



The Encouraging Word

Pleasant Hills Community Presbyterian Church

March
2011

From The Interim Pastor...

The season of Lent can be a wonderful opportunity to grow in the Christian faith, to expand our reading, to go deeper in prayer and to journey with our Lord toward the cross. This period of 40 days and 6 Sundays takes us to the heart of the faith. The 40 days reminds us of the flood in Genesis, Moses' sojourn at Mount Sinai, Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb, Jonah's call to Ninevah to preach repentance and Jesus' time of testing in the wilderness.

In the early centuries of the faith, Lent was a time of preparation for the celebration of baptism on Easter, and for many churches it remains a time to equip and nurture candidates for baptism and confirmation.

The *Companion to the Book of Common Worship*, reminds us that "What we hear during Lent... is that the way of the cross, the way to Easter, is through death. To appropriate the new life that is beyond the power of death means we must die with Christ who was raised for us. To live for Christ, we must die with him. New life requires a daily surrendering of the old life, letting go of the present order, so that we may embrace the new humanity... The church's peculiar Lenten claim is that in dying we live, that all who are baptized into Christ are baptized into his death... In order to embrace the resurrection, we must experience the passion of Jesus." (Geneva Press, 2003, p. 110-111)

In some churches on Ash Wednesday, the words are spoken "You are dust, and to dust you shall return," a quote from Genesis 3:19. It's a reminder that our possessions, our projects, our empires, even our families and our lives do not last forever. We all are just penciled in. Almighty God is prying our fingers back from our presumed securities. But this is also a time to know God's gracious freedom and new life that he gives to us.

This year Pleasant Hills Church is making available the little book *The 3:16 Promise* by Max Lucado. It comes in several versions but the thin paperback contains six brief chapters based on John 3:16. During the six Sundays of Lent, the preacher of the morning will be basing their sermon on this book. Pick up a copy for yourself.

During Lent this year read through the passion stories of our Lord, try tithing, fasting, read cover to cover a significant book, join us for pre-worship prayer each Sunday at 9:00 a.m. in the Boardroom, join the Prayer Chain or take on a service project. In the process we are changed, the "old self" fades away and the "new self" in Christ emerges. May it be so.

For the privilege of serving among you,

In Christ,
David B. Antonson
Interim Pastor

Craig Wolfley to be Featured Speaker at the Men's Communion Breakfast

Craig Wolfley, a 12 year veteran of the National Football League, will be the keynote speaker at the Pleasant Hills Community Presbyterian Church's annual Men's Communion Breakfast.

Mr. Wolfley played for ten years as an offensive lineman for the Pittsburgh Steelers and was selected a member of the Steelers All-Century team. A very ready-for-action person, he has competed in the World's Strongest Man and NFL Strongest Man contests, boxed professionally, has over 19 years martial arts training and has engaged in other physically challenging activities.

Currently, he is a side-line reporter broadcasting football games on WDVE and co-hosts a radio show with former teammate Tunch Ilkin on ESPN Pittsburgh. Mr. Wolfley is an entertaining, inspiring, and humorous speaker who is expected to enthrall the audience attending the breakfast.

The Men's Communion Breakfast is sponsored by the church's Deacons. The communion service, which is open to all men, not only members of the Presbyterian Church, will be held **March 12, starting at 8:00 AM**. The breakfast will immediately follow and church service attendance is not required. Tickets are \$12. They may be bought from a deacon or at the door.

The Pleasant Hills Community Presbyterian Church is located at 199 Old Clairton Road, two blocks from the Pleasant Hills Cloverleaf.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE JANUARY SESSION MEETING

The Session of the church met on Tuesday, January 25, 2011 and here are some highlights of that meeting:

- Thanked those elders going off session: Deac Dressing, John Healy, Ralph Johnston, Gary Molinaro and Linda Stout. A dinner in their honor, with spouses, will be given February 22nd.
- Ken Harris, President of the Board of Deacons, gave an update on their work.
- Approved the Temporary Supply one year contract between Rev. Darlene Hann and the Session.
- David Greiner announced that the church is now insured by a new company that will save \$7,000.00 per year.
- The Stewardship Team presented a proposal that Session proceed with the steps required to develop an Endowment Plan. It was approved.
- Personnel is moving ahead to fill the position of Business Manager.
- Session reviewed plans for the Annual Meeting to be held January 30th.
- Hired Zack Morgan for nine months as a youth intern. He has been a volunteer and is a graduate of California University.

