



A Blue Christmas Service holds space for those experiencing grief and loss during the holidays. While Advent, Christmas, and the New Year are known for their joy and cheer, many can find this time of year challenging when their hearts are

heavy with sorrow. This year, in particular, it seems like the whole world has been touched by a common loss. If you need refuge to tend to the loss and grief you might be feeling, this service is especially for you.

A video of this service will be shared on December 23, 2020 for those who have internet access. This is the printed version of that service. As ritual action we will light five candles together for our common losses and a sixth for any personal losses you might be feeling. If you happen to have candles available, you might get those out to light yourself as you read through our litany. If not, you can use the pictures below to help you imagine the glow of candlelight, dancing shadows, and flickering flame.

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A LITANY FOR LOSSES



During this time of the year, when daylight slips away early and the nights are long, we gather, mindful of the losses that have multiplied throughout the year.

As we look back at it all at once, we are in danger of being overwhelmed by the tragedies of 2020—sickness, pandemic, violence, fire, hurricane, earthquake, and more.

Our aim tonight is to acknowledge this, to mourn this, and to know that in all of this, there is the possibility of more light.

If we are to be overwhelmed, let it be that we are overwhelmed with the assurance that we are not alone.

We are able to do this because the longest night gives
way for ever-more-light
as the days now lengthen and we wait for the
springtime of new life. Monday, December 21 was the
longest night of the whole year. In Indianapolis, our
longest night is almost fifteen hours from sunset to the
next sunrise.

Our ancient ancestors saw this longest night and the
dawn of a day filled with just little more light as the
appropriate time to honor their lost loved ones.
It was this moment that symbolized most powerfully
that the path
to everlasting life is filled with the light of a new and
growing dawn.

Psalm 36:9 says, “Within You is the spring of life; in
your light, we see light.”

As we light these candles, though they are blue as
many of us feel,
the light is still there.

When we feel as if our light is dimmed,
we can rely on the Holy Light to continue to shine
until we ourselves shine bright once more.

We are not alone.

LOSS OF LIFE

We mourn this night the loss of life
And light our first candle.



For so many, the pandemic has taken loved ones.
We mourn the loss of those close to us and those
whose names we do not know.
We mourn those who perished while working to save
other lives. We mourn those who died, not of
pandemic, but of other causes. And we mourn the loss,
in many cases, of our ability to be with them as they
passed, our loss of gathering together for comfort in
the ways we needed so much.

This is our prayer...
We mourn this loss of life.
We honor and remember these beloveds.
We pray for comfort and peace. Amen.

LOSS OF LIVELIHOOD

We mourn this night the loss of livelihoods
And light our second candle.



For so many, the pandemic has taken the security of food, shelter, care for families, and medical care.

We mourn the loss of businesses that could not withstand the circumstances. These were not just businesses, but dreams born of passion and hard work. We mourn those who find themselves needing to rely on others for help when what they really want to do is to be able to help others.

This is our prayer...

We mourn this loss of livelihood.

We honor and remember the dreams now deferred.

We pray for sustenance and resilience. Amen.

LOSS OF LOVE

We mourn this night the loss of love
And light our third candle.



Our society's dilemma, centuries in the making, has created such hatred, suffering, oppression, and ill-will. We mourn the loss of those whose lives were lost to brutality and violence. We mourn the loss of our ability to love one another despite our differences, as beings who deserve to be seen for their inherent beauty and worth. We mourn that black and brown peoples have perished and suffered at the greatest proportion in the pandemic of coronavirus. We mourn the pandemic of racism that still plagues the fabric of our communities.

This is our prayer...

We mourn this loss of love. We honor and remember the work of prophets who proclaim justice.

We pray for compassion and change. Amen.

LOSS OF LIVELINESS

We mourn this night the loss of liveliness
And light our fourth candle.



For so many, this year has robbed us of our energy, our enthusiasm, and our sense of well-being. We mourn teachers and leaders and caregivers and workers who are struggling to help those in their care, themselves exhausted and needing the sustenance they give to others. We mourn the loss of all who are suffering with anxiety and depression, who are finding it difficult to live each day with fullness or to find hope for tomorrow. We mourn those we have lost to suicide.

We mourn those who find themselves addicted to substances in order to ease the pain that feels unbearable. We mourn those who are experiencing their place of shelter as an abusive place from which they struggle to escape.

This is our prayer...

We mourn this loss of liveliness. We honor and remember that each person is precious and whole. We pray for recovery and renewed vigor. Amen.

MORE LIGHT

And now we light a fifth candle.
Just as we will do later this week on Christmas Eve,
We light this as a sign of our belief...
We believe in the Light that has come and is coming.
We now light our fifth candle.



This light casts its glow on all the surrounding prayers we have prayed. This light resides within us, perhaps dim for a time, but always lit—an ember of the Holy inside us. This light reminds us that we are not alone.

If you have a candle at home, you're invited to light it prayerfully as you lift up the losses you have experience this year. Name them—aloud or in the quiet of your heart.

Blessings and peace to you, beloved ones.