Rev. Aaron K. Stauffer, Ph.D.
Saint Paul School of Theology
aaron.stauffer@spst.edu

Academic Positions

Saint Paul School of Theology **2026-Present**
Assistant Professor of Social Ethics and Community Leadership
Director of Academic Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness

Vanderbilt Divinity School, Vanderbilt University **2023-2025**
Associate Director, The Wendland-Cook Program in Religion and Justice
Adjunct Assistant Professor in Ethics and Society
Associate Director of Online Learning 2021-2024

Vanderbilt Divinity School, Vanderbilt University **2020-2023**
Louisville Institute Postdoctoral Fellow

Austin Peay State University **2017-2020**
Adjunct Professor of Religion and Philosophy

Belmont University **2017-2018**
Adjunct Professor of Religion and Honors

Education

Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York **2020**
Ph.D., Social Ethics
Dissertation: *Organizing Lived Religious Practices for Power: Sacred Value in Broad-Based Community Organizing.*

Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York **2014**
M.Div. in Interreligious and Ecumenical Studies
Thesis (with Distinction): "Re-Enchantment and Dissent: Religion and Race in the Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson and James Baldwin." Readers: Dr. Gary Dorrien, Dr. James Cone.

St. Olaf College **2010**
B.A., with Distinction, in Religion

Publications and Presentations

Books:

Listening to the Spirit: The Radical Social Gospel, Sacred Values, and Broad-based Community Organizing. AAR Academy Series (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2024)

Reviews:

- Review by James McCarty for *Journal of Society of Christian Ethics,* https://muse-jhu-edu.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/article/959882
- Symposium with Molly Farneth, Richard Wood, Emily Dumler-Winckler, David Chao, and Dan Rhodes in *Syndicate* https://syndicate.network/symposia/theology/listening-to-the-spirit/

- Review by Clint Schnekloth for *Christian Century,* https://www.christiancentury.org/books/religious-practice-community-organizing
- Symposium with Gary Dorrien, Elizabeth Hinson-Hastey, Joerg Rieger, C. Melissa Snarr, and Stephanie Thurston, *The Wendland-Cook Program in Religion and Justice*, at https://www.religionandjustice.org/interventions-forum-listening-to-the-spirit
- Review by Barry Morris for *Reading Religion* (forthcoming)
- Special Issue of *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* (forthcoming issue 47.2) with Toni Alimi, Grace Kao, Filipe Maia, Scott Paeth, and Colleen Wessel-McCoy

Edited Books:

Organizing Visions: Social Ethics and Broad-based Solidarity Activism. Gary Dorrien, Charlene Sinclair, and Aaron Stauffer, eds., Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2025.

The Making of Gary Dorrien: Historical Reconstruction, Ethical Discontent, and the Spirit of Liberal-Liberation Theology. Demian Wheeler and Aaron Stauffer, eds. Under Contract with Baylor University Press.

The Radical Social Gospel in the South: A New Narrative and Project for Justice Movements Today. Wilson Dickinson, Joerg Rieger, and Aaron Stauffer, eds. in preparation.

Peer Reviewed Articles:

2025: "Under-Connected: Building Relational Power, Solidarity, and Developing Leaders in Broad-Based Community Organizing" *Religions* 16, no. 5: 620. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16050620

2024: "Power in the Social Gospel: Howard Kester, Claude Williams and the Southern Tenant Farmers Union" *Religions* 15, no. 9: 1091 (2024). https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15091091

2023: "Stories of Domination: Building Counter-Narratives of Justice and Vincent Lloyd's Black Dignity" *Political Theology,* Vol. 25, Is. 2, 137-147 https://doi.org/10.1080/1462317X.2023.2249734

2023: "Echoes of a Method: Inductive Christian Social Ethics, Social Practices, and the Radical Social Gospel" *CrossCurrents* 73.2 (2023)

