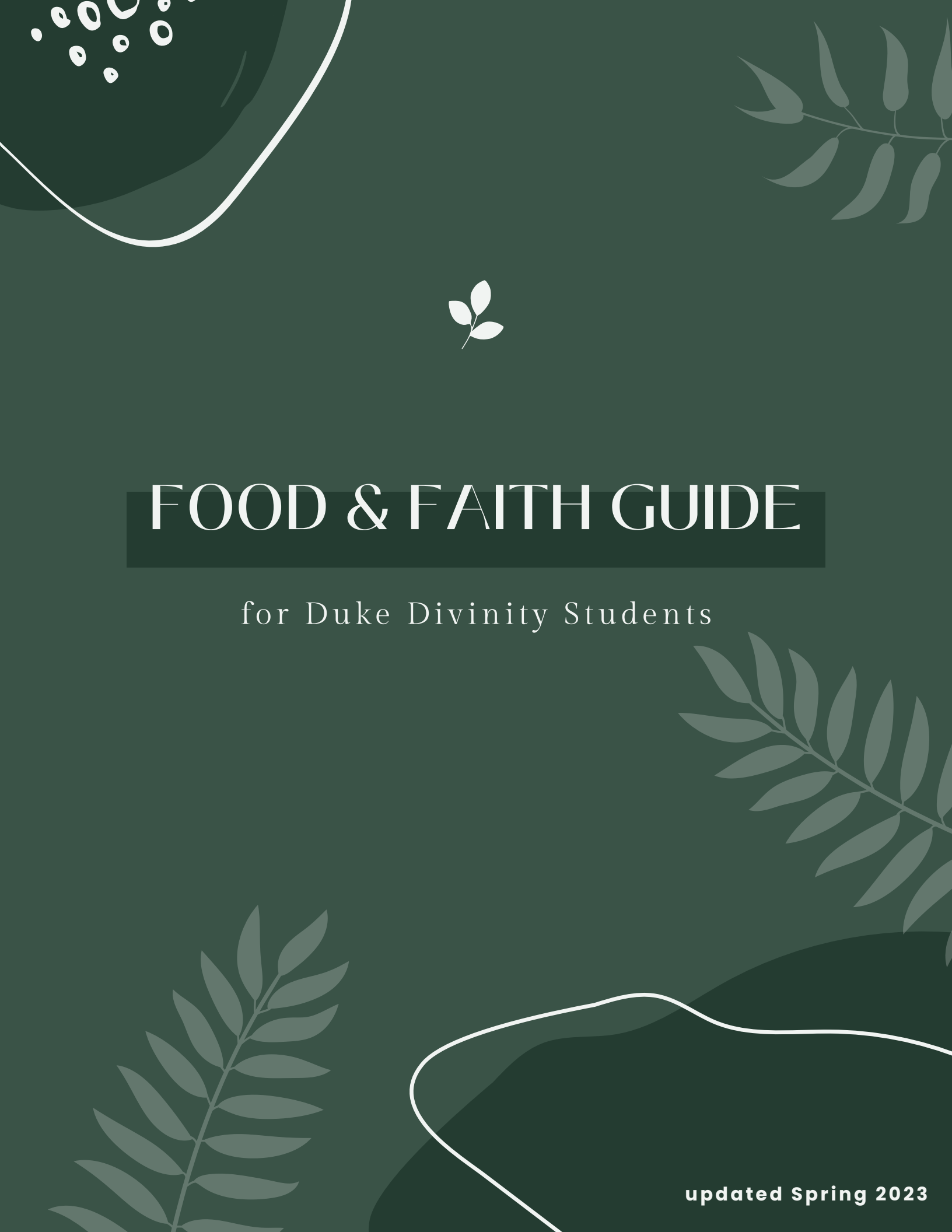




FOOD & FAITH GUIDE

for Duke Divinity Students

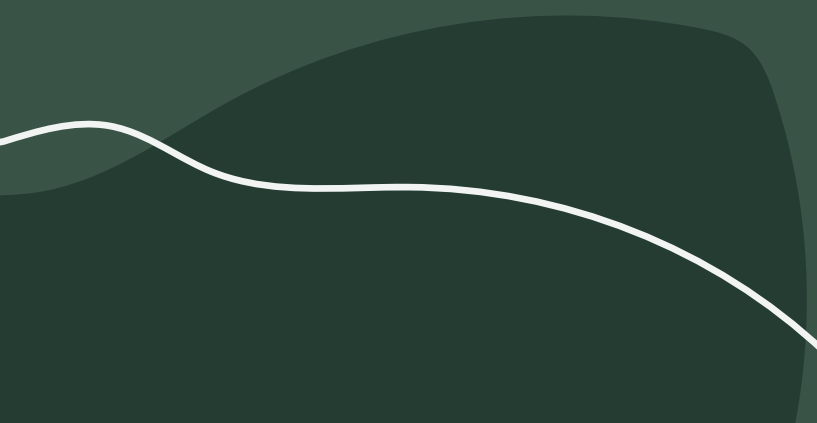
updated Spring 2023



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guidebook is meant to be a living resource for Duke Divinity Students looking to engage more deeply in the local food system during their time in Durham. Initially prepared by RAFI Food, Faith, and Justice Fellow Katie Mangum in Spring 2023, this guide is maintained and updated by RAFI's Come to the Table team. Please reach out to cttt@rafiusa.org with questions and comments.

We hope the following pages provide some ideas and avenues of connection for those interested in exploring the important local links between food, faith, and justice. The guide is organized by the following themes:

- GROW** tending the earth
 - SERVE** serving our neighbors
 - STAND** standing in solidarity with workers
 - SHIFT** engaging in systems change
 - EAT** changing our habits
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GROW

tending the earth

The Lord God took the human and settled him in the garden of Eden to farm it and to take care of it.

Genesis 2:15

"The soil is the great connector of our lives, the source and destination of all."

Wendell Berry

Although we understand caring for the land to be one of our most basic callings as human beings—and the very first found in Scripture—many of us lack a sense of daily connection with the land we depend upon. Brimming grocery store shelves might allow us to forget that getting food to our tables involves sustained patience, deep care, and inherent uncertainty. However, when we spend intentional and consistent time tending to the needs of green and growing things, we learn in new and surprising ways the interconnectedness of all creation. With our hands in the soil, we are reminded of our own creatureliness and our deep dependence on Creator God. The more we live into our first calling as tenders and stewards of this earth, the more we perceive rightly the gifts of creation and our place of profound responsibility and yet smallness in the vast ecosystem of God's good creation.

