



People’s Handbook to Creating End-of-Life & Funeral Ceremonies for 2020 and Beyond

In these challenging times, the emotional nature of a death has been compounded by the separation from those we love, and the adjustments required for public health. The number of decisions and plans to be made during a pandemic like Covid-19 often leave us uncertain and confused to know what to do, what our options are, and who to go to for needed help and guidance in the midst of preparing for a remembrance or memorial for our deceased.

“For a society to be healthy, people must significantly mark the milestones in life through ceremony and ritual.”
– Carl Jung, Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist

Since the beginning of time our human spirit has hungered for meaning and community as a resilient species, we are both imaginative and adaptive - and will continue to be. During these trying times we are experiencing now we offer these resources in this free handbook that brings attention to a new breed of end-of-life ceremonies that has emerged that can be both creative and traditional, and are providing comfort and connection for many people. The Celebrant Foundation & Institute (CF&I a non-profit educational organization) certified Funeral Celebrants are honored to share their professional knowledge and experience to assist those of us who need this heartfelt and much needed end-of-life expert guidance. – Celebrant Foundation & Institute

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I. Introduction from Charlotte Eulette, International Director, CF&I

“To people everywhere, the Celebrant Foundation & Institute offers this **People’s Handbook to Creating End-of-Life & Funeral Ceremonies for 2020 and beyond**. This handbook is provided for all to use and share freely. We believe it is vital to help people understand the choices you have for funerals and all end-of- life ceremonies, especially during this worldwide Covid-19 crisis and into the future.

I am Charlotte Eulette, the international director of the Celebrant Foundation & Institute (CF&I) at celebrantinstitute.org. CF&I is proud to deliver this handbook and guide to all.

Our International CF&I Celebrants have gathered their experiences along with their many years of collective wisdom and professional knowledge, to create this timely and thoughtful resource for everyone to have and use.

Whether you are envisioning a: memorial, funeral, interment of the ashes, private viewing, green burial, commemoration garden, unveiling of the stone, living funeral or a streaming online remembrance service, there are expert, professional, certified Life-Cycle Funeral Celebrants in your area for you to talk to about your plans and your options and to engage their services. Certified Life-Cycle Celebrants® are highly qualified, warm, caring, and ready to help you with all end-of-life ceremonies. The Celebrant Foundation & Institute has been training and certifying Celebrants for decades. We invite you to learn more about us at CF&I, and when you decide you need assistance for an end-of-life ceremony, our org is available to put you in touch with a Celebrant or Celebrants that can help you. To learn more about the Celebrant Foundation & Institute please visit us at: www.celebrantinstitute.org."

"Certified Life-Cycle Celebrants are the front-line workers of important moments. Our business is to identify and acknowledge the ordinary and extraordinary moments in our lives, to create rituals and mark the milestones and important times in life where none existed. Celebrants are the ones who acknowledge the elephant-in-the-room, and also produce the rabbit from the hat."

"Power lives in the act of acknowledgement. The act of adding celebration to acknowledgment leaves an indelible mark on the human heart, whether it's a family gathering via video call to celebrate a life well-lived, any of us donning a facemask, two people joining forever in love, strangers taking a knee, or coming together to share support." – Christopher Frost Shelley, New York & Ohio certified Life-Cycle Celebrant and Faculty member

II. The Value of Funerals and End-of-Life Ceremonies

Funerals and memorials come in many different forms. They can be simple, informal, private, intimate, large, elaborate, in a formal location, outside, on the banks of river, on the top of a mountain. There is no longer a standard prescribed "right way" or "wrong way" to honor our departed loved ones.

Funeral and end of life ceremonies can follow tradition, or they personalized and contemporary- or a blend of both. Regardless of what kind of ceremony you choose, these services serve very real and important human needs.

They Help Us Celebrate a Life

As humans, we identify big chapters in our lives with ceremonies. It is part of our human experience for thousands of years. We celebrate the birth or arrival of a child, we celebrate birthdays. We commemorate the union of two people with elaborate wedding celebrations. And with funerals, we celebrate the life and impact a loved one had on our lives. Every life has a story. Every story deserves to be told. And a funeral is where that happens. A funeral is a chance to acknowledge a life and legacy. It's a chance to show how a person mattered and recognize the impact their life has had on others.

