DEBORAH ANN WONG, ThD

Curriculum Vitae

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Seeking to bridge the Church and Academy as a worship leader for theologians and a theologian for worship leaders

EDUCATION

Doctor of Theology, 2025, Duke University Divinity School, Durham, NC
- Major: Liturgical Studies
- Minor: Christian Formation
- Dissertation: Augustine Sings Hillsong: An Affective Theology of Contemporary Praise & Worship
- Committee: Lester Ruth (chair), Jeremy S. Begbie, J. Warren Smith, Fred P. Edie, James K.A. Smith

Master of Divinity (summa cum laude), 2019, Duke University Divinity School, Durham, NC
- Certificate in Theology and the Arts
- Thesis: "The Heart of Worship": The History and Development of Prayer and Praise in Wesley Methodist Church Singapore
- Advisor: Lester Ruth, Research Professor of Christian Worship

Bachelor of Arts in American Studies (magna cum laude), 2013, Carleton College, Northfield, MN
- Thesis: What We Talk About When We Talk About Diversity: International Student Experiences as Foreigners in the United States
- Advisor: Deborah Appleman, Hollis L. Caswell Professor of Educational Studies

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS & GRANTS

Awarded full scholarship for North American Academy of Liturgy Annual Meeting, Kansas City, MO, 2022.

John Wesley Fellowship, A Foundation for Theological Education, 2021-2025.

Conference Bursary Award, Christian Congregational Music Conference: Local and Global Perspectives, Ripon College, Cuddesdon, Oxford (virtual), 2021.

Awarded (with Lester Ruth, Adam Perez, Glenn Stallsmith, and Jonathan Ottaway) Teacher-Scholar grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, 2020.

Seminarian Award of the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts, 2019.

Hoyt Hickman Award for Excellence in Liturgics, Duke Divinity School, 2019.

Conference Scholarship, International Writing Centers Association Conference, San Diego, CA, 2012.

Conference Travel Grant, International Writing Centers Association Conference, San Diego, CA, 2012.

Conference Travel Grant, Midwest Writing Centers Association Biennial Fall Conference, Madison, WI, 2011.

SCHOLARSHIP

Journal Articles

"Reviving Humility: A Liturgical Reflection." *Liturgy* 40.3-4 (2025), 76-78.

"From the Mouths of Babes: Lessons in Making a Joyful Noise unto the Lord." *Religions* 15.12 (2024).

"'Church is the New Radio': Worship and the *WOW* Series (1996-2019)." Co-authored with Joshua Kalin Busman. *Liturgy 38* no.4 (2023), 41-51.

"Charismatic Piety: Uncovering the Hidden Impact of the Charismatic Movement." *Liturgy 37*.3 (2022), 3-10.

"Transcending Tradition: A Reappraisal of Methods for Studying Charismatic Worship." *Proceedings of the North American Academy of Liturgy*, Annual Meeting, Kansas City, Missouri (2-5 January, 2022), 84-99.

"Liturgy in Lockdown: Restricted Movement, Expanded Worship." *Religions* 13.1 (2021), 25.

Articles in Edited Volumes

"Appendix A: Sample Service Focusing on John 2:1-11" in *Flow: The Ancient Way to Do Contemporary Worship* (ed. Lester Ruth; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2020), 101-115. Translated into Korean and Bahasa Indonesia.

"Singapore." In *Historical Dictionary of Methodism*. Fourth Edition. Edited by Jennifer L. Woodruff Tait and Chris Anderson. Rowman & Littlefield, 2025.

Academic Conference Presentations

"Negotiating Methodist Identity through Ecumenical Song Vetting," Roundtable presentation, "Evaluating the CCLI Top 100 (and Beyond): An Ecumenical Roundtable," Christian Congregational Music Conference, Ripon College, Cuddesdon, Oxford (online), August 5, 2025.

"Augustine Sings Hillsong: A Practical Theology of 'Whoa's," Panel presentation, "Building on *A History of Contemporary Praise & Worship: New Directions in the Study of Contemporary Worship*," Society of Christian Scholarship in Music Conference, Durham, NC, March 3, 2023.

