

# REMEMBERING YOUR LOVED ONE DURING COVID-19



Since the outbreak of the coronavirus, funerals have been severely affected by social distancing rules, causing great emotional distress to families and friends. However, there are different ways to bring meaning and find solace in these difficult times.

Your situation may mean that you are unable to attend a funeral. Here we share our advice for remembering a loved one if you want to do something beyond watching a service via a webcast.

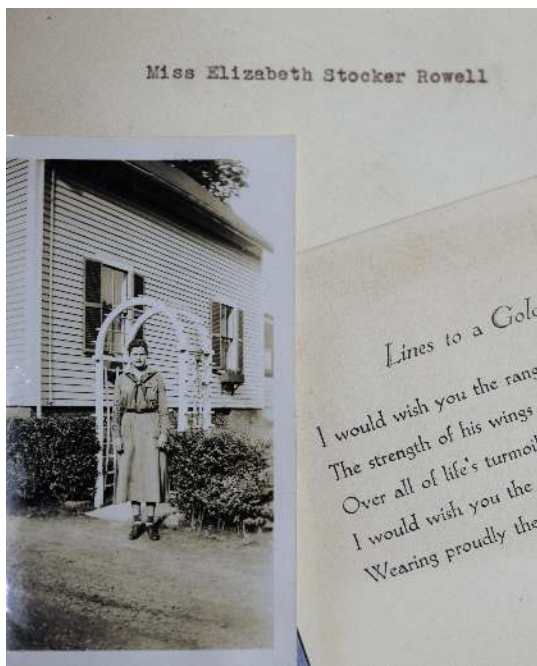
## BEFORE THE DAY OF THE FUNERAL

### Share the funeral details

Tell anyone who would ordinarily have attended the date, time and place of the funeral. This will enable them to mark the time in their own way wherever they are, which may help them in their grief and, knowing they are doing so, could be comforting to you. You could also tell them the music or readings that you have chosen so they can access them at home.

### Online tribute

Christophers' Family Funerals can set up a free online memorial page, which provides the opportunity to donate to a charity in memory of your loved one. The online tribute can be shared with friends and family and on social media. This can include pictures, personal memories, readings, poems and videos.



## SENTIMENTS

Christophers' Family Funerals can help by placing items in the coffin with your loved one. This could be a letter or card to the person who has died and include everything you would have liked to have said, but didn't have the time or a suitable opportunity to do so. Pictures of family or special occasions can be also placed in the coffin along with religious items or a cuddly toy.

If you are at home with children due to school closure and the funeral is for someone they have known and loved, the little ones might like to paint a picture that reminds them of the person. Not only is it really important to involve children to help them express their emotions and understand grief, but it may also bring a smile to your face.

Talking to family and friends will help you remember stories of the life of your loved one. Talk about them positively. You may not see them again, but they will live on with you by remembering them and treasuring special memories.

# THE DAY OF THE FUNERAL



## VIRTUAL SHARING OF THE SERVICE

### Webcasting at Crematoriums

It is possible to 'webcast' the service from all Devon crematoriums. The service is filmed and you would be able to provide login details to others so they could watch it live online or, for a limited period of time, after the service. This can be arranged up to 24 hours before the service. Crematoriums have reduced their usual charge for this service and some are offering it for free (please check with us first).

### Graveside Funerals and Other Venues

#### Live video call

For graveside funerals or other venues where webcasting isn't available perhaps someone can 'stream' it live on their phone or iPad/tablet, for example by using a video call on WhatsApp, FaceTime, Skype or Zoom.

#### Personal video

If your data connection or wi-fi signal isn't good enough for a live video call, consider filming it on your phone or video recorder to send to people later. Christophers' Family Funerals can help you with this so you don't have the pressure during the service. Check how much storage space you have left on your phone beforehand as videos use up quite a lot of space.

#### Voice call or audio recording

We can't account for how good the sound quality would be, but if no video options are possible, you could try making a phone call to someone and simply placing the phone as close as possible to where the minister/celebrant or family/friends will be speaking at the start of the service. Try using a voice recorder app to record the service or individual eulogies and readings that are given. Again, check your storage space.



## WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?

### Orders of service

These are not a requirement and do incur an extra cost, but if you choose to have them you could send copies to people who were unable to attend. In the current climate, it is best to avoid going to a shop to buy stamps. Christophers' can provide a copy as a PDF that can be emailed. If you want to have orders of service and need to keep costs down, consider whether it could just be a sheet of A4 rather than a booklet, or design and print them yourselves at home if you're able.

### Minister/Celebrant

Christophers' are very fortunate to work with some very helpful celebrants and ministers who will put together the exact wording of the funeral service. This can be sent to family and friends who are unable to attend to read along at the same time. They can also contact close family and friends to add stories, readings and poems that could be added to the service.

### Clothing

Why not let everyone, including those who are unable to attend to dress in a particular way, for example in your loved one's favourite colour. This could be another way of connecting to each other on the day.

