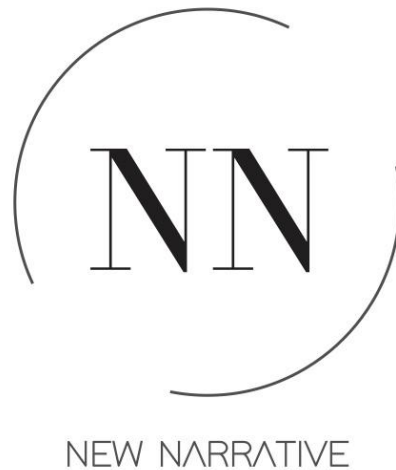


# Creating and Facilitating Virtual End of Life Events

*A Step-by-Step Guide To Support Funeral Directors Working With Families During Social Distancing*

Version 4 | October 13, 2021



Created by [LifeWeb 360](#)  
and [New Narrative](#)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Introduction</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Our Teams</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Chapter 1: Introduction to Virtual Arrangements</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| Virtual Meeting Software  | 10        |
| <b>Chapter 2: Creating a Virtual Receiving Line (Calling Hours, Visitation)</b>                 | <b>11</b> |
| <b><i>Option 1: Drive-through Calling Hours</i></b>   | <b>11</b> |
| <b><i>Option 2: Video conferencing with a virtual queue to mimic calling hours</i></b>          |           |
| 1. Plan with the family   | 12        |
| 2. Register for a free Gruveo account   | 13        |
| 3. Create a Gruveo “handle” for the family  | 13        |
| 4. Create a Gruveo “user” for the family & associate to their handle                            | 14        |
| 5. Add custom images for the family’s calling hours   | 16        |
| 6. Inform friends & family about the calling hours and how to join                              | 17        |
| 7. Ensure the family is ready to receive calls at the designated time                           | 17        |
| 8. More on Gruveo   | 17        |
| <b><i>Option 3: Scheduled time slots using Calendly + Zoom</i></b>                              |           |
| 1. Update your Zoom account settings  | 19        |
| 2. Register for Calendly Premium  | 20        |
| 3. Integrate your Zoom and Calendly accounts  | 20        |
| 4. Update your Calendly account settings to showcase your funeral home                          | 21        |
| 5. Set up a new “Calling Hours” event for an individual family                                  | 23        |
| 9. Download and format the schedule for the family  | 31        |
| 10. Walk the family through the process   | 34        |
| 11. Offering technical support for guests   | 34        |
| <b>Chapter 3: Live Streaming or Recording the Funeral Service</b>                               | <b>35</b> |
| Questions & Answers ~ Live Streaming  | 35        |
| Recording A Service ~ Future Streaming or Playback  | 36        |
| Hosting The Recording on Another Website  | 37        |
| Get Creative! Help the Family Physically Feel Supported from Friends & Family Tuning In At Home | 38        |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Chapter 4:</b>  |           |
| <b>Planning an Online Funeral Reception, Wake, Shiva, or Celebration of Life</b>     | <b>39</b> |
| <i><b>Step by Step Setup for your families:</b></i>                                  |           |
| Step 1 - Identify Your Family Representative(s)                                      | 40        |
| Step 2 - Register for Zoom Pro or other Conferencing service                         | 40        |
| Step 3 - Configure Your Zoom Settings  | 41        |
| Step 4 - Plan & Rehearse   | 43        |
| Step 5 - Send Invitations  | 44        |
| What's In An Invite?   | 45        |
| Dialing In: An Option For Those Without A Smartphone or Computer                     | 45        |
| Preparing For the Stream   | 46        |
| Step 6 - Holding The Event   | 47        |
| Facilitation   | 47        |
| Re-assigning an Event Host   | 47        |
| Opening The Ceremony   | 48        |
| Saving The Chat Box Before You End The Ceremony                                      | 49        |
| Step 7 - Share The Event Recording with Family                                       | 50        |
| Point the family to LifeWeb's family-facing guide as a DIY resource                  | 51        |
| <b>Chapter 5: Ongoing Community Support</b>  | <b>52</b> |
| Encourage memory and condolence sharing  | 52        |
| Virtual Ways To Show up For Each Other   | 53        |
| Collect memories into a multimedia scrapbook with LifeWeb 360                        | 53        |
| 1. Set Up A Lifeweb At No Charge   | 53        |
| 2. Identify 1-2 administrators that can get the word out                             | 54        |
| 3. Watch a scrapbook of their life come together                                     | 54        |
| 4. We engage the community for support over time                                     | 54        |
| 5. Integrate the LifeWeb with an in-person memorial event when it's safe to do so    | 55        |
| <b>Chapter 6: Planning and Hosting a Future Celebration of Life Event</b>            | <b>56</b> |
| During Physical Distancing Restrictions  | 56        |
| Ideas To Keep Families Connected Between the Online and Live Events:                 | 57        |
| Encourage friends and family to contribute to a collective photo album or scrapbook. | 57        |
| <b>Additional Resources</b>  | <b>59</b> |
| <b>Post-COVID, how else can I use my new technology superpowers?</b>                 | <b>60</b> |
| <b>Contact Us</b>  | <b>61</b> |

# INTRODUCTION

---

COVID-19 has halted some parts of our lives in their tracks while other parts continue unphased. Your families continue to have loved ones that pass away, and with restrictions on gatherings and fear in the air, helping your families coming together with their community to remember, laugh, cry, and support one another seems difficult to say the least.

This guide is meant as a small contribution to help you adapt existing technologies during these unprecedented times so you can continue to go above and beyond for your families as you always have. While existing traditions need to be modified, technology actually opens up new opportunities to support your families in entirely new ways.

**Coronavirus shouldn't get to dictate when we support each other during a loss, only *how* we do that.**

What follows is a step-by-step, chronological guide to modify existing funerary practices and traditions to meet the needs of social distancing and look towards a spectacular Celebration of Life when large group gatherings are again safe.

## **This is version 3 - we need your help!**

In this ever changing situation, we can all learn from each other to continuously find creative ways to support families. Send your questions, ideas, and what's working for your funeral home. We will continue to update the guide as we all learn together

**Subscribe [here](#) to ensure you receive future updates of the guide, additional trainings, etc.**

Ali Briggs  
LifeWeb 360  
[ali@lifeweb360.com](mailto:ali@lifeweb360.com)

Christina Andreola  
New Narrative  
[christina@newnarrative.ca](mailto:christina@newnarrative.ca)

---

Version 4

© LifeWeb 360 & New Narrative 2021

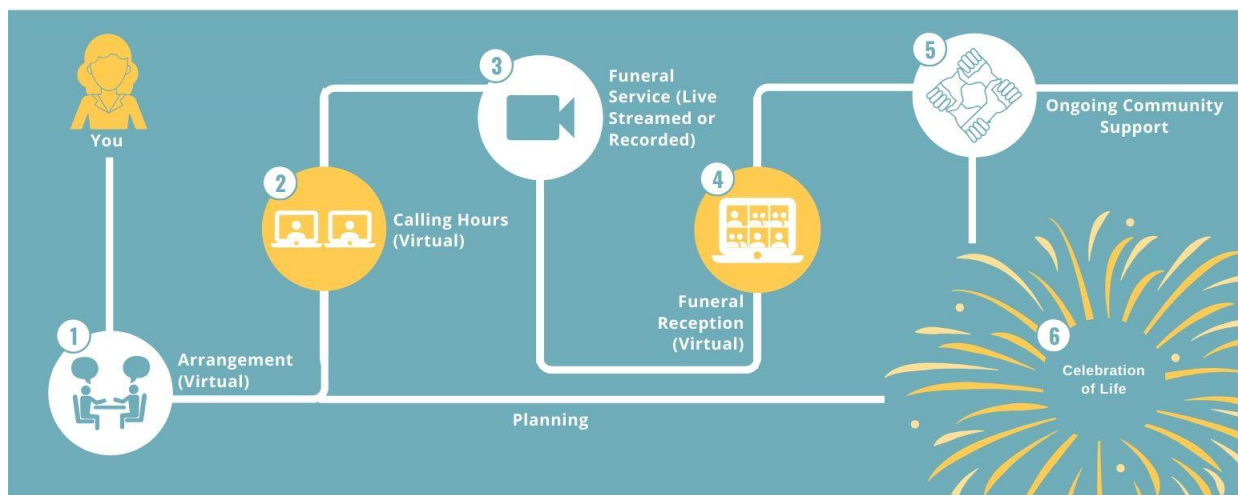


# Memorial Events During Coronavirus

COVID-19 has drastically changed the ways grieving families can mourn and receive support from friends and relatives. Only holding a live-streamed funeral service, or pushing the service back until the end of social distancing, risks families being isolated from the support they need over the first few months after a loss. With some creativity, technology, and the help of the community, you can help the family get the support they need.

And while it's unclear when social distancing will end, this 'in between' time is an opportunity for families to plan for a spectacular future Celebration of Life event.

Find detailed how-tos & additional ideas for each step of the process in [the free expanded resource guide here.](#)



## Arrangement

Give comfort that their community can come together to remember and support each other in different but wonderful ways



- Hold in-person arrangements in a room large enough to accommodate social distancing & suggest including additional family members via video conference
- Hold virtual arrangements with an off-the-shelf video calling tool that allows for screen-sharing, like Zoom, Google Hangouts, or Skype
- Review the [NFDA recommendations](#) on working with families at this time

See [Chapter 1](#) in [guide](#) for details

## Calling Hours

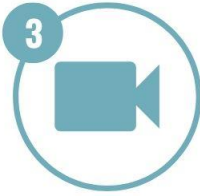
Use video conferencing to allow people to pay their respects



- Effectively mimic a traditional receiving line / calling hours, allowing the family to receive condolences from their community during a defined period of time
- Use [Gruveo](#), a 1-click video conferencing tool with a virtual "queue"
- Create an account for your funeral home & add your branding, then create a "user" for each family and generate a unique link for people to call them at
- Gruveo is currently free for the first 45 days, and very inexpensive after

See [Chapter 2](#) in [guide](#) for details

## Funeral Service **Hold a timely funeral service however you are equipped to do so**



- Live-stream the service if you can, record it if you can't
- If your website can't host the recorded service, embed on a 3rd party memorial site like [LifeWeb 360](#) or [Tukios](#)
- Get set up for live-streaming ASAP with one of these [service providers](#)
- Get creative to help the family feel the support of those not physically in the room / at the cemetery with them:
  - Read statements from those watching at home as part of the service
  - Tie white balloons to the backs of chairs with notes or photos from those watching at home to let the physical room feel as full as the virtual one
  - Ask people to line the route to the cemetery w/ signs or wear a specific color

See [Chapter 3](#) in [guide](#) for details

## Funeral Reception **Simulate a reception or wake, allowing those that watched the live-streamed service to be together virtually & share stories**



- Use [Zoom Pro](#) for necessary functionality - \$15 / mo, & many other use cases for you
  - Use a Zoom 'waiting room' to protect against Zoom trolls (sadly a new trend)
  - Distribute this 'how to join a virtual memorial' [Zoom guide](#) to attendees in advance
  - Designate an emcee, technical helper, and speakers in advance, then open the "floor"
  - Record the event & download the "chat" as keepsakes for the family
- Note:** Some families may prefer this style of event for the funeral service, where all participants can "attend" together in a virtual room, instead of service live streamed one-way to those at home

See [Chapter 4](#) in [guide](#) for details

## Ongoing Community Support **Encourage friends & relatives to 'show up' for the family during this period of social isolation**



- Encourage the community to call, send cards, & share condolences on your website
- Start a collaborative memorial scrapbook, like [LifeWeb 360](#), that friends & relatives can add stories and photos to as a gift to the family and self-organize tributes
- Organize a community vigil like lighting a candle at the same time, and create a hashtag for sharing on social media

See [Chapter 5](#) in [guide](#) for details

## Future Celebration of Life Event **Use this time help the family plan a second memorial event for when restrictions on gatherings end**



- Think of the Celebration of Life as more wedding than funeral service:
  - Attendees may be in a very different emotional state than the funeral
  - You'll have months to plan - consider consulting an [event planner](#)
  - Choose a unique, & sufficiently large, venue - you may have a high number of attendees given the extra time to make travel plans
- Pick a special date like their birthday or anniversary, or create a new one
- Use this time to add special touches - photos, artwork, create a song, etc.

See [Chapter 6](#) in [guide](#) for details

Guide brought to you by [LifeWeb 360](#) and [New Narrative Memorials](#)

[LifeWeb 360](#) - Memorial scrapbooks built by your friends & family. Engage the community to support the family for the long term.



[New Narrative Memorials](#) - Event planning and consulting firm specializing in unique Celebrations of Life.

# OUR TEAMS

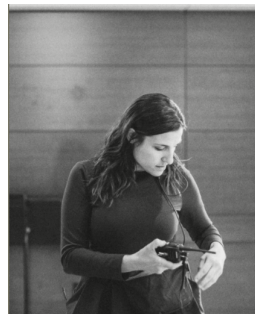
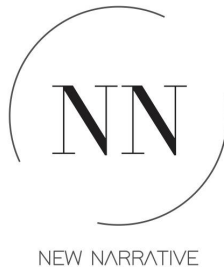
---

## LifeWeb 360



Since well before COVID-19, our team at LifeWeb 360 has been helping families use technology to remember and celebrate their loved ones with their community. Our core product is a multimedia scrapbook that helps families collect stories and photos from their community after a death. We're so grateful to be able to share what we've learned about using technology to support communities after a loss with the funeral profession community. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions!

## New Narrative Memorials



New Narrative Memorials is an events firm dedicated to helping families with producing personalized Celebration of Life events. We aim to make the process easy and streamlined for families and vendors during a difficult time. We work alongside Funeral Directors, Celebrants, and families to consult on events and offer our decade of event experience to those planning a Celebration of Life.

---

Version 4

© LifeWeb 360 & New Narrative 2021

# Chapter 1: Introduction to Virtual Arrangements

---

*Explain the new vision for honoring a loved one during these unprecedented times, and give families comfort that their community can come together to remember and support each other in a different but wonderful way.*

Review this NFDA [guidance](#) on working with families at this time by Dr. Alan Wolfelt.

