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Blue Christmas Service

ORDER OF WORSHIP

THE PRESBYTERIAN
OUTLOOK



Blue Christmas Service

What is a blue Christmas service? It is a worship service that names and holds space for the sadness that accompanies the holidays. Heightened by the advertising of our consumerist culture, there is a definite Christmas ideal that includes neatly iced gingerbread houses, smiling children, and an excessive amount of neatly wrapped packages. These standards and the church's sometimes solitary focus on joy can make the holidays an isolating time for anyone who can't muster happiness or meet the criteria. A blue Christmas service is an invitation for anyone who wants to come and set their burden down, for a community to hold pain collectively.

This liturgy is for any pastors who welcome liturgical aids or like to plan their services with a pre-written outline. It is for lay leaders who are seeking to meet a need in their community. It is for a group of people who recognize that joy and sorrow intertwine.

Our recommendation is to plan the service on or around December 21 — the shortest day of the year. This offers an opportunity for the worship leaders and community to reflect on darkness and light in a literal sense. When the darkness feels overwhelming, we can take comfort in knowing that God meets us there. And, whether it is a seed in the soil, a baby in the womb, or Jesus in the tomb, we know that life comes out of the dark.

When planning the service, we recommend displaying candles at the front of your worship space and/or encouraging those watching from home to have a candle on hand.

SAMPLE



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Call to worship (John 1:1-5)

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
All things were made by God;
without God nothing came to be.
What came to be through God was life,
and this life was the light of the world.
The Light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never overcome it.

Hymn: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (Verses 1, 2, 4, 6, 7)

Responsive prayers

Gracious God, in this season of Advent, we give thanks
that you came to be among us:

Emmanuel, God with us.

You came into the darkness of that time:

a time of change and stress, uncertainty and doubt.

You did not enter this world surrounded by grand things.

You were born in a stable, to parents far from home.

O God, we pray for your presence here and now, in the
difficulties of our time.

**We lay before you our offerings of honesty and need, of
worry and hope.**

For all who are grieving, we pray:

**O Lord, you know what it means to lose someone you
dearly love.**

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