Tawnya Musser: Founder of Dear Departures, is a Home Funeral Guide and End-of-Life Doula as well as a certified Life-Cycle Celebrant®. She works with families that are already stepping outside the norm of how we do death. The ceremonies her families seek are no exception. She says *"They want candor. They want truth. They want ritual. They want to laugh through the tears."*

Tawnya shares her thoughts in her article *"Celebrant Ceremonies in a Time of Crisis"*, excerpt: *"There seems to be an air of "you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone" around remembrance ceremonies and memorial gathering. In a day and age where we hear more and more people saying, "I don't want a funeral," and, "I hate funerals," now that so many have had their ability to be with their dead or gather in community taken from them (because of the nature of Covid-19), the value in being able to do so is now all too apparent. Funerals are for the living. People are realizing even more how important meaningful end-of -life remembrance ceremonies are."*

They Help Us Connect to Our Circle of Family and Community

"It's in our DNA to grieve together, and it persists because it works – because it helps." said **Chaplain Zac Willette of Minnesota** in an article from 'The Globe and Mail-Canada' by Eric Andrew-Gee

Funerals are not just about the deceased. They also very much for the living. When we share a life story at a funeral, whether through photos, tribute videos, toasts, or simply chatting about our favorite memories, we find meaning in our loss. A funeral helps open us up to new perspectives and shows us the purpose our loved one had during their time with us.

Noted author, educator, and psychologist **Dr. Alan Wolfelt**, provides the following insight on the value of the funeral ritual:

"Rituals are symbolic activities that help us, together with our families and friends, express our deepest thoughts and feelings about life's most important events. The funeral ritual... is a public, traditional, and symbolic means of expressing our beliefs, thoughts, and feelings about the death of someone loved. Rich in history and rife with symbolism, the funeral ceremony helps us acknowledge the reality of the death, gives

testimony to the life of the deceased, encourages the expression of grief in a way consistent with the culture's values, provides support to mourners, allows for the embracing of faith and beliefs about life and death, and offers continuity and hope for the living."

You can read his entire article about the impact of Covid-19 and the importance of funerals here: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-its-in-our-dna-to-grieve-together-families-in-emotional-limbo-as/>

Funerals Help Us with the Transition and Acceptance of Loss

In her book "Remembering Well" **Sarah York**, a Unitarian Universalist Minister who served her congregation for 31 years wrote that a meaningful funeral helped people "*feel that they were able to begin letting go of the person who died. They were able to say good-bye and keep something of the person's essence in their heart*".

Linnea Crowther, senior writer at Legacy.com (the 2017 'Obituary Writer of the Year' by the Society of Professional Obituary Writers). Linnea has been quoted by media outlets including CNN and The New York Times. She has written an excellent article about the way funerals-

- help us accept the reality of death
- give us a place to express our grief
- connect us with our support network
- offer us an opportunity to say goodbye
- let us honor and remember a life
- provide us with an opening to reflect on life and death

Read her entire article here: <https://www.legacy.com/advice/why-we-need-funerals/>

In understanding the value of end of life ceremony, even in the midst of a gripping pandemic, there are alternatives and modifications that can be made to allow the bereaved to be supported.

III. End-of-Life Ceremony Options for All Phases of a Pandemic

1. Ceremonies at a Funeral Home or Other Death Care Facility During Social Distancing:

While large group funerals may not be possible in many locations, there may be opportunities for smaller gatherings (where they are allowed). **Funeral and Master Life-Cycle Celebrant®**, **Diane Gansauer** at **Dignity Memorial Funeral Homes in Colorado** tells us: "*In recent months, to limit the spread of the coronavirus, most states and provinces in North American have imposed limits on the size of gatherings. Those limits have*

impacted funerals and resulted in the need to accommodate much smaller funeral gatherings. At the funeral locations where my team of celebrants and I have been working, most of the ceremonies we have done have been at graveside or in a mausoleum, for close family members to attend. These have been intimate gatherings, where we tell the life story of their loved one and honor the individual with appropriate readings, music, prayers, if that suits the individual and the family's wishes, and ritual – such as lighting candles together, placing flowers with the urn, eulogies and tributes, or other rituals unique and fitting to the person being honored. In this way, the family is able to honor their loved one and support their grief in a timely manner. Sometimes we compose a ceremony now for a service they may choose to hold a larger memorial outside or at a later date when social distancing limits are safely expanded. We can also integrate words or rituals from the smaller service into a larger more public service later, which creates continuity between the time of the immediate loss and the stages of grief at a later time.”

