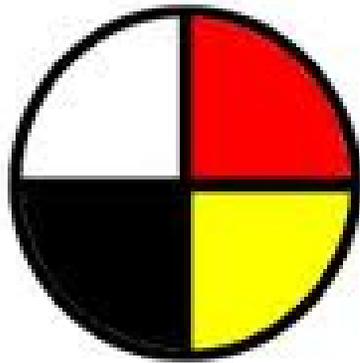


# Exposing the Doctrine of Discovery: A Call to Healing and Hope

Advent 2011  
The Four Directions and *Magnificat*



***A Congregational Resource:*** Personal & Small Group Reflection  
on the Doctrine of Discovery

**Study Guide**

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## The Four Directions and *Magnificat*

### About the Images –

This image of a circle with four colors representing the Four Directions is used with some variation by many Indigenous peoples of the Americas. Many of the recent Episcopal liturgies, commemorating the ordination or consecration of an Indigenous deacon, priest, or bishop or the feasts of David Pendleton Oakerhater or Enmegahbowh, begin with a Four Directions prayer. This kind of prayer and image helps a worshipping community or individual to “orient” themselves, that is, to observe where the East is and to determine where they stand in relation to it.

As suggested by the poem, “Chant to the Four Winds,” by the Rt. Rev. Carol Gallagher, (see p. 15) a Four Directions perspective is useful for much more than simply determining one’s geographical location. Rather, a regular practice of noticing who and what surrounds us, literally and figuratively, becomes a means to knowing who we are and how we fit into the world. This is a view of the world and the self, determined not by the autonomous self of “the rugged American individual”, but rather from looking at one’s community, relations, history, land and taking in, with awareness and wisdom, the whole array of people, Creation, and events that collaborate to make us who we are, and sustains us in that identity.

“Circles are important to Native culture. Traditionally for Native people circles represent life. Inside the circle all of life is included: the two-legged, four-legged, finned, winged, all animals, plants, minerals, water. Roundness is seen in the shape of the earth, sun, moon, stars and structures, such as sweat lodges and tipis. In Talking Circles everyone is equal, there are no titles and each opinion is valued.” (*Elsie Dennis*)

An Advent wreath shares, with the image of the Four Directions, a circle with four points. It has become customary to think of those four points as the four Sundays of Advent marking the preparation, anticipation and commemoration of the first and second comings of Jesus the Christ into the world. Like the Four Directions, an Advent wreath serves to orient us to this season before Christmas. However, in strong contradiction to what is actually going on all around us in the wider culture, the Advent wreath calls us to think, hear, see and feel beyond the hectic events of December. The Advent wreath is a circle that invites us to look both to the past of our tradition and lives, as well as to the future with great implications for present day practices of hope and healing.

This Advent we are invited to ponder both of these images, side by side, in light of the strong language from one of the traditional prayers used at this time, the *Magnificat* –

“*in every generation*”

“*scattered the proud in their conceit*”

“*filled the hungry ...and sent the rich away empty*”

“*cast down the mighty...and lifted up the lowly*”

— as we prepare as a Church to respond to the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery  
**FOREWORD**



**Exposing the Doctrine of Discovery: A Call to Healing and Hope  
Part II Advent 2011**

- Part I “Looking at Columbus Day through the Lens of our Baptismal Vows, A Congregational Resource: Faithful Reflection for Small Groups, Adults, Youth and Children”
- Part II “Four Directions and *Magnificat*” - Personal Reflection in light of the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery: Advent 2011
- Part III Communal Reflection and Action in response to the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery: Lent 2012
- Part IV International Lament over the Doctrine of Discovery  
July 10, 2012

This series, “Four Directions and *Magnificat*” comes as a direct response to resolution DO35, passed by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 2009. That resolution repudiated and renounced the Doctrine of Discovery (DoD), a set of legal and ecclesiastical documents and policies giving full blessing and sanction of the Church to the colonizing dispossession (genocide) of the Indigenous peoples and lands of the Americas. We take these steps of repudiation and prayerful reflection in keeping with the vows of the Baptismal Covenant. These vows, to resist evil, proclaim the Good News, love our neighbors and respect the dignity of everyone -- challenge us (with God’s help) to acknowledge and respond to the disparity between Christian faith and past actions of our church and nation; to learn about, prayerfully reflect upon the history Conquest, Settlement, and Manifest Destiny, and take reconciling steps in response to this painful past and present.

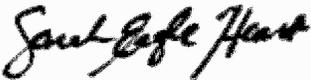
“Four Directions and *Magnificat*” is designed to build upon a “rediscovery” of the history of the Church and this nation that began with “Looking at Columbus Day through the Lens of our Baptismal Covenant.” The purpose of Part II is to invite the use of the season of Advent as a time of personal spiritual preparation for broader communal work by congregations, dioceses, and regions that is to come during Lent and summer of 2012. (See Section 1, Entering Advent as a Season of Spiritual Preparation for Later Work on the Doctrine of Discovery, p. 6.)

Each one of the four parts is offered as useful apart from the other three. However, while one can read and enjoy number five in a series of books without reading 1-4, deeper

learning, insight, understanding, and possibilities for faith formation often occur when the entire series is used. For those who participate in only one of the four, it is important to fill in some basic information about the efforts of the Episcopal Church to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery. For a group or individual new to the theological reflection behind the 2009 actions of General Convention, in the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, please see the resolution at:

([http://gc2009.org/ViewLegislation/view\\_leg\\_detail.aspx?id=983&type=Final](http://gc2009.org/ViewLegislation/view_leg_detail.aspx?id=983&type=Final)) Also, it is strongly recommended that such groups build a foundation for faithful reflection and action by watching the video, “Exposing the Doctrine of Discovery” and “The Episcopal Church Exposes the Doctrine of Discovery,” [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drLnI\\_k5b6s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drLnI_k5b6s) )

One of the insights of the group who planned this series is the importance of pairing learning information *about* history and injustice with the spiritual and theological formation necessary for using that information to bring about actual healing and hope. *Information alone does not bring about spiritual transformation.* Further, the understanding, wisdom and faith of any one person or even one community is insufficient to take on this challenging issue. A group consisting of women and men, lay people and the ordained, Indigenous American, Euro-American and African American Episcopalians from across the nation, representing national Episcopal Indigenous Ministries, Lifelong Learning/Faith Formation and Social and Economic Justice collaborated on this series. While the long term goals, of resolution DO35, Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery, call for concrete changes in church, societal and political structures, policies, and behaviors, those changes will become substantive and more than cosmetic only when we, who seek to carry out these changes, are ourselves transformed from the inside. The dots connecting efforts to changes in church and public policy with the Gospel need to become very clearly represented and grasped again and again, “in every generation.”



