



Discipleship at
Leicester Cathedral



THE COMMUNITY OF THE
TREE OF LIFE

EARTH STORIES

A SUGGESTED 60-MIN PRAYER GUIDE

Below you will find a centring prayer, scripture, link to a short film and some reflective prayer activities. Please feel free to use what you want. Permission to dip in and out, follow the suggested timings or go at your own pace.

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You may need a Bible, paper, a device with Wi-Fi.
Scroll down to find out more before entering prayer.

INTRO

This month, following on from the COP26 conference, we will be continuing to pray into climate justice issues, and thinking about how we can imagine the world beyond the current crisis.

CENTRING & SILENCE [5 min]

Get into a comfortable posture and pray,

'As we enter prayer now, we pause to be still, slow our breathing, and centre ourselves in the abiding presence of Christ'

Bring your attention to your breath. Treat each breath in as an arrival. Breathe in God's presence. As you breath out, imagine letting go of future worries and responsibilities to God. Become present.

OPENING SCRIPTURES [5 min]

Read slowly, aloud or in your head. You may like to read several times.

Romans 8:18-23

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Mark 1:15 [NIV]

“The time has come,” he said. “The Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

CINEMA DIVINA [20 MINS]

Cinema Divina is related to the prayer form of Lectio Divina (divine reading), but instead of Scripture, this form of prayer uses film to aid prayer. It allows God to speak into your heart through the moving images, sound and speech as you notice what feelings, memories or inspiration stirs in you.

Members of the Community of the Tree of Life Here have produced a short film that you may like to use for this Cinema Divina practise...

Settling: Take some moments to settle into your surroundings. Become aware of your breathing. You might want to use this breath prayer to help centre yourself:

[BREATHE IN]: All of creation is a song of praise to God.

[BREATHE OUT]: I am part of that creation.

Shimmering: Watch the video. Notice what you respond to – what shimmers or stand out. It can be either a resonance or dissonance. Once the video has finished, linger on whatever is capturing your attention. You may like to pause the video on a frame that stands out to you.

FILM LINK >> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbgQp9o1_G8

Seeing: Watch the video again. What images, memories, feelings or imaginations are being stirred in you as you continue to focus on whatever has captured your attention? Is there an invitation or a response that God is calling you to? How is it speaking to you about your interconnectedness with the world around you?

Savouring: Thank God for this moment. You may like to write your reflections down, or watch the video a third time.

We ate from a tree.
Took knowledge into our own hands.
And ever since, creation has been crying.

I hear groans from a distance.
The Earth's tears persist and
We, partners with the Father,
Have failed to hold up our end of the bargain.

How is it that seemingly unrelated things are connected to such a degree?
I dispose food wastefully,
My neighbours country is affected painfully.
The earth is crying.

She cries for a system that advocates selfish gain.
For a moral nature that doesn't consider the neighbour.
She cries to the creator: "Where are your children? The heirs to your kingdom?"

See, unrelated things are connected to an amazing degree.
The earth has weathered much pain.
But those who are partnered with God are called to not leave her the same.

The prayers of a young child, the prayers of old,
Can shift the hearts of kings and stir up the soul.
Works from faith are fit to change culture
We will partner with God as he makes the Earth new.

- Words by Ayooluwa, November 2021

PRAYER OPTIONS [25 MINS]

Thinking about how to respond in prayer to the climate crisis can be overwhelming. *Ubuntu*: a way of life followed by the Nguni people of Southern Africa, where every individual finds their place and sense of self through their connection with the wider community, may offer us a way into prayer...

In dealing with climate and racial justice, ubuntu invites us to acknowledge and celebrate our interconnectedness, our interdependence in our shared humanity.

- Dr Batanayi I. Manyika, Global Voices Webinar, 14 October 2021
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NIUgJhRzjw>)

Let us enter prayer by '*remembering our interconnectedness*' with the world around us and the need for both individual action alongside systemic change.

Below you will find four prayer options. Please use as many or as few of these prayer options as you like.

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PRAYER OPTION ONE // CHOIR

Click on the link below and listen to the choir. This song, sung by the monks of Keur Mousa Abbey in Senegal, reminds us that though invisible, God gives life to humankind and the created world, and it in turn reflects God's image.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyyPMnEpR_U

Here is a translation for 'Nous te louons, père invisible':

Lord of immortality

We praise you, invisible Father

You are the source of life

We praise you, invisible Father

The source of all light

We praise you, invisible Father

You are the source of grace

We praise you, invisible Father

Friend of mankind, friend of the poor, you draw everything unto yourself through the coming of your beloved Son!

We praise you, invisible Father

PRAYER OPTION TWO // NATURAL OBJECT

In your home, place of work, or wherever you are praying, find a natural object. It could be a plant, stone, leaf or stick. Alternatively, get outside, take a short walk in nature and find a natural object. You may like to bring it back into your home.

Spend some time sitting with the natural object. Pay attention to the details of the object, imagine its story, reflect on how it connects and interacts with its surroundings. How do you interconnect?

PRAYER OPTION THREE // MAKE A LIST

Stop! Change your ways! Do something differently!

Make a list of small, achievable changes you can make this week. Small actions that can build up towards bigger changes that have ripple effects on our planet for the better. Here are some examples:

- Plant something
- Look into how climate friendly your energy supplier is
- Research different political parties climate change policies
- Find & cook a tasty vegetarian meal
- Find out about local recycling initiatives
- Repair something that is broken
- Go car free for a day (or more)

PRAYER OPTION FOUR // WORDLESS PRAYER

Re-read Romans 8:18-30. Join with creation and allow the Holy Spirit to make prayers out of our wordless actions and aching groans. Lean into a form of wordless prayer that you feel comfortable with or experiment with something new to you. You may like to...

- ...Spend some quality time in silence
- ...Pray in tongues
- ...Make some music or clap a rhythm
- ...Stomp your feet on the ground
- ...Dance, or move your body
- ...Draw, scribble or doodle
- ...Find a posture that becomes a prayer

BLESSING [5 MINS]

Creator God, help us to discover your glory;
To see beyond and to respond
To the groans of creation and our fellow humanity.
O Lord, set Creation free from its bondage to decay
And bring us into glory and freedom.
Amen

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>> Take a moment to give us some feedback about this prayer resource:

<https://us19.listmanage.com/survey?u=cbd6384064124b364f971d785&id=86cdc9720a&tribution=false>

>> For more downloadable 60-minute prayer resources: leicestertreeoflife.org/prayer/