Local Laments Over the Doctrine of Discovery
July 10, 2012
7-10 p.m. EDT

A prayerful gathering, in a Sacred Circle,
with readings, stories, prayers, songs, reflection,
giving and receiving;

In acknowledgment of and response to the tragic consequences
of the Doctrine of Discovery;

To encourage communal awareness and mutual understanding
of the realities of Indigenous people in Church and society;

Carried out in humble hope for a transformed reality
whereby the ways we see each other, the problems
and our responses to them
are changed through newly formed relationships,
under the influence of the Good News of Jesus Christ
An occasion of unprecedented significance in the history of the Episcopal Church

This “Lament over the Doctrine of Discovery” is the first time in the history of the church that we have attempted to come together as followers of Jesus Christ, Native and other people, to openly acknowledge, honor and lament before God and each other, the grievous circumstances of the settlement of this nation. As General Convention 2009 had the courage to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery and to call us to transformed understandings, practices and relationships, tonight we gather here in Indianapolis and throughout the Episcopal Church to share this event with those who participate in Local Laments over the Doctrine of Discovery.

What is the Doctrine of Discovery and what does it have to do with me?

The “Doctrine of Discovery” is a term referring to several documents and policies of church and state that legalized the violent and unjust settlement of North and South America, giving these actions, and their long-lingering tragic consequences, the full sanction and blessing of church and state. Without some awareness of the reasons why and ways in which these policies and actions grievously violate the values of our Christian faith – to continue in the prayers and fellowship, preserve in resisting evil, proclaim Good News, seek and serve Christ in all persons, strive for justice and peace, and respect the dignity of every human being – we cannot live out that faith with honesty and integrity.

(For more information and resources on the Doctrine of Discovery, please see http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/doctrine-discovery-resources.)

Why respond with a lament?

Across the whole Body of Christ, responses to this situation include outrage, stunned silence, denial, guilt, profound grief, other deeply mixed strong emotions, and more. The rich resources of worship in the Episcopal tradition, especially the Book of Common Prayer, offer, invite and enable all of us – “the oppressed and the oppressors” – to gather together in prayer in order to acknowledge and honor all of these strong responses. In a lament, we cry out to God together, naming before God and each other the fullness of this distress, and lay it before God. With the vulnerability and openness of grief shared, rather than the self-focus of guilt, we may move together toward the communion and collaboration necessary to respond faithfully to the wounds of past and present.

Thus, we gather together this night for a series of “offerings” in response to past and present consequences of the Doctrine of Discovery. We “offer” because we do not presume acceptance of our offers. Rather, in a spirit of conciliation – holding out an offering, with respect and honor, that does not obligate the other party to respond – we come together to acknowledge and lament a tragic past in the humble hope that such an offering may make it possible to arrive together at a new, transformed future to more fully embody God’s call to “persevere in resisting evil,” to “proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ,” to “seek and serve Christ in all persons” and “to respect the dignity of every human being.” We “offer” also because that is the way of coming together as the people of God; to offer to God (and to each other) our thanksgiving, praise and lament, together as God’s people.

“We” are an assembly of the people of God who worship in the Episcopal tradition, from “every tribe, and nation,” Native and other people, “the oppressed and the oppressors.” All of us come with our own heritage of culture, history and tradition that deeply forms our lives, faith and participation in this event.
We “witness” these offerings by our presence, listening, singing, prayer, attention and the actions that follow this event in the future. As we gather together to offer and “witness,” we stand in the long tradition of faithful people who have been called to share with one another the joys and sorrows of their lives. That is, although we do not all experience joy and sorrow at the same time or in the same ways, we are all bid by God to come together to express our joys and sorrows, to witness and honor each other’s joys and sorrows, and to learn from each other what it means and how it is that as the Body of Christ we are to share one another’s burdens.

The various stories, readings, experiences, songs and prayers are offered in humble hope for a transformed reality. We describe them as “offerings” because of the painful reality that the wounds brought about through force, ignorance and insensitivity will not be undone or healed through yet more force, ignorance and insensitivity.

