Finding the Words:
Words for Worship

CBF LITURGY AND WORSHIP AIDS

SEASON OF LENT, MARCH 15, 2026

Liturgical Color: purple, red, linen, blue

Lectionary readings:
1 Samuel 16:1-13
Psalm 23
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41
(Mtthew 5:16)

Opening quote: (for bulletin or screen)
Light is a beautiful servant; darkness is a dangerous master.
— Matshona Dhliwayo

Call to Worship:
One [consider inviting a child or youth to lead the litany]: Jesus says, "Let your light shine."
All: When we want to live as children of light,
One: Jesus says, "Let your light shine."
All: When we want to show what is good and true,
One: Jesus says, "Let your light shine."
All: When we want to be fully kind,
One: Jesus says, "Let your light shine."
All: Christ will shine on us, and our light will shine.

Invocation:
Light of the World, because your light shines on and in us, we can let our light shine. Because your love is poured out for each of us, we can love without reservation. Because you know us fully, we can live without hiding in the world. And so we meet you here—bringing our fullness to yours, letting our light shine.
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 thinking of a way that you could shine a light of kindness in your home, school, or neighborhood, 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 watching 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, it is not difficult to close our eyes today and picture those who are walking in dark valleys; if we are honest, it is not difficult to picture times when we walk those valleys ourselves. What a gift, then, to recall that, even in those valleys, you walk with us, your light shines on us. Let our praying and our caring be a way of shining a light into places of deep shadow. Be our light.

For those who are hurting, who we call by name—friends and family carrying heavy burdens of illness, stress, hardship, or grief. Let our praying and our caring be a way of shining a light into places of deep shadow. Be our light.
[pray for each other in the way usual for your faith family]

For needs in our community—for those who do without, for those working to make things better. Let our praying and our caring be a way of shining a light into places of deep shadow. Be our light.
[pray in the way usual for your faith family]

For those who have accepted positions of influence or power in our government—we pray compassion, honesty, wisdom, gratitude, humility. Let our praying and our caring be a way of shining a light into places of deep shadow. Be our light.
[pray in the way usual for your faith family, or omit if this is not a typical part of your prayers at this time]

For the world— for places need and hunger gnaws away, for the times fear and terror are weapons used against human beings, for the ways we fail to seek and find your image in every face. Let our praying and our caring be a way of shining a light into places of deep shadow. Be our light.
[pray in the way usual for your faith family for the troubles of the world]

For our own lives—for the trust to believe that you shine on us, for the courage to believe that we have light to shine, for the commitment to hold the light for each other. Let our praying and our caring be a way of shining a light into places of deep shadow. Be our light.

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 told his friends to let their light shine. You have taken a moment during the service to think of a way you could shine a light of kindness around you. You have had a chance to write one of those ideas 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:
God of all, we know that we live on your bounty, and shine with your light. Grow our hearts to be more generous in sharing, more bold in caring, and more kind in shining.
Amen.

Benediction:
Beloved, whether in time of sunshine or through life's dark valleys, walk as children of light!
Amen.

Hymn suggestions:
Christ, Be Our Light!—text B. Farrell, CHRIST BE OUR LIGHT, ONE LICENSE: 80229
I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say—text H. Bonar, KINGSFOLD
The King of Love My Shepherd Is—text H. W. Baker, ST. COLUMBA
This Little Light of Mine—text African American Spiritual, [this little light of mine]
I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light—text K. Thomerson, HOUSTON, ONE LICENSE: 00361
Amazing Grace—text J. Newton, NEW BRITAIN

Art suggestions:
Christ our Light, Holy Rosary Priory, Bushey, UK, 20th century
https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=54167

“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.