"Transcending Tradition: A Reappraisal of Methods for Studying Charismatic Worship," Paper presentation, Exploring Contemporary & Alternative Worship Seminar, North American Academy of Liturgy (NAAL) Annual Meeting, Kansas City, MO, January 4, 2022.

"The Charismatic Roots of Contemporary Praise and Worship in Singapore Methodism," Panel presentation, "Constructing a Fuller Historiography of Contemporary Praise & Worship Practices," *Christian Congregational Music: Local and Global Perspectives*, Ripon College, Cuddesdon, Oxford (online), July 26 – August 6, 2021.

"Liturgy in Lockdown: Expanding the Notion of Church," Paper presentation, *Pandemic & Religion*, Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life Virtual Graduate Student Conference (online), February 27, 2021.

"Liturgy in Lockdown: Unlocking the Sacramentality of Everyday Life," *Pandemic Liturgy & Issues of Inequality*, North American Academy of Liturgy Emerging Scholars Symposium (online), January 6-7, 2021. Available at https://youtu.be/SsmhjE_fmP8.

"Charismatic versus Contemporary: Praise and Worship in Singapore Methodism," Paper presentation, Exploring Contemporary & Alternative Worship Seminar, North American Academy of Liturgy Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, January 3-4, 2020.

"Mind the Gap: Reimagining our Institutional Identities," Workshop, *Lines in the Sand: How Writing Centers Draw and Redraw Boundaries*, International Writing Centers Association Conference, San Diego, CA, October 26, 2012.

"Weaving an Effective Web of Writing Center Relations at Small Liberal Arts Colleges," Panel discussion, *On the Isthmus*, Midwest Writing Centers Association Biennial Fall Conference, Madison, WI, October 21, 2011.

Popular Level Publications

Contributions of original liturgies, *Call & Response: The Abingdon Guidebook for Worship and Preaching, Year A, Year B & Year C.* Abingdon Press, 2025, 2026, and forthcoming in 2027.

"The North American Academy of Liturgy: 2022 Annual Meeting, Kansas City, MO." *CrossAccent 30,* no. 1 (Spring 2022): 32-33.

"Fasting: An Invitation to a Lenten Way of Life." *Reformed Worship* 142 (Dec 2021).

"Report on North American Academy of Liturgy: Emerging Scholars Symposium, January 6-7, 2021." *CrossAccent 29,* no. 2 (Summer 2021): 28-29.

"Finding God in a Pandemic and Beyond: Online and Ordinary Sacred Places." *Studying Congregations*. July 6, 2021. https://studyingcongregations.org/finding-god-in-a-pandemic-and-beyond-online-and-ordinary-sacred-places.

"Networked Congregations: Together and Apart." *Studying Congregations*. June 23, 2021. https://studyingcongregations.org/networked-congregations-together-and-apart.

Book Reviews

Review of Sabrina Müller's *Religious Experience and Its Transformational Power: Qualitative and Hermeneutic Approaches to a Practical Theological Foundational Concept* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2023) for *Practical Theology* 16, no.6 (2023): 841-842.

Review of Fred P. Edie & Mark A. Lamport's *Nurturing Faith: A Practical Theology for Educating Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2021) for *Practical Theology* 15, no. 1-2 (2022): 175-177. https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2022.2040678.

Review of Roberta R. King's *Global Arts and Christian Witness: Exegeting Culture, Translating the Message, and Communicating Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019) for *Missiology* 49, no. 2 (April 2021): 228-229. https://doi-org.proxy.lib.duke.edu/10.1177%2F00918296211009326e.

