



Discipleship at Leicester Cathedral



THE COMMUNITY OF THE
TREE OF LIFE

IMAGES OF GOD

A SUGGESTED 60-MIN PRAYER GUIDE

Below you will find a centring prayer, scripture, and a range of ‘prayer actions’. 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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Depending on what ‘prayer action’ you choose to take, you may need a Bible, paper, old newspapers/magazine, art materials and a device with Wi-Fi – scroll down to find out more before entering prayer.

INTRO

The theme for February’s 24hr Prayer Leicester is ‘Images of God’. This month’s theme encourages us to think about our images of God. Our Christian faith teaches us that God loves all of us equally and that we are all bearers of God’s image. What is your image of God? Does it matter whether all of us can recognise ourselves in our images of God?

This theme is led by Leicester Cathedral’s Global Voices webinar series, and the Images of God session will take place on the Thursday the 24th February. Over this 24 hours, we join with other Christians in Leicester and Leicestershire as we use this time to enter into prayer and to enlarge our experiences of prayer and of God

CENTRING & SILENCE [5 mins]

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. Become present.

You may like to listen to this song, ‘Open the Eyes of My Heart Lord’, sung by Audrey Assad:

// On [Spotify](#)
// On [Youtube](#)

// Open the eyes of my heart, Lord,
open the eyes of my heart.
I want to see You.
I want to see You.

To see You high and lifted up,
shining in the light of Your glory.
Pour out Your power and love
as we sing holy, holy, holy.

Holy, holy, holy.
You are holy, holy, holy.
Holy, holy, holy;
I want to see you.

- Audrey Assad, 'Open the Eyes of My Heart Lord', *O Happy Fault*,
2014.

OPENING SCRIPTURES [5 mins]

Read slowly, aloud or in your head. You may like to read several times.
Genesis 1:1-2 [NIV]

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Colossians 1:15-17 [NIV]

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

COLLAGED IMAGES [30 mins]

// STEP ONE

Gather up your materials – old newspaper, magazine, book, scissors, glue, and a sheet of paper. Before you begin, take a minute to quieten yourself, slow your breathing and centre yourself in God's presence.

Read Genesis 1:1-2 again to yourself:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Imagine you are there, in the beginning with the Spirit of God. What does Spirit feel like, sound like, smell like, maybe taste like. What images do these sensations conjure up in your head? Spend a moment with this.

// STEP TWO

When you are ready, begin to flick through your magazine or paper. Try not to read the articles. Notice what images or words you respond to – what shimmers or stands out. It can be either a resonance or dissonance. Cut them out. You might want to look through more papers and repeat this process.

// STEP THREE

Once you have gathered enough images and words, arrange them on your page. Try not to think about this too much, but there may be certain combinations that resonate more with you.

// STEP FOUR

Gaze on your completed collage. Is there meaning beginning to emerge? How does this resonate with your reflection on the ‘Spirit of God’ at the beginning of this exercise? What does this collage say, if anything, about your image of God, and the image of God in you?

THE CHRIST WE SHARE [15 mins]

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. - Colossians 1:15

In the Bible, Jesus himself is described as the image of God: ‘he was in the form of God’ (Phil. 2:6); ‘[God] was revealed in the flesh’ (1 Tim. 3:16). While we were made in God’s image, reflecting fragments of God in our nature, Jesus *is* the image of a God that would be otherwise invisible to us. Through understanding our images of Jesus, we might be able to discover more about the image of God.

But even the image of Jesus is understood differently by different cultures. The Church Mission Society’s *Christ We Share* is a collection of images of Jesus that have been created by artists from around the world, reflecting how Jesus has been seen and understood by different cultures. Here are a few of the images: you may like to spend some time looking at them.

Which images capture your attention the most?

Which surprise or intrigue you the most?
Do they tell you anything new about the image of God?
Are there any that make you feel uncomfortable? Why?

You may like to write your own thoughts down, draw your own picture or pray about our collective and individual images of God. As we explore our images of God, what is God's invitation to us?



Figure 1: The Laughing Christ (Latin America), artist unknown. All images from The Christ We Share, produced by Church Mission Society, USPG and The Methodist Church.

