Finding the Words:
Words for Worship

CBF LITURGY AND WORSHIP AIDS

SEASON OF LENT, MARCH 8, 2026

Liturgical Color: purple, red, linen, blue

Lectionary readings:
Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 95
Romans 5:1-11
John 4:5-42
(Matthew 11:28)

Opening quote: (for bulletin or screen)
We aren't rest-filled people who occasionally become restless; we're restless people who sometimes find rest.
-Henri J. M. Nouwen

Call to Worship:
One [consider inviting a child or youth to lead the litany]: Come to me when you are weary, and I will give you rest.
All: When it feels like the struggle has worn us out, let us come to the Lord.
One: Come to me when you are hurting, and I will give you rest.
All: When we are in pain, let us come to the Lord.
One: Come to me when you are left out, and I will give you rest.
All: When it feels like the world has gone on without us, let us come to the Lord.
One: Come to me, and I will give you rest.
All: Let us come to the Lord.

Invocation:
Welcoming Lord, when we are weary, when we are hurting, when we are left out and lonesome, you call us to come and find our rest in you. Before we turn to grumbling, giving up, or bitterness, remind us to turn to you. Meet us this day and all days in the messy midst of life, and let us be yours. Amen.

Invitation: [offered in explanation by a youth or a children's/youth minister]
During this season of Lent, the children and families of the church invite us all to journey together through a cumulative project here in [or near, to suit your situation] our sacred space. We will be "making room" for the Christ in our lives. During this service, we will ask everyone to join the young people in finding a colored paper and pen [give guidance on where on each row these supplies are located] and considering an area of your own life where you would like to find rest in God's presence, and write or sketch your idea on your paper. Near the end of our service we will collect these papers and the children will add them to our faith family's Lenten "house" project. We are looking forward to seeing it take shape over these weeks of waiting for Easter, and are grateful that our church will be joining with us to create something special!

Call to Confession:
If Lent can be seen as a journey toward our heart's true home in Christ, confession and repentance can be seen as steps of reorienting on that journey, examining our steps, turning, continuing.
Family, God calls us to confession this day. How will we respond?

Prayer of Confession:

Loving God, we confess that we have sinned
In our thinking, our speaking, and our doing—
Both in acts we've committed and
acts we've withheld.
We have not loved anyone with our whole heart—
Not you, not our neighbor, not ourselves.
In your mercy, God,
Forgive us, set us back on the path, and draw us more fully into the life of love you dream for us.

Assurance of Pardon:

Family of faith, hear the good news and believe—in the love of God, demonstrated for us in the person of Jesus the Christ, you live forgiven and free!

Pastoral Prayer/Prayers of the People:

Loving God, you are continually seeking connection with us, your children—listening as we call out to you in need, offering reconciliation, engaging our curiosity and intellect as we bring the truth of who we are to you, wrapping our weariness in your rest. As we pray, we trust your desire to hear and to work through relationships to answer.

We pray for those who are hurting, who we call by name—friends and family who have shared their needs with us, and those who are struggling in silence for their own reasons. May your care be a light in their great aloneness. As we pray, we trust your desire to hear and to work through relationships to answer.
[pray for each other in the way usual for your faith family]

We pray for needs in our community—sudden needs revealed by weather disaster or financial catastrophe, or chronic needs created by generations of neglect. May your care be a prompt for our communal action. As we pray, we trust your desire to hear and to work through relationships to answer.
[pray in the way usual for your faith family]

We pray for those who have accepted positions of influence or power in our government—for pursuit of wisdom, respect for truth, desire for justice, labor for the common good, lives of humble service. May your care be a model for faithful leadership. As we pray, we trust your desire to hear and to work through relationships to answer.
[pray in the way usual for your faith family, or omit if this is not a typical part of your prayers at this time]

We pray for the world—for her incredible beauty and potential, her abuse and deep scars, her people our human family. May your care be our north star for the care of all creation and created. As we pray, we trust your desire to hear and to work through relationships to answer.
[pray in the way usual for your faith family for the troubles of the world]

We pray for our own lives—easiest to obsess over, hardest to be honest about, quickest to dismiss from our prayers. May your care for our lives be a reminder of our worth in your eyes. As we pray, we trust your desire to hear and to work through relationship to answer.

We pray today with the gathered family of faith around the world, in the way Jesus taught his disciples to pray, saying:
Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name;
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
[or And forgive us our debts
As we forgive our debtors.]
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory
Forever. Amen.

Congregational Response: [offered in explanation by a youth or a children's/youth minister]
Jesus beckons us to him, offering rest for the places we are most worn out. You have taken a moment during the service to contemplate where you need rest in your life. You have had a chance to write one of those rest areas down on the slips of paper provided near you. If you'll pass those toward [the end of your row/center aisle/side aisle/etc], [children and youth/volunteers] will be by to collect them, and they will be used as part of our Lent-long congregational "Making Room" sanctuary devotion.
[Volunteers move into place to collect slips of paper and take to "home" area]

Offertory Prayer:
Giving God, you come to us meeting our needs—for water in a dry land, for rest in a weary time. But we see you come asking for what we can offer, too—a bucket for the well, cold water, the truth about our own lives. What we have, we offer you and our neighbors, trusting that, with your blessing, it is enough.
Amen.

Benediction:
Beloved, having been comforted with "Come and rest," go now sharing the welcome, "Come and see!" Amen.

Hymn suggestions:
I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say—text H. Bonar, KINGSFOLD
Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah—text W. Williams, trans P. Williams, CWM RHONDDA
God Himself Is With Us—trans J. Miller, F. W. Foster, ARNSBERG
My Shepherd Will Supply My Need—text I. Watts, RESIGNATION

Art suggestions:
Christ and the Samaritan Woman, Julio Romero de Torres, Cordoba Spain
https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=54766

“Making Room” sanctuary devotional project:
Each worship service will provide an opportunity for the children to lead the way in the creation of a Lent-long all-church project of contemplation and devotion in the form of an art project located somewhere in or near the sanctuary. Children may participate during their children’s period, and help with collecting the adults’ contributions later in the service.

The project will begin with the outline of a house (or for those ambitious and crafty, a framehouse!), and each service an addition will be made to the house. The objective is not a work of polished art, but an act of communal contemplation.

This art project will coordinate with the CBF children’s and family Lenten devotional series, “Making Room at Home for Jesus”, which can be accessed at *www.cbf.net/lent* in both English and Spanish. Our hope is that children’s ties to worship will be strengthened as they participate and lead meaningfully in the Lenten journey at home and at church.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leigh Anne Armstrong is a chaplain, liturgist and songwriter and a longtime member of Auburn (AL) First Baptist Church.