A SACRED SPEAKING COMPANION

When you don't know

WHAT TO SAY.

INSIDE

Welcome speeches, opening prayers, introductions & sacred words for every church occasion

FOR EVERYONE

First-time speakers & seasoned leaders alike — written for youth and adults

VOLUME ONE

WRITTEN BY

Karen Lewis

A Word Before You Begin

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> *"Open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise."*
>
> — PSALM 51:15

Beloved,

If you have ever been called to the front of the church and felt your knees lock and your tongue refuse to move — this book was written for you.

There is a sacred art to speaking in the house of God. It is not about being polished or clever. It is about being prepared, prayerful, and willing. Whether you have been asked to give the welcome, introduce the speaker, lead a brief prayer, or simply hold the room while the next part of service comes together, every word matters. Every moment is an opportunity to usher in the presence of the Lord.

This book is your companion. Inside you will find welcome addresses, opening prayers, speaker introductions, transition words, and full speeches written in the voice of our tradition — reverent, rooted in scripture, and rich with the warmth of the Black church. Some are ready to read word for word. Others are templates you can fill in with the name of your pastor, your church, your honoree.

Use what serves you. Adapt what blesses you. And when you stand to deliver, remember this: God did not call the qualified — He qualifies the called.

You are ready. The Lord is with you. Open your mouth, and He will fill it.

— Karen Lewis

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PART ONE

The Foundation

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 TIMOTHY 2:15

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is built for the moment when the microphone is in your hand and you need words that fit the spirit of the house. You do not have to memorize anything. You do not have to be a preacher. You only have to be willing.

Here is how to make this book work for you:

- **Read it word for word.** Every speech and prayer in this book is written to stand on its own. If you read it just as it is, it will bless the room.
- **Fill in the blanks.** Where you see brackets like *[Pastor's Name]* or *[Church Name]*, write in your own. Make it yours.
- **Adapt the tone.** Some churches are quieter. Some are louder. Adjust the energy, but keep the reverence.
- **Pair with prayer.** Before you stand, ask the Lord to anoint your tongue. He will meet you there.

> ### A SACRED REMINDER
>
> You are not performing. You are participating in worship. The goal is never to impress — it is to invite. Invite the Spirit. Invite the congregation. Invite the moment.

SPEAKING WITH SPIRIT & CONFIDENCE

Before you ever open your mouth, here are five things every speaker in the house of God should remember:

- **Breathe before you begin.** Take one slow breath. Let your shoulders drop. The Holy Ghost is not in a rush.
- **Greet the room first.** A simple "Giving honor to God, to my pastor, and to the saints of God" sets the tone every time.
- **Speak slower than feels natural.** When you are nervous, you speed up. The anointing rides on cadence — slow down.
- **Make eye contact, not stare contact.** Look at three or four faces around the sanctuary. They are praying with you.

- **End with intention.** Never trail off. Land your last sentence like an "amen," and then step back.

"God did not call the qualified.
He qualifies the called."

PART TWO

Welcome Addresses

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

PSALM 122:1

WELCOME ADDRESSES

GENERAL SUNDAY MORNING WELCOME

For the opening of a regular Sunday service • 2–3 minutes

Giving honor to God, who is the head of my life. Honoring our Pastor, *[Pastor's Name]*, our First Lady, *[First Lady's Name]*, the ministers, deacons, mothers of the church, and to every saint of God gathered here this morning — praise the Lord, everybody.

On behalf of the entire *[Church Name]* family, it is my honor and my joy to welcome you into the house of the Lord this morning. The psalmist said, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." And somebody ought to be glad this morning — glad that the Lord woke you up, glad that He started you on your way, glad that your feet are planted on Zion's hill one more time.

If this is your first time worshipping with us, we want you to know — you are not a stranger here. You are family. Make yourself at home. Lift your hands if you feel led. Say amen if the Spirit moves you. We don't come to be entertained — we come to be edified.

So open your heart, open your mouth, and get ready to give God the praise He is worthy to receive. God bless you, and welcome to *[Church Name]*.

DELIVERY TIP — *Pause after "praise the Lord, everybody" — wait for the congregation to respond before continuing. The pause is part of the welcome.*

WELCOME FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

A warm, specific welcome directed at guests • 1–2 minutes

Praise the Lord, saints. To every visitor in the building this morning — we see you, we love you, and we thank God for you.

I want you to know that you did not just happen to walk through these doors today. The Bible says the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. Whatever brought you here — a friend, a flyer, a Facebook post, or just a quiet pull on your heart — the Lord ordered it. And we believe before you leave this place, He's going to do something for you, in you, and through you.

So relax. Breathe. You are welcome here. Worship how you worship. Receive what you came to receive. And know that the family of *[Church Name]* is praying with you and for you today.

DELIVERY TIP — *When you say "we see you" — make actual eye contact with visitors if you can spot them. That one moment of being seen often matters more than the whole speech.*

WELCOME FOR A SPECIAL PROGRAM

Musicals, plays, choir programs, fellowship events • 2 minutes

Giving honor to God, to our Pastor, our First Lady, all visiting clergy, and to every soul under the sound of my voice — good evening and welcome.

What a blessed occasion this is. Tonight we have gathered for one purpose and one purpose only — to lift up the name of Jesus through *[describe the program: this musical / this choir program / this fellowship / this celebration]*. The Word of God tells us in Psalm 150, "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord." And tonight, that is exactly what we have come to do.