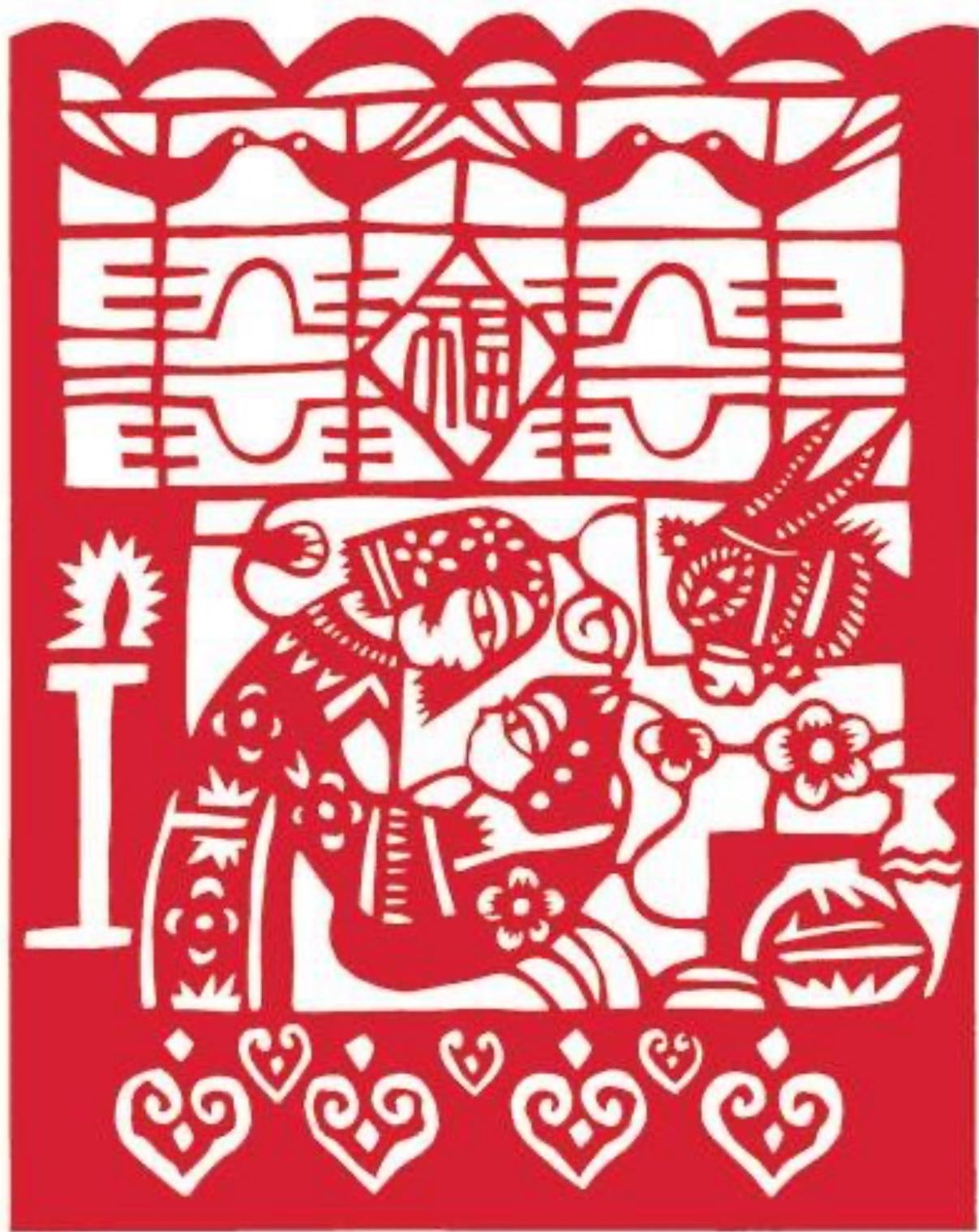


Figure 2: 'Chinese Nativity' by He Qi, Nanjing Theological Seminary. All images from *The Christ We Share*, produced by Church Mission Society, USPG and The Methodist Church.