Sarah Eagle Heart  
Native American/Indigenous Missioner



Ruth-Ann Collins  
Lifelong Christian Formation Officer



## PREFACE:

### Entering Advent as a Season of Spiritual Preparation for Later Work on the Doctrine of Discovery

*Many and great, O God, are thy works  
maker of earth and sky;  
thy hands have set the heavens with stars,  
thy fingers spread the mountains and plains.  
Lo, at thy word the waters were formed,  
deep seas obey thy voice.*

*Grant unto us, communion with thee,  
thou star abiding one;  
come unto us and dwell with us;  
with thee are found the gifts of life.  
Bless us with life that has no end,  
eternal life with thee.*

Hymnal 1982, #385 music: Dakota Indian Chant; text: Joseph R. Renville, ca. 1835

It is one thing to acquire new challenging information but another to be reminded yet again of, the tragic events presented in the video, “Exposing the Doctrine of Discovery”. There, people learned (some for the first time) of the deeply disturbing collaboration between state and church that not only led to, but justified and authorized the Conquest, Manifest Destiny and the violent, unjust settlement of the Americas *as an action of Christian faith*. The images include:

- The burial of murdered men, women and children at Wounded Knee, South Dakota.
- Native children taken from their home and family and stripped of their language and culture on the Navajo Reservation.
- The 38 men hung in Mankato, Minnesota, after singing in Lakota, a song that Episcopalians know as Hymn #385 “Many and Great”

Those images cry out for a response; but what response? How do we move from a disturbing awareness of the brokenness of the past, to discover understanding of how that past connects to the wounds of the present so that we might find the “courage, patience, and wisdom to work together for healing and hope with all people, now and in the future?” How do we mend the hoop of our hearts? For that kind of learning and healing, Advent can be a time of pondering and preparation. So, in the midst of these hectic days before the celebration of Christmas, we are called to a time of reflection and openness to the implications of the Four Directions and *Magnificat* at a time in the life of the Church when we are trying to make sense of and respond to the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery. We use our liturgical year, along with the images, and hymns of this season to orient ourselves to this task.

At the heart of Christian faith are questions of identity and orientation — “Who is God? “Who are we?” “Who am I?” and “How do I/we fit into the world?” As Episcopalians, we begin to answer questions about human identity and orientation by proclaiming that *every* human person is “made in the image of God” and called to love, create, reason and live in harmony with Creation and with God. That very optimistic, gracious image of *all* human persons leads us to two challenging observations: Although all of us are “made in the image of God”, no two of us are exactly alike. We *all* differ from each other. The immense diversity

among human persons across the array of all the cultures of God's people leads us to a deep appreciation that the fullness of God is *never* captured by the ways, worldview, or characteristics of any one human community, person, or race.

The value, of images such as the Four Directions and the Advent wreath, is that we can see and even touch them on a literal level; but their power for transformation occurs at a much deeper, larger level in the soul, heart, head and imagination. The invitation here is to see the Advent wreath on the din Four Directions dining room table or at church on Sunday and to become open to a challenging reflection as to some possible implications of *Magnificat* for our response to the Doctrine of Discovery.

This time of spiritual preparation is not the kind of experience where there is one thing to be learned, and only in one way. Rather, it is an invitation to all people of North America, those whose ancestors were here long ago, and those who have come from the Four Directions more recently, to look again at what it means to live faithfully here on this continent at this time in history. It is an invitation to become aware that there is much that we do not know about the past, and to gain new insights and appreciation for the uniquely American experience of living here in a land with so many of God's people. Whenever we or our ancestors came to this continent, we were invited by the Creator of us all to a respectful attention and appreciation for the First Peoples of the Americas.

“Who will find peace with the lands? The future of humankind lies waiting for those who will come to understand their lives and take up their responsibilities to all living things. Who will listen to the trees, the animals and birds, the voices of the places of the land? As the long-forgotten peoples of the respective continents rise and begin to reclaim their ancient heritage, they will discover the meaning of the lands of their ancestors. That is when the invaders of the North American continent will finally discover that for this land, God is red.”

*God is Red*, by Vine Deloria, Jr.  
(p. 296, 2003 edition)

One way to begin this process of respectful attention and appreciation, for the First Peoples of the Americas, is through looking again at the very familiar Advent image of Mary's Prayer, the *Magnificat* in light of some stories that precede or follow her prayer: Hannah's Lament and Prayer of Thanksgiving from I Samuel 1 and 2, the Lakota tradition of the White Buffalo Calf Woman and the Mexican tradition of the Virgin of Guadalupe. There are many possibilities for learning in these days. The important thing is to enter this time with an open heart, to ponder deeply what comes from God's Spirit, and then to allow ourselves to be changed by what we see, hear, think and feel.

Dr. Kathryn Rickert  
Doctrine of Discovery  
Project Coordinator, Diocese of Olympia



## Background for the Leader: “Four Directions and *Magnificat*”

### Goals:

To use this season of fall into winter, a time of darkness, waiting, and longing for Light for hearing, growing in insight and wisdom that may lead us to healing and hope. Traditionally for Native people, winter is the time to share stories and teachings.

