

# April 1, 2020 Online Leadership Circle — Highlights

## Dr. Dorothy Hunse

### *How can we personally respond right now?*

- This situation forces us to be dependent on God. There are things we simply cannot do. We have to trust that God is going to be there. Pastoral Care 101 is that God is God and we are not. You can just do what you can do.
- We have a choice as to how we respond internally toward the limitations we're not faced with.
  - We can get very frantic and frenetic to do more and more. To make up for the limitations we're faced with. However, this is not a sprint. It will lead to burnout
  - We can become resigned and overwhelmed with the needs. To give up.
  - We can do what Jesus did, which is to be deliberate with our time with God. We need God to lead us and empower us. We need him to do that for us.
- If you are feeling the pain of this, then bring it to God in the form of lament. The only way we will care effectively for people in this is if we tend to our own grief, first. "Without lament, hope is stillborn." Go to God with your pain.

## Rev. Sarah Scott

### *Compassion Fatigue*

1. If you feel yourself physically different (sleep is off, GI is off, etc.), pay attention: the body will be the most honest witness to what's happening to you. This may be the first indicator to how you're doing. Are you irritable? Self-righteous? Apathetic?
2. If you're seeing a change in your digital habits, pay attention to that. It will affect you.

### *Death Care*

- If you have a congregation member who is dying right now: look at the resources inside the facility they are in. There are people inside those facilities who are able to give spiritual care, like chaplains. You can connect in with them. Also, who are the spiritually-minded healthcare staff who could assist you?
- It is unethical to send someone in to give spiritual care if the patient has NOT requested it. They must indicate that they want it, or the family must indicate it. Equip your nurses and healthcare workers to take you, as a pastoral figure, into the room.
- Prayer can go through plexiglass. Pray for people through speakerphone and ask the healthcare workers to help by landing hands on people.
- If one person is allowed to go in to be with someone who is dying, send them in with a piece of paper with things written on it (just don't send a Bible—everything that goes in must be thrown out)

### *Planning Ahead*

After Easter is over, have conversations with your people. Encourage them to have an emergency plan for themselves. Clarify the "ceiling of care" for themselves. Decide now who will be that \*one\* person who would go into the hospital if they became critically ill.

## Wayne Page

### ***Funerals during COVID-19***

- Funerals cannot be what they used to be. We can still have visitations but here in NB, we're only allowed to have 10 people (including staff) in the building at a time, and it may be less in other provinces. Visitations can be staggered. It could take all afternoon to have all the family members to come. Funeral homes need to get the immediate family in, then move them out to sanitize the building before the next group comes in. Most funeral homes will now operate by appointment only. Funeral homes will have their doors locked.

### ***Funerals are often being postponed***

- Families are mostly postponing their funerals. Live streaming is an option, but it's really limited and families will often waive that.

- Many funeral homes are trying to sanitize in between groups coming for visitations. Amazingly, funeral homes have not been classified as "essential services" in Canada. The National Funeral Association has been working to get this changed. This means that funeral directors can't get the supplies like PPE, masks, and hand sanitizer that they need.

### ***Working alongside the funeral director***

- We need to work together. Nerves are frayed and we need to be patient with one another. Unfortunately, many funeral directors have had negative feelings towards pastors. It's important for pastors to know that most funeral directors are not Christians. They often don't feel the same way about the spiritual care for the dying and their families. They need to see that pastors care about funeral directors. You are the face of Christ when you deal with funeral homes.
- Since things change daily, funeral information can change as well. Funeral homes don't always have the absolute latest information on what's going on.
- Pastors, please don't push the limits of people allowed inside funeral homes. It threatens the funeral home's business and reputation. It will compromise their ability to help families down the road. It's important that we all try to maintain the government's requirements.

When this is all over, it will be difficult to schedule the "backlog" of funerals. Many funeral homes in Atlantic Canada are backed up by as much as 25 funerals right now—and we're not even into a time when people are dying from COVID-19.