Dessert and Discussion March 31st at 7pm

The Adult Discipleship Ministry Team invites you to attend a time of sharing and vision for the future of Adult Ministries.

Come enjoy a delicious dessert and share your ideas about Adult education, ministries and goals Childcare will be provided upon request.

RSVP to
DARLENE@PLEASANTHILLSCHURCH.COM .

3:16

Max Lucado's book, **3:16**, will be the focus of study during Lent this year, from March 13th through April 17th. **3:16** focuses upon a central verse of the Bible from the book of John: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Two Sunday Bible studies will cover **3:16**. One will be lead by Ron and Sue Minkus at 9:30 AM, the other by Karen Bentley at 11:00 AM. Two versions of the book will be available after services. The smaller version is a weekly study for Lent and can be purchased for \$2. The larger version serves as a daily devotion during Lent and can be purchased for \$8. For those of you with a Kindle or a Nook, the larger version is available from Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble for \$5.75.

Friday Night Live— March 25th

A night of games, food, awesome speakers, ice skating, soccer, and an early morning dance cruise for middle school students begins at 8:30 PM with registration in the Great Room. Everyone returns to the church by 7:00 AM for their parents to pick them up.

Register by calling Debbie at the church. Permission slips are available from the church website. Bring the filled-out form with the fantastically low price of \$35 that night. Friday Night Live starts out in the Great Room and doors will open at 8:30 PM. Everything is included in the fee except for the snack bar at ice skating and on the boat.

If anyone wishes to sponsor a student for this chance to hear the Gospel, please contact Debbie at (412) 655-2000 x 131.

CrossOver Goes High Tech

CrossOver ministries has spent a lot of time planning this past winter for the upcoming semester and also for the fall of 2011. Though we have set many lofty goals for the year in terms of the ministries within CrossOver there one in particular are I would like to share with everyone. We are looking at more effectively using technology in order to reach and communicate with students, young adults and leaders.

As you may or may not be aware Facebook (social networking application) is used by almost everyone under the age of 30. Most people in this age group spend a significant amount of time on the application in order to keep in close communication with their friends and family. Updates are constantly posted as to what is going on real-time in their lives along with many photos and videos. Facebook also has the ability to communicate events and create spaces where community can exist and share experiences with each other. We are implementing things called "event pages" and "like pages" in order to stay in constant touch with students, leaders and young adults and also inform them and invite them to upcoming ministry events.

In addition to using Facebook we have also implemented a texting service that can notify and remind people of upcoming events. One text can be sent and will reach hundreds of students, adults, parents and leaders. We have started to use this system and will send out reminders to students and leaders the day of and several hours before an event begins. One goal is to hopefully significantly cutback (we already have made some cutbacks here) on our mailings and use the technology that is available to communicate. However our main goal is to more effectively reach and minister to this upcoming generation of students and adults.

Notes From “Speaking On Race”

by Nancy Carr

“When I go to preach at a white church, somebody always asks me if I’m the new janitor. I tell them ‘Yes,’ ” said Pastor Q with a grin. Q (that’s his nickname) says “People always underestimate me.” Q is one of the fascinating people I met at the first Speaking on Race meeting.

“Speaking on Race” was organized by the Pittsburgh Presbytery’s **Amos 5:24 Ministry Team**, which addresses issues of racism in the community of Christ. The first “Speaking on Race” dialogue meeting was just that: a chance to meet, become acquainted, and talk about race.

The primary participants in the dialogue came from our church and Bidwell Presbyterian in Manchester. The first meeting was held at Bidwell on Feb. 10th, and the second will be held at our church on Feb. 17th. We’re a primarily white church, and Bidwell is primarily black. Betsy Sevin, Rev. & Mrs. Antonson, my husband Rob and I attended from PHCPC.

The first thing we did together was what Presbyterians always do: sit down to a delicious meal.