# WHAT YOU CAN DO IF YOU CAN'T ATTEND THE FUNERAL OR IF A SERVICE ISN'T POSSIBLE

Confirm the date and the time of the cremation or burial with us.

If you live with other people, especially people who did not know the deceased, tell them what you are planning for that day and at what time so they know to give you some quiet and space.

Of course, if you wish, you could ask them to be with you for comfort and to have someone to talk to about the person who has died.

## Connect With Others

If you have contact with other friends or family who are also unable to attend, arrange a time to speak with them on the day. This could just be over the phone, or it could be a video call via WhatsApp, FaceTime, Skype or Zoom.

## If There is a Service

Tell those who will be attending what you have planned. It may bring comfort to them to know that other people are thinking of them and remembering the person who died. You could even send them photos to enable them to set up a table to display these along with other mementos.

If you are not in touch with anyone else who knew your loved one, make contact with someone to whom you are close who can listen to you talk about the person who has died and offer you comfort.

For those who feel comfortable with technology, you could even have a virtual service this way as all of these apps have group call options too, either with just audio or video. Some are available through a web browser on a laptop or computer and some need you to download an app on a phone. Be aware that some may have call time limits if using them for free, like Zoom which is 40 minutes.



## Where to Spend This Time...

Decide where in your home or garden you would like to be; somewhere you feel comfortable and best allows you to remember that person.

What's around you?

Make your environment as helpful as possible for remembering them. Maybe have a clean and a tidy up.

Where is your focus?

You may want to choose a spot to have as a focal point, like a table, to place any photos, mementos or candles. Get out objects that remind your loved one: it could be photos, letters, cards or gifts they gave you. The possibilities are endless.

What to wear?

Consider dressing as you would if you were going to the funeral to help you mark it as a specific moment, rather than any other day. You could dress in your loved one's favourite colour, rather than the traditional black. You could ask your family and friends who are also mourning to dress in this colour. This could be another way of connecting to each other on the day.

Some more ideas follow on the next page...

## FURTHER IDEAS FOR MARKING THE DAY OF THE FUNERAL SERVICE.

### Music

Choose something that they liked. If you don't own a particular, favourite piece of music and you have access to the internet you will probably be able to find it online – try Spotify or YouTube for free or buy it on iTunes. If they liked a particular radio programme or station you could play that instead.

### Write a eulogy or a letter

Eulogies are often delivered at funerals. Eulogy means 'high praise', and is the telling of someone's life: values, interests and personality. You can still write one and you can still share it. When writing it, think about what that person meant to you, what they contributed to your life and the lives of those around them, and memories of them from throughout their life; funny memories can be very welcome on such a difficult day. Alternatively, you could do all of this as a letter to the person who has died.

Share these by reading them out to people you live with or

over the phone / via video call or you could even just email it to other people who knew them. If it's a letter you may like to read it aloud to a photo of your loved one.

### Choose a reading

At funerals people often read poems, extracts of text or prayers that express how they feel, are reflective of the person who died or that meant something to them. You can still choose a reading and share it, in the same way as a eulogy or letter.

If you are not able to get a handwritten note to us, emailing it to us to print out is another option and will still mean your thoughts are with the person who has died.

Give yourself time and space to remember – you may not want to write something or to read out anything and that is absolutely fine. You can always just take some time to sit with your thoughts and memories, or even to talk to them in your head.

These are just some thoughts – you may think of others or have your own cultural rituals that you would like to follow. You must do whatever feels right for you – there are no rules.

### Bereavement Services

Free online bereavement services available:

SAIF Care Chat: [www.saif.org.uk](http://www.saif.org.uk)

Cruse Bereavement Charity: [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

Care for the Family: [www.careforthefamily.org.uk](http://www.careforthefamily.org.uk)

The Good Grief Trust: <https://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org/>

The NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Bereavement%20support/LocationSearch/314>

The Government: <https://www.gov.uk/bereavement-support-payment>

## AFTER THE FUNERAL

### Connect with others

After the service, consider contacting people who haven't been able to attend so you can share the experience and memories of the person who has died. It may be difficult emotionally to speak to lots of people so you could also use email, including sharing the eulogies and readings that were given.

### Hold a virtual wake

Gather a selection of friends via Zoom, Skype, or WhatsApp. Have a glass of something ready to raise a toast. To help break the ice with people who might not be used to talking on video apps, ask everyone to think of something that reminds them of your loved one before the call. It could be a memory of an occasion, something they said, or what you liked about them.

### Memorial Service/Ashes Ceremony

Even if you do have a small service now, there are no rules on when a memorial service can be held – this could happen at any point in the future, when restrictions have been lifted and could be a way for everyone to come together and share their memories. It may even feel more fitting to you to remember them at a more positive time.

There are no rules on when or where a memorial service can be held – this could happen at any point in the future, when restrictions have been lifted and could be a way for everyone who knew the deceased to come together and share their memories. It may even feel more fitting to you to remember them at a more positive time. Christophers' can help with arranging the venue, an order of service, flowers, music, taking names of attendance and the interment or scattering of the ashes.