We recommend the *Continuing Care* series of books for the first year after the loss of a loved one. Written by a retired pastor. Scroll down for a link to this resource, and you can reach out to Wayne Page for more information about that.

## Dr. Lennett Anderson

### ***What it's like to have had seven people die since COVID-19 began***

- Burials with no funerals (no celebration of life) is a BIG deal. Lennett's community feels that hurt in a special way. Not being able to gather together for a large wake and funeral is particularly hurting.

- This is a very hard time to say goodbye for the family, the wider community, and also the pastor.

- The hardest part seems to be the fact that people are dying alone.
- In Nova Scotia, it can only be 5 people in the funeral home at one time.

## **Rev. Sarah Scott**

### ***Grieving needs to happen now***

- “We need to be doing grief care—now”
- “Grief is not something that you can put on a calendar, that can be delayed for later.”
- “We need to dig into this now, or else it will push it down into our bellies and we will be sick as a people in six months.”
- "The grief has to go somewhere, and you want it **out**."

### ***Ideas for grieving NOW***

- If your church has a Facebook page, make a post about the person. Tell your people to share online about that person. Get creative with how your people can tangibly remember that person.
  - If they were a great baker, ask people to share their favourite cookie recipe and send it safely to someone else in self-isolation.
  - Light a candle and have everyone post a picture of the candle at a certain time to show solidarity.
- Start a shared Google Doc for people to contribute to with remembrance.
- Get the family together on Zoom to have a remembrance-focused gathering. If Grandma made a great Easter dinner, then have an Easter dinner over zoom.
- Technology isn't ideal but is much more worthwhile than we give it credit for.
- If you do a graveside service, have the people there in person host a Zoom call, so other family members can join in during that moment.
- Take multiple rubbings on paper of the tombstone to mail to people who can't be there in person. Take photos and video.
- Encourage families to plan a future memorial activity that they can do together—such as getting together at the cottage to watch the video recording of the graveside service while eating the loved one's favourite meal.

## **Resources Mentioned In Today's Conversation**

### **SELF CARE:**

YouTube Video, Compassion Fatigue, Dr. Jody Clarke (Atlantic School of Theology)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfhqAL18Wos&t=12s&fbclid=IwAR0ZW3o9torIbGxzxGUpFQNC0uNXpBvwUsIk5W-JYJuZaBDF\\_OMFdtfv0Lk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfhqAL18Wos&t=12s&fbclid=IwAR0ZW3o9torIbGxzxGUpFQNC0uNXpBvwUsIk5W-JYJuZaBDF_OMFdtfv0Lk)

Schwartz Centre for Compassionate Healthcare- Webinars

<https://www.theschwartzcenter.org>

### **GRIEF CARE:**

BOOK: David Kessler, “On Grief and Grieving”, his website is [grief.com](http://grief.com) and he has a number of free online bereavement groups

An Fantastic Canadian Resource on grief with three sites:

<http://www.mygrief.ca>

[www.kidsgrief.ca](http://www.kidsgrief.ca)

<http://www.virtualhospice.ca/> --- this one has a TON of current COvid-19 articles!

## **FUNERALS AND CREATIVE RITES**

Amazing website shared by ADC Alumni Pamela Estey, Chaplain Dartmouth Gen

Covid-19 Innovative Chaplaincy: <https://chaplaincyinnovation.org>

(On that webpage are webinars- especially the webinar "Distance Funerals, Complicated Grief: Gathering to grieve during COVID19")

Video Shared by Hospice Halifax worker

<https://hospicefoundation.org/Education/Making-Funerals-Meaningful-in-the-Age-of-COVID-19.aspx>

Article Shared by John McNally

<https://www.indystar.com/story/news/investigations/2020/03/28/social-distancing-coronavirus-pandemic-challenges-grieving-families-funerals/5083913002/>

*Insight Books: Continuing Care*, a series of small books intended to be read by a grieving family at different intervals after the loss of their loved one

<https://www.insightbooks.com/catalog/item/CCSSET>