We thank God for every hand that worked, every voice that rehearsed, every prayer that was prayed to make this evening possible. To our guests from sister churches — we welcome you. To our family from *[Church Name]* — we are glad you are here. To anyone visiting for the very first time — we want you to know you are at home.

So sit back, open your heart, and let the Lord meet you tonight. Welcome to *[Church Name]*.

WELCOME FOR A REVIVAL OR CONFERENCE

Opening night of a multi-night revival, conference, or crusade • 2–3 minutes

Giving all glory and honor to God, who is the author and the finisher of our faith. Acknowledging our Pastor, *[Pastor's Name]*, who has been led of the Lord to call this revival; honoring our First Lady; honoring every visiting bishop, pastor, elder, minister, and saint of God in the building tonight — praise the Lord.

Something is in the air tonight. Can you feel it? When the people of God come together with one accord, in one place, the Word says the Holy Ghost shows up. We are not here for a program. We are not here for a presentation. We are here for a *visitation*. The Lord has assignments to fulfill, chains to break, bodies to heal, and lives to set free — and He is doing it right here at *[Church Name]*.

To every guest who has traveled near or far — we welcome you. To every member who said "yes" to being in the house — we thank God for you. Over the next *[number]* nights, come hungry, come thirsty, come expecting, because heaven is open and the Lord is here.

Welcome to revival.

DELIVERY TIP — *Build energy here. Each paragraph should be louder and more intentional than the last. End "Welcome to revival" with full conviction — that line should land.*

WELCOME FOR AN ANNIVERSARY SERVICE

Pastoral, church, or ministry anniversary • 2 minutes

Giving honor to God, who has kept us, sustained us, and brought us to this very moment. Honoring our Pastor and First Lady, the pulpit, and every saint of God under the sound of my voice — what a day the Lord has made.

Today is not just another Sunday. Today is a marker. Today is a milestone. Today we pause to look back at what the Lord has done, and we look forward to what He is still going to do. *[Number]* years — only God could have done it. Through the highs and the lows, the seasons of plenty and the seasons of waiting, He has been faithful.

On behalf of the *[Church Name]* family, we welcome every guest, every former member who has come home for this occasion, every sister church, and every soul who said "I'm going to be in the building." You honor us by being here.

So lift your voice, lift your hands, and let us celebrate what only God could have done. Welcome — and to God be the glory.

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FOR THE WELCOME GIVER

A good welcome does three things: it honors God, it honors leadership, and it embraces every soul in the room — especially the ones who feel like they don't belong. Never skip the third one. That is the one heaven remembers.

PART THREE

Opening Prayers

"In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

SHORT OPENING PRAYER (SUNDAY MORNING)

Brief invocation to open service • 30–45 seconds

Most gracious and eternal Father, we come before You this morning with our heads bowed and our hearts open. We thank You, Lord, for being a way-maker, a heart-fixer, and a mind-regulator.

We thank You for waking us up this morning, clothed in our right mind, with the activity of our limbs. We thank You for the privilege of being in Your house one more time.

Now Lord, we ask that You would have Your way in this service. Touch every speaker, every singer, every soul who walks through these doors. Let everything that is done bring honor and glory to Your name.

This we ask in the matchless name of Jesus the Christ. And the church said — Amen.

DELIVERY TIP — *Keep your eyes closed and your voice steady. Let "Amen" rise naturally — don't rush it. The congregation will say it with you.*

PRAYER BEFORE A SERMON

Spoken right before the preacher takes the pulpit • 45–60 seconds

Eternal God, our Father, we bless Your holy and righteous name. We come now to that portion of the service when Your Word is to be preached, and Lord, we ask that nothing of us would stand in the way of what You want to do.

Anoint Your servant who stands to bring forth Your Word. Loose his tongue. Sharpen his mind. Let him say what You said, when You said it, the way You said it. Hide him behind the cross, that we might see Jesus only.

And Lord, prepare the hearers. Open ears that have been closed. Soften hearts that have grown cold. Let every word find its mark, and let no one leave this place the same way they came in.

In Jesus' name we pray — Amen.

PRAYER FOR A SPECIAL SERVICE

Revival, conference, anniversary, dedication • 1 minute

Our Father and our God, we humbly bow before You at the beginning of this sacred occasion. You said where two or three are gathered in Your name, there You are in the midst — and Lord, we are gathered. We are gathered in expectation. We are gathered in faith. We are gathered believing that You will do exceeding abundantly above all that we could ask or think.

We thank You, Father, for every soul that made it to this place. We thank You for the leadership You have raised up. We thank You for the labor, the prayers, and the tears that have already been invested in this moment.

Now Lord, we ask that You would take full and complete control. Send Your Holy Spirit to lead, to teach, to convict, and to heal. Let chains be broken. Let burdens be lifted. Let souls be saved.

We give You all the glory, all the honor, and all the praise in advance — for we know You are already at work. In Jesus' mighty name — Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERING

Before or after the offering is received • 30–45 seconds

Father, we come to You as cheerful givers. The Word of God tells us that the silver and the gold belong to You, and the cattle on a thousand hills are Yours.

We thank You for the privilege of returning to You a portion of what You have already given us. Bless every hand that gives, every heart that sows, and every gift that is brought before You today. Multiply it for Kingdom use. Let it go where You need it to go and do what You need it to do.