Some places to get your hands in the soil:

- Volunteer at [The Garden Spring Forest](#).
- Volunteer or apply to work at [the Duke Campus Farm](#).
- Volunteer or become a member at [Chestnut Ridge Community Farm](#).
- Volunteer at your own church garden—or start a new one!

SERVE

serving our neighbors

For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Galatians 5:14

"You pray for the hungry. Then you feed them. This is how prayer works."

Pope Francis

One way we express our love of neighbor is through sharing the table with those who are experiencing hunger today. Despite being a highly agricultural state, North Carolina is home to high rates of food insecurity in both urban and rural areas. Food insecurity disproportionately impacts low-income communities and communities of color, making it an issue of justice that overlaps with many others. Even as we work for the transformation of our food system on a systemic level so that all people one day have access to healthy, affordable, sustainable and justly-produced food, faithfulness also looks like tending to the basic needs of those around us. As we listen deeply and walk humbly alongside those who are most impacted by the gaps in our food system, we grow our collective resolve, compassion, and wisdom in the face of complex systemic issues.

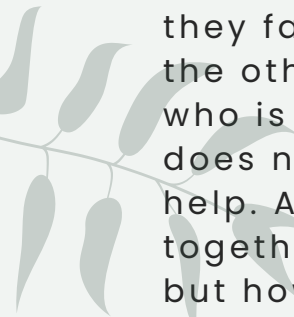
Some ways to start serving:

- Support the Duke Graduate and Professional Student Government Pantry.
- Volunteer with the Society of St. Andrew's Gleaning Network.
- Volunteer with Root Causes Fresh Produce Program, providing food as medicine.
- Volunteer with End Hunger Durham (a sponsored program of Durham Congregations in Action).
- Volunteer with PORCH-Durham, setting out to fight hunger.
- Volunteer with Inter-Faith Food Shuttle.