PRACTICE

Classroom Teaching Experience

United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH
Work of Worship: Summer 2026 (hybrid); Fall 2026 (online asynchronous)

Trinity Theological College, Singapore
100,000 Sundays: The History of Christian Worship and Its Ongoing Relevance for Today: Spring 2024 (online)

Duke University Divinity School, Durham, NC
American Christianity, Teaching Assistant: Fall 2026 (hybrid)
Introduction to Christian Education, Directed Study (Instructor of Record): Summer 2026 (hybrid)

Introduction to Christian Worship, Teaching Assistant: Spring 2021 (online), Summer 2021 (online), Fall 2021, Fall 2022, Fall 2023, Summer 2025 (hybrid), Summer 2026 (hybrid)

Guest lecture: "Singing Our Way Home: How Music Forms a Faith That Lasts" in *Worship and Christian Formation*

Christian Nationalism and Worship, Teaching Assistant: Fall 2025 (hybrid)

Introduction to Christian Theology, Teaching Assistant: Fall 2025 (hybrid)

Songwriting and Theology, Teaching Assistant: Fall 2021

Guest lecture: "Singing Our Lives Before God," Worship and Christian Formation, Duke Divinity School, March 18, 2021 (online)

Global Readings of Scripture, Teaching Assistant: Spring 2023.

Academia English and Writing Center, Singapore
English and Writing, Associate Teacher and Curriculum Writer, 2015-2017

Methodist Girls' School (Secondary), Singapore
8th and 9th grade Social Studies, Teacher (2013-2014)
8th and 9th grade History, Teacher (2013-2014)

Other Teaching & Speaking Engagements

(Upcoming) "'I Can't Get Enough': Augustine, Contemporary Worship, and Longing for God," Workshop, Calvin Symposium on Worship, Calvin University, Grand Rapids, MI, February 5, 2027.

(Upcoming) "The Worship We Inherit, the Worship We Make: Thirty Years of Change in Christian Worship," Seminar, jointly led with Adam Perez and Melanie Ross, Calvin Symposium on Worship, Calvin University, Grand Rapids, MI, February 4, 2027.

(Upcoming) "Let the Little Children Come: Engaging Children in Contemporary Worship," Workshop, The Wonder Summit, Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, November 4-6, 2026.

"The Influence of the "Big 4" Megachurches on Worship Music," Panel, Calvin Symposium on Worship, Calvin University, Grand Rapids, MI, February 9, 2024.

"Biblical and Theological Foundations for Worship," Lecture, Certificate in Christian Worship, Methodist School of Music, Singapore, June 17, 2023.

"A Brief History of Christian Worship," Lecture, Certificate in Christian Worship, Methodist School of Music, Singapore, June 17, 2023.

"Planning Invitational and Participatory Worship," Workshop, Office of New Faith Communities Common Learning Days, North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, Durham, NC, October 11-12, 2022.

"The Practice of Worship Leading," Workshop, Certificate in Christian Worship, Methodist School of Music, Singapore, September 28, 2022 (via Zoom).

"The Role of the Worship Leader," Seminar, Certificate in Christian Worship, Methodist School of Music, Singapore, September 24, 2022 (via Zoom).

"Flow 2.0: Digging Deeper into Doing Contemporary Worship," Webinar, Shepherding Souls in Worship series, Methodist School of Music, Singapore, February 18 & 25, 2022 (online).

"Flow: The Ancient Way to do Contemporary Worship (Ibadah yang Mengalir: Bagaimana Mewujudkan Ibadah Style Kontemporer dalam Geraja Tradisional?)," Webinar and book discussion, jointly hosted by Literatur Perkantas Jatim, Wonders of Worship, and Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Reformed Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia, January 17, 2022 (online).

"Blended Worship," Panel discussion, *Flow: The Ancient Way to do Contemporary Worship*, Methodist School of Music Worship Symposium, Singapore, June 25, 2021 (online).

"Extemporaneity, Free Worship, Worship Words," Panel discussion, *Flow: The Ancient Way to do Contemporary Worship*, Methodist School of Music Worship Symposium, Singapore, June 24, 2021 (online).

"Flow: Finding an Ancient Way to Contemporary Worship," Webinar, Shepherding Souls in Worship series, Methodist School of Music, Singapore, August 7, 2020 (online).

"Worship Leading 101," Workshop, University of North Carolina Wesley Foundation, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA, February 19, 2019.