Then we broke into groups that provided a mix of black & white participants in each group. Our facilitator asked questions that we each answered:

- *What is your racial history?* This included things such as what our parents taught us about people of other races; our own reaction to the civil rights movement and the reaction of those around us; things we experienced connected to racism/civil rights, etc.
- *How has your racial experience shaped you?*
- *Have you experienced or witnessed racism recently?*
- *What do you particularly like about being your race? What do you most dislike?*

The discussion was serious and funny, painful and happy. When we talked about incidences of racism, people’s strength became evident. “It (racism) was present, but I didn’t let it affect my life,” said Audrey, a soft-spoken black woman who I learned had lived within five minutes of my childhood home.

Where was our pastor, Dave Antonson, during the civil rights unrest of the late 1960’s? Pastoring a white church in Alabama, the hotbed of protests on both sides. When the courts ordered racial integration of the public schools, Pastor Dave had to deal with a congregation resistant to the idea. Ask him about it sometime.

I went to this meeting for several reasons:

- I grew up during the 1960’s, during a period of huge civil unrest, in an area where that unrest was inescapable. I’m interested in how racism was, and is, and how to dispel it.
- The Hartford Institute for Religion Research survey of almost 900 congregations found that one factor associated with church growth is a multiracial congregation. That’s food for thought.
- I discovered not too long ago that I am married to a black man; my husband is 1/8th black. I’m looking forward to the next meeting.

Precepts Women’s Bible Study

Spring 2011

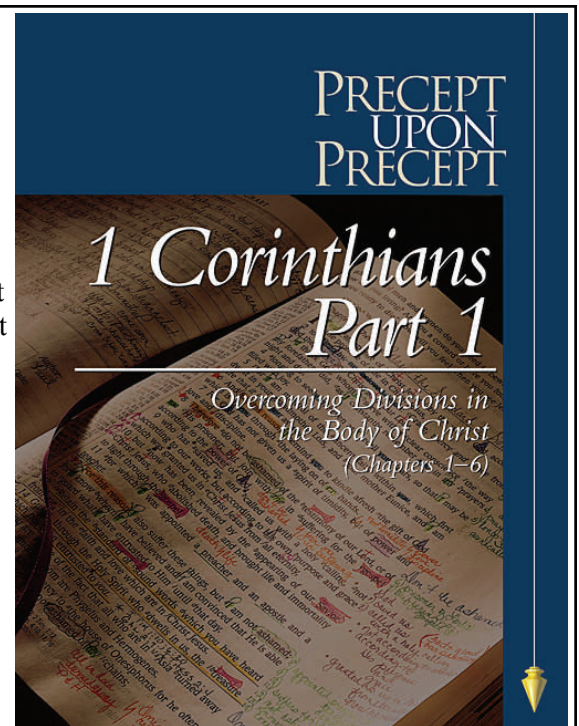
Pleasant Hills Community Presbyterian Church
Wednesdays 9:15 – 11:30, Fellowship Hall

I Corinthians, Part 1: Do you wonder why people in the church can’t just get along with each other? Conflict among God’s people is not new and neither is its resolution. How shall we, as Christians, more gracefully handle disputes? Does it matter how we work through disagreements about pot luck dinners, or only about more important issues, such as leadership or sin? Join us as we dig into God’s Word to learn answers to these questions and how to BE the church.

Classes will be on March 23th and 30th, April 13th, 20th and 27th and May 11th, 18th and 25th.

Pray for one another and for those who prepare our lessons and refreshments.

Questions: call Kristin Palmer: 412-655-8289 or Linda Sue Boehmer: 412-653-1082.



Border Transitions Ministry

by John and Diane Davis

Her name was Nancy. She and her husband Sam were missionaries with the Methodist church. Their call was to plant churches near Monterrey, Mexico. Sam and Nancy had been in the field for twenty three years and knew the danger that comes with this job. In fact, according to their son they had been chased more than once by the drug gangs patrolling the highways in and around Monterrey.



Then one day a couple of weeks ago Sam and Nancy went into Mexico, knowing the risks, to serve their churches and their God. This time on the way home they either stumbled onto a gun battle between two rival gangs or were being chased again by these thugs trying to steal their truck or (presuming they had money) rob them. This time the thugs won. Nancy was shot and killed. We tell you this for several reasons: Sam and Nancy's last name is Davis, they drive a gray pickup truck like ours, and we have been on that road numerous times. Also Sam is 62 and John is 64 while Diane is 62 and Nancy was 57. Coincidences abound!