STAND

standing in solidarity with workers



Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other, but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Food systems workers—including agricultural laborers, processors, packers, distributors, grocery store staff, food service workers, and restaurant employees—make up about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the global workforce. It goes without saying that their wellbeing impacts every single community on the planet—a reality the world recognized anew at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, in our industrialized system largely controlled by corporations, workers are vulnerable to mistreatment and exploitation, from unfair wages and safety hazards to discriminatory practices and intimidation. In the U.S., laborers in this sector are very often migrant workers and people of color who experience overlapping systems of inequities. As neighbors of food systems workers, we are called upon to stand in solidarity with them against the forces of empire. Together, we press for more safe and just working conditions for all those who are involved in the sacred acts of providing food to the world.

A few ways to join farmworker advocacy:

- Get involved with [the National Farm Worker Ministry](#).
 - Get involved with [Student Action with Farmworkers](#).
 - Get involved with [the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry](#).
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SHIFT

engaging in systems change

God's power was at work in Christ when God raised him from the dead and sat him at God's right side in the heavens, far above every ruler and authority and power and angelic power, any power that might be named not only now but in the future.

Ephesians 1:20-21

"Food charity is a sweet siren song. It is not a sustainable track toward the Beloved Community."

Rev. Dr. Heber Brown III

Ultimately, our efforts to improve our food system should move toward systemic change. Our current industrial, globalized food system relies heavily on the exploitation of both human and non-human creation—farmers and food workers, nearby communities, animals, the soil, water, and air. Practices such as monoculture, heavy use of chemicals, concentrated animal feeding operations, and long-distance distribution ultimately degrade our environments, our communities, and our own health. Corporate interests, legal forces, entrenched social norms, and widespread complacency stand between where we are now and the food system as it should be—where farmers, consumers, workers, communities, and non-human creation are able to flourish. Toward this vision of a just, nourished Beloved Community, we can engage research and education, policy and advocacy, and collective action.

Join in efforts to reshape the food system:

- Get involved with RAFI's work challenging the root causes of unjust food systems. Check out [RAFI's newsletter](#) and [annual DDS fellowship](#).
- Volunteer with [Farmer Foodshare](#), reshaping the food system.
- Check out [Bass Connections](#) student research projects related to food.
- Support organizations working toward land and food justice, such as [Urban Community Agrinomics \(UCAN\)](#).
- Check out the [Center for Environmental Farming Systems'](#) internships.

EAT

changing our habits

“Food is a gift of God given to all creatures for the purposes of life’s nurture, sharing, and celebration. When it is done in the name of God, eating is the earthly realization of God’s eternal communion-building love.”

Norman Wirzba

Even as we live within the realities of the food system as it is, we can shift our daily habits and practices to reflect the hope we have in the vision of a food system as it should be. This involves taking whatever steps we can to purchase more local, sustainable, justly-produced foods and to consume our food more consciously and in more communal contexts. We can care for our neighbors and the land by supporting nearby farmers who are engaging in sustainable practices. We can mitigate our climate impact by eating less meat and minimizing our food waste. We can cultivate postures of gratitude, compassion, and interdependence by farming, cooking, and eating together. While individual efforts are not the ultimate goal, engaging healthy, mindful, communal modes of eating can be an important step in our own discipleship and in preparing our own hearts for systemic change. As we eat and pray over our daily bread, we live into our belief that small, daily practices truly shape us, our lives of faith, and our communities in tangible, important ways.

Engage with food differently:

- Visit the [Durham Farmers’ Market](#).
- Participate in a [local CSA](#) or find [local farms](#) to support.
- Explore new ideas and habits around food with your church or faith community through resources like [the Edible Theology Project](#).

FOR FURTHER LEARNING...

Other ways to engage:

- Speak with the Office of Field Education about possibilities for engaging food and faith work during field education placements.
- Take courses within the Faith, Food, and Environmental Justice certificate.
- Engage with the Creation Justice Coalition, an official student organization at DDS.
- Check out [the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association](#).
- Follow [the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition](#).
- Follow [the HEAL Food Alliance](#).

Some suggested reading:

- *Good Food: Grounded Practical Theology* by Jennifer R. Ayres
- *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating* by Norman Wirzba
- *Agrarian Spirit* by Norman Wirzba
- *Soil and Sacrament: A Spiritual Memoir of Food and Faith* by Fred Bahnson
- *We Are Each Other's Harvest: Celebrating African American Farmers, Land, and Legacy* by Natalie Baszile
- *We Will Feast: Rethinking Dinner, Worship, and the Community of God* by Kendall Vanderslice
- *Manna and Mercy* by Daniel Erlander
- *Jesus for Farmers and Fishers: Justice for All Those Marginalized by Our Food System* by Gary Paul Nabhan