2. Holding a Private Viewing, Family Only or an Informal Ceremony or Ritual Service at a Funeral Home:

Diane Gansauer shares, “Whether a funeral service will be held or not, I have also met with many families at the time when they come to view their loved one for the last time. That is a very tender moment, made all the more poignant because in many cases no family member was permitted to be at the loved one's side when he or she was dying. This is so very sad! I have been very grateful to greet the family members when they come see their loved one, offer my condolences, explain what the viewing will be like, answer questions, and to honor that moment by being deeply present to their needs. Very often this time together has included reflections on the individual's life, and a poem or prayer of thanks for their time among us. I have seen tremendous relief and peace come over people at that difficult moment, by the simple gift of time with their loved one's body, being accompanied in their grief, and having the opportunity to respectfully say farewell. Funeral celebrants accompany families; we should never under-estimate the value of that.”

Elisa Chase, Master certified Life-Cycle Celebrant®, **and The Celebrant Foundation and Institute's Academic Director** tells us, “There are many meaningful ways to honor your loved one-during this crisis and as we go forward. Grief is unique, loss is personal as well as communal and that is why you do not ever have to take a one-size fits all approach to an end of life service, anytime.

If a private viewing is your choice or the only chance you have to be with your loved ones earthly remains, you can ask the Funeral Home if they have a resident Celebrant who can help you honor your loved one during your private viewing, OR if they do not offer that service, you can request extra time for the viewing in order to have some sacred time and space. Discuss your desire to have more than a few brief minutes and instead ask for 30 minutes alone with your loved one. In these moments, consider

reading a poem or prayer, sharing your favorite memories, or compose a life story eulogy that can be read. Consider retaining help from a certified Life-Cycle Celebrant® who can work with you to compose any part of a ceremony or a small ritual that will fit the time and space of a private viewing that you can manage on your own. Celebrants support our clients in many ways. We are not limited to serving only when a fully composed public service is required. We are flexible and can meet your needs and assist, even if the Celebrant will not be needed during the actual ceremony. Along with a private viewing, you might choose to hold a public or group service at a later time. A certified Life-Cycle Celebrant® can work with you to support a meaningful experience both personally and can carry over those feelings and experiences into a fully composed ceremony at a time when it is safe or logistically feasible to come together in a group. “

Elisa Chase shares the experience of the private viewing for her brother: “When my brother died, he lived 900 miles from us. It was my honor and job to escort my Mom to see her son. He did not want a formal service. But we arranged for my Mom, my sister and brother in law and me to have a private viewing. As a Celebrant, I wanted my family to have space to express their grief and to say goodbye in the presence of his body since we had not seen him in close to a year. We called the Funeral Home requested to spend some time with his body. They were more than accommodating. When we arrived, they had draped him in a hand crocheted blanket someone provided at the Funeral Home. I did not prepare anything formal because there was no time, but I did hold space for my Mom, and my sister and I asked them: What do you love most about John, what are your favorite memories, what will you take into the rest of your life from the years we had together, would you like to say goodbye out loud?” We are not a religious family, so these secular questions fit us. If my family were religious, I might have offered a prayer, or asked about how our faith would help us manage our grief. This small informal “ceremony” was deeply meaningful to my family and helped us articulate our loss, feel less isolated and to know we had honored my brother and made sure our love went with him to the great beyond.”

3. Live-Streaming or Recording a Ceremony in a Funeral Home or Other Death Care Facility:

CF&I Master certified Life-Cycle Celebrant®, **Diane Gansauer** states, “Because families are isolated and are often in distant locations from each other, it has become common for a small ceremony attended by close family members to be live-streamed to family and friends who can't be there. Celebrants take these special situations into consideration when they plan the ceremony staging, for example, and acknowledge the people who are in attendance on-line rather than in person. Sometimes those who are attending from a distance can still see each other, light candles together, and even say a few words during the ceremony, which helps everyone to feel like they are

united in the intent of the gathering.” Many funeral homes have invested in Live-Streaming and or recording services. At most funeral homes with this technology, they can even offer to live-stream the services with a limited number of people in attendance, or to everyone without any family or friends physically present with the celebrant –where everyone is on-line. This option works during the strictest of quarantine where only the Celebrant can be in the Funeral Home OR even when the Celebrant is being livestreamed from their own home. “Feeling the warm and personal connection with people can be more challenging for but most certainly it is better than having no gathering at all. Connecting via WebEx, Zoom, Facebook Live or other options make it possible to honor a life in a virtual setting when getting together in person is impossible. The Celebrant will do their professional best to reach out to those online and make them feel truly connected to the ceremony and the honoring of their loved one. While many people initially expressed doubt about technology and the feelings of being impersonal, a large proportion of people who have attended an online end of life ceremony expressed how valuable, honorable, and meaningful the experience was overall. Much more than not having any kind of service”