During the arrangement, your family will let you know which events they would like to hold now (virtually) and indicate which events they are intending to hold in person at a future date.

Events held now will need to be supported by technology and you may want to use screen captures or demonstrations to show your potential service offerings. For example:

- Demonstrate your live streaming capabilities
- Open up a Zoom meeting demo functionality for a virtual service, calling hours, or wake
- Show your funeral home guestbook, a LifeWeb memorial scrapbook [example](#), or any other digital place you help families collect memories and condolences

Consider holding meetings in a larger room or space to allow for social distancing between directors and families during a consultation.

## Virtual Meeting Software

There are several off-the-shelf online platforms available to families where you can connect virtually to discuss arrangements and share screens that show your service offerings. All of the options below include a 'Presenter Mode' where you can present your screen to families to ensure everyone is working with the same visuals.

|                | <u>Zoom</u>                                    | <u>Google Hangouts</u>                         | <u>Facetime</u>               | <u>Skype</u>                                   |
|----------------|--|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Accessible Via | Mac or PC<br>iPhone<br>Android<br>iPad or iPod | Mac or PC<br>iPhone<br>Android<br>iPad or iPod | Mac<br>iPhone<br>iPad or iPod | Mac or PC<br>iPhone<br>Android<br>iPad or iPod |
| Cost           | Free<br>\$15 / mo ( <a href="#">Pro</a> )      | Free<br>Pro available*                         | Free                          | Free<br>Pro available*                         |
| App?           | Yes  | Yes  | Yes                           | Yes  |
| Presenter Mode | Yes  | Yes  | No                            | Yes  |
| Resolution     | High   | Low  | High to Medium                | Medium   |



## Chapter 2: How To Create a Virtual Receiving Line (*Calling Hours, Visitation*)

---

*Use video conferencing to allow people that would like to pay their respects to the family to do so in an organized way*

Although your families may opt to hold a larger, in-person memorial service at a future date when restrictions on gatherings are lifted, they are still in need of support from their community now, as you would typically help them receive from calling hours. We'll use the term "calling hours" in this document to refer to the time when the family typically receives friends and relatives during a defined window of time, often accompanied by visitation with the decedent; also known as visiting hours, visitation, a receiving line, etc.

You can encourage families to set aside blocks of time where they will be available on a video conferencing platform to receive guests 'visit' them in a virtual 1:1 setting, similar to calling hours.

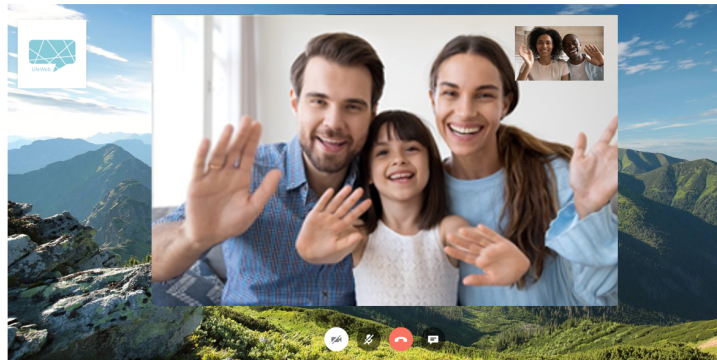
### **Option 1: Drive-through Calling Hours**

Ask friends and relatives to come to the funeral home or other parking lot at a predefined time and line up in their vehicles. The family can stand or sit in lawn chairs at a safe distance back, allowing everyone to speak at a safe distance. The family's voice may start to get tired at a certain point from talking at a long distance. To counter this, create an amplifier for them by connecting a bluetooth speaker to their phone using an app such as this [one](#), then having them speak into their smartphone to amplify their regular speaking voice to the person in the car.

## Option 2: Video conferencing with a virtual queue to mimic calling hours

*In the following section, you will learn how to:*

- Create an account for your funeral home on Gruevo video conferencing, which is like a phone number that customers can video call you at any time
- Create a unique user account for each family you are setting up calling hours for, which will enable guests to call them with one click and enter a virtual “queue” if the family is on the line with someone else
- Create custom branding for your funeral home Gruevo “handle” (unique URL), as well as the family’s calling hours



### 1. Plan with the family

Calling hours are possible to hold at a later date, but may not bring the same level of benefit to the family as they would if held closer to the time of passing. With time, the emotional state of the guests and potentially also the family may have shifted towards celebrating the decedent’s life and reminiscing, and a different format for expressing these emotions may be more appropriate than traditional calling hours.

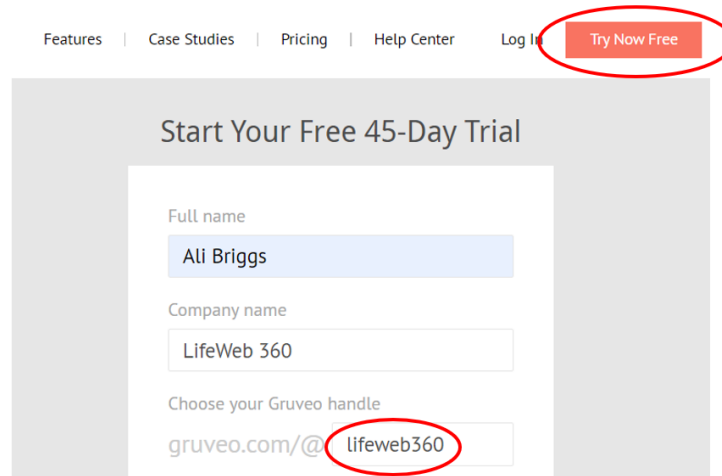
Once you have determined if and when the family would like to hold virtual calling hours, and for how long, you can get started with your set-up.

*Note when determining length of calling hours: As video conference is a new tool for many people, and the resulting communication between the family in their guest is more private than typical calling hours, this may impact who “self-selects” to visit with the family this way. I.e. less people may participate in the calling hours, but the ones that feel comfortable doing so may be interested in a longer than typical visit with the family compared to in-person calling hours.*

## 2. Register for a free [Gruveo](#) account

[Gruveo](#) is currently offering a free trial of their product for 45 days during COVID-19. Sign up by clicking the “Try Now Free” button.

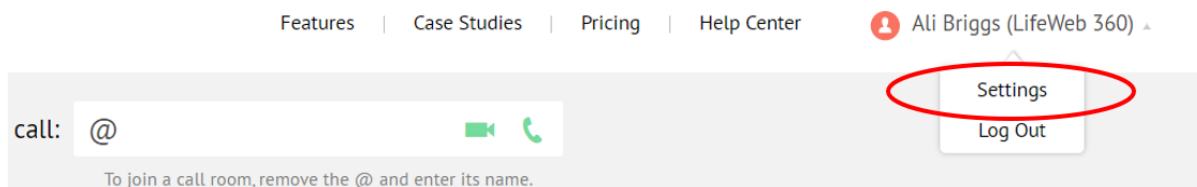
Select a Gruveo “handle” (your unique link that people can call your funeral home at) that reflects your funeral home or organization name, your name, etc.



The screenshot shows the Gruveo registration page. At the top right, the "Try Now Free" button is circled in red. The main heading is "Start Your Free 45-Day Trial". Below this is a form with three fields: "Full name" with the value "Ali Briggs", "Company name" with the value "LifeWeb 360", and "Choose your Gruveo handle" with the value "gruveo.com/@lifeweb360". The handle field is also circled in red.

## 3. Create a Gruveo “handle” for the family

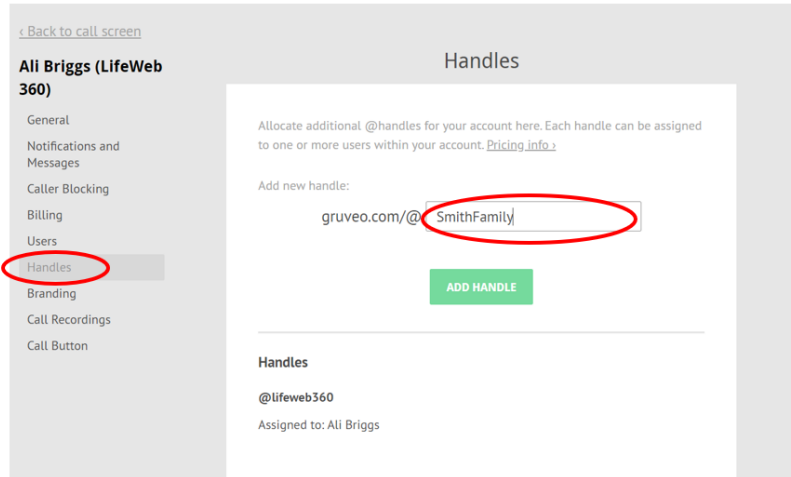
You’ll need to create a separate “user” for each, individual family. Navigate to “Settings” by clicking on your username in the right hand corner:



The screenshot shows the Gruveo user interface. At the top right, the user's name "Ali Briggs (LifeWeb 360)" is displayed next to a profile icon. Below this, a dropdown menu is open, showing "Settings" and "Log Out" options, both of which are circled in red. On the left side, there is a "call:" label followed by an input field containing an "@" symbol and a "To join a call room, remove the @ and enter its name." instruction below it.

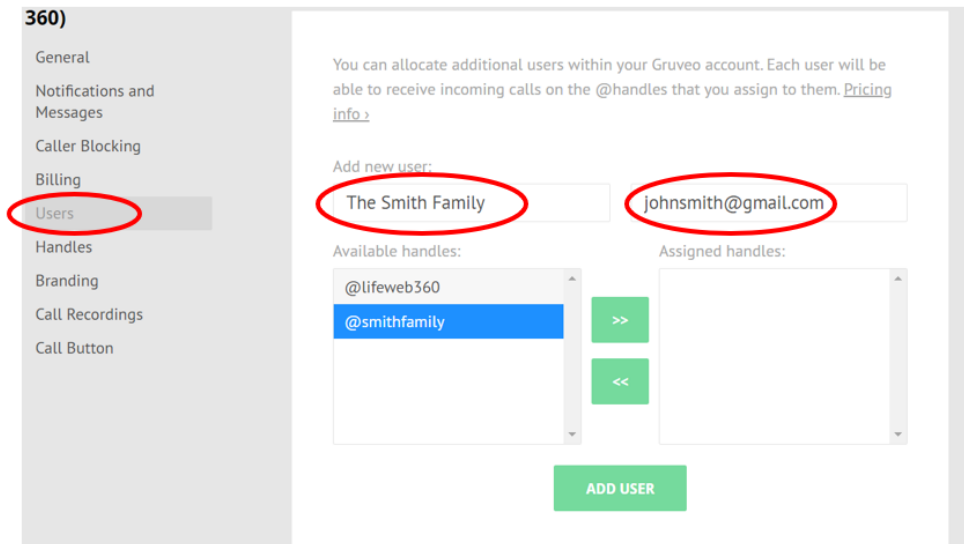


Create a “handle” for the family, which will be a custom URL / web address that guests can use to call the family via a video call. Select “Handles” in the left sidebar, then type a handle name in. Consider a handle name like “Smith family”, “Calling Hours for Sue Smith”, etc. Finally, click the green “Add handle” button.



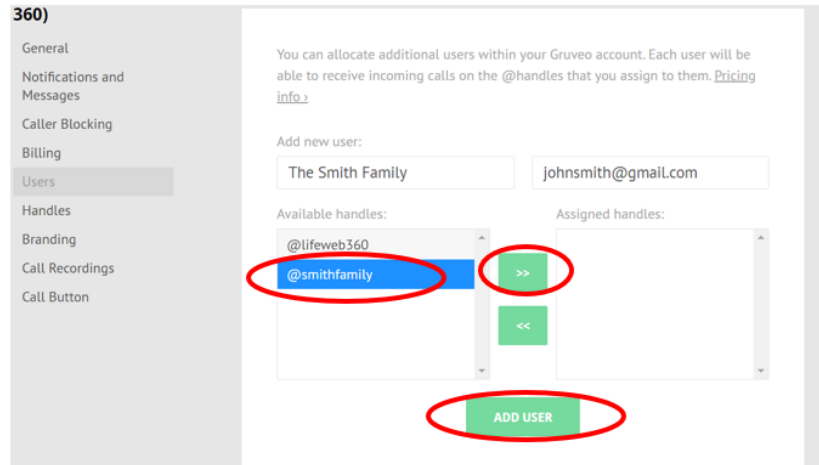
#### 4. Create a Gruveo “user” for the family & associate to their handle

Create a “user” for the family, which ties their email address to the handle you’ve just created. Select “Users” from the left sidebar. Enter in the name you’d like to display to guests, like “Smith Family”, “Bill & Shirley”, “The Smiths”, etc. Then, add the email address for a designated family representative.

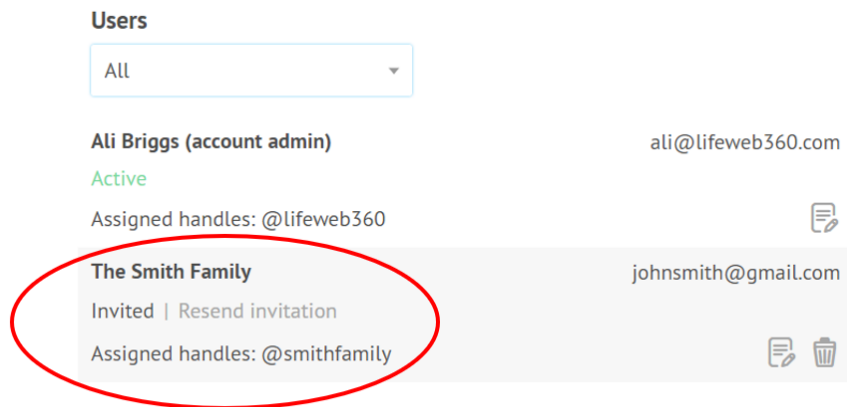


Next, select the handle you created in step 3 and click on the green arrow pointing to the right to move it from the “Available handles” column to the “Assigned handles” column.

Finally, click “Add user”, which will send a notification email to the family.