To prepare for spiritual work around Christmas, Lent, Easter, and next summer’s Lament over the Doctrine of Discovery –July 10, 2012 so that this may lead to action in the world.

To see that pairing the Four Directions and *Magnificat* or White Buffalo Calf Woman, the Virgin of Guadalupe, Hannah, and Mary the Mother of Jesus *is not to see them as all the same*. It is to recognize that God did not arrive in the New World on the *Santa María*, along with Christopher Columbus.

“For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things [God] has made.” Romans 1:19-20 (NRSV)

To invite those, who are more influenced by Euro-American understandings of the Good News, to attend to the wisdom found within Indigenous traditions.

In some way, God has made God's self known to the First People of this land. All of us who have come since the arrival of Columbus, stand to learn from and with First Peoples, things that will deepen and strengthen the faith and ministry of all so that we might work together for all people.

For this series, we will give our attention to two aspects found in many Indigenous spiritual traditions of the Americas –

- Four Directions as a way of orientation, or placing one’s in relation to all of Creation; an image for the shape of life as compared with either the power pyramid/ vertical line of hierarchical power.
- The Give-A-Way – the kind of self-giving that we see in Jesus

Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

<sup>5</sup>Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,

<sup>7</sup> but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.  
And being found in human form,  
<sup>8</sup> he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.                      Philippians 2:4-8 (NRSV)

Both of these principles — Four Directions and the Give-A-Way — in some form, hold places of great significance in Christian theology and spirituality. We focus our respectful attention on them now so that we might become familiar with them, but also that we might begin to grasp how much damage is done when such powerful means for the formation and support of identity and community are denied, ignored, distorted or destroyed. Even a small appreciation of this loss may help to shed light on the tremendous struggles for identity that Indigenous youth face when they lack access to the traditional wisdom of their ancestors.

The break between traditional Indigenous religions and Christianity has done harm. Although there are many shared values — respect, universality, generosity — these may not be recognized as such when they appear in the words, languages, songs, and cultural ways of Indigenous people, both those who are Christians and those who practice their traditional religions. In the church, we continue to struggle with God’s call to seek and be open to recognizing the Spirit in all people.

The cross was carried by early European colonists, both Roman Catholic and protestant, into the Indian world. As a cultural-religious symbol it was rich with spiritual connotations; it embodied concepts of salvation, redemption, and brotherhood so central to European Christian faith. But even more importantly for cross-cultural concerns, it was an *inclusive* symbol. It was universal. Christ died on the cross for all...

...The sign of the cross, therefore, cast a long shadow in Indian country, but it held out the promise that ownership of its religious message was as available to Indian people as it was to European immigrants. It is exactly at this juncture that real hope for cultural reconciliation existed, for the Indian religious view was also inclusive. It was equally universal. The symbol of the circle, as a metaphor for the basic unity of life, the drawing together of all people and things as creatures of God, was common to North American Indian culture. It too carried a message of “good news” for Indian people: that we are all one. ...

Unfortunately, cultural symbols are only as good as the people who use them. The theoretical compatibility of the cross and the circle was not realized in practice. As we have seen, the weight of cultural differences was thrown against the fragile links between Indian and white society. The mind-set of most early Christian missionaries precluded acceptance on Indian religious symbolism or insight. White missionaries were products of their own cultural milieu, and despite the inclusive nature of the Christian message, they tended to offer the cross to Indian people as an either-or proposition....

Today, we have come a long way ... And yet, the same problems of mutual understanding and respect still haunt us. After centuries of contact, the split between [these] cultures remains unhealed.

“Native American Spirituality”, by the Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston (Choctaw) pp. 152-3 in *Jamestown Commitment: The Episcopal Church and the American Indian*, by Owanha Anderson, Cincinnati, Ohio, Forward Movement, 1988

A worldview that sees God *only* through one cultural lens, historical experience, or social location may struggle to proclaim the Good News. When our efforts at making sense of the world and responding to what we see are limited to collaboration only with those who see things just as we do, it becomes very difficult to seek and serve Christ *in all persons*, and respect the dignity *of every human being*.”

The world views from which the Four Directions and the Advent Wreath come are NOT the same. In some ways, they are opposites. In the words of the Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston:

“The American Indian culture and the European culture are polar opposites. By any test of cultural standards, they stand 180 degrees apart....The first set of symbols can be the *vertical* as opposed to the *horizontal*...i.e. The way a group of people organize themselves into a community, the way that they look at themselves from the inside out.... [“Native American Spirituality”, by the Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston (Choctaw) pp. 150-51.]

The point of this example is not to label one culture “good” and the other “bad”, but rather to help all of us who come from all of these cultures to appreciate more fully how the Good News is not captured by any one culture, but is in fact proclaimed to and by the entire world.

In this light, we are invited to hear the powerful, trickster-like language and vision of *Magnificat* with the Doctrine of Discovery, Conquest, and Manifest Destiny in the background:

*“in every generation”*

*“scattered the proud in their conceit”*

*“filled the hungry ...and sent the rich away empty”*

*“cast down the mighty...and lifted up the lowly”*

**Matrix for Four Directions and *Magnificat*:**

| <b>Week</b> | <b>Holy Woman</b>                                       | <b>Summary</b>  | <b>Text</b>                                   | <b>Activity</b>                            | <b>Orientation</b>  |
|-------------|---|---|---|--|---|
| <b>#1</b>   | <b>White Buffalo Calf Woman<br/><br/>Lakota</b>         | We all use stories to orient ourselves as to who and were we are in the world                                     | Rev 12:1-6<br><br>“Chant of the Four Winds”   | <b>Label the Advent Wreath</b>             | You have shown mercy on those who fear <i>you in every generation</i> .                         |
| <b>#2</b>   | <b>Virgin of Guadalupe<br/>“Mother of the Americas”</b> | Loss of connection to stories and images = loss of direction and identity   | <b>Isaiah 40</b><br><br>Comfort,.. all people | <b>Identify our stories of orientation</b> | You have shown the strength of your arm, and have <i>scattered the proud in their conceit</i> . |
| <b>#3</b>   | <b>Hannah, Mother of Samuel</b>                         | Relationship with God and others requires awareness of our own hungers & desires offered in hope and trust to God | I Sam 1:9-20 & 2:1-10                         | <b>Being Hungry</b>                        | You have filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.                      |
| <b>#4</b>   | <b>Mary, Mother of Jesus</b>                            | Looking at Conquest through the lens of <i>Magnificat</i>   | <i>Magnificat</i><br>Luke 1:46-55             | <b>Giving ourselves away</b>               | You have cast down the mighty from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly.                      |