4. Creating A Funeral Without a Funeral Home- at a location of your choice, or totally virtual:

Elisa Chase adds: *“There are two different models for virtual or live-streamed funerals. One involves the Funeral Homes ability to offer live-streaming, or their willingness to allow the family or someone hired by the family to record or stream the service. The second option is for the family/bereaved to plan and stream the ceremony on their own, without the assistance of a Funeral Home. This may be because the Funeral Home does not have the capacity, or the technology to live-stream, or it may be during times of strict quarantine where no one is allowed to enter an end of life care facility. And, even before the pandemic, some people are moving toward self-managed end of life service when traditional services do not meet their needs and where personalization, ritualization and the honoring of their loved ones life story has deep value to them. In all of these cases, Professional Funeral Celebrants play a HUGE role in helping bring a Zoom, webex, Facebook Live, or livestreamed Funeral together”.*

Technology platforms to livestream a Funeral for your loved one:

There are several different platforms that you can choose from for a virtual ceremony—Google Hangout, Facebook Live, Instagram Live, and Zoom. **Zoom** has been the most popular video conferencing tool during the pandemic because it's free, it's easy to use and it has the ability to show not just the person speaking, but it also shows the faces of each person who is logged into the webinar so everyone can see each other and the ceremony can be recorded. Currently, Zoom offers a free account for webinars that last up to 40 minutes, however, for \$20.00 the host account can manage calls for any amount of time. Not having to worry that the call will end before you are ready is often worth the \$20.00. Note that pricing from these providers can change.

Managing the Technology:

- It helps to ask everyone to mute themselves, or to get familiar with the MUTE ALL function in whatever platform you decide to use.
- If you are using Zoom, you can also use the "spotlight feature". By using Spotlight, the main view that each participant see's will be of the face of the person speaking, and everyone else's faces will appear smaller and to the side. This will help people focus on the words and the story.
- You may want to ask a tech savvy friend or family member to be the Zoom/conference HOST on your behalf and have them record the ceremony call so you can send it to others who could not attend, or watch it again in the future if you desire.
- Create an outline of the ceremony, who is speaking and a cue sheet so whoever is managing the call knows what is coming next. This is another place where using a certified Life-Cycle Celebrants® can be extremely helpful. All certified Life-Cycle Celebrants® write and compose unique and personal ceremonies with intimate input from their clients. Then we send a copy of the full ceremony to our client honorees in advance of the ceremony. We also prepare cue sheets that the webinar host can use to follow along and manage the technical requirements. This is all part of the service we provide. This takes a huge burden off the bereaved.

Other details for planning a Live-streamed Funeral:

- It can be extremely helpful to retain the services of a certified Life-Cycle Celebrant® who can work with your remotely or in your own town to compose a meaningful personal ceremony. Celebrants focus on writing ceremonies that embrace the unique experience and life story of each clients. They will help you find readings, music, rituals, and words to commemorate your loved one. They will include anyone you in the planning and their priority will always be to express you and your loved one's beliefs and perspectives. They will craft a ceremony that is written uniquely for you. They will confer with you, and ensure you are comfortable with the final ceremony. They will draft cue sheets if needed and can explain the ceremony flow to anyone who is running the webinar.
- Ask someone who is outside the immediate family and friends to run the webinar for you. It would be excellent if this person is familiar with webinars or technology in general. If you do not know someone who can fill this role, there are companies and individuals who can run the technology for you. These services range from low cost solutions for the hosting to more elaborate vendors who will also offer the creation of audio and visual resources like slide shows, background music and more.
- You will need to communicate the details of the time and technical requirements for the ceremony in advance, this can be in the form of a formal invitation, a social media post, email etc.

- Depending on the type of streaming technology you choose to use, you may be able to create a slide show of favorite picture by using electronic pictures, pictures from various social media feeds, pictures that you use a printer to scan into electronic format. PowerPoint, Microsoft Word, Adobe Acrobat or Publisher are all options to create a beautiful slide show that can be shared, or even a simple picture of your loved one that can be displayed at the beginning or end of the ceremony.
- Consider sending everyone easy instructions for how to mute themselves so background noise is minimized. You can even make a document in any word processing program that contains the information on HOW to MUTE and UNMUTE, and the etiquette you would like followed for any "Chat" features that are enabled in your technology application of choice. This can be shared at the very beginning of the call when folks are first arriving and dialing in.
- Record the ceremony. The recording can be sent to loved ones who could not attend, and it can be a saved treasured memory.
- Open the webinar at least 15 minutes before the ceremony is to begin, or earlier. Often you will be connecting with people you have not seen in some time and sometimes people need a few moments to simply say hello to each other and appreciate seeing each other's faces. If you are recording the ceremony, you may want to start the recording at the beginning of the formal service rather than during this pre-able chat.
- Consider doing a walk through of the ceremony with your Celebrant in advance of the actual ceremony so you can organize speakers, slides being shown and other important details.

