

Catherine Wright, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Religion and Philosophy | Founding Executive Director, Collaborative for the Common Good

Wingate University, Wingate, NC
c.wright@wingate.edu | www.thewrightecotheologian.com

Professional Summary

Innovative educator, program founder, and research-driven leader with over a decade of experience in higher education, sustainability, and faith-based engagement. Skilled in translating theological and ethical principles into strategic institutional initiatives and community partnerships. Recognized nationally for advancing service-learning pedagogy and sustainability integration (AASHE Campus Sustainability Research Award Finalist, 2022). Experienced in designing programs that empower students and communities to enact justice, equity, and ecological stewardship.

Professional Experience

Wingate University, Wingate, NC

Founding Executive Director, Collaborative for the Common Good (2019–2024)

Department Chair, Religion and Philosophy Department (2020–2022)

Associate Professor, Religious Studies (2014–Present)

- Promoted to Executive Director for leadership in program research and institutional development.
- Awarded 2022 Finalist for AASHE Campus Sustainability Research Award.
- Designed and implemented two ROOTS Summits for campus-community stakeholders and coordinated a diocesan-wide Catholic Conference for Creation Care.
- Secured over **\$60,000** in grant and in-kind funding for food insecurity programs (2022–2024).
- Created **Paw Provisions**, a weekly free store addressing student food insecurity and period poverty (served 1,700+ students).
- Founded the **Wingate Farmers Market** and **Farmers Marketplace** to connect students and local producers.
- Designed, implemented, and assessed seven Service-Learning and Community Engagement (SLCE) courses with statistically significant civic learning outcomes.
- Published results of SLCE impact studies in leading journals.
- Initiated “knowledge democracy” collaborations between campus and community; see project white papers on website.

Education

Ph.D. Christian Ethics, Regis College, Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto, 2015

M.Div. University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, 2003

B.Ed. Faculty of Education, University of Toronto, 1997

Hon. B.Sc. University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, with Distinction, 1995

Professional Development

- CITI Certification Course: Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research (Nov 2025)
- Mental Health First Aid (Wingate Univ., 2023)
- Preparing for ChatGPT and AI in Higher Ed Workshop (UNC Charlotte, 2023)
- Faith & Health Network Gathering, Interfaith America (2023)
- Religion and Health Convening, Interfaith America (2023)
- Leading for Equity, Diversity & Inclusion in Higher Education (Univ. of Michigan Online, 2021)
- "Stop the Hate" Trainer Workshop – Racial Equity Institute (2021)
- Professional Certificate in Campus Sustainability Leadership, Univ. of Vermont (2018)

Books

Wright, C. (2023). *Food and Faith: From Dirt to Dessert*. Kendall Hunt Publishing.

Wright, C. (2020). *A Practical Guide to Creation Care: Living Laudato Si'*. Paulist Press.

Wright, C. (2017). *Creation, God, & Humanity: Embracing the Mystery of Suffering in the Sacred Cosmic Story*. Paulist Press.

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

Wright, C., Lapan, C. (forthcoming). Bridging ethics and engagement: The promise of service-learning in religion courses. *Michigan Journal for Community Service Learning*.

Wright, C. (2025). Food and faith: A two-year study on the impact of service-learning and community engagement practices in a general education religion course. *Transformative Social Impact: A Journal of Community-Based Teaching and Research*, 1(1).

Wright, C. (2022). Cultivating a collaborative culture for ensuring Sustainable Development Goals in higher education: An integrative case study. *Sustainability*, 14(3).

Wright, C., Keel, M., & Kellar, A. (2018). A new alliance for service-learning and community engagement: Cultivating citizens with an ecocentric vision of justice. *Partnerships: A Journal of*

Service-Learning and Civic Engagement, 9(2).

Wright, C., Keel, M., & Fleurizard, T. (2017). Connecting SLCE with sustainability in higher education: Cultivating citizens with an ecocentric vision of justice. *Michigan Journal for Community Service Learning*, 23(2), 165–169.