At the bottom of this screen, under the “Users” section, you should now see the family name and their assigned handle. Tell the family representative whose email you used to look out for an email with Gruveo to confirm their account. They’ll need to select a password to finish the set-up process, at which point their user account will show as “active” rather than “invited”.



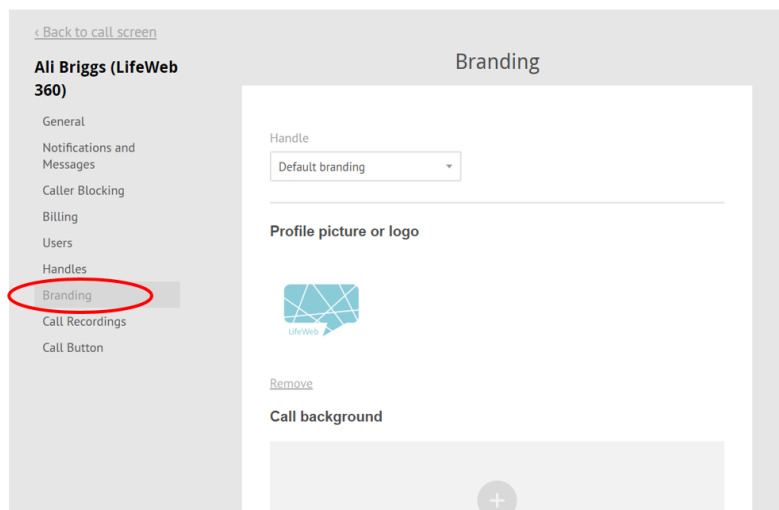
## 5. Add custom images for the family's calling hours

You can create a custom call background image and profile picture or logo icon to be displayed to callers while they are waiting for the call to be answered. Do this from the “branding” tab, instructions [here](#). Make sure to click the green “save changes” button at the bottom of the screen.

For your funeral home handle, consider using your funeral home logo or a headshot for yourself for the profile picture, and a soothing background photo or an image you create with a message or other information from your funeral home. The standard Gruevo background is a calming landscape, so you can feel comfortable leaving as is if you'd like.

For the family's user account, consider using a picture of the family representatives, the decedent, or your funeral home logo for the profile picture. Add a favorite family photo for the background image, leave it as default, or create a custom image with details on the funeral arrangements, or other requests the family may have like where to share a memory or photo of their loved one.

You can create a professional looking custom background image (and many other documents and marketing materials) easily with [Canva](#).



## 6. Inform friends & family about the calling hours and how to join

After the family confirms their account via the email they receive, they can be reached for a video call at [gruveo.com/@HANDLE](https://gruveo.com/@HANDLE) when they are logged into their account. The guest who is calling does not need a Gruveo account. If multiple calls are placed at the same time, the callers are placed in a waiting line until the call is answered by the family. Read more about what the queue / waiting line looks like for guests [here](#).

Being mindful of the family's privacy, consider where you will post the date, time, and link ([gruveo.com/@HANDLE](https://gruveo.com/@HANDLE)) for guests to join.

## 7. Ensure the family is ready to receive calls at the designated time

The family should be in front of a computer with a working webcam and microphone that they test in advance. They should test out the Gruveo functionality in advance, e.g. by a member of your staff calling them. Additional considerations to pass on to them:

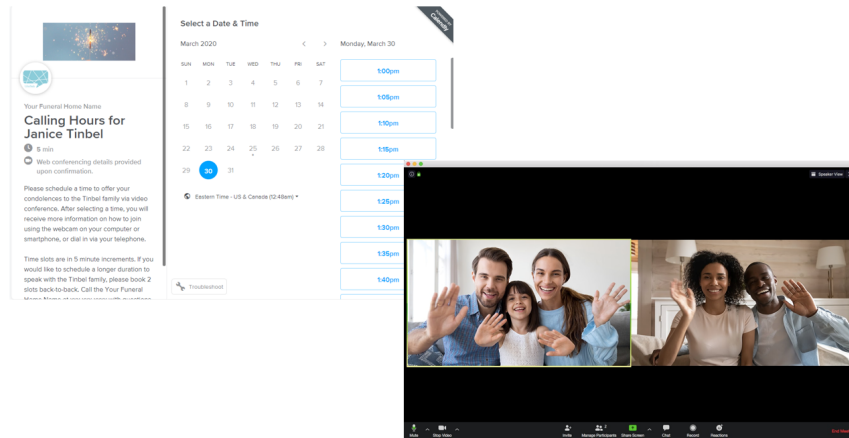
- Choose a quiet spot / avoid background noise
- Be conscious of their background and lighting
- Ensure a stable internet connection, optimized for speed as much as possible:
  - Wired internet connection is better than wireless (WiFi)
  - Close unneeded applications on your device
  - Ask others at home to limit high bandwidth activities during the event like streaming and downloading

## 8. More on Gruveo

After the free 45 day trial ends, you can continue using Gruveo for \$29 / month for the account for your funeral home. Pricing for each "user account" you create for each family is prorated, i.e. about \$1 per day that the account is active. After the calling hours, you can deactivate the account for the family, keeping this a very inexpensive option for hosting virtual calling hours.

For your permanent funeral home account, explore additional features like [call rooms](#), which are one-time unique links for people to join - similar to traditional video conferencing. Or, consider advertising the link as an additional telephone number to reach a funeral home representative during certain hours via video call.

## Option 3: Scheduled time slots using Calendly + Zoom



*In the following section, you will learn how to:*

- Create a scheduling system via Calendly, allowing sympathy-givers to sign up for one or more time slots with the family
- Connect your Calendly account with a Zoom Meetings account, automatically creating a private video conference call between the family and the guest
- Create an easy to follow schedule for the family to meet with their guests

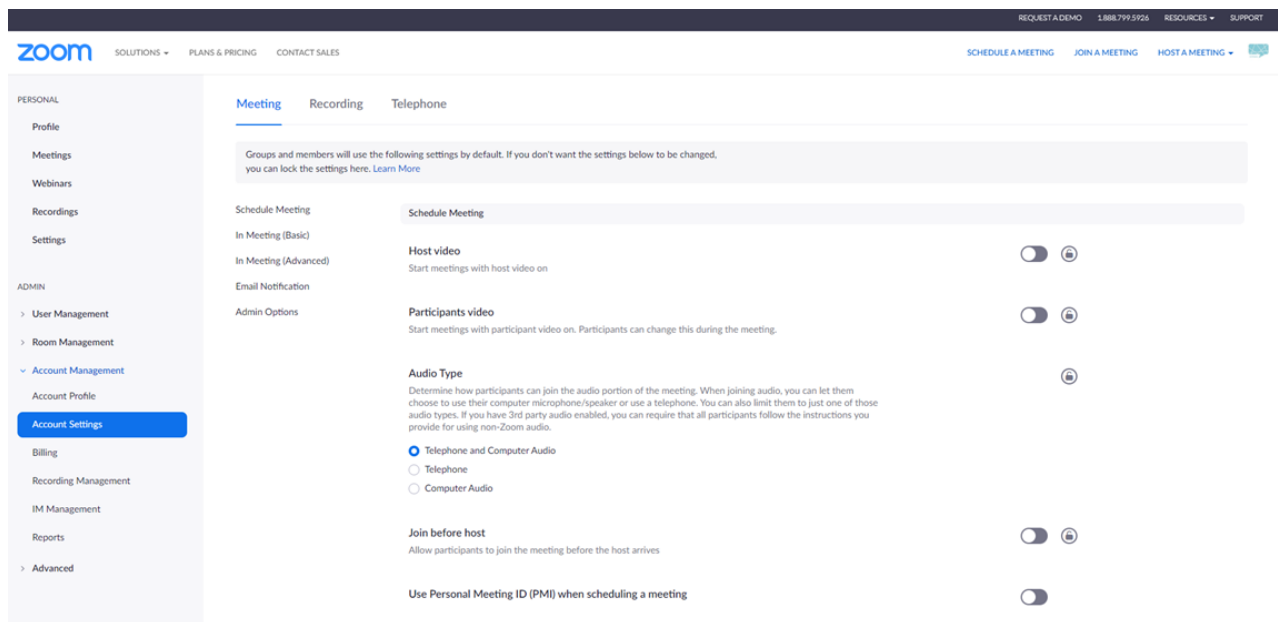
There are a number of video conferencing tools out there, and if you already feel comfortable with one you should absolutely use it. If you don't, we recommend Zoom for video conferencing as it integrates with Calendly to create a new video call for each 5-minute meeting.

You can use the free-tier of Zoom if you would like to host virtual calling-hours / a receiving line ONLY, however we recommend [Zoom Pro](#) as it will enable you to have meetings longer than 40-minutes, and therefore hold other virtual events such as a funeral reception / wake. This will cost your funeral home \$15 / month to use, however the options for using it are endless. Besides running a virtual wake / funeral reception (see step 4), you can include far-away family members in the arrangement, and include those who can't attend all or part of the funeral proceedings in-person - now and post-COVID.

## 1. Update your Zoom account settings

You'll need to make several changes to your default Zoom account settings, which will allow your families to use the Zoom calls scheduled for them without a representative from your funeral home opening each call as a "host".

Navigate to "My Account" in the top right hand corner of the Zoom homepage, then navigate to the vertical, gray index on the left hand side. Select "Account Management" > "Account Settings"



- Schedule Meeting
  - Participants Video: Turn toggle on, so it turns blue
  - Join Before Host: Turn toggle on, so it turns blue
  - Require a password when scheduling new meetings: Turn toggle off, so it turns gray
- In Meeting (Basic)
  - Co-host: Turn toggle on, so it turns blue
- Email Notification:
  - When attendees join meeting before host: Turn toggle off, so it turns gray

*Note: You'll notice there are a LOT of additional ways to customize Zoom to the preference of your funeral home / the families you serve. The above changes are the bare minimum you'll need to make virtual calling hours a success.*

## 2. Register for [Calendly Premium](#)

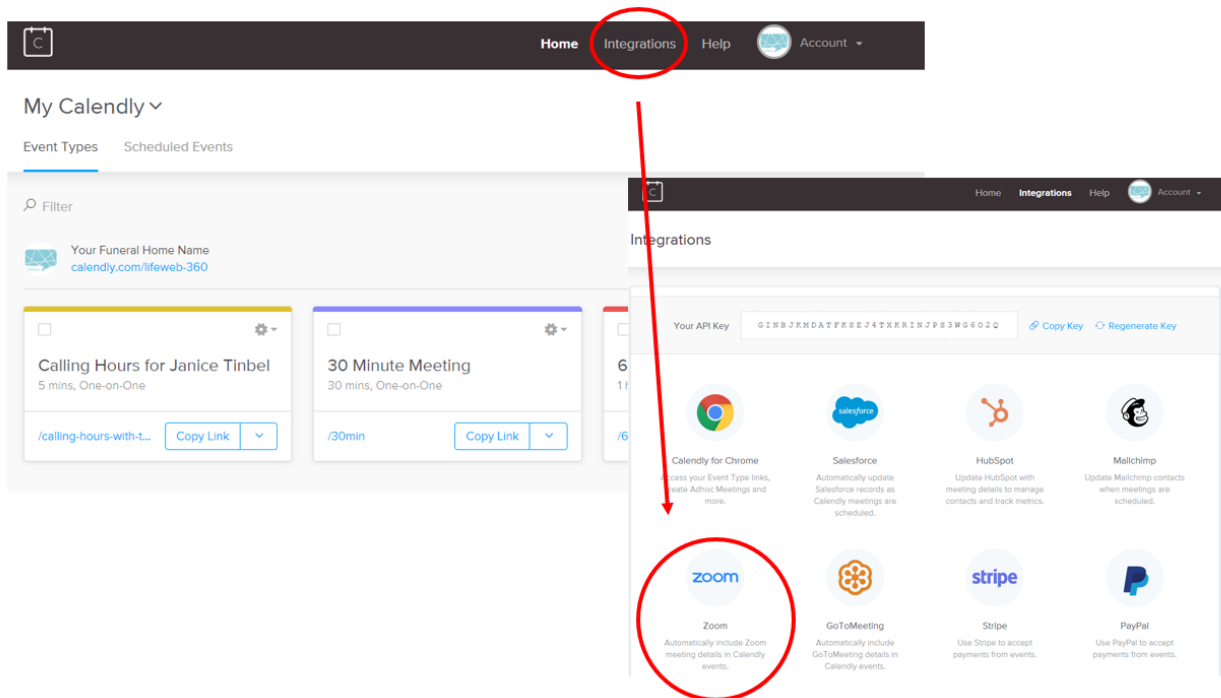
There are a number of scheduling tools out there, and if you already feel comfortable with one, you should absolutely use it. If you don't, we recommend Calendly for scheduling for its ease of use, low price point, and customization options.

Calendly Premium is \$8 / month, and is the least expensive option that will allow you to have unlimited events and auto-generate Zoom meeting details to accompany scheduled meetings.

Beyond COVID-19, Calendly is a great addition to your funeral home workflow! You can allow families to book a time from up-to-date availability on your calendar for pre-need arrangements, etc. You'll save time on the endless back and forth to align on a time that works for everyone, and can ask screener questions so you're informed on key information prior to the meeting to allow you to best tailor the discussion.