5. Other Options for Services- in times of social distancing

- **Memorial Drive By:** When being gathered in groups is not allowed, friends and family can stay in the safety of their cars and drive through the Funeral Home parking area, a park, cemetery, or mausoleum is a safe way to honor the deceased and show support to the bereaved. Depending on the level of risk, this might include the ability to lower windows and express condolences from a safe distance or with the use of face masks. Coordination of this kind of event may include the Funeral Director if you are hoping to use their facility such as a parking lot. If you are creating the ceremony without a funeral home, you may need to contact public health, and law enforcement if traffic or crowd control is a concern, but for smaller community gatherings this can be easily accommodated with a minimum of coordination.
 - **Memorial Drive by Options and Ideas:** If you are having a memorial drive by, you can consider (weather permitting or with the use of a tent or shade) creating a memorial table for your departed that holds items of nostalgia. You can print signs or enlarge photographs much like we have seen people do with virtual Graduation events. If you are having a drive

by at the home of the deceased or their loved ones, consider having chairs set up outside a safe distance from the road but close enough to see the faces of your loved ones as they drive by. This can also be accomplished in a park or parking lot (again with the permission and or assistance of local law enforcement or your Parks Department)

- **Outdoor ceremonies from a distance, in or out of vehicles:** Some Funeral Homes have invested in sound systems that allow a ceremony to be held outdoors while people stay in their cars. This works well in many areas of the country where small distanced gatherings are allowed. Some Funeral Homes even have large projector screens and lovely outdoor gardens. Some certified Life-Cycle Celebrants® have small portable sound systems that may work for smaller gatherings. You may also be able to rent sound systems if your local rental vendors are open.
- **Strict Lock Down alternative-Automobile “Line of Honor”:** In areas of high or rising infections where strict quarantines may be implemented, loved ones can park their cars along the road of the cemetery and remain in their vehicle with windows closed. While this is a very distanced option, the impact of seeing dozens of cars parked silently is a way to show community and family support in a time when we do not see each other as often as we usually do. This request needs to be coordinated with the Funeral Home and the cemetery/mausoleum.
- **Outdoor ceremonies using social distancing as locations are re-opening:** When you are able to gather in groups outside, there are many outdoor public or private spaces that can be used for free, low cost or more where an ceremony or memorial can be held outside for groups of any size depending on the regulations in place. Always check the guidelines in your area and follow every rule for safety. Funerals were “super spreader” events during the early days of the pandemic. Rules about distancing, masks, singing and more are all in place to protect the people you love the most.
- **Social Media Condolence “Books” or Memorial Pages:** If your family and community are users of Social Media, you can also set up a Facebook Memorial Page that included the details for your event, or an Instagram account specifically for pictures that honor and memorialize your loved one. These pages are separate from the person page the deceased may have set up. By setting up a separate Social Media presence for the purpose of memorializing your loved one, people can use these pages like an online Condolence Book and can even post into the future when special days arise or they have feelings, memories or thoughts to share with the community of people who have lost someone they love.

Certified Life-Cycle Celebrants® are professionals who are trained to act as both an advocate for their bereaved families, but also as part of the unified team of people who come together to honor the life and death of your loved one. A certified Life-

Cycle Celebrant® can help by understanding a family's needs or desires, and opening conversations with the Funeral or Cemetery directors in order to determine the feasibility of these kinds of distanced tributes.

6. The Value of certified Life-Cycle Celebrants® For End of Life

Ceremonies-for group gathering or livestreamed ceremonies

Honor Yourself, take this time to grieve, be in the moment, engage a Celebrant. **Diane Gansauer** has been helping families and loved ones for many years at Dignity Memorial Funeral Home in Denver, CO. She says, "Grief should not be an isolated process. It should involve coming together. Those grieving should be accompanied. And truly, they should lean on a guide rather than trying to make this gathering a do-it-yourself moment. Please do not make the funeral a completely DIY (do it yourself) experience, no matter how competent you are in other parts of your life. Give yourself a break to be there for your own grief and to be with those you love. Lean on ceremony professionals who can help you begin the steps of grieving with a beautiful ceremony honoring your loved one. Step back and take care of yourself. One of the ways to do that is to let others step forward and accompany you. Use a certified Life-Cycle Celebrant®."