We tell you this story for several reasons: to ask you to pray for our brother and sister, to let those of you who have heard the story know that we are fine, and to dispel any rumors that the troubles in Mexico are stopping the work of the Lord and are spilling over into the United States. Sam Davis reportedly has decided to return to serving the Lord. We do not know if he has returned to Mexico yet, but we know he has plans to do so. We are under orders from our board of directors to concentrate our service in Laredo, TX. There is enough work in Laredo, TX for decades, but there are many times we miss serving our friends in Nuevo Laredo, MX, Monterrey, MX and Saltillo, MX. We will be back there as soon as the Lord allows.

If you ever have questions about what is happening here, please contact us by email, btmlaredo.com@hotmail.com, call phone, 956-763-4051, or by writing us at:

Border Transitions Ministry
2520 Lane Street
Laredo, TX 78043

A Letter to the Parents



I hope everyone had as much fun this winter as I did. Each year around this time we start to get ready for the seasons to change...again! The kids start asking to go out without a coat on even though it's only 45 degrees. I know it feels a lot warmer but we still have a few weeks to go before we can start putting away the winter coats and the snow boots. The kids are already planning for the summer and what all they want to do with vacation. What happened to Spring! It seems like the kids are always ahead of me these days and I try hard to keep up with them.

With the kids, we do have to always be looking ahead and planning for what comes next. We are just half way through the winter session and we already need to get the spring session ordered and ready. We are learning a lot in Sunday School as well as Children's Worship. I hope the kids are having fun, we had over 50 kids this past

Sunday and that is really excited for us all! Don't forget to come and see us each Thursday for Kid's JAM, too.

This summer we will have **VBS in the morning the week of June 20th**. It seems like that is just around the corner. I have learned a lot from the leaders we have here and I have learned even more from your children. I have had a blast getting to know the kids of our church as well as the parents too. We flew through winter with Thanksgiving, Illumination, Advent, and then Christmas. The New Year has started and we are flying towards Spring with Lent, Easter, then Summer, and then we start over again next fall. (GO STEELERS!) It all seems to be a blur but we have to embrace and enjoy each moment. As a good friend of mine once told me, "sometimes the days seem long but the years are short". It does go by in a flash. As my kids try to keep me "up with the times", I try to get them to "stop and smell the roses" once in a while. It seems like things will never end and to tell you the truth, I hope they never do!

Let's all welcome spring together. With open arms and open hearts, we can watch our kids grow in their love of God and as active members of our Church.

In Christ,
Walt



Interfaith Hospitality Network families are moving into their own homes! Please help them to set up housekeeping by donating these items:

Gently Used Furniture:

- Couches/Love Seats/Chairs
(sorry, no sleeper sofas)
- Coffee & End Tables
- Lamps
- Tables and Chairs
- Small Dinette Sets
- TV Stands
- Book Cases/Shelves
- Dressers
- Nightstands
- Bed Frames

Kitchen:

- Plates/Bowls
- Cups & Glasses
- Silverware
- Serving Plates/Bowls
- Pots & Pans
- Cooking/Baking Utensils
- Baking Sheets
- Mixing Bowls
- Dish Towels/Cloths/Potholders
- Coffee Makers/Toasters
- Microwaves
- Dishracks

Household:

- New** Pillows
- Blankets
- Sheet Sets
- Comforters
- Draperies/Curtains/Sheers
- Curtain Rods
- Table Cloths/Placemats
- Laundry Baskets
- Televisions
- DVD Players
- Toilet Paper
- Paper Towels

Cleaning:

- Dish Soap
- Laundry Soap
- Bleach
- Bathroom Cleaner
- Window Cleaner
- Sponges
- Buckets
- Mops
- Brooms
- Tall Kitchen Trash Bags
- Large Plastic Bags

Bath:

- Bath Towels
- Hand Towels
- Wash Cloths
- Shower Curtains, Liners & Rings
- Rugs & Accessories

A few words...

Furniture: Unfortunately, we most likely won't be able to accept large pieces of furniture unless you are able to get them to us. Is there anyone who could help you transport it?

Mattresses/Box Springs: Less than 10 years old and cleaned: Sprinkle [baking](#) soda over the top and bottom, and allow the baking soda to remain overnight. Vacuum the entire mattress the following morning. Remove any stains with spot remover. Check the edges of both the mattress and box spring to make sure there are no springs or wires poking through the seams.

