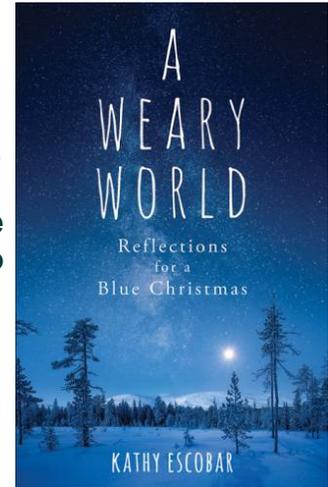


# Honoring our feelings of despair during the 'most wonderful time of the year'

New "Blue Christmas" devotional addresses grief and depression during Advent and Christmas

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LOUISVILLE - During the holidays, so many of us can suffer for all kinds of reasons. The magnitude of our weary world weighs on our hearts and minds. We wrestle with chronic pain, broken relationships, shattered dreams, fragile faith, and unexpected losses. Our grief and sorrow feel particularly acute when compared to the festivity and joy everyone else seems to be feeling. More and more churches are acknowledging this fact with "Blue Christmas" services (also called "Longest Night" services) and offering resources to give particular support and comfort to those struggling during the "most wonderful time of the year."



Kathy Escobar has been leading Blue Christmas experiences at her church for nearly a decade and just experienced her bluest season of all following the sudden death of her son. In her new devotional for Advent, "[A Weary World](#)," Escobar provides 28 daily reflections paired with prayers and practices to honor these struggles during the holidays. Divided into a four-week study and Christmas Eve section, chapters address honoring the reality of our situations, practicing honesty with ourselves, embracing the paradox of our feelings and the celebration of Jesus' birth, and borrowing hope for our darkest nights. Escobar includes a section for family and friends to help support suffering loved ones as well as a chapter for ministry leaders caring for those experiencing a Blue Christmas.

Our feelings of loss, isolation, grief, and loneliness may be especially acute as we continue to grapple with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. And since many churches have transitioned to virtual worship, digital resources have become more important than ever. To accompany the book, you can find free digital images designed to enhance small groups and worship services, adaptations for many of the practices to use for a virtual Blue Christmas worship service, and marketing materials to invite others to join at [wjkbooks.com/AWearyWorld](http://wjkbooks.com/AWearyWorld).

"A Weary World" is now available from [Westminster John Knox Press](http://WestminsterJohnKnoxPress.com).