You can expect a certified Funeral Celebrant to work together with you to create an authentic, personal, and meaningful ceremony. You may want them to craft a ceremony that they hand to you, or to craft a ceremony they will preside over in the location and/or manner you choose - with respect to your regions social distancing regulations. Celebrants aim to please; they do much of the heavy lifting when co-creating the ceremony with and for their client honorees. The Celebrant you choose will talk in depth with you to understand the vision you have for the ceremony and they will speak with family and loved ones of the deceased who the client wishes the Celebrant to interview, as part of the preliminary ceremony intake writing process. If you are religious but separated from your spiritual community because of Covid-19, certified Life-Cycle Celebrants will work with you to include appropriate reflections of your beliefs. While most Celebrants are not ordained clergy, they are trained in a variety of customs. They will never try to fulfill the role of an ordained clergy or spiritual leader, but there are many ways to honor your perspectives. Your Celebrant can contact other members of your community if you would like their input to the ceremony, regardless of their location. If you are working with a Funeral Home or death care facility, your Celebrant will work as part of the team to ensure everyone's needs are accounted for, and that the seamless fit into the process. Also, professional funeral Celebrants can help with decisions to include participants, speeches, readings, poetry, music, and traditional or homegrown rituals. A Celebrant's goal is to assist their clients so the client and bereaved can fully focus on their grief and other logistical details that also *need attending to*.

A certified Life-Cycle Funeral Celebrant's mission is to create a ceremony with and for you that reflects the wishes, beliefs, cultural background, and values whether religious or non-religious. You, as the client honoree, have complete choice of and final approval over the ceremony. (**Excerpt from the CF&I Funeral Ceremony Webpage-** <http://www.celebrantinstitute.org/funeralso-memorials.html>)

Certified Life-Cycle Celebrants are flexible and able to meet a variety of needs, from helping write a eulogy, to crafting simple rituals or writing your ceremony from start to finish. They are highly trained in public speaking and can work with you to officiate in person, or live-streamed to groups of any size. They can help craft a program for private ceremonies where the Celebrant is not going to be in attendance. The fee for service will depend on the unique needs of each family. With a certified Life-Cycle Celebrant® you are in the best of hands. Each Celebrant will take time to understand your needs, discuss options and provide you a fee for their service in a caring manner.

*"Because the opportunities to connect may be limited due to shelter-in-place orders and general health precautions due to the present crisis, I believe it is more important than ever for an end-of-life tribute fits and honors the deceased. A custom-tailored ceremony that tells a person's story -- reflects the deceased from womb to tomb -- should help mourners leave the celebration of life feeling that it was a powerful tribute. This is what certified Life-Cycle Celebrants® for the Celebrant Foundation & Institute strive for, every time." - **Master certified Life-Cycle Celebrant, Kim Kirkley***

7. Locating a certified Life-Cycle Celebrant®:

If you are currently under a "shelter-in-place" order, the location of your Celebrant may not be relevant since you will be working remotely through calls or webinars. If you have the ability to meet safely, or to gather in small groups, or would like to have your Celebrant available to you when it is safe once again to gather in person, it's best to choose a Celebrant that is near your location. You can search for certified Life-Cycle Celebrants® here: <http://www.celebrantinstitute.org/choose-a-celebrant.php>

8. The Future of Funerals and End of Life Ceremonies: Beyond Covid-19

Diane Gansauer tells us, *"Live-streaming and/or recording services for family and friends to watch live or later will be much more common in the future. Almost every ceremony that occurs right now has integrated live-streaming or recording, because it's been so very needed. Now that it is here, I do not see this stopping. I think people will take this as a practical measure to protect the safety of elderly family members especially, and a way to give everyone a chance to "be there" for the ceremony when travel is difficult or impractical in general, not just during quarantine.*

But most importantly, I see families returning to ceremonies of some kind. They have felt the pain of isolation from their loved ones, often not being permitted to be at bedside in a hospital or nursing home when their loved one was dying. Then in some cases, for their own safety, they were not allowed to travel or to be with their loved one's body after death. They may have had a small service, or private viewing, and missed the opportunity to share and be supported by community. Such isolation has added enormously to the grief that families have endured in recent months. They are hungry to be with loved ones and embrace each other. They are saddened to have lost these opportunities recently, and I think that in the future, they will remember how much that hurt and will want to gather when another loved one passes from their presence. Perhaps the experience of a death during a pandemic has heightened our realization that gathering and honoring life, in all its unique manifestations, is so especially important."