"What is Worship?," Workshop, Geomot Methodist Church, Daejeon, Korea, 2016.

"Worship Leading 101," Workshop, Charis Methodist Church, Singapore, 2016.

"Trusting God (Romans 15:13)," 1st Singapore Company Girls' Brigade, Singapore, 2015.

"Band Dynamics 101," Workshop, Live for Christ Youth Ministry, Kyotanabe, Japan, 2015.

Worship & Music Leadership

2026 – Present	Director of Contemporary Worship, Oxford United Methodist Church, Oxford, NC
2025 July	Worship Leader, Asian Pastors' Convocation, North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, Salter Path, NC (July 21-24)
2025 – 2026	Worship Musician, Oxford United Methodist Church, Oxford, NC
2023 – Present	Worship Leader, Single Cell Worship, North Carolina Correctional Institute for Women, Raleigh, NC (monthly)
2023 – Present	House Band Co-Leader, Pilgrimage, North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, Rocky Mount, NC (annual event)
2022 – 2026	Worship Leader, First on Chatham, Cary United Methodist Church, Cary, NC
2022 Oct	Worship Leader, Common Table National Gathering, Durham, NC (Oct 4-6)
2022 Sept	Worship Leader, *Leitourgia* Opening Retreat, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA (Sept 23-25)
2022 July	Worship Leader, The Glen Workshop, Image Journal, Asheville, NC (July 24-30)
2022 July	Daily Prayer Leader, The Summit Youth Academy, Southwestern College, Winfield, KS (July 10-16)
2021	Goodson Chapel Summer Worship Assistant, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC

2018 – 2019	Artist-in-Residence, Duke Memorial UMC, Durham, NC
2017 – 2019	Goodson Chapel Worship Intern, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC
2017 – 2019	Chapel Band Lead Coordinator, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC
2017 – 2018	Ministerial Intern, Union Grove UMC, Hillsborough, NC
2016 – 2017	Gospel Choir member, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC
2010 – 2013	Mustard Seed Band Worship and Ministry Leader, Carleton College, Northfield, MN
2009	LoveMGS Annual Worship Event, Chairperson and Worship Leader, Methodist Girls' School Alumnae Association, Singapore
2005 – 2015	LoveMGS Annual Worship Event, Worship Team, Methodist Girls' School Alumnae Association, Singapore
2005 – 2016	Worship Leader, Barker Road Methodist Church, Singapore
2005 – 2016	Worship Leader, Methodist Girls' School, Singapore
Various	Worship leader for Fusion 2016 (Singapore), Bible Society of Singapore D6 Family Conference, YMCA Singapore, World Vision Singapore, LoveSingapore daily morning prayer (Singapore), Geomot Methodist Church (Korea), Live for Christ Youth Ministry (Japan), Societas Homiletica Conference 2018 (Durham, NC), The Navigators African American Congress 2018 (Greensboro, NC), Rougemont UMC (Rougemont, NC), Oak Church (Durham, NC), The Peak UMC (Apex, NC), Orange UMC (Chapel Hill, NC), Christ UMC (Chapel Hill, NC), NCCIW Raleigh Women's Prison (Raleigh, NC), others.

MEDIA PUBLICATIONS

"Is Modern Worship Wesleyan? Wesley, Augustine, and the Theology of Flow w/ Dr. Debbie Wong," Podcast episode, *The Wesleyan Option*, March 24, 2026.

"Augustine & Hillsong: with Debbie Wong," Podcast episode, *Music, Theology & Worship with Julie McKee*, December 11, 2025.

"Babies, Theology, and True Praise Beyond Words," Podcast episode, *The Worship Nerds*, April 4, 2025.

"WOW! Worship (ft. Joshua Busman and Debbie Wong)," Podcast episode, *The Worship Nerds*, July 2, 2024.

"Worship and Justice," A Six-lesson Video and Written Curriculum on Worship and Justice for High School Students, *Leitourgia* (pending publication)

"Flow: The Ancient Way to Do Contemporary Worship," Podcast episode, *New Books Network with Ryan Shelton*, March 8, 2021.