## Background to the: *Magnificat* and the Stories behind the Stories:

*Magnificat* as it shows up in Luke's Gospel, and the *Book of Common Prayer* is a story/prayer in front of an "older story/ prayer," with another "story/prayer behind or within it". It has its ancestors in the line of the generations of the Story of Hannah in I Samuel 1:9-20. The prayer we know as *Magnificat* is a great deal like Hannah's song of praise in I Samuel 2:1-10 (NRSV)

2:1 Hannah prayed and said,  
'My heart exults in the Lord;  
my strength is exalted in my God.  
My mouth derides my enemies,  
because I rejoice in my victory.

2 'There is no Holy One like the Lord,  
no one besides you;

there is no Rock like our God.

3 Talk no more so very proudly,  
let not arrogance come from your mouth;  
for the Lord is a God of knowledge,  
and by him actions are weighed.

4 The bows of the mighty are broken,  
but the feeble gird on strength.

5 Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,  
but those who were hungry are fat with spoil.  
The barren has borne seven,  
but she who has many children is forlorn.

6 The Lord kills and brings to life;  
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.

7 The Lord makes poor and makes rich;  
he brings low, he also exalts.

8 He raises up the poor from the dust;  
he lifts the needy from the ash heap,  
to make them sit with princes  
and inherit a seat of honor.  
For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,  
and on them he has set the world.

9 'He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,  
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;  
for not by might does one prevail.

10 The Lord! His adversaries shall be shattered;  
the Most High\* will thunder in heaven.

The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;  
he will give strength to his king,  
and exalt the power of his anointed.

The prayer just before this prayer of Thanksgiving, is Hannah's Lament, I Samuel 1:9-20 NRSV

9After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose and presented herself before the Lord. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. 10 She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord, and wept bitterly. 11She made this vow: 'O Lord of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head.'

12 As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. 13Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she was drunk. 14 So Eli said to her, 'How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Put away your wine.' 15 But Hannah answered, 'No, my lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. 16 Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time.' 17 Then Eli answered, 'Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him.' 18 And she said, 'Let your servant find favor in your sight.' Then the woman went to her quarters, ate and drank with her husband, and her countenance was sad no longer.

19 They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, and the Lord remembered her. 20 In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, 'I have asked him of the Lord.'

One of the problems or challenges of Christian faith is a tendency to get lost in the story before our noses, while failing to notice the stories that are behind or within the story. Such may be the situation for those who, along with their ancestors, have come to live in North America without much understanding of the stories and peoples who first lived in this place. We may see what is here now, perhaps without knowledge of who came before us. We may hear these strong

prayers of thanksgiving, without hearing the cries – legitimate cries of those who have been turned into the “poor and needy” through the actions -- of the mighty and full to which these prayers are a response.

In this powerful woman's prayer -- either Hannah's or Mary's version – God is portrayed as the one who turns upside down what is wrong. It is a prayer that may be very useful to those who would set aside this Advent to pray over the painful past of this nation and to seek wisdom around our contemporary response to the Doctrine of Discovery. The power of the prayer is enhanced when one realizes the audacity of personal prayer and faith as found in Hannah's Lament. Both Hannah and Mary serve as vivid role models for those who would set aside this season of Advent to ponder these things in their hearts.

This combination of Hannah's lament with her song of thanksgiving provides a glimpse into a story behind the story. When one hears only the song of thanksgiving, one would never know that Hannah was, in fact “deeply distressed” and “deeply troubled”, accused of making a “drunken spectacle” of herself, yet she “poured out her soul before the Lord”, while “speaking from her great anxiety and vexation”. However, when both stories and prayers are heard we gain a more realistic view of how a prayer such as the *Magnificat* fits into our own experience, and may help us make sense of the Doctrine of Discovery.

As many people may have not known that Hannah’s Lament and Thanksgiving are stories and prayers behind the *Magnificat*, Mary’s Thanksgiving, many people are also unaware of the first stories and ways of the First Peoples of North America. For this reason, we are invited to take a brief journey during Advent with four Holy Women:

White Buffalo Calf Woman

The Virgin of Guadalupe

Hannah, the Mother of Samuel

Mary, the Mother of Jesus

We bring these women into our reflections on Four Directions and *Magnificat*, so that we might learn from all of them in order to see more fully how God is “God of all people and every tribe, through whom all people are related; Call[ing] us to the kinship of all [God’s] people.”



## HANDOUTS:

### The Song of Mary, *Magnificat*, Luke 1:46-55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

My spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
for you have looked with favor on your lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:

You, the Almighty have done great things for me,  
and holy is your Name.

You have mercy on those who fear you  
in every generation

You have shown the strength of your arm,  
and have scattered the proud in their conceit

You have filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

You have cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly

You have come to the help of your servant Israel,  
for you have remembered your promise of mercy,  
The promise you made to our forebears,  
to Abraham, [Sarah and their] children for ever.

[**Note:** This translation of the *Magnificat* is from p. 27 from “*Enriching Our Worship 1*”]

**Chant to the Four Winds, by the Rt. Rev. Carol Gallagher, (Cherokee)**

Come, Great Creator  
Come, Life Giver  
Come to this Sacred Place  
Come and be with us.

