

17<sup>th</sup> December 2020

## Blue

**“Blue, darkly, deeply, beautifully blue.”**

*Robert Southey, Madoc*

Today we pause on our Advent journey to take a moment to be aware of all those who struggle with bereavement. In recent times, memorial events for bereaved people have become more common in our churches. Offered at the beginning of Advent or close to Christmas, they're a sensitive recognition of the painfulness of loss for many in the "festive season" – people facing their first Christmas since the loss of a loved one, or another Christmas when "absent friends" figure highly in their thoughts.

Even with Covid restrictions, the whole world appears to be in festive mood. Coloured lights, glitzy television, sparkly trees, all part of our Christmas fun. Surrounded by all of this, how do people cope with grief?

The song *Blue Christmas*, written by Billy Hayes and Jay W. Johnson and sung, most famously, by Elvis Presley, contains these words:

*I'll have a blue Christmas without you.*

*I'll be so blue just thinking about you.*

*Decorations of red on a green Christmas tree*

*Won't be the same dear, if you're not here with me.*

Many churches offer *Blue Christmas Services*. And while we may be doing things differently around Christmas this year, the feelings of those who are bereaved will be no different from what they've always been. They will be the "darkly, deeply" blue of which the poet, Southey, wrote so well.

I supported two young women through the loss of their gran. They were uneasy that no one was talking about their grief as Christmas approached. So, in the middle of the Christmas meal, they called for quiet to take a moment to remember gran. They lit a candle and stood in silence. There were tears among the family, of course, but no complaints. Grief had been acknowledged. Loss had been named. Gran was with them all.

Take time to be aware of those who'll be facing a "blue Christmas" this year, as they remember those who have died. Name the loss and grief you're living with too. Light a candle in your heart, and remember ...

### **A prayer for today**

*Lord, amidst the blues and greys which might predominate for me, show me again the reds and greens of hope and love, and the light of your blessing. Amen*