"Evening Prayer, 2.27.21," Podcast, *Leitourgia Podcast*, February 27, 2021.

Liturgist (words), "A Prayer in Search of Holy Connection," visual liturgy in collaboration with *The Work of the People*, Dec 2020.

"Flow: The Ancient Way to Do Contemporary Worship, Part 2," Podcast, *Music and the Church with Sarah Bereza*, Episode 55, Oct. 12, 2020.

Lead vocals, back-up vocals, acoustic guitar on *Saviour Messiah King*, released July 17, 2016 by Jocelyn Ong, produced by Loong, Finding My Sound Productions.

Backup vocals on Love *of Another Kind EP*, released June 16, 2015 by Yap Wei Chiang, produced by Yap Wei Chiang.

SERVICE & LEADERSHIP

2024 – 2025	Curriculum Committee Member, *Duke Divinity School, Durham, USA.*
2023 – 2024	CCLI + Beyond Vetting Project, *UMC Discipleship Ministries, USA.* https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/ccli-top-100-beyond-project.
2020 – 2023	Curriculum Committee Member, *Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC*
2020	CCLI + Beyond Vetting Project, *UMC Discipleship Ministries, USA.* https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/ccli-top-100-beyond-project.
2020	Worship & Christian Vocation Task Force member, *Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC*
2020	Chapel Task Force, *Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC*
2018 – 2019	Divinity Student Council, Co-President, *Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC*
2017 – 2019	Chapel Band, Lead Coordinator, *Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC*
2017 – 2018	Asian Theology Group, Co-Facilitator, *Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC*
2017	Project BRI(DDD)GE, Leader, *Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC*
2017	Worship and Spirituality Committee, Member, *Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC*
2015 – 2016	Small Group Leader, *Barker Road Methodist Church, Singapore*
2014 –	Committee Member, Methodist Girls' School Alumnae Association, *Singapore*
2014 – 2015	Young Adults Small Group Ministry, Coordinator, *Barker Road Methodist Church, Singapore*
2014	Young Adults Ministry Retreat, Chairperson, *Barker Road Methodist Church, Singapore*
2012 – 2013	Lead Writing Consultant, *Carleton College Writing Center, Northfield, MN*
2007	Annual Youth Camp, Camp Commandant, *Barker Road Methodist Church, Singapore*

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

2009 –	Freelance Musician
2025 –	Martial Arts Instructor (Ninjutsu, Brazilian Jiujitsu), *Quest Jiu-jitsu & Self-Defense, Chapel Hill, NC*
2019 – 2020	Research Assistant to Dr. Lester Ruth, Research Professor of Christian Worship, *Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC*
2019 – 2020	Research Assistant to Dr. Jerusha Neal, Assistant Professor of Homiletics, *Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC*
2015 – 2017	Curriculum Writer, *Academia English and Writing Center, Singapore*
2015 – 2016	Associate Teacher, *Academia English and Writing Center, Singapore*
2015	Account Executive, *Optimum Media Direction, Omnicom Media Group, Singapore*
2013 – 2017	Outside Admissions Reader, *Yale-NUS College, Singapore*
2013 – 2014	Long-term Substitute Teacher (8th and 9th grade History, Social Studies), *Methodist Girls' School (Secondary), Singapore*
2010 – 2013	Writing Consultant, *Carleton College Writing Center, Northfield, MN*

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Journal of Childhood and Religion: member of editorial board (since 2025)

The Liturgical Conference: board member (2023 – present); secretary (since 2025)

North American Academy of Liturgy: member of Exploring Contemporary and Alternative Worship seminar group (since 2022)

Society for Christian Scholarship in Music: member (since 2023)

John Wesley Fellowship (A Foundation for Theological Education): fellow (since 2021)

CHURCH AFFILIATION

Denomination: Methodist Church of Singapore
Membership: Barker Road Methodist Church (Singapore)

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Languages: English (native), Mandarin Chinese (fluent), Spanish (elementary)
Music: guitar, vocals, piano, drum kit, cajon