



be comforted with the message that God is with us in our darkness, in a special

The [national online service](#) to be broadcast this weekend is to be led by Oxfordshire curate Revd Sorrel Shamel-Wood and will be marked by prayers for all those facing a 'difficult' or sad Christmas ahead.

"As we begin to look forward to Christmas, it is of course a joyful time, but it is also a time for many different powerful emotions. It is a time when we gather together as family and friends and for many people that joy will be accompanied by a sense of loss," she will say.

"For many families and communities there may be an extra space at the table, maybe someone who has died or a separation or estrangement, maybe a friend or a loved one who is living abroad."

The service includes a sermon from the Canon Pastor of Coventry Cathedral, Revd Kathryn Fleming, who will speak of the 'weight of collective sadness' people feel over the impact of the Covid pandemic.

Speaking from the Chapel of Christ in Gethsemane in the Cathedral, she will say: "For most of us, the past two years will have seen the landscape of our lives reshaped in ways we would never have chosen and could not have imagined.

"There is a weight of collective sadness for the old pre-Covid world where life felt so much more certain, so much less provisional. And for many this coming season feels very short of comfort and joy in the absence of someone much loved who has gone from here too soon."

The service will also include personal testimony from people who have been bereaved. These include Revd Canon Yvonne Tulloch, who founded the charity [At A Loss](#), following the death of her husband in 2008, which helps bereaved people find support,.

She said: 'Christmas is difficult at the best of times for anyone who has been bereaved and this year, after all the restrictions that we have for more than 18 months, it's likely to be particularly hard.'

The service is one of a number of ways in which the Church of England is aiming to help those suffering sadness, bereavement or isolation over Christmas.

The Church of England's national online services and reflections are available to be heard on the [Daily Hope line](#), the free 24 hour telephone line from the Church of England.

[A live 'carols and chat' event will be held on YouTube on Christmas Day for those on their own to chat and singalong together.](#)

The Church of England will share on Twitter mental health reflections and phone lines for those alone on Christmas Day.

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