And Lord, we ask You to open the windows of heaven over every giver, and pour out a blessing they don't have room enough to receive. In Jesus' name we pray — Amen.

DELIVERY TIP — *This prayer is short on purpose. Don't pad it. Givers want to be blessed, not preached to.*

CLOSING BENEDICTION

To close service or send the congregation out • 30–45 seconds

Now unto Him who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy —

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

Go in peace. Go in power. Go in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And the people of God said — Amen.

DELIVERY TIP — *This benediction is rooted in Jude 24 and Numbers 6. Memorize it if you can — it is one of the oldest, most beloved sending-out prayers in the Black church tradition.*

"Prayer is not preparation for the work.
Prayer is the work."

A QUIET TRUTH

The best prayers are not the longest. They are the most honest. If you forget what to say, just thank God for what He has already done. Gratitude is a complete prayer all by itself.

PART FOUR

Speaker Introductions

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

ROMANS 10:15

INTRODUCING THE PASTOR

Before your own pastor preaches • 1–2 minutes

Saints, give God a praise, because we are about to come to that portion of the service we have all been waiting for.

The man who is about to come before you needs no long introduction in this house — because he is no stranger to this pulpit, and he is no stranger to the Lord. For *[number]* years, he has labored among us. He has prayed for us when we couldn't pray for ourselves. He has wept with us in our valleys and rejoiced with us on our mountaintops. He has carried the burden of this ministry on his shoulders and the souls of this church on his heart.

He is a man of integrity. He is a man of prayer. He is a man who studies to show himself approved. And when he opens his mouth, the Lord has something to say.

So church, on your feet, with your hands together, let's give a high praise of welcome to our pastor, our shepherd, our man of God — *[Pastor's Full Name]*!

DELIVERY TIP — *When you say "on your feet," lead the standing yourself. Don't ask — invite by your own action.*

INTRODUCING A VISITING PREACHER

Read their bio in your own voice • 2 minutes

Church, what a privilege we have today. The Lord, in His sovereign wisdom, has sent us a vessel — a chosen vessel — to break the bread of life for us this morning.

Our speaker, *[Speaker's Title and Name]*, comes to us from *[Church Name and City]*, where *[he/she]* serves as *[role]*. *[He/She]* is *[brief credentials — education, family, ministry highlights]*. But more than any title *[he/she]* carries, more than any platform *[he/she]* has graced — *[he/she]* is a servant of the Most High God, called and anointed to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.

I have been told that when *[he/she]* opens that Bible, you had better get ready, because the Lord shows up. So let us receive *[him/her]* the way the Lord deserves to be received in this place.

Church, please join me in welcoming to the sacred desk — *[Speaker's Full Name and Title]*!

INTRODUCING A GUEST SPEAKER

Non-clergy guest — community leader, ministry leader, honoree • 1–2 minutes

Saints, we are blessed today to hear from a remarkable individual whom the Lord has placed in our path for such a time as this.

Our guest, *[Guest's Name]*, is *[role/title]* at *[organization]*. *[He/She]* is known for *[brief description of their work or witness]*, and *[he/she]* brings with *[him/her]* a wealth of wisdom, experience, and a testimony that I believe is going to bless us today.

What I appreciate most about *[Guest's First Name]* is that *[he/she]* doesn't just talk the talk — *[he/she]* walks it. *[His/Her]* life is the message before the message ever gets preached.

So church, give your hands and your hearts a warm welcome — let's receive *[Guest's Full Name]*!

INTRODUCING A MISSIONARY OR EVANGELIST

For ministry on the move • 1–2 minutes

Giving honor to God, who still says, "Go ye therefore into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Saints, today we have the privilege of hearing from a soldier in the army of the Lord.

Our speaker, *[Name]*, has dedicated *[his/her]* life to taking the gospel where the gospel needs to go. From *[mention field of ministry — local outreach, prison ministry, international missions, evangelism]* to *[other area]*, the Lord has used *[him/her]* mightily to win souls and to set the captives free.

When you have walked the road this servant has walked, when you have seen the things this servant has seen, you don't come to play — you come to preach. So let us prepare our hearts, open our ears, and welcome with high praise — *[Name]*!

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A NOTE ON INTRODUCTIONS

Never read a speaker's full résumé. The longer the introduction, the smaller the speaker looks. Pick the two or three details that matter most for this room, this moment — then sit down and let the Lord work.

PART FIVE

Occasion Speeches

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."

ECCLESIASTES 3:1

PASTOR & FIRST LADY ANNIVERSARY

For honoring the shepherd and his wife • 3–4 minutes

Giving honor to God, who has joined together what no man can put asunder. To our beloved Pastor and First Lady — this day belongs to you.

The Bible tells us in Hebrews chapter 13 to "remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God." Today, we remember. Today, we honor. Today, we say thank you to the man and the woman God Himself selected to shepherd this flock.

Pastor *[Pastor's Name]*, when we count up *[number]* years of your ministry to this church, we are not just counting Sundays. We are counting prayers prayed in the midnight hour for members you have never met. We are counting hospital visits, funeral services, weddings, baby dedications, and counseling sessions that nobody in the world will ever see. We are counting the Saturdays you studied when you could have been resting. We are counting the times you preached through your own pain because the Lord said the people need a word.

First Lady *[First Lady's Name]* — we honor you too. Because nobody, and I mean *nobody*, sees what you see. You have prayed beside him, fasted with him, cried with him, and held this house together with grace the world will never understand. You are not in the shadow of the ministry — you are the strength behind the ministry. And we love you for it.