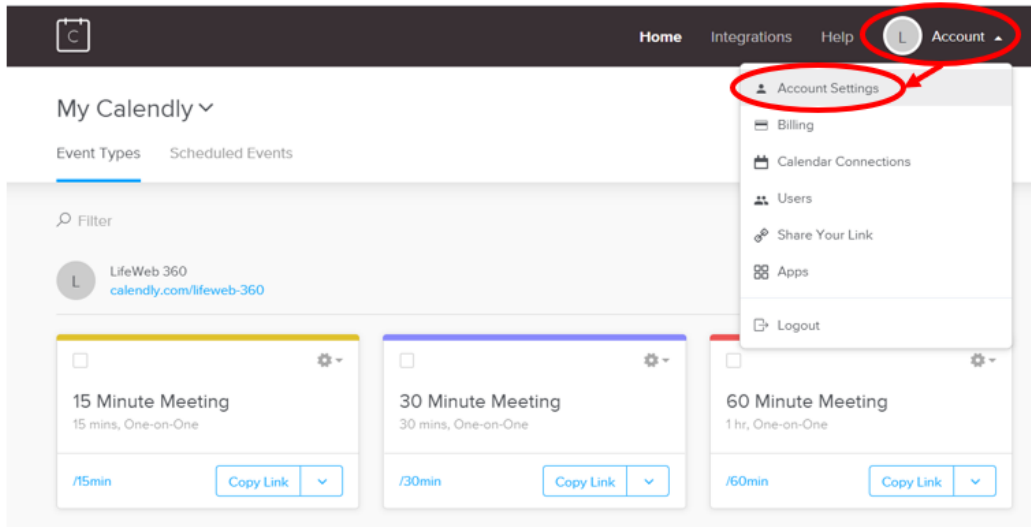
## 3. Integrate your Zoom and Calendly accounts

Integrating accounts will allow Calendly to automatically generate Zoom meeting log-in information for new events scheduled via Calendly. Navigate to "Integrations" > "Zoom", then follow the on-screen instructions to link your accounts.



## 4. Update your Calendly account settings to showcase your funeral home

Navigate to your account settings:



Parts of your profile and branding will be seen when someone schedules calling hours, so this is a nice opportunity for you to jazz up your page.



Version 4

© LifeWeb 360 & New Narrative 2021



Under “Profile”, add the following:

- Upload picture: Add your funeral home’s logo under “Upload Picture” >> Calendly may zoom in too closely on your logo (see screenshot below). If this is the case, upload a version of your logo with more white space around it so it centers properly. You can do this by copy pasting your logo onto a Word document, then screenshotting a larger area around your logo using the “snipping tool” (find by searching in your computer applications)
- Name: Add your funeral home’s name
- Welcome message: Keep this high level or blank, it won’t display when people go to schedule a time with the family. *E.g., Our team at [Funeral Home] welcomes you to schedule time to visit during calling hours.* Keep even more generic if you intend to use your Calendly page for other purposes, like scheduling pre-need meetings.

#### Account Settings

Profile

Branding

My link

Login

**Upload Picture**  
JPG, GIF or PNG. Max size of 5MB.

**Name** ?  
Your Funeral Home Name

**Welcome Message** ?  
Our team at Funeral Home welcomes you to schedule time to visit during calling hours.

Apply Cancel

Under “Branding”, add a supplemental image to accompany your logo, such as a picture of your funeral home, flower arrangement, or other suitable image.

Account Settings

Profile

**Branding**

My link

Login

**Logo** ?

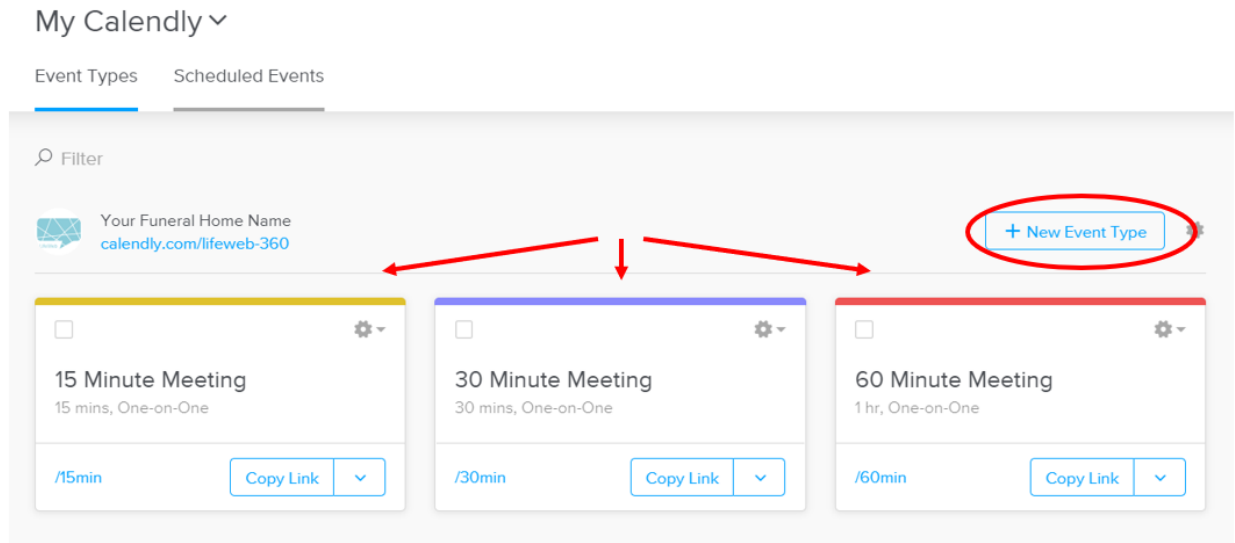
Update Remove

Calendly Branding ?

Save Changes Cancel

## 5. Set up a new “Calling Hours” event for an individual family

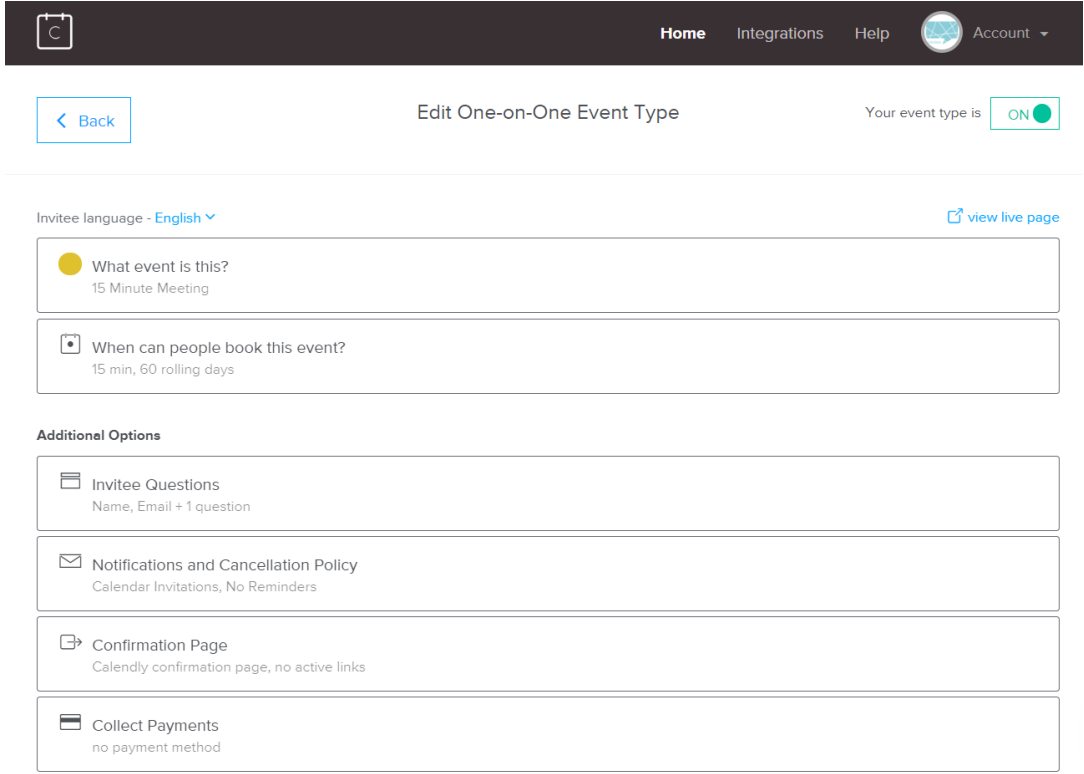
You can modify one of the 3 placeholder events Calendly has already set up for you, or set up a new event type (choose one-on-one event):



You'll see a series of options for customizing the event, instructions for each section follow. When you make a change to a given section, don't forget to hit the blue “Save and Close” button or your work won't be saved. It looks like this:



Below is a summary view of the various event options you'll customize. Never fear, we'll take you through each one, step-by-step, with accompanying screenshots.



**What event is this?**

Suggested inputs:

- Event name: Calling Hours / Visitation for [FirstName] [LastName]
- Location: Zoom (Note: If you haven't already connected your Zoom account, you'll be prompted to do so at this point)
- Description / Instructions: Please schedule a time to offer your condolences to the [LastName] family via video conference. After selecting a time, you will receive more information on how to join using the webcam on your computer or smartphone, or dial in via your telephone.

Time slots are in 5 minute increments. If you would like to schedule a longer duration to speak with the Tinbel family, please book 2 slots back-to-back. Call the [Your Funeral Home Name] at [xxx-xxx-xxxx] with questions.

- Event link: calling-hours-with-the-[LastName]-family

What event is this?  
Calling Hours for Janice Tinbel
Cancel Save & Close

**Event name \*** ?

**Location** ?

Zoom
Edit X

Want to offer choices to your invitee? [Add a location option](#)

**Description/Instructions** ?

↶ ↷ B I U ☰ ☱ 🔗

Please schedule a time to offer your condolences to the Tinbel family via video conference. After selecting a time, you will receive more information on how to join using the webcam on your computer or smartphone, or dial in via your telephone.

Time slots are in 5 minute increments. If you would like to schedule a longer duration to speak with the Tinbel family, please book 2 slots back-to-back. Call the Your Funeral Home Name at xxx-xxx-xxxx with questions.

**Event link \*** ?

calendly.com/lifeweb-360/

**Event color \*** ?

### **When can people book this event?**

- Event Duration
  - Choose length of time that sympathy-givers can book with the family; we suggest 5 or 10 minute increments, and people can always book 2 time slots back-to-back if they would like:

**Event Duration \*** ?

|           |           |           |           |                 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|
| 15<br>min | 30<br>min | 45<br>min | 60<br>min | 5<br>custom min |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|

- Date Range
  - Input the day (or days) that you decided on with the family in step 1 to hold the calling hours / visitation
  - Choose “Over a date range”, then select the specific day or days; you’ll choose times for those days in the next step

**Availability**

When can events be scheduled?

Over a date range ▼

Your invitees will be offered availability within a defined range of dates.

Mar 30 - Mar 30, 2020

<      **March 2020**      >


| Su | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
| 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  |

Apply

Cancel

- Event time zone
  - Ensure your local time zone is selected

**Event Time Zone** ?

 You're in Eastern Time - US & Canada. Your invitees will see your availability in their local time zone. [Edit](#)

- Availability

- Hours: Click on the day the calling hours are scheduled, then add the window of time you decided on with the family
  - We recommend scheduling a few intervals of time to allow for breaks for the family
- Advanced: Change “Show availability in increments of” to “5 min” or “10 min” depending on time slot length you’ve chosen

Availability ?  
Set your available hours when people can schedule meetings with you.

The screenshot shows the 'Availability' interface. At the top, there are two tabs: 'Hours' and 'Advanced'. The 'Hours' tab is selected. Below the tabs, there is a calendar for the period 'March 29 - April 11, 2020'. The calendar shows availability slots for each day, with a red circle around the '9:00a - 5:00p' slot on Monday. A red arrow points from this slot to the 'Edit Availability' modal. The modal has a title 'Edit Availability' and two columns: 'From' and 'To'. There are three time slots listed: '01:00 pm - 02:00 pm', '02:15 pm - 03:00 pm', and '03:15 pm - 04:00 pm'. Below the slots, there is a '+ New Interval' button, an 'I'm unavailable' button, and two blue buttons: 'Apply to Mar 30 only' and 'Apply to all Mondays'. The 'Apply to Mar 30 only' button is circled in red. At the bottom of the modal, there is a link 'Or apply to multiple...' and a 'Cancel' button.

Availability ?  
Set your available hours when people can schedule meetings with you.

The screenshot shows the 'Availability' interface with the 'Advanced' tab selected. Below the tabs, there is a section titled 'Availability Increments'. It contains the text 'Set the frequency of available time slots for your invitees.' and 'Show availability in increments of'. Below this text is a dropdown menu with '5 min' selected.

## Invitee Questions

You can customize this section as much as you'd like, and include as many or as few questions as you want, for example you can ask for a phone number to call in case they can't get the video conference to work. Here's our recommendation:

- Leave the 2 required fields:
  - Name
  - Email
- Delete the auto-generated field:
  - Please share anything that will help prepare for our meeting
  - *Rationale:* People may share condolences or memories here, which will be difficult for the family to aggregate compared to those shared in other places
- Add 1 field:
  - Question: How did you know [name of decedent]?
  - Check "required"
  - Answer type: One line (*This is just for added context for the family, don't want to encourage people to write novels here*)

Additional Options

Invitee Questions  
Name, Email + 1 question

Name \*

Email \*

Add Guests

Please share anything that will help prepare for our meeting.

+ Add New Question

Cancel Save & Close

Invitee Questions  
Name, Email + 1 question

Name \*

Email \*

Add Guests

+ Add New Question

New Question

Question \*

How did you know Janice Tinbel?

ON

Required

Answer Type

One Line

Delete Question

Apply Cancel

Version 4

© LifeWeb 360 & New Narrative 2021

## Notifications and Cancellation Policy

You can do as much or as little with this section as you'd like. You may want to consider customizing the calendar invitations and email reminder to be specific to the honoree, and include a [link](#) to guidance on how to join a Zoom call.

This is also a good spot to add your funeral home phone number in case they have issues joining the call (see final step of this section for information on tech support).


## Confirmation Page

You can either stick with the default Calendly setting "Display Calendly confirmation page", which will look like this once someone schedules a time:


✉ Notifications and Cancellation Policy  
Calendar Invitations, No Reminders


Cancel [Save & Close](#)

---

 **Calendar Invitations** ?  
An event will be created in your calendar and your invitee will be added as an attendee. [Personalize](#)


**Note:** Requires a Google, Office 365 or Exchange calendar connection with the ability to add new Calendly events.  
[Switch to Email Confirmations](#)

 **Email Reminders** ?  
An invitee will receive a reminder email before a scheduled event at specified times. [Personalize](#)

 **Email Follow-Up**  
Request a review or prompt next steps with an automated email sent after the event is over. [Personalize](#)

**Use a no-reply email address**  
 Your invitee will not see your email address in event notifications sent by Calendly (this doesn't impact calendar invitations).