Welcome our Relatives from the East  
And bring your Gifts  
Rising Sun and Gentle Waters  
Soaring Eagle and New Vision

Welcome our Relatives from the South  
And bring your Gifts  
Our Rich Mother Earth  
Innocence and Love

Welcome our Relatives from the West  
And bring your Gifts  
Thunder Drum and Wind  
Oceans and Strong Hearts

Welcome our Relatives from the North  
And bring your Gifts  
Mighty Buffalo and Wisdom  
Rivers of Harmony

Welcome Dear Christ  
Our Circle is Complete  
We Thank you for this Circle  
And for the Home you have made  
For us and for our Relatives.

There is setting of this text in *Voices Found #52 & First Peoples Theology Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 1, September 2001, p. 1.

## Opening Prayer: Weeks 2-4

*This is a suggested format you may choose to use for each week. However you should make these prayers to reflect the context of your community.*

Directions: If possible, all stand, facing the center of the circle, with a copy of this prayer for each person. One reader is appointed for each of the Four Directions. As the reader introduces direction, all turn in that direction. At the conclusion of the prayer, all turn toward the center of the circle. Each week this prayer is prayed, there will be opportunities for individuals to name specific people, creatures and other aspects of Creation that help to orient and sustains them in identity, faith, service and community.

Leader: We stand together in this circle, related to each other and to all of God's Creation, rejoicing in God-with-us; for you have done great things for your people, and your name is holy.

Reader: We turn to the East -- *Name several places and people who live to the East of you* -- remembering and giving thanks for those in every generation who fear you: *(We name those persons, creatures and things in Creation that bring Light to our lives.)*

Reader: We turn to the South -- *Name several places and people who live to the South of you* -- mindful of your strength and promise to "scatter the proud in their conceit" *(We name those persons, creatures and things in Creation that challenge greed, arrogance, and lack of generosity.)*

Reader: We turn to the West -- *Name several places and people who live to the West of you* -- knowing that it is your way to cast down the mighty from their thrones, and to lift up the lowly. *(We name those persons, creatures and things in Creation who follow your way.)*

Reader: We turn to the North -- *Name several places and people who live to the North of you* -- so that we may not be sent away empty, may we and all people hunger for the good things that come from you. *(We name those persons, creatures and things in Creation that are filled with the good things of God.)*

Leader: We turn back to the center of this sacred circle, mindful of God's promises of mercy to us and to all people; sustain us with your mercy to remember and fulfill our promises to resist evil, proclaim Good News, seek and serve Christ in our neighbors, and to respect the dignity of all your people. Amen.

## Closing Prayers for Weeks 1-4

### Week 1

O Great Spirit, God of all people and every tribe,  
through whom all people are related;  
Call us to the kinship of all your people.  
Grant us vision to see through the lens of our Baptismal Covenant,  
the brokenness of the past;

*(Here may be inserted specific, local prayers for the brokenness of the past.)*

Help us to listen to you and to one-another,  
to hear of your “mercy on those who fear you  
in every generation”  
in order to heal the wounds of the present;

*(Here may be inserted specific, local prayers for the healing of the wounds of the present.)*

### Week 2

Help us to listen to you and to one-another,  
so that we might hear your call and how it is that  
“You have shown the strength of your arm,  
and have scattered the proud in their conceit,”  
in order to heal the wounds of the present;

*(Here may be inserted specific, local prayers for the healing of the wounds of the present.)*

### Week 3

Help us to listen to you and to one-another,  
so that we might see how it is that  
“You have cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and have lifted up the lowly”  
in order to heal the wounds of the present;

*(Here may be inserted specific, local prayers for the healing of the wounds of the present.)*

### Week 4

Help us to listen to you and to one-another,  
so that we might grasp what it means that you  
“*have filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty*”,  
in order to heal the wounds of the present;

*(Here may be inserted specific, local prayers for the healing of the wounds of the present.)*

And give us courage, patience,  
and wisdom to work together  
for healing and hope with all of your people,  
now and in the future.

*(Here may be inserted specific, local prayers for hope and healing for the future.)*

Mend the hoop of our hearts and let us live in  
justice and peace  
through Jesus Christ,  
the One who comes to all people  
that we might live in dignity. Amen

# Hannah's Lament and Prayer of Thanksgiving

## Hannah's Lament, I Samuel 1:9-20 (NRSV)

9 After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose and presented herself before the Lord. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. 10 She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord, and wept bitterly. 11 She made this vow: 'O Lord of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a Nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head.'

12 As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. 13 Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she was drunk. 14 So Eli said to her, 'How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Put away your wine.' 15 But Hannah answered, 'No, my lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. 16 Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time.' 17 Then Eli answered, 'Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him.' 18 And she said, 'Let your servant find favor in your sight.' Then the woman went to her quarters, ate and drank with her husband, and her countenance was sad no longer.

19 They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, and the Lord remembered her. 20 In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, 'I have asked him of the Lord.'

## Hannah's Prayer of Thanksgiving, I Samuel 2:1- 10 (NRSV)

2:1 Hannah prayed and said,  
'My heart exults in the Lord;  
my strength is exalted in my God.  
My mouth derides my enemies,  
because I rejoice in my victory.  
2 'There is no Holy One like the Lord,  
no one besides you;  
there is no Rock like our God.  
3 Talk no more so very proudly,  
let not arrogance come from your mouth;  
for the Lord is a God of knowledge,  
and by him actions are weighed.  
4 The bows of the mighty are broken,  
but the feeble gird on strength.  
5 Those who were full have hired themselves out  
for bread,  
but those who were hungry are fat with spoil.  
The barren has borne seven,  
but she who has many children is forlorn.  
6 The Lord kills and brings to life;  
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.  
7 The Lord makes poor and makes rich;  
he brings low, he also exalts.  
8 He raises up the poor from the dust;  
he lifts the needy from the ash heap,

to make them sit with princes  
and inherit a seat of honor.  
For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,  
and on them he has set the world.  
9 'He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,  
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;  
for not by might does one prevail.  
10 The Lord! His adversaries shall be shattered;  
the Most High\* will thunder in heaven.  
The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;  
he will give strength to his king,  
and exalt the power of his anointed.