So today, on behalf of *[Church Name]*, we say: thank you. We celebrate you. We cover you in prayer. And we declare that the best is yet to come for both of you, in Jesus' name.

God bless you, Pastor and First Lady *[Last Name]*. We love you with the love of the Lord.

DELIVERY TIP — *This speech is emotional by design. Don't try to hold back the feeling — let it sit in your voice. Let the room feel what you feel.*

CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

Celebrating the founding of the church • 2–3 minutes

Giving honor to God, the Founder and Sustainer of the Church. Today, we celebrate *[number]* years of *[Church Name]*.

Some of us were here from the beginning. Some of us came in along the way. And some of us just walked through the doors. But every single one of us is standing on the prayers, the sacrifices, and the tears of those who came before us. Mothers and fathers in the faith who said, "We are going to build a house for the Lord." And the Lord has been faithful.

The enemy tried to shut these doors. The world tried to make us irrelevant. Storms came. Sickness came. Loss came. And yet, here we are — still standing, still preaching, still teaching, still saving souls in the name of Jesus.

To God be the glory for the great things He has done at *[Church Name]*. And to every saint who lifted a hand, gave a dollar, said a prayer, or sang a song to help us get here — we say thank you, and we say to God be the glory. Happy anniversary, church.

PENTECOST SUNDAY

Celebrating the outpouring of the Holy Ghost • 3–4 minutes

Giving honor to God, who keeps His promises. Saints, today is not an ordinary Sunday — today is Pentecost Sunday. And if you have come into this house expecting business as usual, you came to the wrong building, because Pentecost is never ordinary.

Acts chapter 2, verse 1 says, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." And verse 4 tells us, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

That same Spirit that fell in the upper room is the same Spirit that is in this room. The same fire that lit up Peter, James, John, and the disciples is the same fire that is still falling today. Pentecost was not a one-time event — Pentecost was a promise. And the promise, the Bible says, is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

So today, we don't just remember what happened — we expect what is happening. We expect the Holy Ghost to move. We expect Him to speak. We expect Him to heal. We expect Him to fill every empty place in every life in this building.

If you have ever needed the power of God, today is your day. If you have ever needed fresh fire, today is your day. If you have been dry, today the rain is falling. Open up your heart, open up your hands, and let the Holy Ghost have His way at *[Church Name]*. This is Pentecost — and the Lord is here.

DELIVERY TIP — *This is a high-energy speech. The Apostolic tradition holds Pentecost as central — don't be afraid to lean in. Speak from your chest, not your throat.*

RESURRECTION / EASTER SUNDAY

For Easter morning service • 2–3 minutes

Giving honor to God, who has the keys of death, hell, and the grave. Church, He is risen!

Today we celebrate the most important Sunday in all of Christianity. Today is the day the stone rolled away. Today is the day the grave gave up its hostage. Today is the day Jesus the Christ — who was crucified on Friday, dead and buried — got up early Sunday morning with all power in His hand.

If He had stayed in that tomb, we would have no gospel to preach. If He had stayed in that grave, we would have no hope to offer. But the angel said, "He is not here, for He is risen, as He said." And because He lives, we can face tomorrow. Because He lives, every fear is gone. Because He lives, we have the victory.

So today, lift your voice. Today, lift your hands. Today, lift up the name of Jesus, because death could not hold Him, the grave could not keep Him, and the enemy could not stop Him. He is alive — and so are we, in Him.

Happy Resurrection Sunday, church. He is risen indeed.

DELIVERY TIP — *When you say "He is risen!" — the traditional response is "He is risen indeed!" Many Black churches still keep this call-and-response. Wait for it.*

MOTHER'S DAY & WOMEN'S DAY

Honoring mothers and the women of the church • 2–3 minutes

Giving honor to God, who created woman from the rib of man and breathed into her a strength the world still doesn't fully understand.

Today we honor the women — the mothers, the grandmothers, the great-grandmothers, the spiritual mothers, the godmothers, the play mothers, and every woman who has ever poured into another soul.

Proverbs 31 tells us, "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her." Today, we arise. Today, we call you blessed. Because we know what it cost you. We know the prayers you prayed when nobody else knew our names. We know the meals you made out of nothing. We know the nights you went without so we could have. We know the love you gave that the world could never afford to repay.

To the women who carried us in their bodies, and to the women who carried us in their hearts — today is your day. To the women who never had biological children but mothered everybody else's — today is your day. To the women still believing God for a child — today is your day, too.

We honor you. We thank God for you. We cover you in prayer. Happy Mother's Day, queens.

FATHER'S DAY & MEN'S DAY

Honoring fathers and the men of the church • 2–3 minutes

Giving honor to God, who is the Father of fathers, the Author of manhood, and the Source of every good and perfect gift. Today, we honor the men.

To every father in the building — biological, adoptive, step, spiritual, or play — we see you, and we thank God for you. Being a man of God in this generation is not easy. The world is loud, the pressure is heavy, and the standard is high. But you keep getting up. You keep providing. You keep covering. You keep showing up — and somebody in this building is who they are today because of a man who decided to be present.

Psalm 1 tells us, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly... but his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." That is who we are honoring today — the men who have chosen the Lord, even when nobody clapped, even when nobody noticed, even when they were tired.

