Wonder of Worship
OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

Vol. 4.4

Great Idea!



A word from the project director...

October will be a super busy month for Wonder of Worship. We have two Godly Play sessions with children, the Montreat regional gathering (fully subscribed), and the annual gathering for grantees within our Lilly Endowment initiative in Indiana.

I would like your help with the latter event. Each grantee is given an 18" x 18" square to display the nature of their grant. Last year we had the flat display above, but I want to do something more 3D and interactive this year. If you have a quotation or picture, you could send of something that Wonder of Worship has assisted you with for your congregation, could you please send them my way via wow@ctsnet.edu? I would need these by Friday, October 23. Thanks for your help!

Kathy Dawson, WoW Project Director



Godly Play Training

Godly Play Training registration is now full for our November 3-5 offering. Please send an email to wow@ctsnet.edu if you would like to be put on the waiting list for this event.

If you're unable to make this fall training there will be one final core training offered on April 20-22, 2027. Registration for this will open with the February newsletter.

Amazing Quick Sheet 2.0 This Month!

Peter Levenstrong from our partner church, St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church has shared with us his amazing extension grant work around creating an Easter event scripted by an intergenerational group of people from the congregation and AI.
Be sure to check out our two-page quick sheet and if you want to know more, check out his blog at The Human Part. The second part of the post on the use of AI is linked to the quick sheet itself.





Check out our previous interviews here!

The Videos are Ready and Amazing!

Natarsha Sanders once again moderated a wonderful conversation on our fall topic with Drs. Anna Carter Florence and David Csinos. Montreat participants will get the first opportunity to hear these fabulous presenters.

In the latter part of October we will post these on the website for everyone to enjoy!

The Community was the Author

Proclaiming the Gospel with Every Generation

Wonder of Worship
Quicksheet 3.2
October 2026

This quicksheet highlights an innovative take on collective, multigenerational proclamation. Read more about the process and approach used by Saint Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Fransisco.



An Unscripted Moment

On Easter morning, mid-Emmaus scene (Luke 24:13-35), the risen Jesus broke the bread. Cleopas, played by a mother, was so overcome that she flung her bread over her shoulder and leapt to her feet. Her companion, played by a boy with a well-known love of communion bread, delivered his lines through a mouthful of loaf. None of it was planned, and it caught the disciples' astonished joy better than any staging I could have devised.

The Vision

That is what our Wonder of Worship extension grant made possible: not a performance the congregation watched but a story it authored. The congregation is not an audience but a community of theologians. Three pageants are planned (Easter 2026, Christmas 2026, Easter 2027); this was the first.

Scripture, Scissors, and Tablespace

The process began with a document we called "Easter in Parallel": all four gospel accounts of the resurrection, organized by narrative moment rather than by gospel. People began to see the Easter narratives not as one fixed story but as a set of overlapping witnesses. They converged on five scenes.



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From Scripture to Script

I then worked with Claude, Anthropic's AI assistant, to turn the assembled text into a performable script. The community chose the scripture, made every theological decision, and directed the staging. The community was the author. AI was the scribe.

Rehearsal Easter Morning

Most Sundays went to building the script rather than polishing a performance. No memorization, no auditions, roles sized to availability. On Easter the pageant was performed in the round as part of the liturgy. Several volunteers playing the apostles who dismissed the women were themselves women, and they played the disbelieving men with gleeful bluster: funny and pointed at once.

Try This

1. Print the scripture passages, cut them into segments, and let people of all ages arrange them, deciding together what to include and in what order.
2. Use whatever tools you have to turn the result into a script. Walk through it, note what is missing, revise, repeat.
3. Use cue cards and tell people not to memorize.
4. Then perform it as worship, not theater: with the congregation, not for them. The product is not the script but what happens to the people who make it.

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Learn More...

Two posts on my Substack, The Human Part, tell the fuller story, including the human-AI collaboration: "The Community Was the Author" and "The Scribe in the Room." Our full process guide is available on request: peterlevenstrong@saintgregorys.org.



Peter Levenstrong is an Episcopal priest at St. Gregory of Nyssa Church in San Francisco, where he explores creative ways to foster intergenerational worship and engagement. He is also a grant recipient through Wonder of Worship.