# Two Indigenous Holy Women: White Buffalo Calf Woman and the Virgin of Guadalupe

## White Buffalo Calf Woman

1. from “*Ehanna Ptehincala Ska Win, Oglige Wakan, Ahi: A Long Time Ago, The White Buffalo Calf Woman – Sacred Messenger – Came*” by Dakota Goodhouse, in *The First Peoples Theology Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3, January 2005, pp. 2-7

“In both versions, the White Buffalo Calf Woman showed the people, *Lakol Wicoh’an*, the Lakota Way-of-Life, not so much as “Religious,” but more spiritually intense in the daily manner of living – Living as Worship. There are many different versions of the coming of the White Buffalo Calf Woman, and the simple beauty of the *Lakol Wicoh’an* allows for the individual to make personal interpretations to make a relationship to the mystery of creation and the mystery of the Great Spirit, all while not criticizing that what is true for one is not the truth for all, but most of all, is not false either.

I believe, that, a long time ago, there was one hunter who went to the hill to scout for game. While looking afar, he saw the will of God send forth a messenger, which was manifested in the form of a white bison calf, the symbolism implied was that bison was life of the Great Plains, and white another symbol for purity, the calf for innocence. Taken together, this man saw the work of the *Tuku Wakanskankan* (Something-Holy-Moving), “The Holy Spirit,” in the presence of the pure and innocent life in front of him.

In the scout, as in each and every one of us, battled two natures, the best of him and the worst of him. Now, the worst of him lusted for the strange beautiful woman in front of him, while in the back of his mind he knew better – that this was something mysterious and sacred. He fell to his hands and knees near the edge of her white buckskin dress, where hung braids of sweet grass. His mind and heart was misted with the presence of the holy, and when the fog cleared, he was no longer of two minds, but one healed and made whole. When he rose to go back to his people, he looked and at the foot of the White Buffalo Calf Woman were the bones of his vice...he went back to camp, where he was able convince the People to prepare for the coming of *Wakan Tanka’s* Sacred Messenger...”

2. from “The Sacred Power of Lakota Women” by the Rev. Dr. Martin Brokenleg, in *The First Peoples Theology Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3, January 2005, pp. 27-34

“In the complex story of how the visible world came to be, there is a sacred being, a fatherly life force who takes the form of the blue sky. Another sacred being is the mother earth whose first form is that of the red disc of the earth. Their child is *Wohpe*, Falling Star, who was occasionally see blazing across the night sky. She connects the life force above and the earth and is their child. *Wohpe* will be known in another form, that of *Ptesanwin*, The White Buffalo Calf Woman. Note an important principal in Lakota sacred experience that there is no difference between the physical and spiritual realms but they are rather an amalgam bound inseparable together... (p. 28)

It is *Ptesanwin*'s most recent appearance that contemporary people are the most familiar [with]; when she came to give us the Pipe as a tool of prayer. She also directed Lakota men, women, and children in specific areas of life. The details of how the Pipe was brought vary slightly but they all recount certain basic points. Goodness is a quality required for spiritual living and for the benefits of the Pipe. Bad behavior and thought can block one from encountering the sacred. Men and women have obligations to care for different aspects of the community. While the roles of men or women are not superior to the other, they are different. Likewise with children, certain sensitivities and duties are prescribed by *Ptesanwin*. Perhaps the most significant teaching of the Pipe is the guarantee that we Lakota can be related to all things in the created cosmos. We are not only relative to one another but to the other nations, called "animals" in English. We are kinfolk to entities perceived as inanimate in western culture such as stones, winds, the moon, sun, thunders and plants....

### **The Virgin of Guadalupe**

[**Note:** Although it is *not* on the Liturgical Calendar of the Episcopal Church, December 12 is still widely celebrated by many Episcopalians as the Feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe.]

12 A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. <sup>2</sup>She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pangs, in the agony of giving birth. <sup>3</sup>Then another portent appeared in heaven: a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. <sup>4</sup>His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. <sup>5</sup>And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was snatched away and taken to God and to his throne; <sup>6</sup>and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, so that there she can be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Revelation 12:1-6 (NRSV)

“According to the legend, as Juan Diego, a Christian Indian of common status, was going from his home in the *barriada* (“district”) near Tepeyac, a hill northwest of Mexico City, he suddenly heard beautiful music. As he approached the source of the music, a lady appeared to him. Speaking in Nahuatl, the language of the conquered, she ordered Juan Diego to go to the palace of the archbishop of Mexico, at Tlatelolco, and tell him that the Virgin Mary, “Mother of the true God through whom one lives” wanted a temple to be built on that site so that in it she could “communicate all the love, compassion, help, and defense to all the inhabitants of this land...to hear their lamentations and remedy their miseries, pain, and suffering.”

After two unsuccessful attempts by Juan Diego to convince the bishop of the Lady's authenticity, the Virgin wrought a miracle. She sent Juan Diego to pick roses in a place where only desert plants grew. She then arranged the roses in his cloak and sent him in the presence of the bishop with the sign he had demanded. As Juan Diego unfolded his cloak in the presence of the bishop, the roses fell to the floor and the painted image of the Lady appeared on his cloak.

The subjugated Mexican people came to life again because of Guadalupe..." (p. 11)

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"If Ash Wednesday stresses the earthly belonging and present suffering of the people, and Good Friday marks their collective struggles and death, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe shouts out with joy the proclamation that a new dawn is breaking: the collective resurrection of a new people. Out of their own earth – Tepeyac – and in community with the life of their ancestors, a new mother emerges, pregnant with life. She is not a goddess but the new woman from whom the new humanity will be born, *la raza cósmica de las Américas*. She is herself the prototype of the new creation. She is *la Mestiza*. She combines opposing forces so that in a creative way new life and not destruction will emerge."

— *Galilean Journey: The Mexican-American Promise*, by Virgilio Elizondo, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985, pp. 43-44.