2022: "The Sounds and Silences of the Spirit: Rev. George Washington Woodbey's Political Ecclesiology of Organizing" *The Other Journal*, November. (2022) https://theotherjournal.com/2022/10/the-sounds-and-silences-of-the-spirit-a-political-ecclesiology-of-organizing%ef%bf%bc/

2021: "Radical Democracy and Sacred Values" *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 42 (2): 72–92. (2021)

2021: "The Relational Meeting as a Political and Religious Practice," *Political Theology* https://doi.org/10.1080/1462317X.2021.1899704 (2021)

Book Chapters:

2025: "The Problems and Promise of Radical Social Gospel in Organizing Movements" in *Organizing Visions: Christian Social Ethics and Organizing for Freedom*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2025

2025: "Conclusion" in *Organizing Visions: Christian Social Ethics and Organizing for Freedom,* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2025.

2024: "Religion and Socialism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Economic Ethics*, with Joerg Rieger, edited by Albino Barrera and Roy C. Amore. Oxford Handbooks Series. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2024.

Web-based and Popular:

2025 "What the History of the 'Social Gospel" Can Teach us Today: How Congregations can keep acting on what matters," *Sojourners*. January/February, 2026. https://sojo.net/magazine/januaryfebruary-2026/what-history-social-gospel-can-teach-us-today

2024 "Overcoming Burnout" *Presbyterian Outlook*, July 30, 2024 https://pres-outlook.org/2024/07/overcoming-burnout/

2024: "Listening to the Spirit: Churches Organizing and Building Power," *Unbound: The Intersections of Faith and Justice*. May 20, 2024. https://justiceunbound.org/listening-to-the-spirit-churches-organizing-and-building-power/

2024: "The Theologically Trained Organizer" *The Christian Century*. February 2024. https://www.christiancentury.org/features/theologically-trained-organizer.

2023: "Theorizing Domination Itself: Philosophy, Organizing Movements, and Vincent Lloyd's Black Dignity" *Political Theology Network,* July 2023

2022: "The History of An American Idea: Christian Democratic Socialism" *Tikkun*, July, 2022.

2022: "Attuning the Church, Debating What Lies Beyond Racial Capitalism" *Political Theology Network* Book Symposium on Jonathan Tran's *Asian Americans and the Spirit of Racial Capitalism*, 6 January 2022.

2021: "What About Religion? Christian Politics are of Sacred Value in Polarized Times," Essay for Unity and American Democracy Project at Vanderbilt University, 12 July 2021.

2021: "Church, Power, and Liturgy in the *¡Presente!* Litany," *Syndicate Theology*, Book Symposium on Kyle Lambelet's *¡Presente! Nonviolent Politics and the Resurrection of the Dead* , 12 July 2021.

2020: "Introduction: Enchantments and Romantics," *Syndicate Theology*, Book Symposium on Eugene McCarrahrer's *The Enchantments of Mammon: How Capitalism Became the Religion of Modernity*, 1 December 2020.

2020: "How do Christians Practice Democracy?," on Luke Bretherton's *Christ and the Common Life: Political Theology and the Case for Democracy*. *Marginalia*, an imprint of the LA Review of Books, 28 February 2020.

2019: "Introduction" *Syndicate Theology*, Book Symposium on Gary Dorrien's *Social Democracy in the Making: Political and Religious Roots of European Socialism,* August, 2019.

2019: "Introduction: Social Ethics and Social Practice in Hegel," *Syndicate Theology*, Book Symposium on Molly Farneth's *Hegel's Social Ethics: Religion, Conflict and Rituals of Reconciliation*, July, 2019.

2019: "Islam, Sex and Secularism," on Joan Wallach Scott's *Sex and Secularism. Marginalia*, an imprint of the LA Review of Books*,* 18 January 2019.

2019: "Moving From the 'Is' to the 'Ought." *Mission Crossroads*. Spring, 2019.