Tawnya Musser certified Life-Cycle Celebrant® says, "A family may choose to do something small at the funeral home and still have a virtual ceremony open to the community at large in addition to their smaller in-person gathering. I predict we will see more hybrid ceremonies, where in-person gathering, hugs, and touch are the cornerstones when they are safe and within pandemic guidelines, but where technology is incorporated more than it ever was before, in large part to be more inclusive to those who can't attend in person."

Elisa Chase, Master Life-Cycle Celebrant® and Director at the Celebrant Foundation and Institute states, "I believe 2021 will bring rise to the concept of a Memorial Service and open up other opportunities to have larger group and community honoring of our deceased loved ones as we recover from the pandemic and shift toward a new "normal". I have already been contacted by families asking about Memorial Services on the anniversary of the death of their family member since they have not been able to have a public service this year. I believe there will be opportunities to "Unveil or Dedicate the Head Stone" or Memorial Plaques or family altars. Community tragedies have a long history of needing opportunities for group mourning and honoring's. Like the ceremonies that take place to honor 9/11, The Columbine and Newtown tragedies here in the US and other memorial events, I believe we will need to mark the milestones of impact Covid has had on our world when it becomes safe to do so, personally and in groups and communities." At the Celebrant Foundation, we are actively adding resources and education around these kinds of ceremonies to our courses and our training materials and ongoing educational efforts. We are ready to help families and communities."

Kim Kirkley, Master Life-Cycle Celebrant® adds: "For the most part, all family and friends may not be able to gather in person, but we can virtually touch, heart to heart, and connect. I have found live-streaming to be extremely beneficial in this time of decreased travel, and unpredictable rolling quarantines, because mourners can see

each other, and the with Zoom for instance, the chat feature allows loved ones to connect directly. At my aunt's funeral that took place live-streamed on Zoom, I saw cousins I had not seen in 30 years. It was a gift to see them, recognize the shared love and grief and chat with them. It was not the same as being together, but in a way it brought more of us together than we would have been able to include in person even before Covid-19"

Appendix 1 – Evolving Choices for End of Life Ceremony-An interview with sevenponds.com

Charlotte Eulette CF&I Int'l Dir and CF&I Board Member Dorry Bless interviewed Suzette Sherman, Founder of SevenPonds (www.sevenponds.com). SevenPonds promotes a healthy attitude towards the process of death by encouraging a meaningful experience that is in harmony with the environment. They are a contemporary resource for those who wish to celebrate memory and personalize the end-of-life. At SevenPonds, they believe that cremation and natural burial are the new end of life tradition.

Excerpt of this great article can be found here:

Part 1: <https://blog.sevenponds.com/professional-advice/an-interview-with-charlotte-eulette-and-dorry-bless-pt-1>

Part 2: <https://blog.sevenponds.com/professional-advice/an-interview-with-charlotte-eulette-and-dorry-bless-part-2>

Appendix 2: About the Celebrant Foundation & Institute ®

The Celebrant Foundation & Institute (CF&I) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization incorporated in New Jersey. CF&I is dedicated to the education, on line training and certification of professional officiants known and registered as certified Life-Cycle Celebrants®. Celebrant Foundation & Institute was founded in 2001 and headquarters are in Montclair, New Jersey, and on line at www.celebrantinstitute.org.

What is a Celebrant: Certified Life-Cycle Celebrants® are educated and trained by the Celebrant Foundation & Institute to serve their community via personalized ceremonies, including the following life milestones for individuals, couples, families and communities: weddings, coupling and partnering ceremonies, renewal of vows, coming of age/rites of passages, baby welcoming's/namings/blessings, adoptions, elder-wisdom/sage, memorials and end-of-life celebrations, living funerals, memorials, retirements, healing and transition ceremonies, divorce/uncoupling ceremonies, work related ceremonies, seasonal/nature based and community ceremonies.

Certified Life-Cycle Celebrants® are professional ceremony officiants who co-create (with their client honoree(s)) personalized ceremonies and rituals to serve the needs of society and the individual. The celebrant and their client(s) collaborate to create one-of-a-kind ceremonies that reflect the clients' beliefs, philosophy of life and personalities, not the Celebrant's. The ceremonies belongs to the honoree and a copy is given to the client as part of their personal legacy and history.