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Please share this experience with others throughout the world:

Twitter: @episcopalDoD @indigepiscopal @GC77

A Resource for the “Local Laments Over the Doctrine of Discovery”

“Local Laments Over the Doctrine of Discovery” are being held all over the nation, concurrent with the one being held in Indianapolis, Indiana, at General Convention, July 10, 2012, 7-10 p.m. EDT

(Choose from among the suggested readings, stories, songs and prayers below. If possible, please include both the Gathering and the Sending parts. Beyond that, do what the Spirit moves you to do.)

A Gathering Prayer

Creator,
we give you thanks for all you are
and all you bring to us
for our visit within your creation.
In Jesus, you place the Gospel
in the center of this sacred circle
through which all of creation is related.
You show us the way to live a generous
and compassionate life.
Give us your strength
to live together with respect and commitment
as we grow in your spirit, for you are God,
now and forever,
Amen.

from A Disciple’s Prayer Book ¹
A Song or Reading: “A chant to the Four Winds,” *Voices Found*, 52
1 Welcome cousins from the East! And bring your gifts.

O Si-yo! Si-yo! O Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo!
O Si-yo! Si-yo! O Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo!
O Si-yo! Si-yo! O Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo!
O Si-yo! Si-yo! O Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo!

Rising sun and gentle waters, soaring eagle, new vision.

O Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo!
O Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo!
O Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo!
O Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo!
O Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo! Si-yo!

D.C.
Welcome cousins from the South! And bring your gifts.

Our rich mother earth, innocence and love!

Welcome cousins from the West! And bring your gifts.

Thunder drum and wind, oceans and strong hearts!

Welcome cousins 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 made for all!

O-si-ye means hello and goodbye, welcome and peace.

O = o
si = see
yo = o

Verses may be sung by solo voice and the choir may sing the same accompaniment for all verses.
A Prayer for Transformation  (adapted)
(To be prayed by all)

O God of all the Earth,
bless us into the spiritual call
to be agents of unity among all people.
Let us not turn aside for the sake of our own comfort
or convenience,
but let us turn instead to stand
in support of our brothers and sisters.
Let their hope be my hope.

And so, join us together through your grace,
that we may love one another more perfectly,
heal one another more powerfully and
liberate one another more profoundly
that we could have ever dreamed possible.

And let this blessing pass through us to our children,
and their children’s children
that our many tribes and nations
may always exist
to the honor of the Earth and Seas
and to the glory of your wonderful Name. Amen.
Offering (1) Toward Awareness of History

A Reading: Lamentations 1-7, 10-12, 16-17

A Story: http://www.eyewitnesshistory.com/knee.htm
Have someone read this account of the Massacre of Wounded Knee, and then tell it briefly.

An Experience: A Prayer for those who are sad and in grief:² (Read in unison.)

Gracious God, you alone are the source of all life.
May your life-giving Spirit flow through us,
so that we may be ministers of your compassion one to another;
in our sorrow give us the calm of your peace,
and kindle our hope,
and let our grief give way to wisdom and joy,
through Jesus Christ our Deliverer. Amen.

A Response: Psalm 10:1-19 (read antiphonally, one side to the other)

A Song: “Way, Way, Way” (Ojibway), Wonder, Love and Praise, 813

Each alternative text is sung independently and repeated numerous times.
Offering (2)  Voicing and Hearing Present Reality

A Reading:  Numbers 11: 5-15

A Poem:  “Just Like You” by Mike Kirby

There is a side of me
beyond this pretense
of civility.

If I live a lie
will it even be enough
to learn your ways?

Should I call the wind
of Ancient landscapes
to buffet your attempts
to ignore me?

I might even destroy
the evidence of my reality
and drag myself along
to you, my friends

Or change my face
to prove
I’m other than
I know myself to be?

bleeding all the while
from wounds that never heal

while smiling at the touch
of hands washed white by
indifference.