To the fathers raising children. To the men holding down households. To the brothers fighting through silent battles. To the sons honoring fathers no longer here. To every man who said, "I will serve the Lord" — today is for you.

Happy Father's Day, kings. We honor you.

WATCH NIGHT / NEW YEAR'S EVE

For the final hour of the year • 2–3 minutes

Giving honor to God, who has brought us from a mighty long way. Saints, here we are — the last few hours of *[year]*, on our feet, in the house of the Lord, praising the One who made it possible.

Some of us did not believe we would see this night. The doctor said no, but God said yes. The bills said no, but God said yes. The diagnosis said no, but God said yes. And here we stand — not by our strength, not by our might, but by the Spirit of the Lord.

Watch Night is a sacred tradition. Our ancestors gathered on December 31, 1862, to wait for the Emancipation Proclamation to take effect at midnight. They prayed through the night, watching for freedom. Tonight, we are still watching. We are watching for the new thing the Lord is going to do. We are watching for the doors He is going to open. We are watching for the chains He is going to break.

So as the clock moves toward midnight, hold on. Pray. Praise. Worship. Because we are not just ending a year — we are entering a new season. And the Lord has already gone before us.

To God be the glory for *[year]*. And welcome — in advance — to everything *[new year]* is about to bring.

DELIVERY TIP — *This speech carries weight. Watch Night is one of the oldest Black church traditions in America. Honor it with steady, grateful delivery.*

BABY DEDICATION

For dedicating a child to the Lord • 1–2 minutes

Giving honor to God, the Author of life and the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Today, the family of *[Parents' Names]* brings before the Lord their child, *[Baby's Name]*, for dedication.

In 1 Samuel chapter 1, Hannah said, "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him." And every parent standing here today is making that same declaration — this child is a gift from the Lord, and today we give that gift back to Him.

To *[Parents' Names]* — today you are not just promising to feed and clothe this child. You are promising to teach this child the ways of the Lord. To pray over this child. To cover this child. To raise this child in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

And to the church family — we are not bystanders. We are covenant partners. We commit, as the village of God, to surround this child with love, with prayer, and with truth.

Lord, we dedicate *[Baby's Name]* to You. Cover this child. Guide this child. And let this child's life be a living testimony to Your goodness. In Jesus' name — Amen.

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"Every occasion is an opportunity to magnify the name of the Lord."

PART SIX

For the Youth

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

1 TIMOTHY 4:12

FOR THE YOUTH

The young people are not the church of tomorrow — they are the church of today. The speeches and prayers in this section are written in language that young speakers can confidently deliver, and they honor the young person who has been called to take the microphone, whether for the first time or the fortieth.

YOUTH SUNDAY WELCOME

For a youth giving the welcome on Youth Sunday • 1–2 minutes

Giving honor to God, who is first in my life. Honoring our Pastor, *[Pastor's Name]*, our First Lady, *[First Lady's Name]*, all of our ministers, deacons, mothers, parents, family, and friends — good morning, and welcome to *[Church Name]*.

On behalf of all the young people of this ministry, we are so glad you came to be with us today. The Bible says in Psalm 8, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength." That means God can use anybody — at any age — to give Him praise.

Today, we are not just here to be seen. We are here to worship. We are here to lift up the name of Jesus. And we are here to show that the young people of this church love the Lord, too.

So sit back, get comfortable, and get ready to be blessed. Welcome to *[Church Name]*.

DELIVERY TIP — *For young speakers: take a slow breath before you start. Look up at three faces in the audience while you speak. You are doing great.*

YOUTH DAY OCCASION SPEECH

Explaining why Youth Day matters • 2–3 minutes

Giving honor to God, and to everyone here today — what an honor it is to stand before you.

The occasion of this gathering is Youth Day. Today is the day the church pauses to celebrate the young people God has placed in this house. We are not just a small part of the church — we are a vital part of the church.

The Bible reminds us that Samuel was a boy when God called him. David was a teenager when he defeated Goliath. Mary was a young woman when she said yes to carrying the Savior. Timothy was young when Paul mentored him in the ministry. God has always used young people to do great things — and He is still doing it today.

So today, we celebrate. We celebrate every young person who came to church when their friends did not. Every young person who chose Jesus when the world was pulling them in a different direction. Every young person who is learning what it means to walk with God.

To the young people of *[Church Name]* — this day belongs to us. To the parents, the grandparents, and the church family who have prayed for us — thank you. We could not do this without you. Happy Youth Day, church.

WHEN A YOUNG PERSON GIVES THE WELCOME

For first-time young speakers • 1 minute

Good morning, church. My name is *[Your Name]*, and I have the honor of welcoming you to *[Church Name]* today.

I want to start by saying thank you to God for waking us up this morning. Thank you to my parents and my church family for believing in me. And thank you to every visitor who took the time to come worship with us today.

The Bible says, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." And I'm glad you are here. Whether this is your first time visiting or you come every week, we are happy you came.

So please, make yourself at home. Worship with us. Receive what God has for you today. And on behalf of all of us — welcome to *[Church Name]*.

DELIVERY TIP — *If this is your first time speaking, remember: nobody is judging you. Everybody is rooting for you. Speak slowly, smile, and you will do great.*

SHORT PRAYER LED BY A YOUTH

A simple opening prayer for a young person to lead • 30 seconds

Dear Heavenly Father, we come to You this morning with thankful hearts. We thank You for waking us up. We thank You for being in our right mind. We thank You for the chance to come into Your house one more time.