2018: "The Praxis of Organizing by Two American Muslims," in *Political Theology*. July, 2018. https://politicaltheology.com/islam-immigrant-communities-and-community-organizing/

2015: "Theologies of Fear," in *Sojourners,* August, 2015 https://sojo.net/articles/theologies-fear

2014: "Economic Democracy: A Union Tradition." *Union Now* Fall, 2014.

Book Reviews:

2024: Review of Mark Santow, *Saul Alinsky and the Dilemma of Race: Community Organizing in the Postwar City* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2023), *Christian Century*, September 2024.

2024: Review of Jack Delahanty, *Making Moral Citizens: How Faith-Based Organizers Use Vocation for Public Action* (University of North Carolina Press, 2023), *Journal of Church and State*, February 2024, https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/csae009

2023: Review of *Religion and Politics Beyond the Culture Wars: New Directors in a Divided America*, ed. Darren Dochuk (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2021), *Reading Religion*, February, 2023, https://readingreligion.org/9780268201296/

2022: Review of Eric Nelson, *The Theology of Liberalism: Political Philosophy and Justice of God*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy*, Vol. 42, No. 3., 2022.

2021: Review of Daniel Finn, *Consumer Ethics in a Global Economy* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2020), *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics,* Vol. 41. No. 1., 2021

2020: Review of Matthew Kaemingk, *Christian Hospitality and Muslims Immigration in an Age of Fear* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*., Vol. 40, No. 1., 2020

2018: Review of Richard L. Wood and Brad Fulton, *A Shared Future: Faith-Based Organizing for Racial Equity and Ethical Democracy, Reading Religion*, May, 2018

Teaching, Research, and Editorial Experience

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN

Summer 2025 DIV/ REL 7118: "Interfaith Leadership and Religious Diversity in America."
Spring 2024 DIV/REL: 5232: "Prophetic and Pastoral Ministry in Mainline Congregations."
Fall 2022 DIV/REL 7120: "Modern Christian Political Thought"
Summer 2022 DIV 0007 - 001 "Crisis in our Congregations"
Spring 2022 DIV/REL 7119: "Models of Interfaith Engagement"
Fall 2021 DIV 0006 - 001 "Organizing Church"
Fall 2021 DIV/REL 6807: "Suffering, Politics, and Liberation"

Saint Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, KS.

Adjunct Professor of History of Christianity
2025 EWR 531: Interfaith Leadership and Religious Diversity in America
2023-25 HST 302: Christian Traditions II
2021-25 COS 522 Theology in the Contemporary Church

Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN

Adjunct Professor of Religion and Philosophy
2017-2020 Philosophy 2200: "Religion and the World"
2018 Philosophy 3300: "Western Religions"

Belmont University, Nashville TN

Adjunct Professor of Religion and Honors
Fall 2017 Honors 1517: "World Traditions of Faith and Reason"
Fall 2018 Religion 1010: "Understanding the Bible"

Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York

Teaching Assistant
Fall 2016 CE/CH 236: "American Theological Liberalism 1805 - 1930"
Spring 2017 CE 316: "Economy, Ecology and Ecofeminism"

Research Assistant

2016-2018 Assistant to the chairs of AAR Black Theology Group

2016-2018 Research Assistant for Dr. Andrea White, Associate Professor of Theology and Culture at Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York

2017 Research Assistant for Dr. Lisa Thompson, Assistant Professor of Homiletics Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York

Editorial Support and Indexing

Editorial Assistant and Indexing - *Faith, Class, and Labor: Intersectional Approaches in a Global Context.* eds. Jin Young Choi and Joerg Rieger. Wipf and Stock Publishers as part of their Intersectionality and Theology Series.

Editorial and Bibliographic Support - *Preaching the Headlines: Pitfalls and Possibilities of Attending to the Times* by Lisa Thompson, Fortress Press.

Editor for a number of *Syndicate Theology* symposiums and a *Political Theology* round table discussion.

