

TIPS FOR PLANNING

Outdoor Worship in Winter



Yes, outdoor worship can happen in the winter! You may have heard the phrase, “There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing.” While there is truth to that, we also need to remember that not everyone has the means to own good outerwear for all conditions. And, there are simply some conditions that are too extreme in which to risk gathering. That said, once you’ve done a risk assessment, winter offers beauty and wisdom that make it well worth the extra effort to be out in the elements. We need winter’s lessons as much as any other season.

Risk Assessment

It is important to assess the safety of outdoor worship gatherings. Consider these winter variables to make your plans so as to not put participants into unreasonable risk.

- Temperature, windchill and precipitation.
- Ground conditions like ice or slush.
- Darkness or poor visibility.

How to Dress

If people are not accustomed to spending extended time outdoors in the wintertime, it is helpful to be explicit in offering tips on how to dress. Besides having a warm coat, these are helpful things to remember:

- Wear winter boots - footwear with insulation that will keep feet dry in snow.
- A toque or hood to keep your head warm.
- An extra layer on your legs - a base layer like long johns, and/or an outer layer like snow pants or wind pants.

Planning Tips

A few things you can do to make winter outdoor gatherings more comfortable:

- Choose a location that is sheltered from wind or precipitation (ie, among trees).
- Plan a shorter gathering and include movement or standing rather than sitting.
- Have some extra blankets on hand to offer people who maybe don’t have a warm enough coat or pants.
- Bring a thermos of tea or hot chocolate and have reusable mugs available.
- If your location allows, have a campfire to gather around.
- Finally, in case you do need to cancel, make sure participants know how it will be communicated.