Finding the Words:
Words for Worship

CBF LITURGY AND WORSHIP AIDS

EASTER, APRIL 5, 2026

Liturgical Color: white or gold

Lectionary readings:
Acts 10:34-43
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Colossians 3:1-4
John 20:1-18
(Luke 24:6)

Opening quote: (for bulletin or screen)
Crown him the Lord of love;
behold his hands and side,
rich wounds, yet visible above,
in beauty glorified.
-Matthew Bridges

Call to Worship:
One [consider inviting a child or youth to lead the litany]: Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good:
All: God's steadfast love endures forever!
One: This is the day that the Lord has made:
All: let us rejoice and be glad in it!
One: Hear the good news, and believe—Christ is risen!
All: He is risen indeed!

Invocation:
Risen Christ, this is indeed the day that you have made, and we rejoice in your steadfast love for every person! We are in awe of you, a Savior who rises from the dead and bears your own wounds with you, banishing death and shame, calling for us to follow. Make us your own.
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 have invited us all to journey together through a cumulative project here in [or near, to suit your situation] our sacred space. We have "made room" for the Christ in our lives. During this service, we will ask everyone to join the young people in finding a colored paper "butterfly" and pen [give guidance on where on each row these supplies are located] and consider where you see new life or hope in the world today; write your idea on your butterfly. Near the end of our service, we will collect these ideas, and the children will add them to our faith family's Lenten "house" project, creating a celebration all around the house! How wonderful it has been to watch our house take shape over these weeks of waiting for Easter, and how grateful we are that our church has joined with us to create something special!

Pastoral Prayer/Prayers of the People:
Loving God, every Easter Day is a reminder that in the world's great trouble you are working on the side of goodness. When hatred and fear are strong, you are a force for compassion and everyday courage. When death seems to have had the last word, you are whispering hope and singing life over the world. As we pray, we claim your goodness, your compassion, your courage, your hope, and your life for those in need today.

We pray for those who are hurting, who we call by name—friends and family struggling with hard realities and vague feelings of life gone sideways. As we pray, we claim your goodness, your compassion, your courage, your hope, and your life for those in need today.
[pray for each other in the way usual for your faith family]

We pray for needs in our community—for those caught in calamity and misfortune, for those living in fear over rumors of coming trouble, for those at the mercy of others' generosity or not. As we pray, we claim your goodness, your compassion, your courage, your hope, and your life for those in need today.
[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 steadfastness in doing good, for tenacity in seeking justice, for patience in seeking good for all, for humility in forgetting self-enrichment, for attentiveness to stewardship of resources, for wisdom to see the long view. As we pray, we claim your goodness, your compassion, your courage, your hope, and your life for those in need today.
[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 green spaces, brown nourishing soil, blue waters; for her spinning place in the cosmos; for her intricately connected human family. As we pray, we claim your goodness, your compassion, your courage, your hope, and your life for those in need today.
[pray in the way usual for your faith family for the troubles of the world]

We pray for our own lives—that we claim in both our scars and our soaring our likeness to you, created in your image and called to follow in your way. As we pray, we claim your goodness, your compassion, your courage, your hope, and your life for our own today.

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]
The times we notice, and even when we don't, new life and hope are springing up all around us. You have taken a moment during the service to write one of the ways you've noticed that hope or new life on a colorful butterfly 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:
Living Christ, you have offered us all of yourself, dying and rising. We offer you our fullness—our faith and our fear, our gratitude and our pettiness, our soaring and our scars. We offer you all of who we are, trusting in your steadfast, transforming love.
Amen.

Benediction:
Beloved, hear the good news, and believe—Christ is risen, and we soar where he has led! Alleluia! Amen!

Hymn suggestions:
Christ the Lord Is Risen Today—text C. Wesley, EASTER HYMN
In the Garden—text C. A. Miles, GARDEN
Were You There—text African American Spiritual, WERE YOU THERE
Goodness Is Stronger Than Evil—text D. Tutu, GOODNESS IS STRONGER, ONE LICENSE: 02636
O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus!—text S. T. Francis, EBENEZER
This Joyful Eastertide—text G. R. Woodward, VRUECHTEN

Art suggestions:
Mary Magalene in the garden with Jesus, Rowan and Irene LeCompte, Washington National Cathedral, Washington DC USA
https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=54843

"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. [THIS SUNDAY'S SLIPS OF PAPER SHOULD BE COLORFUL "BUTTERFLIES"—SCHOOL, CHURCH, OR LIBRARY DIE-CUT MACHINES SHOULD HAVE A BUTTERFLY PATTERN TO MAKE THIS AN EASIER TASK TO PREPARE!]

I would encourage your church to consider leaving the (now riotously colorful) "house" up and on display during the season of Eastertide so that church members (especially the younger ones) will have ample opportunity to read and discover the messages left on slips of paper over the passage of Lenten time.

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