Fellowships, Grants, and Awards

2025	"Religious Institutions as Sites of Climate Adaptation and Resiliency," lead Researcher, Vanderbilt Center for Sustainability, Energy, and Climate, two year grant of $300,000
2023	"Cultivating a Community of Practice Among Leaders in Lifelong Learning in Theological Schools" Planning Team Member. Three year grant from Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion
2022	"The Unexplored Legacy of the Social Gospel in the South" Vanderbilt University Sesquicentennial Grant, Project Co- Lead.
2022-2023	Association of Leaders in Lifelong Learning for Ministry Early Career Coaching Fellowship
2022	"Organizing Visions: The Past, Present, and Future of Christian Social Ethics and Organizing Movements," Project Director, Grant from Louisville Institute.
2020-2023	Postdoctoral Fellowship, Louisville Institute
2019	Fellow in Residence, Sewanee University School of Theology
2016-18	Doctoral Fellowship, Louisville Institute
2015 - 2019	Graduate Fellowship, Union Theological Seminary
2014	Charles A. Briggs Award, Union Theological Seminary
2012-14	Scholarship and Fellow, The Roothbert Fund, Inc.
2006-2010	St. Olaf College Service Leadership in Community and Church Award

Selected Presentations and Invited Lectures

Academic Presentations:

2026	"Relational Power and Organizing Movements" at Society of Christian Ethics Annual Gathering, January.
2026	"How to Build an Institution" at Society of Christian Ethics Annual Gathering Pre-Conference: "Streams Become Rivers," January.
2025	"Career Development Panel" at Society of Christian Ethics mid-term gathering, via zoom, August 14.
2025	"Building and Sustaining Transcending Desire," Reformed Theology Interest Group, Society of Christian Ethics, January.
2024	"What Remains: Gary Dorrien's Christian-Intellectual Life, Democratic Socialism, and Liberation Theology" at American Academy of Religion, November.
2024	"From Muted to Movement: Faith-Rooted Organizing and Congregational Ministry" at Lexington Theological Seminary, September 11.
2024	"Ties that Bond Us: Differences of Sacred Value in Interfaith Organizing," at Oxford Interfaith Forum, April 11.
2023	"Organizing Visions: The Past, Present, and Future of Christian Social Ethics and Organizing Movements," at Society of Christian Ethics Annual Meeting, January.

2021 "The Church as a Freedom-House: The Political Ecclesiology of George Washington Woodbey" at Nineteenth Century Theology Unit, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November.

2020 "The Politics of Sacred Value in Broad-based Community Organizing" at Society of Christian Ethics Annual Meeting, January.

2019 "Our Last Best Chance?: Harry Ward's Radical Social Gospel, Liberal Theology and Soviet Communism" at Liberal Theologies Unit, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November.

2019 "Feminist and Anti-Racist Accounts of Sacred Value," at International PhD Seminar: *Religion and Activism*, November.

2019 "Deweyan Radical Democracy and Broad-based Community Organizing" at The Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought, June, 2019

2019 "Organizing Race" at The Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion, March, 2019.

2018 "Sacred Value, Moral Horror and Resembling God in Robert Adams' *Finite and Infinite Goods*." at Tennessee Philosophical Association, October.

2018 "Black Liberation as Political Expectation," at Harvard Divinity School and Science, Religion and Culture *Ways of Knowing* Conference, October.

2017 "Organizing Sacred Value" at McGill University Center for Research on Religion Graduate Conference, McGill University, September.

2017 "Organic Intellectuals and Moral Exemplars to the Church" at Mid-Atlantic Region of American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, January.

2017 "A Politics of Grieving: Organizing Practices Rooted in Augustinian Virtue" at Princeton Theological Seminary Graduate Theology Conference, Princeton Theological Seminary, January.

2016 "Posturing toward a Social Eschatology: Race, Property, and Embodied Expectations" at Duke Graduate Theology Conference, Duke University, October.