Lord, we ask that You bless this service. Bless our pastor, our leaders, and everyone who is here today. Let everything that is said and done bring glory to Your name.

In Jesus' name we pray — Amen.

DELIVERY TIP — *Young leaders: keep your eyes closed and speak from your heart. Prayer is just talking to God — and He's already listening.*

YOUTH INTRODUCING THE SPEAKER

For a young person introducing a preacher or guest • 1–2 minutes

Good morning, saints. I have the honor of introducing our speaker for today.

Our speaker is *[Speaker's Title and Name]* from *[Church or Organization]*. *[He/She]* has been serving the Lord for *[number]* years, and is known for *[brief detail — their ministry, their teaching, something they are recognized for]*.

What I appreciate about *[Speaker's First Name]* is that *[he/she]* loves God, and *[he/she]* loves people. And when *[he/she]* opens that Bible, God always shows up.

So church, on your feet — please help me welcome to *[Church Name]*, our speaker, *[Speaker's Full Name]*!

DELIVERY TIP — *When you say "on your feet," start standing yourself. The congregation will follow your lead.*

YOUTH RECITATION OR SCRIPTURE READING

A simple framework for a youth presenting scripture • 1–2 minutes

Good morning, church. My name is *[Your Name]*, and today I will be reading from the book of *[Book, Chapter and Verse]*.

The Word of the Lord says — *[Read the scripture clearly and slowly. Pause before and after.]*

This scripture means a lot to me because *[share one short sentence about what it means to you — or, if reading only, simply close as below]*.

May the Lord add a blessing to the hearing and the doing of His Word. Thank you.

DELIVERY TIP — *When reading scripture, slow down by half. The Word of God is not in a hurry. Pause after the reference, pause after the verse, pause before you sit down.*

A WORD FOR GRADUATING SENIORS

Honoring high school or college graduates • 2–3 minutes

Giving honor to God, who is the Author of every accomplishment. Church, today we celebrate our graduating seniors of *[year]*.

To our graduates: you did it. Through every late-night study session, every hard test, every doubt, every long stretch when it felt like the finish line was too far away — you kept going. And today, we celebrate you.

Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." The Lord has thoughts about you. He has plans for you. And the diploma you are about to receive is not the end of your journey — it is the beginning of what God has been preparing you for all along.

So as you walk into this next chapter, remember three things: stay rooted in your faith, stay close to people who love the Lord, and stay humble enough to keep learning. The world is going to need what God has put in you.

To our graduates — we are proud of you. We are praying for you. And we are excited to watch the Lord do great things through your life. Congratulations, class of *[year]*.

"You are not the church of tomorrow.
You are the church of right now."

A WORD TO YOUNG SPEAKERS

If your hands shake, that's okay. If your voice cracks, that's okay. If you forget a word, that's okay. The Lord did not call you because you are perfect — He called you because you said yes. Take your time. Trust Him. He will meet you there.

PART SEVEN

Homegoing Services

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

PSALM 116:15

HOMEGOING SERVICES

Few moments in church life carry more weight than a homegoing service. When you are asked to stand and read on behalf of a family in mourning, you are not performing — you are ministering. Every word matters. Every pause matters.

The pages that follow walk you through how to read the acknowledgments, the resolutions, the obituary, and the cards and condolences with the dignity each one deserves. These are some of the most sacred speaking moments in our tradition — and you have been entrusted with them for a reason.

BRIEF FAMILY REMARKS

For someone speaking on behalf of the family • 1–2 minutes

Giving honor to God, the keeper of every soul. To the family of *[Name of the Departed]* — we are here. We are with you. And we are sharing in this sacred moment with you today.

The Bible tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:8 that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. So while we grieve, we do not grieve as those who have no hope. Our *[sister/brother]* is not gone — *[she/he]* has simply gone home.

[Name] blessed our lives in ways that words can never fully capture. *[Add one or two specific memories or qualities — their laugh, their service, their faith.]* And while *[her/his]* seat may be empty here, *[her/his]* legacy is full, and *[her/his]* reward is with the Lord.

To the family — we are praying for you. We are covering you. And we will continue to walk alongside you. May the God of all comfort wrap His arms around every heart in this room today.

DELIVERY TIP — *Speak gently. Pause often. The family is not listening for eloquence — they are listening for love.*

READING THE ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A complete framework — how to deliver this portion with dignity • 3–4 minutes

What it is: The acknowledgments are the family's way of saying thank you — to everyone who sent flowers, food, prayers, calls, cards, and condolences, and to those who took part in the service. You are reading on behalf of a family who is too overwhelmed with grief to speak for themselves. Honor that.

How to open:

"Giving honor to God, to our Pastor, to the family of *[Name of the Departed]*, and to every person under the sound of my voice — good *[morning/afternoon]*. I have been asked to read the acknowledgments on behalf of the family."

How to read the body:

"The family of *[Name of the Departed]* wishes to acknowledge with deep gratitude every act of love and kindness shown to them during this time of bereavement. For every prayer prayed, every card sent, every meal prepared, every phone call made, every flower given, and every embrace shared — the family says, from the bottom of their hearts, thank you."

"A special acknowledgment is extended to:"

[Read the list provided by the family slowly and clearly. Common acknowledgments include: the officiating pastor, the church family, the funeral home, the medical staff or caregivers, the pallbearers, the musicians, the soloists, family members who traveled, sister churches, organizations, employers, and any individual the family specifically named.]