All Donations: Clean, in good working order and ready to use, please.

New Items: Gladly accepted!

Please contact Laura Vincenti at 724-229-1129 or 412-921-2916 or LAURAVINCENTI@GMAIL.COM to discuss your donation.

Thank You!

The next Interfaith Hospitality Network week at our church will be March 20-27. Please help out!

Deacon Diary

March 2011

by Ken Harris, Deacon President

I'm looking forward to many great things with this year's Deacons! The Deacon Retreat was held on January 25 and was well attended. We also participated in the Leader Workshop in February.



Our March calendar includes:

- March 1 – Deacons Meeting
- March 6 – Serving extended Communion to our Care Partners
- March 9 – Ash Wednesday Soup Supper
- March 12 – Men's Communion Breakfast

Ongoing Deacon Responsibilities:

- Collecting food items for the Cloverleaf Food Bank
- Serving coffee and treats between services in Fellowship Hall
- Contacting and visiting our Care Partners
- Outreach through Care Ministry cards (sympathy, congratulation, get well)
- Serving men's shelter meals every other month at East Liberty Presbyterian Church

This year, we are blessed to have the following people serving as Deacons:

- Ken Harris (Deacon President), Cindy Podplesky (Vice President), Dot Foote (Secretary)
- Caring and Sharing Ministry members include:
 - Matt Virgin (Chair), Fiore Perri (Vice Chair), Victor Graves, JoAnn Fosbaugh, C.T. Lin, Craig Carlson, Ron Minkus, Gretchen Johnson, Rob Bootay
- Outreach Ministry members include:
 - Duke Ramsey (Chair), Lew Wright (Vice Chair), Nancy McCall, Shawn Grusofsky, Dave Delmonico, Don Kreiger Jr., Howard Crawford, Jim Johnson, Chuck Correll
- Fellowship Ministry members include:
 - Rick Place (Chair), Floyd Nevling (Vice Chair), Hollis McDaniels, Walt Kivala, Ron Hann, Joanne Dressing, Betsy Sevin, Bob Zirkle, Robyne Hinson

I would like to thank everyone serving as a Deacon. We're off to a great start! If you have any comments or questions relating to Deacons, please contact Ken Harris at 412.860.2655 or KENH412@GMAIL.COM.

Ash Wednesday Meal and Worship

The annual Ash Wednesday Soup Supper will begin at 6:00 PM in Fellowship Hall on March 9th.

Following the supper, at 7:00 PM, there will be a Communion worship service in the Sanctuary marking the beginning of the Lenten season. John Stainer's "For God So Loved The World" will be sung. Please join us to commemorate the start of the Lenten season.

Upcoming Opportunity!

Beginning May 8th through June 26th a fruit basket of Bible wisdom:

Fruits of the Spirit.

Each week a lecturer will present one of the gifts of the spirit. Classes held at 9:30 and 11:00. Plan to attend for a summer refreshment of the Word and fellowship.

Business Manager Position Available

We are now accepting resumes for the part-time position of Business Manager in the church business office. A position description is available from the church website at:

[HTTP://WWW.PLEASANTHILLSCHURCH.COM/ABOUT/RESOURCES/](http://www.pleasanthillschurch.com/about/resources/)

or at the volunteer desk in the church office.

Next Sunday: Condiments for the Food Bank

During March, PHCPC's deacons are collecting condiments for the Cloverleaf Area Ecumenical Assistance Program—the Food Bank. Please place unexpired containers of mayonnaise, mustard, ketchup, hot sauce, or other condiments in the baskets in either the Great Room Lobby or Fellowship Hall.

A Few Preschool Places Remain

If you are looking for preschool for your child, a few places are left in the PHCPC Preschool classes. There is a \$50.00 registration fee. Information about the PHCPC preschool program is available on the church website. If you are interested, call Joan at home (412-655-9283) or leave a voice mail on 412-655-2000 x136.

MOPS SuperSale

The PHCPC Mothers Of PreSchoolers (MOPS) annual SuperSale will be Saturday, March 19th from 8:00 AM until 2:00 PM in the Great Room. Purchase children's clothing, toys, baby items, maternity clothing, housewares and baked goods! All sales are cash only and proceeds benefit MOPS.

