**2016 Winter Solstice Blessings (before and after the meal)**

Before we eat:

“*As we begin this meal with grace, let us become aware of the memory carried inside the food before us. The quiver of the seed awakening in the earth, unfolding in a trust of roots and slender stems of growth on its voyage toward harvest; the kiss of rain and surge of sun, the innocence of animal soul that never spoke a word, nourished by the earth to become today our food; the work of all the strangers whose hands prepared it; the privilege of wealth and health that enables us to feast and celebrate.”*

After we eat:

*“We end this meal with grace for the joy and nourishment of food, the slowed time away from the world, to come into presence with each other, and sense the subtle lives behind our faces, the different colors of our voices, the edges of hungers we keep private, the circle of life that unites us. We pray the wise spirit who keeps us, to change the structures that make others hunger and that after such a grace we might now go forth and impart dignity wherever we partake.”*