## **“Looking to the Past in Order to Heal the Wounds of the Present”**

**The Rev. Doyle Turner**

“Goal number one is to come away from a past in our church that has been a shameful place for all of us. As we tried to fit Christianity and Native Spirituality together and tried to live together as brothers and sisters in Christ in this particular denomination of God’s Holy Church we followed a paradigm which was badly skewed. The paradigm held up elitist principles that made value judgments against [Native] culture and spirituality that were morally and ethically wrong. The church has followed a paradigm that told the native people that we were only of value to the extent that we could become like the dominant culture, that nothing between our creation and the coming of the missionaries mattered or had any intrinsic value.

Living together as brothers and sisters in Christ under these circumstances was very hard. The reality was that the native people were not treated like brothers or sisters. We were treated more like poor, ill-bred step siblings...

Out of this unspeakable shameful past a new paradigm of mission needs to emerge, a paradigm which allows dignity of culture and freedom of spirit, freedom of giving and offering, and grace in receiving. A paradigm is needed that allows a transformation of culture by the truth of the gospel and the loving action of Jesus Christ...

We struggled, not because, as was commonly thought, and still to some degree, that reason and intellect is something we lack, but because the intellectual concept of God is a concept which keeps God far off and somehow disjointed from the everyday life we lead. This view of God is totally opposite from the native understanding within which God is very present and active participant in life.” ...

“Traditional Native American and Christian Spiritualities: A Dialogue” by, The Rev. Doyal Turner, in *First Peoples Theology Journal* Vol. 1, No. 1, July 2000, pp. 92-94.



**Week 4** “ *You cast down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up the lowly*”

Giving ourselves away: In Advent, we look forward to and prepare for giving and receiving gifts of life in our families and communities. In the Church and world, we ponder the deep giving of Jesus the Christ. How might this season help us to gain insight into our failure to give and receive with generosity, in the past so that we might be more able to do so in the future?

**A Reading and Group Response:**

If possible, meet in a circle and invite someone from the group to *tell*, rather than read, the story. If that is not possible, then read the story slowly and respectfully. Each of these stories of four strong women serves to “orient” — to figure out their relationships and responsibilities to the Creation, to God and to each other —those who hear and hold on to these sacred stories. Shared in a context of the season of Advent, the Four Directions and *Magnificat*, these stories invite us into pondering some implications of Christian faith for responding to the Doctrine of Discovery. Following the telling, invite those in the circle to respond without judgment: What do you hear? What do you see? What do you think? What do you feel?

**Week 1** “White Buffalo Calf Woman” – pg.19

**Week 2** “The Virgin of Guadalupe” – pg. 20 & Rev. 12:1-6, pg. 30

**Week 3** “Hannah’s Lament and Thanksgiving Prayers” – pg. 18

**Week 4** Mary’s Prayer, *Magnificat* and “Looking to the Past in Order to Heal the Wounds of the Present” – pp. 20-22

**Activity:**

**Week 1** Labeling the Advent wreath with four phrases from *Magnificat*

Provide the necessary materials so that each person in the group can make a set of four labels for their home Advent wreath. If someone does not have a home Advent wreath, suggest that they make the labels any way, and consider hanging them on the Christmas tree, a door wreath or some other place where they will be reminded to ponder in their hearts some of the connections between the Four Directions and *Magnificat*.

*“You have shown mercy on those who fear you in every generation”*

*“You have shown the strength of your arm ...scattered the proud in their conceit”*

*“You have filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty”*

“You cast down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up the lowly”

**Week 2** Identifying the Four Directions for our Lives and Faith

Provide the materials necessary for each person to draw and fill in his/ her own Four Directions; adding names, images, places, people who help to provide direction, structure and sustenance for their sense of who they are and how they fit into the world. As the poem, “Chant to the Four Winds” used in Week 1 suggests, the Four Directions is not a private or personal orientation to the world, but rather something shared with a wider community. (This could also be accomplished as a group process, working on large pieces of paper to record contributions from the group.)

Once these versions of the Four Directions have been constructed, invite the group to reflect both on what appeared on the pages, and how the world looks when one takes in the Four Directions.

**Week 3** Lament *and* Thanksgiving:  
Naming our own hungers before trying to feed someone else

All four of the stories in this series draw our attention to desires, needs, and hungers. The Doctrine of Discovery, (the Conquest and Manifest Destiny) and their tragic, long-term consequences all carry out numerous collisions of desire and hunger: land, power, food, identity, survival, community, faith...

As Hannah’s Thanksgiving follows Hannah’s Lament, as a group ponder one or more of the following:

If Mary had prayed a lament before the *Magnificat*, what would she have lamented?

OR What it is we lament as we seek to respond to the Doctrine of Discovery? What do we desire? What do we hunger for?

OR How does our prayer of lament prepare us to respond to the suffering of others and to work together for healing and hope for all people?

**Week 4** *Magnificat*: As a Response to the past and guide for practice in the present and future around the Doctrine of Discovery

Prepare a one-page handout for each participant with the *Magnificat* (p. 14) on one side and Doyal Turner’s “Looking to the Past in Order to Heal the Wounds of the Present” (p. 22) on the other. First, read the *Magnificat* aloud, together. Then invite each person to select or highlight one or two phrases of the *Magnificat* that could provide direction for responding to the Doctrine of Discovery. Next, invite one member of the group to read the Turner article aloud, pausing every two or three

sentences. During the pause, invite the group to “shout out” one of the phrases they have identified as being useful for responding to the DoD. (Each person is invited to share one response. A second response may be shared after everyone has had a turn.)

After this reading, pause for a brief time of reflection and hear from the group what it is that they see, hear, feel and think from this practice.