How to close:

"To anyone whose name we have not specifically called — please know that you are not forgotten. Your love has been felt, and the family is forever grateful. The family asks that you continue to keep them in prayer in the days, weeks, and months ahead. May God bless each and every one of you."

DELIVERY TIP — *Read the names slowly and with care. If you stumble on a name, do not panic — pause, breathe, repeat it correctly, and continue. The family will hear the love in your effort.*

READING THE RESOLUTIONS

A complete framework — how to deliver resolutions with reverence • 3–5 minutes

What it is: Resolutions are formal statements from organizations, ministries, churches, or clubs that the departed was part of. They use the language of "Whereas" and "Therefore Be It Resolved." Read them word for word — but read them with weight, not in a rush.

How to open:

"Giving honor to God, to the family, and to everyone gathered here today — I have been asked to read the resolution*[s]* on behalf of *[name of the organization or ministry]*."

Standard resolution format — read it just as it is written:

"Whereas, it has pleased our Heavenly Father, in His infinite wisdom, to call from our midst our beloved *[Sister/Brother/Mother/Deacon/etc.] [Name of the Departed]*;"

"And whereas, *[she/he]* was a faithful and dedicated member of *[organization or ministry name]*, having served with distinction for *[number]* years;"

"And whereas, *[she/he]* exemplified the love of Christ in every area of *[her/his]* life — in *[her/his]* service, in *[her/his]* generosity, in *[her/his]* witness, and in *[her/his]* walk with the Lord;"

"And whereas, *[her/his]* presence will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved *[her/him]*;"

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the members of *[organization or ministry name]*, do hereby express our heartfelt sympathy to the family during this season of bereavement."

"Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the family, a copy be entered into the records of *[organization]*, and a copy be read at this homegoing service in loving memory of *[Name]*."

"Respectfully submitted this *[day]* day of *[month], [year]*. Signed: *[Names and Titles of Officers]*."

DELIVERY TIP — *Each "Whereas" should be read like its own sentence — pause briefly after each one. Read "Therefore, be it resolved" with the most weight. That is the heart of the resolution.*

WHEN MULTIPLE RESOLUTIONS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED

How to honor every organization without losing the room • 4–6 minutes

What it is: Many homegoings receive resolutions from several places at once — the church, the auxiliary, the usher board, the choir, a sorority or fraternity, a civic club, a workplace, a sister ministry. Every one of them matters. Your job is to honor each organization while keeping the service moving in a way that blesses the family, not exhausts them.

Before the service: organize first.

- Lay the resolutions in front of you in the order the family wants them read. If they have no preference, group them: church ministries first, then community organizations, then workplace or civic groups.
- Read the names of every organization and every officer signing the resolution silently to yourself before service starts. Practice the unfamiliar ones.
- Mark the ones to read in full versus the ones to read in summary *(see below)*.
- Place a small paper clip or sticky note on each one so you can move through them without fumbling.

How to open — set the tone before the first one is read:

"Giving honor to God, to our Pastor, to the family, and to everyone gathered here today — the family has received several resolutions in honor of our beloved *[Name of the Departed]*. Each one represents an organization, a ministry, or a community that loved *[her/him]* dearly. With respect for every one of them — and for the time of this service — I will read some in full and summarize others. Every word, every signature, and every organization will be presented to the family in writing following this service. To God be the glory for a life that touched so many."

Reading in full versus reading in summary:

If there are **three or fewer** resolutions, read each one in full using the standard format on the previous pages.

If there are **four or more**, read the first one in full to set the tone, then summarize the rest using the short form below. This keeps the moment sacred without overwhelming the family.

Short form for summarized resolutions:

"A resolution has also been received from *[Name of Organization or Ministry]*, where *[Sister/Brother/Mother/Deacon] [Name]* served faithfully for *[number]* years. The organization extends its deepest sympathy to the family and honors *[her/his]* memory and legacy. Signed by *[President's Name or Officers]*."

[Pause briefly, then continue:]

"A resolution has also been received from *[next organization]*..." — and so on, until all have been acknowledged.

DELIVERY TIP — *Read every organization's name with the same care, whether it's the largest church in the city or the smallest auxiliary. To the people who signed it, their resolution is the most important one in the stack.*

CLOSING & TRANSITIONING AFTER MULTIPLE RESOLUTIONS

How to close the resolutions portion with grace • 1 minute

How to close:

"To every organization, ministry, club, and community that submitted a resolution today — the family receives each one with deep gratitude. Every signature represents a life *[Name]* touched, a relationship *[she/he]* built, and a legacy *[she/he]* leaves behind."

"The family has asked me to assure you that every resolution will be kept, treasured, and read again in the quiet days ahead. To God be the glory for a life so well lived, and for a community so deeply loved."

[Brief pause, then turn toward the family seated in the front:]

"To the family — these resolutions belong to you."

DELIVERY TIP — *If a presenter from one of the organizations is in the room and stands during their resolution, acknowledge them with a small nod or "we see you." That gesture means everything to the people who came to represent.*

A SACRED REMINDER

When the stack of resolutions is heavy, the temptation is to rush. Resist it. The family chose this moment in the program because every organization listed loved their loved one. Slow your pace by half. Let each name land. The Lord is not in a hurry, and neither are you.

"Every signature is a story.
Read it like it matters — because it does."