---

 **Text Reminders** ?  
Your invitees will have the option of receiving text reminders before a scheduled event at specified times. Inactive  OFF



### Confirmed

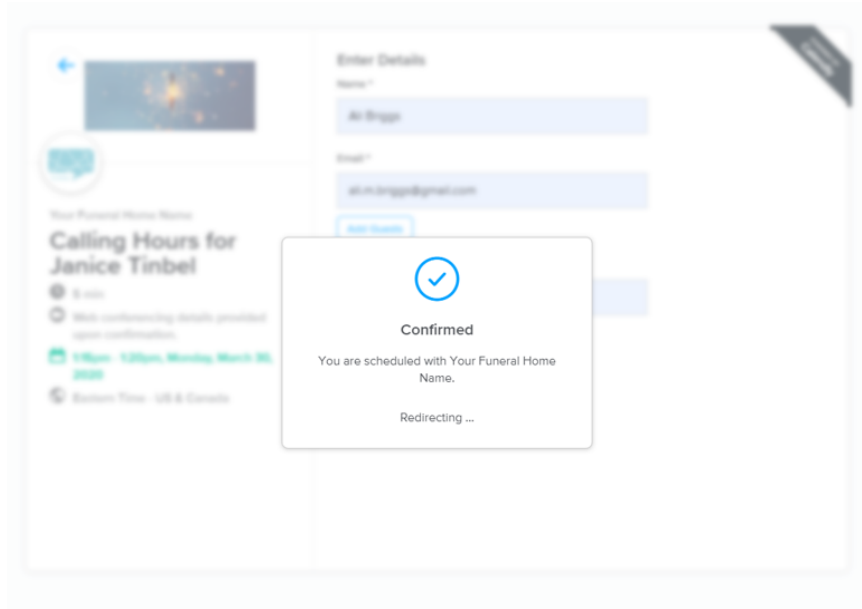
You are scheduled with Your Funeral Home Name.

-  **Calling Hours for Janice Tinbel**
-  **1:00pm - 1:05pm, Monday, March 30, 2020**
-  Eastern Time - US & Canada
-  Web conferencing details to follow.

A calendar invitation has been sent to your email address.



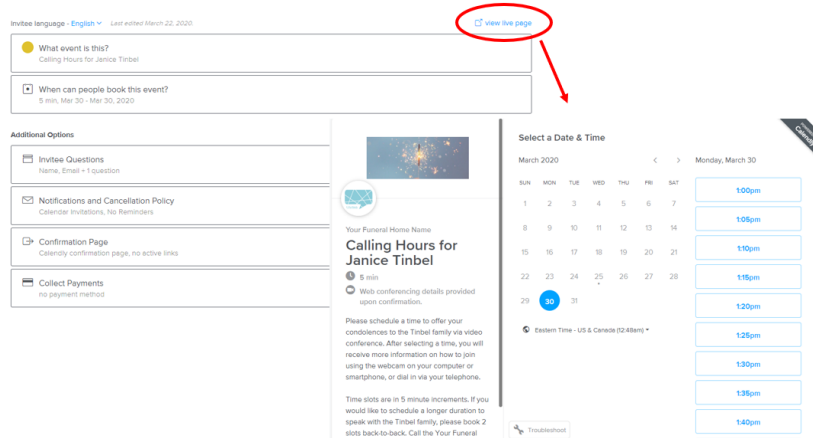
Or you can redirect the person to another site, such as the decedent’s page on your funeral home website, or a LifeWeb or other memorial page, crowdfunding site, etc. set up on their behalf. In that case, before the person scheduling is redirected to that site, they will see this:



Collect Payments  
N/A - leave blank

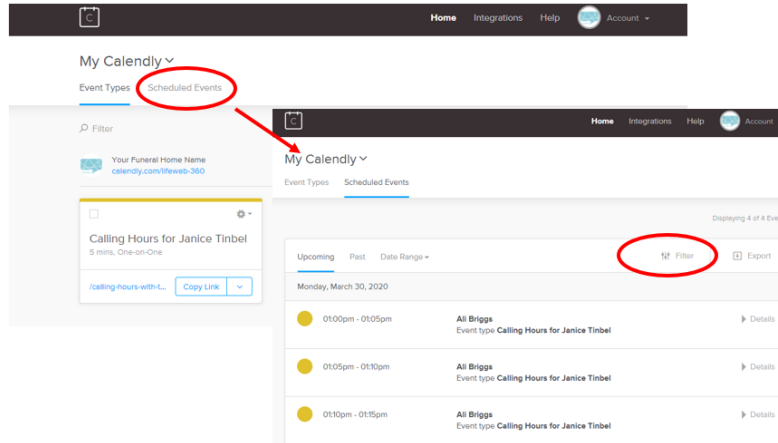
### 8. Invite guests to calling hours

From the “Edit Event Type” menu, select “View live page” in the upper right hand corner, which will take you to the public-facing scheduling link. You can share this link in the obituary, funeral home website, or anywhere else funeral arrangements are being announced.

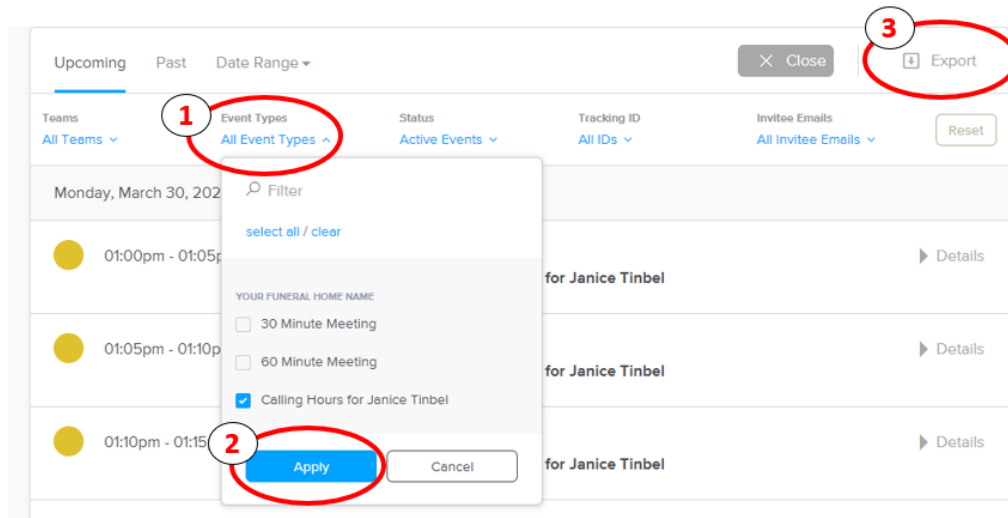


## 6. Download and format the schedule for the family

You'll now want to put all of this in an easy to follow format for the family by downloading into a spreadsheet which you can format and send to them. Navigate to "Scheduled Events" from your home view, then "filter".

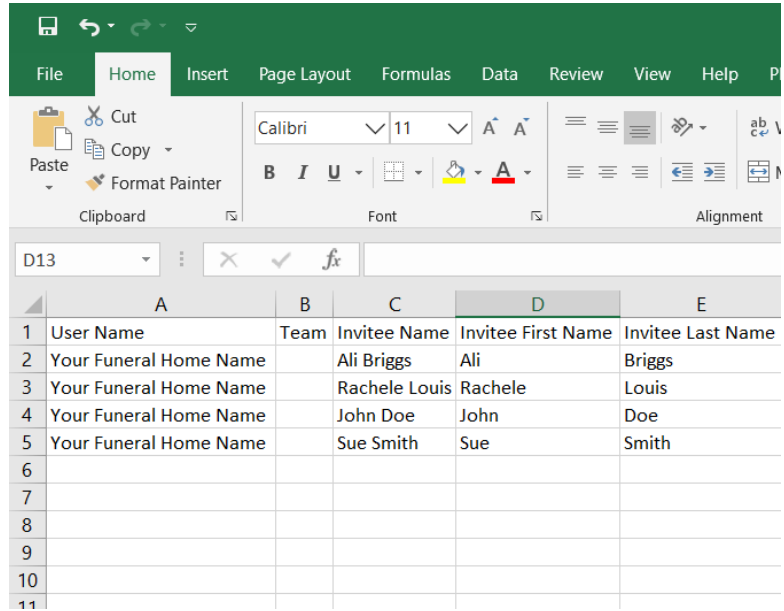


Filter the scheduled events by "Event Type" for the appropriate family, hit "Apply", then "Export".



You'll download an Excel spreadsheet with LOTS of details, most of which you don't need and which will confuse your families. Keep the following columns only and delete the rest:

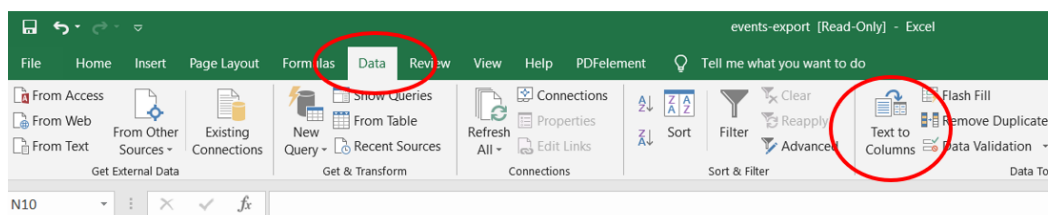
- Invitee Name > Change to "Name"
- Start Date & Time
- Location > Change to "Zoom Link"
- Add 2 blank columns to the right of the "Zoom Link" column
- Response 1 > Change to "How did you know [first name of decedent]?"



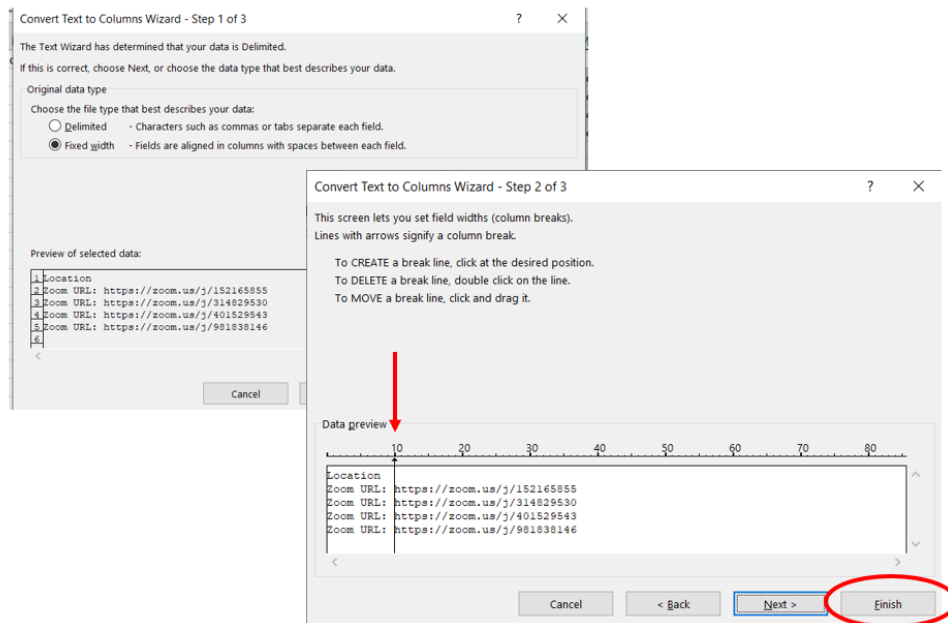
Your spreadsheet should now look like this:

|   | A             | B                            | C                                     | D | E | F                               |
|---|---------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 | <b>Name</b>   | <b>Start Date &amp; Time</b> | <b>Location</b>                       |   |   | <b>How did you know Janice?</b> |
| 2 | Ali Briggs    | 3/30/2020 13:00              | Zoom URL: https://zoom.us/j/152165855 |   |   | friend                          |
| 3 | Rachele Louis | 3/30/2020 13:05              | Zoom URL: https://zoom.us/j/314829530 |   |   | coworker                        |
| 4 | John Doe      | 3/30/2020 13:10              | Zoom URL: https://zoom.us/j/401529543 |   |   | swim camp                       |
| 5 | Sue Smith     | 3/30/2020 13:15              | Zoom URL: https://zoom.us/j/981838146 |   |   | college                         |
| 6 |               |                              |                                       |   |   |                                 |
| 7 |               |                              |                                       |   |   |                                 |

You're almost there! As a final step, you'll need to format the "Zoom Link" column into clickable hyperlinks, so it's easy for the family to join. Highlight the "Zoom Link" column by clicking on the letter at the top of the column, then navigate to "Data" > "Text to columns":



Select “Fixed Width”, then adjust the line where you want the text to break apart, i.e. right before the “https” in the URL of the zoom ID. Then, click “finish”. The URLs will separate from their earlier text.



Now your spreadsheet should look like this:

|   | A             | B                            | C               | D   | E | F                               |
|---|---------------|------------------------------|-----------------|---|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 | <b>Name</b>   | <b>Start Date &amp; Time</b> | <b>Location</b> |   |   | <b>How did you know Janice?</b> |
| 2 | Ali Briggs    | 3/30/2020 13:00              | Zoom URL:       | <a href="https://zoom.us/j/152165855">https://zoom.us/j/152165855</a> |   | friend                          |
| 3 | Rachele Louis | 3/30/2020 13:05              | Zoom URL:       | <a href="https://zoom.us/j/314829530">https://zoom.us/j/314829530</a> |   | coworker                        |
| 4 | John Doe      | 3/30/2020 13:10              | Zoom URL:       | <a href="https://zoom.us/j/401529543">https://zoom.us/j/401529543</a> |   | swim camp                       |
| 5 | Sue Smith     | 3/30/2020 13:15              | Zoom URL:       | <a href="https://zoom.us/j/981838146">https://zoom.us/j/981838146</a> |   | college                         |
| 6 |               |                              |                 |   |   |                                 |

Finally, make those hyperlinks blue and clickable so very easy for the family to join! In cell E2, write the formula `=HYPERLINK(D2)`. Hide columns C and D, and title column E “Zoom Link”. The final product:

|   | A             | B                            | E   | F                               |
|---|---------------|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
|   | <b>Name</b>   | <b>Start Date &amp; Time</b> | <b>Zoom link</b>  | <b>How did you know Janice?</b> |
| 2 | Ali Briggs    | 3/30/2020 13:00              | <a href="https://zoom.us/j/152165855">https://zoom.us/j/152165855</a> | friend                          |
| 3 | Rachele Louis | 3/30/2020 13:05              | <a href="https://zoom.us/j/314829530">https://zoom.us/j/314829530</a> | coworker                        |
| 4 | John Doe      | 3/30/2020 13:10              | <a href="https://zoom.us/j/401529543">https://zoom.us/j/401529543</a> | swim camp                       |
| 5 | Sue Smith     | 3/30/2020 13:15              | <a href="https://zoom.us/j/981838146">https://zoom.us/j/981838146</a> | college                         |

## 7. Walk the family through the process

Have the family download the Zoom application on their computer(s) for an easier user experience, although they can also join from their browser or the Zoom smartphone app.