The need for Celebrants in Society: Celebrancy answers the call to the increasing need of people throughout the world who come from diverse cultures, beliefs and backgrounds who wish to have a ceremony that expresses who they are at the very core whether they are religious or not, performed by professionally trained certified Life-Cycle Celebrants. The Pew Research Studies year after year show that a growing population of people worldwide, 70% of or more, state that they are not connected to a religion; many belong to an interfaith or non-religious people community and/or they do not consider themselves as religious. This demographic seeks and relies on certified Celebrants to mark the milestones in their lives in a genuine way.

CF&I Mission: CF&I's mission is to pioneer the widespread use of relevant, customized ceremonies to honor the fullness of the human experience across the lifecycle. CF&I seeks to increase opportunities to affirm and celebrate milestones and transitions for people from all walks of life through the training, certification, and ongoing support of professionally certified Life-Cycle Celebrants®, and by providing public education, outreach, and advocacy.

CF&I Celebrant Certification Training and Education: The Celebrant Foundation & Institute offers educational programs taught via live, real time, web-based classes. Individuals looking for a change in career either as an independent, full-time, or part-time job have taken courses at the Celebrant Foundation in the pursuit of starting a career as a certified Life-Cycle Celebrant®. Celebrant students follow the CF&I interdisciplinary, Jungian-based education program that focuses on the history and art of ceremony, ritual, rite of passage and world religions and cultural traditions, public speaking, ceremony writing and presentation and business[3] via live, distance learning, online)classes taught by CF&I faculty. The certificate courses are: Wedding Celebrancy, Funeral/End of Life Celebrancy and Ceremonies Across the Life Cycle Celebrancy, Healings and Transitions - and an advanced course: Master of Celebrancy. Following graduation, Celebrant trained students through the Celebrant Foundation & Institute become certified and earn the registered title of certified Life-Cycle Celebrant®.

Certified Celebrant Occupation/Profession: Celebrancy is a growing occupation worldwide. It originated in the 1960's in Australia and New Zealand and later took hold in the United States, Mexico, Canada, Caribbean, Europe, Malaysia, Africa and Asia. The Celebrant profession has been reported as a top "Encore Career" by CNN and Money Magazine, and a "best job" in Parade Magazine and other media for those over 40 who wish to have a fulfilling career that is both meaningful and viable. In United States, in 2014 the state of New Jersey became the first state to pass the law

that includes certified "Civil Celebrants" to legally perform weddings. Presently, the law is in the process of being passed and included into different state's marriage acts throughout the US.

Who Becomes a Celebrant: As a retirement career, supplement career or change of career, the CF&I offers training to become a professional ritual maker and ceremony specialist called a: certified Life-Cycle Celebrant®. The Celebrant career attracts both women and men, mostly 40 years of age and older, who enjoy and are proficient at: writing, public speaking, business and are open to creating and officiating or presiding over ceremonies for people from all walks of life. Many Celebrant graduates have backgrounds as: teachers, health and wellness professionals, social workers/therapists and life coaches, end-of-life professionals (funerals directors, hospice and death doulas), wedding professionals, lawyers, ministers/clergy, librarians, business entrepreneurs and artists.

Appendix 3: Contributors and Gratitude's

Big Thanks goes out to our CF&I certified Life-Cycle Celebrants in order of their contribution to the **People's Funeral and End-of-Life Ceremony Handbook 2020 and Beyond** above:

Tawnya Musser, certified Life-Cycle Celebrant® Founder of Dear Departures, is a Home Funeral Guide and End-of-Life Doula as well as a certified Life-Cycle Celebrant®
<http://www.deardepartures.com/>

Elisa Chase, Master Life-Cycle Celebrant® and CF&I Academic Director
<https://www.elisachase.com/>

Christopher Shelley, certified Life-Cycle Celebrant®, Faculty and NY State co-Chapter Facilitator <http://www.illuminatingceremonies.com/>

Dorry Bless, Master Life-Cycle Celebrant® and past Board Member of the Celebrant Foundation & Institute

Diane Gansauer, Master Life-Cycle Celebrant®, Faculty and Dignity Memorial Member
<http://www.lyricallifeceremonies.com/about-lyrical-life/meet-diane-gansauer/>

Kim Kirkley, Master Life-Cycle Celebrant®, Faculty and Author

and

Charlotte Eulette, International Director, and the Board of Directors at the Celebrant Foundation and Institute who invite you to contact Charlotte at charlotteeulette@celebrantinstitute.org or at the Celebrant Foundation & Institute in New Jersey, USA at (973) 746-1792.

Thank you.

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