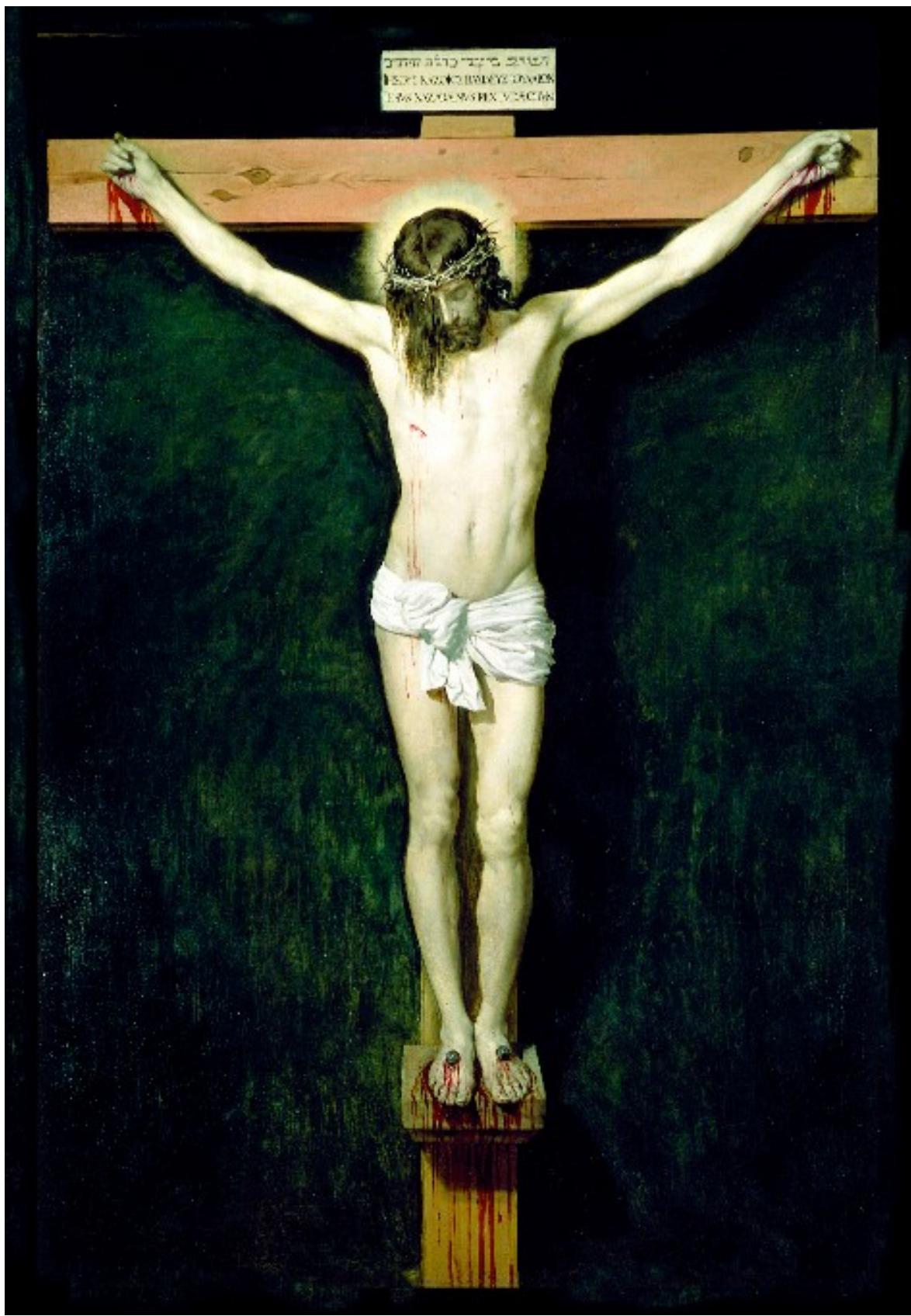


Figure 3: Spanish Crucifix (Spain), Diego Velazquez. All images from *The Christ We Share*, produced by Church Mission Society, USPG and The Methodist Church.



Figure 2: Rasta Jesus (Africa), artist unknown. All images from *The Christ We Share*, produced by Church Mission Society, USPG and The Methodist Church.



Figure 3: 'The Foot Washing', Kathy Priddis. All images from *The Christ We Share*, produced by Church Mission Society, USPG and The Methodist Church.

CLOSING BLESSING [5 MINS]

May the God who created a world of diversity and vibrancy,
Go with us as we embrace life in all its fullness.

May the Son who teaches us to care for stranger and foreigners,
Go with us as we try to be good neighbours in our communities.

May the Spirit who breaks down our barriers and celebrates community,
Go with us as we find the courage to create a place of welcome for all.

[Clare McBeath and Tim Presswood]

>> Suggestions for further reading:

Christena Cleveland, *God is a Black Woman*, 2022.

Nicola Slee, *Seeking the Risen Krista*, 2011.

The Global Voices Webinar on 'Images of God' will be available to watch on The Diocese of Leicester YouTube channel after it has taken place:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1tcUiav10YNkCSBmGRHlg>