They should use the formatted spreadsheet from the previous step as a sort of schedule to understand who they are speaking to next, how they knew their loved one, and what link to join. Because you formatted the file for them, they can just click the link and join each private meeting.

If possible, walk them through how this will work in advance. You can create an example list for them to practice with.

## 8. Offering technical support for guests

Include your funeral home phone number in the announcement of the calling hours to help attendees with the following:

### Scheduling an appointment

1. Allow people having trouble with Calendly to call and book a time slot with you directly. When someone calls, ask them for the following:
  - The name of their loved one
  - Their name
  - Their email address
2. Then navigate to the appropriate Calendly calendar and tell them the times available. Book their name and email in a time slot. Think of yourself as a restaurant host booking reservations before OpenTable :)
3. They will receive an email confirmation with the details directly from Calendly

### Joining their scheduled appointment

- You may consider adding an additional hour to the end of the total calling hours for the family, during which the family is available to be called on the phone by anyone that had technical difficulties joining at their scheduled time. This hour should not be listed on Calendly
- If someone calls unable to join, you can give them a phone number designated by the family and tell them to call anytime during this window, and if the line is busy to try back in 10-15 minutes


# Chapter 3: Live Streaming or Recording the Funeral Service

---

*Hold a timely funeral to provide initial peace for the immediate family with as much engagement from their community as technology allows*

We strongly recommend you review the latest NFDA guidance, which is constantly evolving. New resources, like these [ideas](#) from the InSight Institute of Certified Celebrants for ceremony at this time, are continuously added.

As you know, in the United States the official [NFDA guidance](#), informed by the CDC, is as follows:



**NFDA Recommendations for Funeral Homes\***

Limit funeral attendance during this period to immediate family and live stream or record the service to include other would-be attendees

Limit funeral attendance during this period to comply with governmental guidelines

No more than 10 immediate family members of the decedent in person

*\*As COVID-19 statistics and preventative measures are consistently updating, please defer to your local health officials for the most up to date guidelines and restrictions in place.*

The [official guidance](#) (as of the writing of this guide) is to limit funeral attendance to immediate family and live stream or record the service to include other would-be attendees. Next steps based on your funeral home's current set-up and capabilities for live streaming or recording:

## Questions & Answers ~ Live Streaming

Q: We don't live stream today but would like to set up ASAP

A: The NFDA has put together this [list](#) of funeral live streaming service providers, many of whom use local contractors that should be able to install live streaming hardware at your funeral home ASAP. You can also see our chart of live streaming options not specific to funeral homes in Step 1, such as Zoom and Skype.

Q: We won't be live streaming funerals in the near term, what else can we do?

A: Here are a few thoughts and suggestions on recording and replaying for family and friends unable to attend:

1. Record and host the recording on your funeral home website
2. You can record the service and distribute to would-be attendees immediately after.

## Recording A Service ~ Future Streaming or Playback

1. Set up your ideal recording device. If using a smartphone, place the phone securely on a tripod for stability. [Click here for a list of phone stands available on Amazon.](#)
2. Upload your recorded video to the cloud, to a YouTube Channel (set the video to *unlisted*) or to Vimeo. Larger files may require a paid account to ensure you have enough space.
3. Add a link for your family to view the recording. This can be a direct link to the YouTube, Dropbox, or Google Drive, or can be hosted on your Funeral Home's website. You may need to contact your web developer in order to have the video show up as soon as someone visits the space.

If you are familiar with coding and are the person updating your website, here are the specific steps you can take:

- *Copy / paste the following wherever the link you would like to hyperlink should appear:*
- `<a href="{link address}">{link address}</a>`
- *The blue highlighted portion should be completely replaced with the desired link. The link must include the https:// part of the link. Example: <a href="https://www.google.com">www.google.com</a>*
- *Why? The way the paragraph text is analyzed by most websites, adding the "<" and other characters tells the site to show the text in between those brackets as a link. In the example above, this means once saved your website should not show anything but a clickable [www.google.com](https://www.google.com)*

Be mindful of posting a video which includes copyrighted music in the background without appropriate licenses.

[Click here for more information and NFDA guidelines](#)

## Hosting The Recording on Another Website

LifeWeb 360: If your funeral home website isn't able to host a link to the live streamed or recorded video on your site, you can set up a [LifeWeb 360 page](#) for your families to host this and other information on -- see step 5 for more details, example [here](#).

[Tukios](#): Funeral homes can use Tukios's system to upload a recorded service. Tukios will host the video, create the URL, and then work with Legacy to get that video link added to an online Legacy obituary. Contact Tukios at [support@tukios.com](mailto:support@tukios.com) or 801-682-4391.

## A Note From Us For Families & Live Streamed Services

Keep in mind that this is a brand new experience for many (if not all) of your virtual attendees. We suggest creating a how-to guide for your funeral home to distribute to families, use the how-to join [PDF](#) we've created, or [contact us to help get you started](#).



## Get Creative! Help the Family Physically Feel Supported from Friends & Family Tuning In At Home

Even though only a handful of people can physically attend the funeral service, burial, or other funeral events, there are many creative ways to help them feel the support of those watching from home:

- **Line the procession route between the funeral service and burial** - Encourage people to bring signs or wear a specific color to stand out for the family. Be sure to include information on the route, time, and these specific requests in the obituary or on your funeral home website. Read more on this idea from the Homesteaders Life blog [here](#).
- **Tie white balloons or tape photos to chairs to help the service feel full** - Visually represent all the people that are present with the family via the live-stream. Allow people to send photos of themselves or notes to the family that you can tape to the backs of chairs, or tie to the strings of white balloons that you then tie to chairs.

## Chapter 4: Planning an Online Funeral Reception, Wake, Shiva, or Celebration of Life

---

A funeral is so much more than the service, as of course you know. One of the most cathartic parts of a funeral is often the reception / wake / Shiva that follows, where everyone comes to share stories and be together. Although COVID-19 has restricted our traditional funerary gatherings, families can still hold a ceremony virtually until they can convene again in person.

Although COVID-19 has restricted our traditional funerary gatherings, it's important to emphasize that families can still hold virtual gatherings to receive support from their community immediately after their loss.

Virtual gatherings and online streaming can be a great way to have friends and family can share stories, songs, and photos, just like they would at a wake or funeral reception.

If the online recording is filmed and given back to the family, they're left with the memories of a meaningful and unique service for years to come.

After the online event, families can have the time and space to pause, grieve, and take time to reflect on how they can curate an upcoming Celebration of Life event that best supports their needs. They have more time and emotional readiness to participate in this planning than usual.

Families can enlist the tech savvy and creatives in families to work together to send out invitations, design a fitting event flow, identify who would like to share stories, be the point of contact for the event logistics, and emcee the event. It's a great opportunity to get more friends and relatives involved who may be stir crazy at home and looking for a tangible way to support the family.



You can work with your families to determine who would like to share stories, songs, etc. during the memorial event and create a schedule of speakers to ensure clarity and a smooth service. Of course, there is the option of an open microphone during the event.

You have two options for helping your families host a virtual wake, depending on how resource-constrained your funeral home is:

1. [Set up for your families](#)
2. [Point them to LifeWeb's family-facing guide as a DIY resource](#)

## **Step by Step Setup for your families:**

### **Step 1 - Identify Your Family Representative(s)**

We recommend identifying two members of the family or friends who are familiar with video conferencing or would be open to learning and managing the stream. Together, these family members or friends will help design the schedule, distribute the streaming link, practice with the Zoom controls and tools, and be the emcee / Master of Ceremonies.

### **Step 2 - Register for [Zoom Pro](#) or other Conferencing service**

There are a number of video conferencing tools out there, and if you already feel comfortable with one you should absolutely use it. If you don't, we recommend Zoom for video conferencing due to its ease of use for both you and attendees, low price point, and ability to record.

[Zoom Pro](#) is the least expensive plan that gives your funeral home all the functionality you need to host a virtual wake. For \$15 / month, your home can have up to 100 participants and meet as long as you'd like. 100 participants should be enough as that counts computers joining, not people, and families will likely be joining together from 1 computer. If more than 100 participants, you can upgrade to 500 participants for \$65 / month.

The options for using Zoom in the future are endless. Besides running a virtual wake / funeral reception, include far-away family members in the arrangement, and include would-be attendees that can't attend live in any of the funeral proceedings - now and post-COVID.

## Step 3 - Configure Your Zoom Settings

Zoom has a number of setting options for different types of meetings and gatherings, including the ability to record the entire event; below are the settings we'd recommend for a virtual wake.

- Registration: not required, i.e. leave box unchecked
- Meeting ID: Generate Automatically
- Meeting Password: Required
  - *Previously recommended not to require a password to reduce hurdles to access the memorial; however, given recent Zoom "trolling" issues, password protection is recommended for added security*
- Video: On for both host and participant
- Audio: Both
- Meeting Options:
  - Enable join before host: Do not enable, i.e. leave box unchecked
  - Mute participants upon entry: Do not enable, i.e. leave box unchecked
  - Enable waiting room: Do not enable, i.e. leave box unchecked
    - *Similarly to the comment above, now recommend enabling the waiting room to reduce likelihood of Zoom "trolls"; See new section below on admitting guests from this waiting room, and read more about this change [here](#).*
  - Only authenticated users can join: Do not enable, i.e. leave box unchecked
  - Record the meeting automatically: Record in the cloud

*Your settings should reflect the screenshot on the following page:*

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Registration | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required |
|--------------|--|

---

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Meeting ID | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Generate Automatically <input type="radio"/> Personal Meeting ID 677-955-6826 |
|------------|--|

---

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Meeting Password | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Require meeting password <input type="text" value="430222"/> |
|------------------|--|

---

|       |             |   |
|-------|-------------|---|
| Video | Host        | <input checked="" type="radio"/> on <input type="radio"/> off |
|       | Participant | <input checked="" type="radio"/> on <input type="radio"/> off |

---

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| Audio | <input type="radio"/> Telephone <input type="radio"/> Computer Audio <input checked="" type="radio"/> Both |
|       | Dial from United States of America <a href="#">Edit</a>  |

---

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Meeting Options | <input type="checkbox"/> Enable join before host   |
|                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Mute participants upon entry  |
|                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enable waiting room  |
|                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Only authenticated users can join   |
|                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Record the meeting automatically <input type="radio"/> On the local computer <input checked="" type="radio"/> In the cloud |

**Zoom training information**

Zoom is a very intuitive tool to use for both you as the event host, as well as for your event attendees. However, if you'd like more help with Zoom, they have a wealth of [help resources](#). You can also join one of their [daily live training webinars](#). While these webinars are more general in nature, there will be time at the end of the session for you to get any specific questions you have answered.

If you prefer something more hands on, [schedule](#) a 1:1 training session specifically on using Zoom for a virtual memorial with the New Narrative Memorials team.

## Step 4 - Plan & Rehearse

The helpers should ask friends & family in advance who would like to share stories, songs, etc. during the memorial event, and make a schedule so it's clear whose turn it is to speak next. And of course, more attendees should be encouraged to share stories after the initial list has been covered.

Select a date and time to run through the details with the helpers to ensure everyone is able to log in, use their microphones, configure camera settings, and feel comfortable with the online streaming process.

We suggest the following tips to prepare for the live stream:

- ❑ Allow at least 1 hour for performers, speakers, emcee / Master of Ceremonies, and the Technical Manager to practice their roles
- ❑ Create a virtual 'green room' for performers and speakers to test microphones and camera connections prior to the live event
- ❑ Include a rehearsal schedule in the overall timeline for the event

Consider what else you might like to incorporate during the event, such as a slideshow, musical performance, etc.

If you'll be using a slideshow, you'll need someone to have the slideshow pulled up on their computer screen and then they will "present" their screen using the green button in the bottom center of the Zoom panel. It looks nicest if you don't have other tabs and things open on your computer, and can immediately move into "presentation" mode to fill the entire screen with the slideshow.

The easiest way to incorporate a musical performance is to have just 1 person singing to everyone else, or everyone singing but on mute and the volume on for the primary singer. Otherwise, delays in internet speeds make for a not so smooth singing experience. However, if you're feeling really creative, there are [methods](#) for creating a virtual choir.

Zoom has a LOT of functionality you can take advantage of - the sky is the limit on your creativity! Here are a few advanced maneuvers to consider and how you can use them:

- [Spotlight video](#) - Designate one speaker to the “primary” speaker for all attendees, i.e. the person who is really big on the screen. Even if there is background noise from other computers, the video will stay focused on the spotlighted speaker until you disable. Consider using this feature to spotlight each storyteller in turn.
- [Breakout rooms](#) - Mimic tables at a funeral reception by [pre-assigning attendees](#) to a group, e.g. high school friends, relatives, co-workers. After the main event, you can break everyone into their assigned groups, which will put them in smaller, more intimate video conference rooms. As moderator, you can pull everyone back together at any point. You can also have the immediate family “visit” each table by moving between each breakout room. If you use this feature, it takes some getting used to, so practice plenty in advance. You should pre-assign all attendees to a group to save time, for example by sending a survey in advance or asking a family representative to break people out; instructions [here](#).

## Step 5 - Send Invitations

Now it's time to invite family and friends. Given that video conferencing is a new concept for many people, asking the helpers to take a big role in spreading the word is important.