### **Reflection Questions – for use in groups with more than 50 minutes.**

1. What does it feel like to be standing at the center of this sacred circle and taking account of, giving thanks for all those who loved you into life, helped you to be who you are, proclaimed the Good News to you, etc.? Is this how you usually look at the world? What is different about looking at the world this way?
2. From where does your orientation – sense of direction as to who you are – come? How do you fit into the world? How did you come to have faith?
3. Who are the “generations” (biological and otherwise) who have contributed to my awareness of the mercy of God?
4. What is the heritage, ethnic and or otherwise, that I bring to my prayerful consideration of the challenges to faith/ (call for action) posed by the painful past of this nation, e.g. as seen in the Doctrine of Discovery, Manifest Destiny, etc.?
5. Who are my ancestors in the faith (actual and chosen/fictive)?
6. Who are my ancestors in becoming aware of the ways in which history/ DoD, Manifest Destiny, etc. are not Good News for many people?
7. What do I await, long for, hope for in this season of Advent that will help me to make sense of this painful part of our national history?
8. What resources do I find for this task in the lessons for this week?
9. What action might I take in this week that would help me to grow in understanding of how it is that the Light-in-darkness which we recognize and celebrate in the Feast of the Nativity helps to equip, direct and sustain us in the task of “persevering in resisting evil” and the “works of darkness” that have allowed injustice and ignorance of injustice around the settlement of this nation to go unnoticed?

## **Week 2**

1. What does this lesson help you to see about the “strength” of God’s arm? That is, where are the concerns for protection and uplifting those who need protection?
2. What does it mean to “scatter the proud in their conceit”?
3. Who are the “proud” in any one of the lessons for today?
4. Who are the proud in your world today?
5. Where in your life/ heart do you see yourself as either one who needs the strength of God’s arm? Who is that today?
6. Where in your life/heart do you see yourself as one of the proud?  
How does the Good News in today's Gospel offer help/ assistance/ guidance to those who are caught in our “conceit?”

## **Week 3**

1. Compare Mary’s Prayer with Hannah’s Lament and Thanksgiving.
2. What might have been Mary’s Lament, the one for which Magnificat is a thanksgiving?

## **Week 4**

1. How does *Magnificat* over turn the injustices, cruelty and ignorance that supported the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny?
- 2, How has Advent “changed” by taking this time to reflect on the implications of the Four Directions and the *Magnificat*? How have you been changed?

**Closing Prayer for the Week – p. 17**



## Resources

Given the vast and complex history of the settlement of the Americas over the past 500+ years, it may be helpful to various congregations and dioceses to learn about and reflect on the history and events particular to that region. Since the Episcopal Church has nine provinces, it would be helpful for specific congregations and dioceses to identify and present resources for grasping the events behind the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny by region.

The regions themselves are very large and the specific events pertaining to each region certainly include a broad range of tribal peoples, languages and cultures with varied experiences of the Conquest. The history of each region and tribe is not the same. The ways in which the Doctrine of Discovery, and in some places perhaps more obviously Manifest Destiny were understood and carried out, may be more useful for purposes of faith formation when they are linked to places and peoples that are more well known to us.

Initially, as each person is encouraged to find out whom his/her ancestors are, both biological ancestors as well as those who are our ancestors in the faith. Each congregation is also encouraged to find out who their Indigenous neighbors are. In both cases, the individual exploring one's ancestry and heritage, biological and "in the spirit", and congregations attempting to meet their indigenous neighbors, has the potential for establishing mutual, collaborative relationships and to offer insight into how we have come to be and see the world as we do.

### *A Caution*

In both cases, individuals and communities will very likely come across information about the past that is not pleasant. The point of searching out our ancestors and the origins of our families is not to identify and separate the good from the bad or, the oppressed from the oppressor; it is rather to grow in our understanding, and gain insight into and compassion for those who have gone before us so that together, in the kinship of all God's people, we might work together for healing and hope for all of God's people today. When in our exploring, we come across information suggesting the noble and courageous actions of the past; we give thanks and seek to learn from such lives.

When in our exploring, we come across information of egregious wrongs of oppression received, carried out, or ignored by our ancestors; we are called, by our faith, to come together in grief, more so than guilt, to use the "passion" of that grief to work together for healing and hope.

When we become aware of those things "done on our behalf", then we are called to repent, that is to turn away from that and toward the Light of the Christ whose presence and grace we await at the season of this year.

For example: in *Holy Women, Holy Men* the collect for John Wyclif, priest and prophetic witness, 1384, October 30, pp. 658-59.

O God, your justice continually challenges your Church to live according to its calling: Grant to us who now remember the work of John Wyclif contrition for the wounds which our sins inflict on your Church, and such love for Christ that we may seek to heal the divisions which afflict his Body; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Brokenleg, Martin “The Sacred Power of Lakota Women” in the *First People’s Theology Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3, January 2005, pp. 27-34.

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### **Lectionary for Advent 2011**

#### **First Sunday of Advent November 27, 2011**

[ART](#) -- [PRAYER](#) [Isaiah 64:1-9](#) [Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19](#) [1 Corinthians 1:3-9](#) [Mark 13:24-37](#)

#### **Second Sunday of Advent December 4, 2011**

[ART](#) -- [PRAYER](#) [Isaiah 40:1-11](#) [Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13](#) [2 Peter 3:8-15a](#) [Mark 1:1-8](#)

#### **Third Sunday of Advent December 11, 2011**

[ART](#) -- [PRAYER](#) [Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11](#) [Psalm 126](#)

or [Luke 1:46b-55](#) [1 Thessalonians 5:16-24](#) [John 1:6-8, 19-28](#)

#### **Fourth Sunday of Advent December 18, 2011**

[ART](#) -- [PRAYER](#) [2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16](#) [Luke 1:46b-55](#) or

[Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26](#) [Romans 16:25-27](#) [Luke 1:26-38](#)

Revelations 12:1-6 (NRSV)

A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. <sup>2</sup>She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pangs, in the agony of giving birth. <sup>3</sup>Then another portent appeared in heaven: a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. <sup>4</sup>His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. <sup>5</sup>And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule\* all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was snatched away and taken to God and to his throne; <sup>6</sup>and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, so that there she can be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.