Invited Lectures and Public Talks:

2025 "Theology That Organizes: Why *Organizing Visions* Is the Book Progressive Christianity Needs Right Now" Podcast Live Book Launch with Gary Dorrien and Charlene Sinclair, via zoom, December 3, 2025, https://processthis.substack.com/p/theology-that-organizes-why-organizing

2025 "Solidarity Economy and Collaborative Congregational Cultures" Presentation to Covenant Presbyterian Church, Durham NC, via zoom, August 16, 2025.

2025 "Congregational Vitality as Leader-full Communities." Keynote at Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy August Meeting, August 14, 2025.

2025 "Democratic Tensions and Politics of Sacred Value" at *Democracy in Tension* online summit, via zoom, July 30, 2025

2025 "The Future of Faith and Justice" at Homebrewed Christianity podcast, July 7, 2025, https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/homebrewed-christianity/id276269040?i=1000716088447

2025 "Interfaith Leadership Formation" at *Praxis of Encounter: Forming Catholic Leaders for a Public & Synodal Church,* University of San Francisco, May 21.

2025 "Breakfast with Author" at Society of Christian Ethics

2024 "Broad-based Organizing and Sacred Values," at Religious Socialism Podcast, November 20, 2024, https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/broad-based-organizing-sacred-values-aaron-stauffer/id1103945328?i=1000677930072

2024 "Futures of Liberation Theology" and "Interlocking Crises of Democracy and Religion" at Homebrewed Theology Beer Camp, October 18-19.

2024 "Spirit, Community, and Social Pragmatism," a two-part podcast at Center for Asian American Christianity at Princeton Seminary podcast, August 8, 2024 https://caacptsem.substack.com/p/the-spirit-of-community-with-aaron

2024 "Theology for Action with Aaron Stauffer" at Homebrewed Christianity podcast, August 7, 2024 https://trippfuller.com/2024/08/07/aaron-stauffer-theology-for-action/

2024 "Building Churches, Building Community" a Three Month Adult Christian Education Series at Woodland Park Presbyterian Church, Seattle, Wa.

2024 "Faith Spaces and Community Organizing with Aaron Stauffer" at A Matter of Faith: A Presby Podcast, 20 June 2024, https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/faith-spaces-and-community-organizing-w-aaron-stauffer/id1554293595?i=1000659606644

2024 "Listening to the Spirit with Aaron Stauffer" at Religion and Justice podcast. April 1, 2024 https://open.spotify.com/episode/45KLapXLpbrOc2qmx4vmDo?si=a224416699194a2b

2024 "Avoiding Burnout in Under Resourced Churches and Agencies," at Vanderbilt Divinity School, March 21, Nashville Tn.

2024 "Listening to the Spirit Book Launch," at Vanderbilt Divinity School, March 18.

2024 "Listening to the Spirit" a Three Week Adult Christian Education Class at First Presbyterian Church in Oak Ridge, TN, February 2024.

2023 Guest Preacher, Historic Franklin Presbyterian Church, Franklin, TN

2023 Guest Preacher, Historic Franklin Presbyterian Church, Franklin, TN

2023 "Celebrating Creation" at Vanderbilt Divinity School, Chapel, September.

2023 "Educating Outside the Box" moderator, webinar with The Association for Theological Schools

2023 "Moral Imagination, Religious Difference, and Interfaith Cooperation," Vanderbilt University, Integrative Chaplaincy Training Intensive.

2022 Panelist on "Prophetic Action: Building a Faith Based Justice Network on Long Island" for Long Island Jobs with Justice Conference.

2022 Guest Preacher, Second Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN

2022 Guest Preacher, McMinnville Presbyterian Church, McMinnville, TN

2022 Guest Preacher, Southminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN.

2022 Community Organizing and Religion's Role. TV Interview with News Channel 5 *Issues of Faith*, July 8, 2022. https://www.newschannel5.com/plus/issues-of-faith/community-organizing-and-religions-role.