### Ways To Invite Guests

There are several methods to inviting guests to the online memorial service. Encourage the family you're working with to select the option most comfortable for them, whether it's via a Facebook invitation or event, direct email, or an online invite service (ie. Evite or Paperless Post).

We have created an email invitation template to help you and your families get started, access [here](#). It includes a PDF attachment explaining to attendees how to join a virtual memorial. Access this PDF explainer [here](#).

You can also include the details for the wake along with the funeral service information in the obituary and anywhere else funeral-related communications are going out, though consider how private or public the family would like the event to be.

Given the increase in “[Zoom trolling](#)”, it may be preferable to include information in the obituary to inform that there will be a virtual service, the date and time, and that invitations will be sent but to call your funeral home for more details. The family can then directly invite all attendees via email, text, Facebook, etc.

### TIP

Create a custom link with the honouree's name for easier navigation. to customized URL by shortening the link and customizing it to match your honouree's name. [A URL shortener like Bit.ly gives you creativity and flexibility.](#)  
*(and may save on a printed obituary's character count)*

## What's In An Invite?

Depending on your preferred method of communication and inviting attendees, we suggest including the following in your virtual invitations (see [template](#)):

- Date of Stream
- Time of Stream (*\*indicate time zone*)
- Link + dial-in information (see below)
- Program / Speeches (if desired)
- Anything your attendees should be aware of
  - le. wearing a specific color or bringing a prop for a group toast

## Dialing In: An Option For Those Without A Smartphone or Computer

Zoom allows participation via video call or phone call. Each Zoom invitation will include a phone number to call in to, based on your region and where your attendee is calling in from.

### TIP

If there are very important family members who may need to phone in, be sure to connect with them ahead of time to ensure they are comfortable with phoning in.

Zoom gives you a LOT of ways to join the meeting, mostly different dial-ins for people calling in on their phone. The only link you really need to send is the one circled in green below + the meeting password. However, if you plan to have less tech-enabled folks calling in, you should include at least 1 of the phone number options, as well, which you'll find when you click "copy the invitation".



## Screenshot of Your Invitation Settings Page:

The screenshot shows the 'Manage "Celebrating John"' page in a Zoom interface. The page includes the following details:

- Topic:** Celebrating John
- Description:** Bringing everyone that loved John together to share stories of his life
- Time:** Apr 6, 2020 07:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)
- Add to:** Three buttons for Google Calendar, Outlook Calendar (ics), and Yahoo Calendar are circled in red.
- Meeting ID:** 349-486-023
- Meeting Password:** A green checkmark and the text 'Require meeting password 942604' are circled in green.
- Invite Attendees:** A 'Join URL: https://zoom.us/j/349486023?pwd=SVNzVWtyZXF3WWWh3YXdYWlRodVlkdz09' is shown, and a 'Copy the invitation' button is circled in red.
- Start this Meeting:** A blue button is located in the top right corner.

## Preparing For the Stream

In the invitation to friends and family, you can encourage those that are safely able to join together to do so (e.g. family in the same household joining from the same computer). You may also want to ask them to check in advance that they have the following:

- Computer or phone with a working webcam and microphone, unless dialing in
- A quiet place to sit and enjoy the livestream. Be cognizant of your background
- Headphones, if desired
- A stable internet connection, optimized for speed as much as possible:
  - Wired internet connection is better than wireless (WiFi)
  - Close unneeded applications on your device
  - Ask others at home to limit high bandwidth activities during the event like streaming and downloading

This information and more included in our PDF on how to join a virtual wake - download [here](#).

## Step 6 - Holding The Event

### Facilitation

A member of your funeral home will need to “open” the Zoom room to begin the event as the event host. We recommend logging in 15 - 20 minutes early for anyone who arrives early. Being the host means you can mute all participants, unmute people selectively, and control the recording. You can also end the event for all participants.

### Update: Zoom Waiting Room

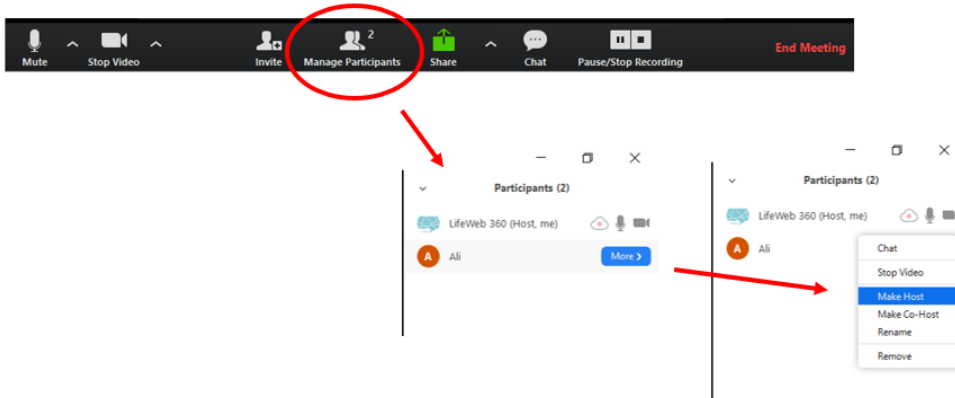
A Zoom waiting room is a virtual staging area that prevents attendees from joining a meeting until the host is ready. As of April 3, Zoom recommends meeting hosts use the waiting room feature to reduce the risk of [Zoom trolling](#), a terrible social-distancing phenomena.

As the host, you can either admit attendees one by one, or all at once. Given the difficulty of creating a complete guest list for a funeral event, where by nature some attendees will not be known by the family, the best use of this feature for our purposes may be the ability to quickly remove individual attendees from the call and not let re-join (in the unlikely event that is necessary).

Learn more about how to use the Zoom waiting room [here](#), which includes a 1-minute overview video of the feature.

### Re-assigning an Event Host

If you will be managing the technical side of the event, you should stay as the event host. Otherwise, hand off the controls to one of the “helpers” you identified in step 1. Because you have a Zoom Pro account, the event will continue to run for an unlimited time, even if you leave the event and the new host is a free Zoom user. [You can find detailed instructions by clicking on this link](#) or see the screenshot below:



*Note: If the new host accidentally ends the meeting for everyone, you can re-start it from your Zoom admin panel, and again re-hand over “host” controls to the helper.*

It’s up to your team and your family if a member of your funeral home’s staff will provide technical support, become the celebrant, or introduce each speaker as they are unmuted and take the microphone.

## Opening The Ceremony

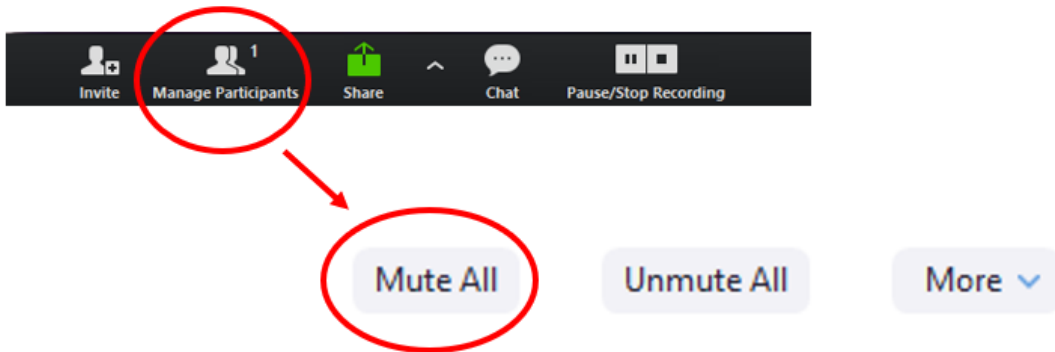
Your Master of Ceremonies or Celebrant will be responsible for welcoming the group to the virtual event. We recommend they include some of the following pointers in their opening remarks:

- Welcome and thank you for attending virtually
- Perhaps a note to acknowledge and make mention of this new experience and time in our society and world
- Acknowledging guests who are tuning in from all parts of the city / country / world
- Mention the livestream and if it’s public or private
- Let guests know if there are plans to create an in-person event once physical distancing bans have been lifted
- There will be speeches and/or performances from selected family & friends  
There is a host [*name*] who will be ensuring each speaker has their moment to speak, uninterrupted
- This stream may be recorded by the family  
*\*\*Please mention that attendees’ faces will be recorded. If attendees do not want their face to be shown, they may turn off their camera while their voice can be heard during an open mic*
- Mention if there will be an open microphone session

The helper who is not the emcee should keep track of who would like to share a story after all the scheduled speakers have gone by checking comments in the “chat” feature.

They can do this in a Google Sheet or other document that is shared with the emcee, so everyone is on the same page about who is speaking next.

If there's a lot of background noise, the host can mute all participants, then selectively unmute people based on whose turn it is to speak (or ask the speaker to unmute themselves):

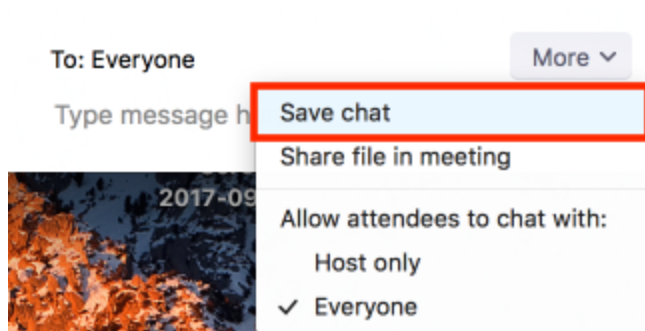


If you'd like to display a slideshow, you can do so by having the emcee share their screen which plays a slideshow.

### **Saving The Chat Box Before You End The Ceremony**

Download the in-meeting “chat” to serve as a sort of guestbook. You’ll likely find that many people are adding their own stories and reactions to others’ stories using this chat feature, so as not to disturb the flow of the event. While the format of the saved chat isn’t much to write home about, it’s easy to do and serves as a nice keepsake. Easy to follow instructions [here](#) to save the chat manually, or configure your Zoom settings to automatically save all chats.



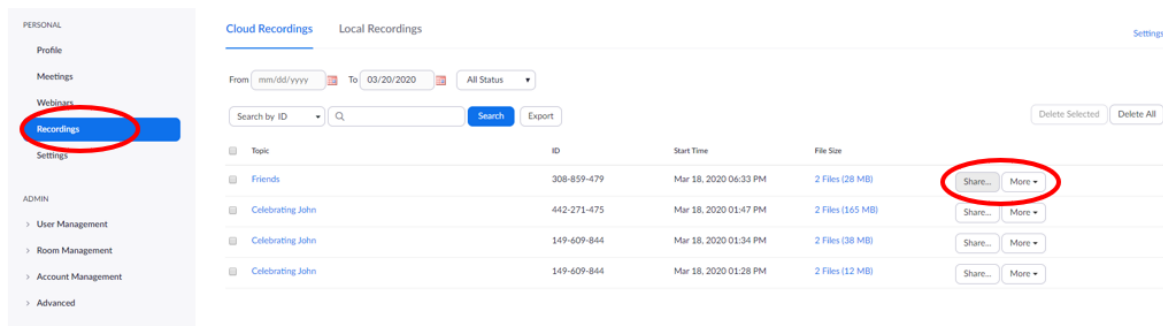


If you do not enable auto-saving of the chat, you MUST save the chat before you end the meeting for everyone.

## Step 7 - Share The Event Recording with Family

If you selected the “record to cloud” option in your settings, you will be able to access the recording a few hours after the event. Zoom will send you an email when the recording is ready, and you can also access in the Recording section of your Zoom admin panel. See screenshot below.

Click “more” to download the recording to your hard drive, or “share” to send a link to the recording to the family directly. You can even add a password. Be sure to rename the file with the family’s name for posterity and reference.



### Share this cloud recording

Share this recording

Publicly

Only authenticated users can view

Viewers can download

On-demand(Registration Required)

Password protect

#### Recording Link Information

Topic: Friends  
Start Time : Mar 18, 2020 06:33 PM

Meeting Recording:  
[https://zoom.us/rec/share/vc1qNu\\_X2CBJQp3VuBuFFfYjI9nlaaa81iZL\\_fpbzBovs1Af3HikFqomHfC2qV8w](https://zoom.us/rec/share/vc1qNu_X2CBJQp3VuBuFFfYjI9nlaaa81iZL_fpbzBovs1Af3HikFqomHfC2qV8w)

Select, copy and paste the recording links.

[Point the family to LifeWeb’s family-facing guide as a DIY resource](#)

Direct the family to the LifeWeb 360’s [DIY guide](#) for planning and hosting a virtual wake.

# Chapter 5: Ongoing Community Support

---

*Encourage the community around your family to support them with a few technology-supported ideas during this period of social distancing, when everyone is already feeling isolated, and beyond*

After the events of the day, we always hear from families that they are comforted by the amount of people physically around them. People dropping by the house, bringing a casserole, watching a movie together, looking at photos. Families tell us that it's a month or so AFTER the funeral when they feel most alone and really need support, because all those people are gone. Imagine how they are feeling during social distancing, when that feeling of isolation begins much sooner.

## **Encourage memory and condolence sharing**

When you speak to friends and relatives of your families, or in messaging you put out on your social media page and website, consider encouraging families to lean into memory and condolence sharing which will provide families a visible reminder that others are thinking of them and their loved one.

- Virtual condolences: Encourage condolence sharing on your funeral home website, Legacy.com's guestbook, or anywhere else you already see memory and condolence sharing online today
- Cards & calls: Encourage friends and relatives to send sympathy cards and call the bereaved family, as they always have
- Memorialized Facebook pages: Many people share messages of sympathy and memories on Facebook when someone passes. You can let your families know about the option to memorialize their loved one's Facebook account, which will preserve their page, create a "Tributes" section for new messages, and notify Facebook not to include them as suggested invitees for events, etc. More info [here](#).
- Community Vigil: Ask friends and family to light a candle, listen to a specific piece of music, or eat a favourite meal at a certain day and time, together.

