bring the unique resources of a Chaplaincy to bear on preparing students for lives in a global community in which understanding among faiths and inclusivity are essential. Among the outcomes of that work was the hiring of a full-time Imam at Duke and the establishment of the Duke Faith Council, which comprises representatives of the major global faiths and coordinates interfaith programming.

Shortly after moving to Duke in 2003, Rev. Kocher served for one year as Acting Dean

of the Chapel, managing all aspects of the Chapel's staff and programming, while directing religious and spiritual life programming. Earlier in his career, he was Associate Pastor at of the 3,200-member Davidson (N.C.) United Methodist Church and Campus Minister to Davidson College. His experience at a major research university and a small liberal arts college informs his understanding of our University's unique configuration and possibilities.

Rev. Kocher, an ordained Elder in the United Methodist Church, holds a bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a master's of divinity, magna cum laude, from Duke University. He is completing a doctor of ministry at Columbia Theological Seminary. The topic of his dissertation is "Theology and Practice: Interfaith Engagement and the Modern University."

With you, I look forward to welcoming Rev. Kocher and his wife, the Rev. Abby Williford Kocher, to the University of Richmond community. I am grateful to the search committee—chaired by Law School Dean John Douglass and comprising representatives of the students, faculty, staff, Campus Ministers, Chapel Guild, and Board of Trustees—for their work. I also, of course, remain deeply grateful to Kate O'Dwyer Randall, who has provided generous and able leadership as Acting Chaplain for more than two years and serves our campus community so well. I know how many of you share my admiration for her. I am very pleased that she will continue to play a leading and integral role in the Chaplaincy as Associate Chaplain.

Best wishes for the summer. I look forward to seeing you all again in August.

Ed Ayers  
President