

The Seattle Times

Honoring the dead in trying circumstances

Re: [“Funerals prohibited in Washington state in effort to slow coronavirus spread”](#) [March 19, Northwest]:

This is only half of the story. Thousands of faith communities throughout the state stand ready to care for those affected by COVID-19, including end-of-life honors, rituals, blessings, and prayers.

The day before the story, I, along with nearly 100 other members of local faith communities, participated in a conference call with King County Public Health and representatives from the CDC. Funerals and memorial services are not, in fact, prohibited. This is an important distinction to make. Funeral businesses may be operating in a reduced capacity and gatherings in those places may be suspended, however, our churches, synagogues and mosques are up and running, actively caring for their neighborhoods in creative ways.

Faith communities have always found ways to honor the dead, even in the most trying of circumstances. I have no doubt that we are up to the task now to pay respectful tributes to any one of us who may face death as a result of this outbreak.

Rev. Kelly Wadsworth, Alki United Church of Christ, Seattle

March 22, 2020