READING THE OBITUARY

When asked to read the life history • 4–6 minutes

What it is: The obituary is the life story of the departed. It is your job to bring it to life, not just to read it. Pace yourself. Honor every chapter of their life with the same care.

How to open:

"Giving honor to God, to the family, and to all who have gathered to celebrate the life and legacy of *[Name of the Departed]* — I have been asked to read the obituary."

How to read:

Read the document the family provided exactly as written. Most obituaries follow this order:

- Date and place of birth, parents' names
- Early life, education, and conversion / spiritual journey
- Career, marriage, and children
- Church membership and ministry service
- Hobbies, accomplishments, and how they were known
- Date of passing and those who preceded them in death
- The list of survivors (read this section slowly — every name matters)

How to close:

"*[Name]* leaves to cherish *[her/his]* memory: a devoted family, a loving church, and countless friends whose lives were made richer because *[she/he]* lived. To God be the glory for the life *[she/he]* lived. Amen."

DELIVERY TIP — *If the survivors list is long, take a breath every five or six names. Do not rush through family — being named at a homegoing matters more than people realize.*

READING CARDS & CONDOLENCES

Selected cards read aloud during the service • 2–3 minutes

How to open:

"The family has received an outpouring of love through cards, messages, and condolences from near and far. I have been asked to share a few of them with you today."

For each card, read in this order:

"From *[Name of Sender]* of *[City or Organization]*: *[Read the message.]*"

How to close:

"To everyone who sent a card, a message, or a kind word — the family has read every one. They are grateful for every prayer and every expression of love. May God bless you for your kindness."

DELIVERY TIP — *Read only the cards the family has chosen. Never improvise or add. Three to five well-chosen cards land better than a dozen rushed ones.*

PART EIGHT

In Between Moments

"Let all things be done decently and in order."

1 CORINTHIANS 14:40

TRANSITIONS & HOLDING THE ROOM

Sometimes the most important words in a service are the ones spoken in between. When the choir is getting in place. When the next speaker is being prepared. When the technology is acting up. When the moment needs to be carried until the next moment arrives.

These are short, ready-to-use lines for those exact occasions.

WHILE THE CHOIR IS COMING UP

"Saints, while our ministers of music are taking their places, somebody in here ought to thank God for the gift of song. The Bible says, 'Sing unto the Lord a new song.' Let's get ready to lift up the name of Jesus together."

BEFORE A SONG SELECTION

"Church, before we hear this next selection, I want you to clear your mind. Let go of whatever you brought in with you. The Word says, 'Make a joyful noise unto the Lord.' Receive what the Lord is about to do through this song."

DURING A PRAISE BREAK

"Somebody in here knows the Lord has been good. Somebody knows He woke you up. Somebody knows He kept you. If you know it — give Him a praise right where you are!"

BEFORE THE OFFERING

"Saints, the Lord loves a cheerful giver. As we prepare to receive the offering, let's not give out of obligation — let's give out of celebration. We are not paying God, we are honoring God. Get your gift ready."

WHEN THINGS GO OFF SCHEDULE

"Church, give yourself a hand — you are exactly where the Lord wants you to be. While we make our next adjustment, lean over to your neighbor and tell them, 'God is still in control.'"

DELIVERY TIP — *This one is a lifesaver. When the program glitches, this line resets the room without panic.*

CALLING FOR PRAISE & WORSHIP

"Saints, give God a praise on your way to your feet. If the Lord has been good to you — if He woke you up this morning — if He kept you through the week — open up your mouth and tell Him about it. The psalmist said, 'I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.' Let's give Him some praise right now!"

QUIETING THE ROOM AFTER PRAISE

"Whew. The Lord is here, saints. Take a seat where you can find one. Let's keep this atmosphere of worship as we move into our next portion of the service."

BEFORE A TESTIMONY SERVICE

"Saints, we have come to the testimony portion of service. The Word of God tells us in Revelation 12:11, 'They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.' Somebody in here has a story. Somebody in here has a witness. Don't keep it to yourself — your testimony might be the very thing that sets somebody else free."

CALLING FOR THE ALTAR / PRAYER LINE

"Saints, the altar is open. If you need a touch from the Lord — a healing, a breakthrough, a word — don't sit there in silence. The Lord is here, and He is no respecter of persons. Make your way to this altar right now. Don't let pride keep you in your seat. The Lord is calling."

CLOSING THE SERVICE BRIEFLY

"Saints, what a glorious time we have had in the Lord today. Before we are dismissed, lean over to somebody and tell them, 'I'm glad you came. I'll see you next time.' Don't leave this place the same way you came. Take Jesus with you."

THE GOLDEN RULE OF TRANSITIONS

Never apologize for the moment. If something is running long, if a mic isn't working, if a speaker is delayed — don't say "I'm sorry for the wait." Say "While we're getting set, give God a praise." The congregation never minds a delay if you turn it into worship.



A Final Blessing for You

If you have made it to the end of this book, it means the Lord has something for you to say.

You may never preach a sermon. You may never stand behind a pulpit. But every time you open your mouth in the house of God, you are participating in something sacred — and you are exactly the person He chose for that moment.

Now go forward. Speak boldly. Speak humbly. Speak in love. And remember: the same God who opened the mouth of Moses, who unlocked the tongue of Jeremiah, who anointed the lips of Isaiah — that same God is with you.

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord cause His face to shine upon you.
The Lord give you peace, and the words.

KAREN LEWIS