## Virtual Ways To Show up For Each Other

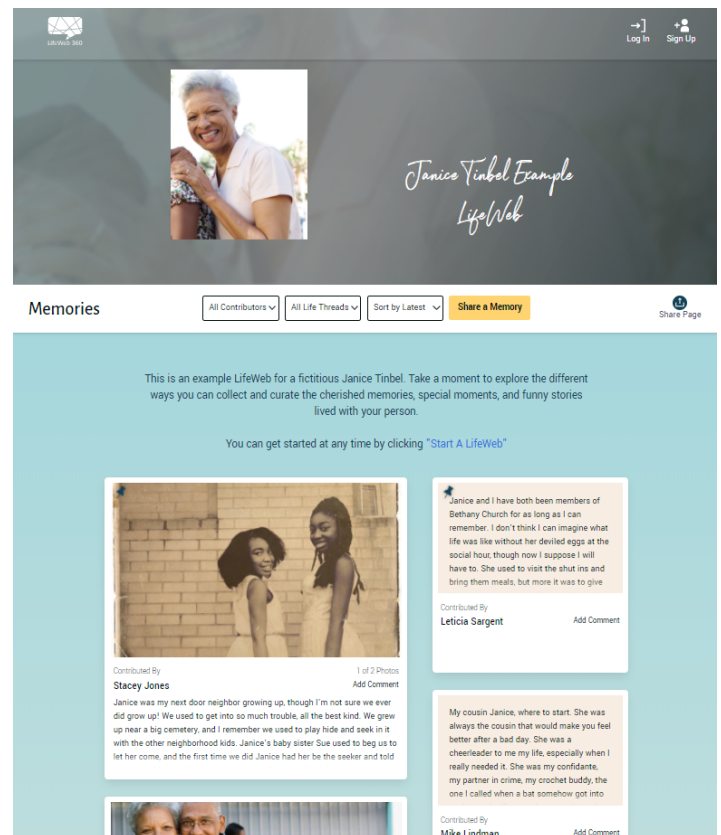
Key things friends and relatives can still do include spending time with the bereaved family, sending food, sharing memories - truly the same things we have always done to comfort others - albeit with a bit of technology. A few ideas:

- Virtual tea or wine date - WhatsApp video chat, Google Hangouts, and Facetime are easy to use, free options. Have some tea, paint your nails
- Look at photos together - Use a screen sharing tool like Google Hangouts or Zoom to look at photos together on Google or Apple Photos, someone's computer, etc.
- Watch a movie together - Use [Netflix Party](#) mode, or good old fashioned hitting play at the same time + video chat on your phone
- Recommend this [Story-sharing & listening guidebook for virtual gatherings](#) from The People's Supper, packed with actionable ideas for facilitating a meaningful virtual supper. Help families grieving spend real time together with others that care about them

## Collect memories into a multimedia scrapbook with LifeWeb 360

[LifeWeb 360](#)'s mission is to help communities that have lost a loved one to gather memories and celebrate their life, authentically. Their free collaborative storytelling platform makes it easy to collect and preserve photos, videos, and memories from friends and family and create a community for ongoing sharing. Founded in 2019, LifeWeb 360 has helped thousands of people around the world to honor their loved ones and make meaning from a loss.

The service also includes reminders to these friends and relatives on key dates to check in with the family, updates on memorial events and tributes, and ideas for how to support a grieving friend.





*Quick steps to use LifeWeb 360 if you find it a helpful resource for your families:*

### **1. Set up a [LifeWeb](#) at no charge**

You can set a LifeWeb up for the family, they can set up themselves, or your best option is to ask the helpers you enlisted for the virtual wake to own this. All you need to get started is a photo of the person; if you don't have one, you can stick with a pre-set image selected by the LifeWeb 360 team to represent their light. See an example LifeWeb [here](#) which includes a link to the virtual wake.

Memories can be shared publicly or privately, and privacy settings can always be changed later.

Choose from the free tier which includes unlimited story, photo, and video link sharing, or from the premium tier which includes additional memory collection and curation features. Memories stay online forever. Create a LifeWeb [here](#).

### **2. Identify 1-2 people that can get the word out**

The goal of LifeWeb is to help friends and relatives come together to support the bereaved family, with as little burden on the family as possible. If you set up for the family, you'll want to identify 1-2 relatives, family friends, etc. that can make the memory collection a success.

As the creator of a LifeWeb, you will automatically be an admin for that LifeWeb, which means you can set privacy settings, add a photo, welcome message, and obituary. You can easily add the friends, relatives, or family members you've identified as helpers to also be admins of the page with those same permissions. If you'd like a clean "hand-off" with the family, you can remove yourself as an admin from the page once you've added other admins.

We will then communicate directly with those admins going forward, i.e. no more work on your part. We will ask them to think of the different "circles" of people their person was a part of - work, school, hobbies, childhood, etc. - and try to identify a "captain" in each circle to help them spread the word and collect memories from others in that circle.

### **3. Watch a scrapbook of their life come together**

That's it, as photos and stories are shared, watch them organized by "life thread" and built on by others. Life threads are the themes of their life - from the things and groups of people most important to them to how they've made others feel. They're sort of like "tags" on social media, and are used to organize the memories.

The LifeWeb 360 team has a review system in place to ensure all memories shared are in the spirit of honoring the person before they are posted.

The memories can also be transformed into a physical book that can be held in your hands. The LifeWeb team formats the layout of the book so the family doesn't have to, then it's printed by an artisanal printer as a true legacy product.

#### **4. Integrate the LifeWeb with a virtual memorial event**

Many families are using the LifeWeb page during informal virtual memorial events like wakes and funeral receptions to drive story sharing; simply have someone share their screen during the event and pull up the LifeWeb page, then look at the memories shared as a group and ask everyone to join in on the memory sharing out loud.

Additionally, many families and celebrants are finding it helpful to read excerpts from the stories shared on the LifeWeb page during the service, or incorporating them into their eulogy as examples to highlight the unique attributes of the person. Consider coordinating with the funeral celebrant to shine a light on the most impactful stories shared on the LifeWeb page during the service.

#### **5. LifeWeb engages the community for support over time**

Anyone that visits the LifeWeb page can opt into notifications for different ways to stay involved:

- Reminders of important dates to check in with the family (birthday, anniversary of passing)
- Memorial events & tributes
- Ideas from LifeWeb 360 on ways to celebrate your loved ones & support a grieving friend
- Notifications when new memories are shared

Allowing site visitors to opt into notifications for memorial events and tributes ensures no one is forgotten when the future Celebration of Life occurs.

#### **6. Integrate the LifeWeb with an in-person memorial event**

The memories shared can be showcased in different ways at a larger future Celebration of Life event, like creating a slideshow from the photos shared.

The LifeWeb 360 team can help you set up different options for collecting memories at the event, which can be added to the LifeWeb to continue building their story. Other LifeWeb event tools include sharing memory cards, a live word cloud creation activity, and a memory sharing station to record stories live. Contact the LifeWeb 360 team at [partners@lifeweb360.com](mailto:partners@lifeweb360.com) for more details.

# Chapter 6: Planning and Hosting a Future Celebration of Life Event

---

*Use this time between the arrangement and the end of restrictions on gatherings to help the family plan a truly unique and spectacular Celebration of Life.*

Once it's time to implement a Celebration of Life event, whether digitally or after the social distancing has lifted, the family may be wondering how to infuse an online event or an in-person gathering with the same joie de vivre as their person had.

Here are a few ideas for during and after the physical distancing period to help you plan for an unforgettable commemoration:

## During Physical Distancing Restrictions

*There are many ways to make an online memorial special. [Connect with us at New Narrative for a complimentary consultation.](#)*

- **Consider the date and time as a creative nod to your honoree.** Whether someone enjoyed hosting dinner parties, family lunches on Sundays, or was a respected businessperson, consider hosting your online event on a day and/or time that would fit well with their demeanour and the way they lived their life. Suggestion: a Sunday morning event around 'brunch time' for someone who loved their bacon & eggs. Just make sure everyone makes their own at home :)
- **Ask your attendees to all wear a certain colour when tuning in.** There is nothing more fantastic than seeing a sea of faces on a screen all wearing turquoise or bright yellow when appearing. If clothing stores have all closed down in your area, consider choosing 2 - 3 favourite colours for guests to choose from what they already have at home.
- **Include live performances and music.** When creating a schedule for the event, feel free to put out a call for people who would like to sing or perform for a couple of minutes. This time of isolation has been ripe for creativity from those staying indoors. Leaving a few days or weeks could be perfect for creating a tribute.

- **Archive and download any shared photos or videos.** While the family is reading comments, memories, seeing pictures, and reading the lovely messages sent to them from their friends and family, encourage them to keep a Google Drive document full of names and email addresses for you to follow up with prior to the Celebration of Life event. Alternatively, your funeral home website may allow guests to sign up for notifications for an upcoming event
- **Think about the future in-person event.** If you consider that a Celebration of Life can be just as large (if not larger, in some cases) than a wedding reception, you'll want to think about how you are going to go about planning a large event! Enlisting an event planner to help you shift gears from having just 3 days to plan, to the luxury but added challenges of having 3 months to plan, can be very helpful.

### **Ideas To Keep Families Connected Between the Online and Live Events:**

- Encourage friends and family to contribute to a collective photo album or scrapbook.
- Create a collective playlist of songs that remind you of your person
- Ask attendees to submit written pieces or photos of themselves at a favourite spot that reminds them of your honouree
- Help the family with scheduling monthly or weekly check-ins with family and friends. Encourage them to take advantage of their Zoom subscription

[Connect with us at New Narrative for a complimentary consultation.](#)

## After Physical Distancing

*When families are able to connect in person again, your funeral home can offer to host a second, in-person event including several elements from the previous, technology-enabled events you've helped them to facilitate. Here are a few ways you can encourage families to continue planning the event so you can follow up to host their memorial after restrictions have been lifted.*

- **Create a special day and time for the event.** If the funerary arrangements have been taken care of when the distancing has been lifted, the family will have flexibility in choosing a date and time that holds meaning to them. Consider holding the event on a special birthday, anniversary, or create a new date to commemorate their person.
- **Choose a venue that reflects their loved one's personality - and guest count.** Now that families have a list of friends, colleagues, and acquaintances to invite, you will have a better idea of what size venues to consider. Be conscious that many people may not want to travel at this time and that a couple of weeks may be needed to secure the ideal location that fits your guest count and ideal aesthetic.
- **Incorporate archived photos and video from the decedent's funeral home page, LifeWeb 360 site, or Facebook page.** While friends and family are uploading photos, videos, audio files, and posting memories, consider downloading these pictures to cloud-based storage. With a service like Google Drive, Dropbox, iCloud, or Microsoft One, you can keep these precious images for creating a slideshow when your family is ready to host a Celebration of Life.
- **Implement special touches. If you asked guests to dress in a certain color or say a specific passage, consider bringing these elements into your in-person ceremony.** If asking guests to light a candle or eat favourite foods, this could be a great opportunity to incorporate guest favors or takeaways for the day.
- **Encourage family and friends to stay connected.** Whether via the LifeWeb 360 platform or by creating an annual commemorative event, consider helping the family use their guest list to create traditions in the years to come to celebrate their loved one in their own way.

# Additional Resources

---

## VIDEOS

- [NFDA webinars](#) with COVID-19 guidance
- MKJ Marketing: [Webinar](#) and [slides](#) on marketing during Coronavirus
- [Home Funeral Guide and Pandemic Care](#)
- Grief support perspectives from ADEC
  - [Best practices](#) in grief and bereavement tele-therapy
  - [COVID-19: Grief, Loss of the Assumptive World and Meaning-Making](#)
  - [COVID-19: Grief, Bereavement, and Death at a Distance: Perspectives on The Impact to the Community](#)

## ARTICLES

- NFDA Guidance: [Dealing with Families During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) by Dr. Alan Wolfelt
- Article - Remembering a Life: [Loss in a Pandemic Funeral Planning](#)
- [The Inspired Funeral: "Sample Ceremonies"](#)
- Oregon Funeral Alliance's ["How to Create Ceremony"](#)
- NY Times opinion article - ["The Surprising Intimacy of the Live-Streamed Funeral"](#)

## LINKS TO SHARE

- [Interactive PDF to Prepare for Potential Hospital Stay](#) by Banister Advisors
- [Funerals in the time of a pandemic: A toolkit for children and families](#)
- Free Checklists are available from the following companies:  
[Lantern](#) | [Farewelling](#) | [Everplans](#) | [GatheringUs](#)
- Virtual grief support
  - [Grief Plan](#): Video and worksheet-based online grief program by Dr. Jason Troyer
  - [Better Help](#): Match with an online grief therapist
  - [Grief Coach](#): Text-based grief support to a grieving person and up to 4 friends
  - [PNW Grief](#): Live online grief education and group support facilitated by qualified professionals
- Resources for grieving children during social distancing

- [Funerals in the time of a pandemic - a toolkit for children & families](#) from Good Grief
- [My Good Grief Journal App](#), recommended by the [Eluna Network](#) (who have a wonderful library of resources). Activities & journaling to spark conversations between grieving children and their adults

## Post-COVID, how else can I use my new technology superpowers?

---

Video conferencing:

- Include out-of-town family members in arrangements
- Include friends and family that can't make it to any part of the funeral proceedings, whether due to distance, illness, or other inability to attend live

Calendly:

- Allow families to book a time from up-to-date availability on your calendar for pre-need arrangements, etc. Save time on the endless back and forth to align on a time that works for everyone, and ask screener questions so you're informed on key information prior to the meeting to allow you to best tailor the discussion

Gruveo:

- Use your funeral home's Gruveo handle as an additional phone line for customers to call you during business hours via video call

LifeWeb 360

- Communicate with the community around your bereaved families when your funeral home will be holding remembrance events, e.g. on Memorial Day or holiday programs

# Contact Us

---

We're so grateful to be able to help you and your families at this time. Please contact us with questions, what's working for you, and other ideas for how we can improve the guide.

Ali Briggs, [LifeWeb 360](#)

[ali@lifeweb360.com](mailto:ali@lifeweb360.com)

Phone: 708 320 1084

Christina Andreola, [New Narrative](#)

[christina@newnarrative.ca](mailto:christina@newnarrative.ca)

Cell: +1 778 960 8782