Sunday Worship at PHCPC in March

Sunday, March 6th: Transfiguration Sunday

We will give consideration to Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain. The readings for the day are Exodus 24:12-18, Psalm 2, II Peter 1:16-21 and Matthew 17:1-9. A second new member class takes place this day. Join us for prayer in the Board Room at 9:00 AM.

Sunday, March 13th: Confirmation Sunday/First Sunday in Lent

We are recognizing our confirmation students who are completing a special time of preparation and study. The assigned readings for the day are Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:1-7, Psalm 32, Romans 5:12-19 and Matthew 4:1-11. The sermon will tie into the book *The 3:16 Promise* (chapter one) by Max Lucado. A third new member class takes place this day. Join us for prayer in the Board Room at 9:00 AM

Sunday, March 20th: Second Sunday in Lent

The assigned readings for the day are Genesis 12:1-4a, Psalm 121, Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 and John 3:1-17. The preacher of the morning will be following Max Lucado's book *The 3:16 Promise*. The fourth and final new member class takes place today. Join us in the Board Room for prayer at 9:00 AM

Sunday, March 27th: Third Sunday in Lent/Welcoming of New Members

The assigned readings for the day are Exodus 17:1-7, Psalm 95, Romans 5:1-11 and John 4:5-42. Preaching will again follow Max Lucado's book and we will be receiving a class of new members.

2011 Lenten Concert Series

The organ suite performed is based upon the text of Jesus' sermon on the mountain. Scriptures will be on a powerpoint screen for meditation and prayer. Robert encourages you to drop by the sanctuary for a few moments to pray for the world, family, friends and whatever else may be on your mind.

Celebrate the
World Day of Prayer
with Richard Hudson's
"The Time Of Ministry"
Come and experience the
synthesis of music and prayer!

Friday
March 4th
12-2 PM
5-7 PM

Sunday
March 20th
4 PM

Celebrating the music of
Ronald Perera &
Joe Utterback

Robby Beasley, trumpet
Robert Morehead, organ

This Sunday afternoon
we will take the
opportunity to
celebrate the music of
two American
composers. Be ready
for a program that will
challenge your faith!

Styles will vary from jazz to classical to contemporary. Music celebrating Jesus' time here on earth will be presented in addition to some of the key elements of our faith: Jesus' birth, Jesus' death Jesus' ascension. Mystical elements of our faith will also be explored. An opportunity for everyone to sing a traditional American hymn tune will be part of the concert as well! Come and be refreshed!

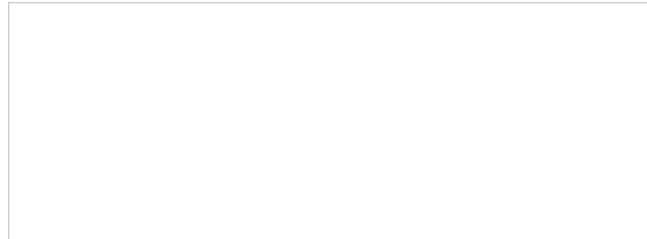
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Reaching *out to share God's love*

Growing *followers in their faith*

Sending *believers into the world to do God's work every day*



WORSHIP- WHAT IS IT?



George Barna surveyed a group of people who regularly attend churches and asked them, “How do you define worship?” Ask yourself this same question; what is your answer? Well, the result of this survey was that two out of three people had no idea at all or offered a vague definition with no real meaning. So, why is not being able to explain worship a big deal? The reason is because worship is not a suggestion in the Bible, it is a command. We are repeatedly commanded to worship God. Take a look at Psalm 29:2 and Psalm 96:9. Matthew 4:10 states: “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.” Now, if we attempt an honest study of the Bible and really look at each word listed as

“worship” we can conclude three things:

- Worship honors God
- Worship is directed toward God
- Worship requires involvement

Now, I am going to ask you to look at the following verses and consider whether or not the worship honors, is directed towards God, or does it include involvement? Sometimes it's all three- I encourage you to take a look at the Word!

2 Chronicles 20:18
Nehemiah 8:6
Matthew 28:9
Romans 12:1
Revelation 4:10

The primary source material for this article is derived from:

Kraeuter, Tom. *Becoming a True Worshiper*. Lynwood, MA: Emerald Books, 2006.