A Response:  Psalm 13

A Song:  “Nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen,” Lift Every Voice and Sing, 175
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SILENCE
Offering (3)  Acknowledge & Lament the Past and Present

A Reading:    I Peter 5:1-11

A Story:    (See http://www.mountainman.com.au/eastman5.html have someone read the brief section, “A Living Book,” from The Soul of the Indian: An Interpretation by Dr. Charles Alexander Eastman, 1911, born Ohiyesa of the Santee Sioux, in 1858.)

A Response:    Psalm 31:1-10; 14-17

A Communal Confession of Sin and Hope:

(This prayer is to be prayed slowly by all, while looking around the room at each other.)

God of all mercy
we confess [to you and to each other,] that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done,
and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us,
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. Amen.
When Jesus wept, the falling tear in
mercy flowed beyond all bound; when Jesus groaned, a

trembling fear seized all the broken world around.

Offering (4)  Recognition of “Our” Places in the Story

A Reading:  Ezekiel 37:1-14

An Experience: A Prayer for Healing and Hope

O Great Spirit, God of all people, every tribe, and nation 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 named examples of the brokenness of the past.)

Help us to listen to you and to one another, in order to heal the wounds of the present;

(Here may be named examples 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 named examples of healing and hope 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.

A Response:  Psalm 41
A Song:  “Sometimes I feel like a motherless chile.” *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, 169

1. Sometimes I feel like a motherless chile,
2. Sometimes I feel like I’m almos’ gone,

1. Sometimes I feel like a motherless chile,
2. Sometimes I feel like I’m almos’ gone,

long ways from home,
A long

ways from home... Then I get down on my knees and
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SILENCE
Offering (5)  Prayer of Lament: Giving It to God, All of Us Are in This Together
(a communal offering)

A Reading: Romans 12:1-21

Have someone read Chief Joseph's Speech

An Experience: “A Prayer for All of Us” from New Zealand Prayer Book

For the hungry and the overfed
May we have enough.

For the mourners and the mockers
May we laugh together.

For the victims and the oppressors
May we share power wisely.

For the peacemakers and the warmongers
May clear truth and stern love lead us to harmony.

For the silenced and the propagandists
May we speak our own words in truth.

For the troubled and the sleek
May we live together as wounded healers.

For the homeless and the cosseted
May our homes be simple, warm and welcoming.

For the vibrant and the dying.
May we all die to live.

A Song: Hymn 385, “Many and great”  (To be played and sung with a drum)
earth and sky; thy hands have set the heavens with stars;
bidding one; come unto us and dwell with us;

thy fingers spread the mountains and plains. Lo, at thy
with thee are found the gifts of life. Bless us with

word the waters were formed; deep seas obey thy voice,
life that has no end, eternal life with thee.


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SILENCE
Offering (6)  Hope for a Transformed Reality: A New Kind of Love

A Reading:  2 Corinthians 1:3-14

An Experience:  Exchange the Peace, and then give each person present a single large wooden bead as an act of giving and receiving to mark this event.

A Response:  Psalm 121

A Song:  “The Kingdom of God is justice and peace,” Taizé

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A Communal Blessing and Dismissal

Loving God,
we give you thanks for creating all people in your image,
and for calling us together this night
in humble hope
that our offerings, witness, prayers, songs and stories
may serve to heal, transform and bind us together
in your compassionate wisdom and love.

As we leave this Sacred Circle,
may we carry away the memory of this time together
so that we may continue in the risen life of Christ,
the one who comes that all people
might live with dignity and in peace. Amen.
A Sending: 8 *(This prayer is to be said by the entire assembly to each other.)*

Live without fear:
your Creator has made you holy,
has protected you,
and loves you as a mother.
Go in peace to follow the good road,
and may God’s blessings be with you always.
Amen.
Notes


2. “Praying from Our Sadness and Grief,” adapted from *Enriching Our Worship 3* (Church Pension Fund, 2007), p. 73.