Wright, C. (2017). In the darkness grows the green: The promise of a new cosmological horizon of meaning within a critical inquiry of suffering and the Cross. *Journal of the Center for Ecozoic Societies*, 4, 465–480.

Wright, C. (2017). We are stardust: Towards an ecological theological anthropology. *The Other Journal: An Intersection of Theology and Culture*.

Book Chapters

Wright, C. (2018). Social justice in service-learning and community engagement: A conversation about meanings, practices, and possibilities. In L. Jewett, F. Calderon Berumen, & M. Espinosa-Dulanto (Eds.), *Critical Intersections in Contemporary Curriculum & Pedagogy*. Information Age Publishing.

Book Reviews

Wright, C. (2019). Review of Incarnation: A New Evolutionary Threshold by D. O'Murchu. *Modern Believing*.

Wright, C. (2015). Review of God's Good World: Reclaiming the Doctrine of Creation by J. R. Wilson. *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 31(1), 149–151.

Wright, C. (2014). Review of For Earth's Sake: Towards a Compassionate Ecology by S. Scharper. *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 30(1), 161–162.

Other Scholarly Publications

Wright, C. (2021). *CEE Primer: Civic and Community Engagement in Higher Education*. NC Campus Compact.

Wright, C. (2020). *Exploration of creation care and sustainability among CCCU members*. AASHE Publication.

Wright, C. (2018). Book reviews in *Modern Believing Journal* (Liverpool Press).

Grants and Awards

- Jessie Ball duPont Green Revolving Loan Fund – \$125,000 (2019)
- Carolina Farm Credit Agricultural Immersion Grant – \$5,000 (2020)
- Food Council Shared Gifting Microgrant – \$4,519 (2021)
- Blue Cross Blue Shield & AHA Mini Grant – \$6,250 (2021)
- NC Resourceful Communities Food & Faith Grant – \$14,000 (2018)
- NetVUE Gathering Grant – \$16,000 (2023)

- Finalist, AASHE Campus Sustainability Research Award (2022)

Public Lectures and Research Presentations

International & National Conferences:

- 14th International Conference on Food Studies, Portugal (2025) – From Dirt to Dessert: Exploring Food and Faith as Vehicles for Sustainable Development
- AASHE National Conference & Expo (2019) – How a Small Rural University in NC is Helping Co-Create a Sustainable Economy
- American Academy of Religion (2018) – Doing Religion and Ecology in the Bible Belt
- IASLCE Conference (2017) – Harnessing the Synergistic Effect of SLCE and Sustainability
- Catholic Theological Society of America (2015) – The Promise of a New Cosmological Horizon

Keynotes and Public Talks (Selected):

- St. Francis Retreat Center (2025) – A Decade of Laudato Si'
- Catholic Diocese of Charlotte Conference (2025) – Walking with the Spirit in the World
- TEDx Talk, Wingate University (2023) – The Extraordinary Power of Your Ordinary Fork
- Oratory Earth Day Lecture (2024) – Befriending Earth as a Spiritual Path to God
- C3 Christians Caring for Creation Conference (2023) – Food and Faith: Embracing Our Vocation as Stewards of God's Creation
- Catholic Climate Covenant Webinar (2021) – Environmental Justice and Catholic Social Teaching
- Season of Creation Lecture (2020) – Environmental Racism and Laudato Si'

Regional & Community Engagement:

Includes over 30 invited lectures, parish series, and university talks on creation care, faith, and sustainability across diocesan, academic, and nonprofit contexts. Full list available upon request or at www.thewrightecotheologian.com.

Core Competencies

- Program design and pedagogy for diverse learners (undergraduate, adult, and community)

- Interdisciplinary research and publication (faith, ecology, ethics, sustainability)
- Grant writing, project management, and partnership building
- Strategic development and systems thinking
- Curriculum design integrating UN SDGs and Catholic social teaching
- Skilled in Canvas, Qualtrics, Google Suite, Canva, and AI-driven teaching tools