2022 Guest Preacher, East Brentwood Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN

2022 Guest Preacher, Southminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN

2022 "Christian Social Ethics for Social Justice," a month-long adult education series at First Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN.

2021 Guest Preacher, Glencliff Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN

2021 Guest Preacher, Donnelson Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN

2021 Guest Preacher, Second Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN

2021 Guest Preacher, First Presbyterian Church, Springfield, TN

2021 "The Social Gospel Yesterday and Today," at Idlewild Presbyterian Church, Memphis, TN.

2020 "Interfaith Peacebuilding" at Austin Peay State University

2019 "Religion and Politics," at Congregation Micah in Nashville, TN.

2018 "The Christian Church's Call to Racial Justice," at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN.

2017 "Grassroots Interfaith Community Organizing Against Islamophobia" at Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly in Columbus, OH.

2016 "Peacemaking and Bridge building at the Grassroots between Muslims and non-Muslims" at Parliament of World Religions, Salt Lake City, UT.

Academic, Guild and Church Service and Certification

Academic Service

Vanderbilt University Divinity School

Chair, Online & Lifelong Learning Committee, 2023-2024
Member, Academic Programs and Academic Affairs Committee, 2020-2024
Online Course Development Institute, Center for Teaching, 2021

Saint Paul School of Theology

Member, Advisory Council, Pause / Play Center for Preachers, 2024-Present

Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York

Member of Union Theological Seminary Search Committee for Systematic Theology Faculty Member, 2012-2013

Guild

Society of Christian Ethics

Chair, Social Ethics and Organizing Interest Group, 2024-Present
Member, Nominating Committee, 2024-2025

Association for Leaders in Lifelong Learning for Ministry

Secretary, 2023-Present

Rowan and Littlefield, an imprint of Bloomsbury Press.

Manuscript Reviewer, 2024

Baylor University Press

Editor of Academic Book Series (together with Joerg Rieger), Intersectional Challenges in the Capitalocene: Theology, Religion, Class, and Justice

Church Service

Board Member, Black Mountain School of Theology and Community, 2026
Co-Chair, Presbyterian Social Ethics Network, 2024-2026
Ordained, Minister of Word and Sacrament, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2022
Moderator, Committee on Leadership Excellence, Middle Tennessee Presbytery, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2021-2023
Clinical Pastoral Education, Unit I, St. Thomas Hospital, Murfreesboro, TN, 2020
Member, General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2018-2020
Member of writing team for General Assembly Committee on Interfaith and Ecumenical Relations Interfaith Stance for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); Member of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Young Adult Presbyterians and Multifaith Cohort, 2012-2013

Professional Experience

2020 - 2020 **Wendland Cook Program in Religion at Justice at Vanderbilt University**
Senior Research Fellow

2012 - 2015 **Religions for Peace USA**

Associate Director; *Executive Director*

2011 - 2013 **Faith and Culture Center**
Project Coordinator

2010 - 2011 **Communities Organized for Public Service / Metro Alliance**
Community Organizer

Professional Memberships

Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought
American Academy of Religion
Society of Christian Ethics
Social Ethics Network of the PC(USA)
Fellowship of Protestant Ethics

Languages

Spanish (Advanced, reading, writing and speaking), German (Intermediate, reading)

Academic References

Gary Dorrien
Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics, Union Theological Seminary in NYC and Professor of Religion at Columbia University
Email: gdorrien@uts.columbia.edu

Joerg Rieger
Distinguished Professor of Theology, Cal Turner Chancellor's Chair of Wesleyan Studies, Vanderbilt Divinity School
Founding Director of the Wendland-Cook Program in Religion and Justice
Email: j.rieger@vanderbilt.edu

C. Melissa Snarr
Associate Professor of Ethics & Society, Vanderbilt Divinity School
Email: melissa.snarr@Vanderbilt.edu