

Announcements and Reminders

March 2021

FOR ELDERS

1. **Medical Matters:** An updated listing of Hospital Liaison Committee members is available when you are logged in to jw.org. (Go to LOOKUP > CONTACTS.) Each elder should ensure that he has ready access to this information in case of an emergency. This listing is not for general circulation. Therefore, copies should not be made for publishers or posted on the information board. In an emergency, you may print the durable power of attorney (DPA) card from jw.org.—*sfl* chap. 11.

2. **Songs at Congregation Meetings:** Some have asked whether it is appropriate to play original songs during congregation meetings. Songs from only “*Sing Out Joyfully*” to *Jehovah—Meetings* should be used during congregation meetings unless directed otherwise by the organization. Elders should not make exceptions on their own. The *Shepherd* book, chapter 20, paragraph 22, will be updated to reflect this clarification in due course.

3. **Arrangements for the Watchtower Study and Congregation Bible Study:** We have received reports that some congregations are separating the congregation into smaller groups when holding the weekly *Watchtower* Study or Congregation Bible Study via videoconference. As stated in *Videoconferencing Systems for Meetings* (S-179), “meetings held by videoconference should *closely follow* the established arrangements and format for meetings held at the Kingdom Hall.” This means that the entire congregation should meet together for the *Watchtower* Study and Congregation Bible Study if this is how it would take place in the Kingdom Hall. (See *Instructions for Our Christian Life and Ministry Meeting* [S-38], paragraph 25, for direction on holding auxiliary classes. See the *Shepherd* book, chapter 24, paragraphs 9-12, for direction on meetings, or portions of meetings, held by pregroups and groups.) In the rare case that the body of elders believes there are extenuating circumstances that require organizing separate videoconferences for the *Watchtower* Study or Congregation Bible Study, please contact your circuit overseer before implementing such an arrangement.

4. **Arrangements for Meetings for Field Service:** Some congregations have started to use the meeting for field service to hold *extended* Scriptural discussions, view Governing Body video updates, conduct interviews, and so forth before engaging in the ministry. Those who conduct meetings for field service should adhere to the arrangements for this meeting as outlined in our publications, even if it is held via videoconference.—1 Cor. 4:6; *od* chap. 7 par. 21.

5. As a reminder, the purpose of the meeting for field service is to provide practical suggestions that publishers can use in the ministry. It should be concluded *within five to seven minutes*. When it follows a congregation meeting, the meeting for field service should be even shorter, since those in attendance have already enjoyed a fine Scriptural discussion. Before ending the meeting with a brief prayer, all should know the arrangements for the witnessing period. Such brief meetings for field service enable all to spend more time in the ministry.

6. We truly appreciate your efforts to encourage our dear brothers and sisters, especially during the pandemic. However, recognizing the appropriate time and place for shepherding allows us to make the best use of our time in the all-important work of the ministry.

7. Private Meetings Arranged via Videoconference: “The faithful and discreet slave” has provided practical, Scriptural guidance that highlights principles for individuals to consider when deciding whether to organize or attend a social gathering. (Matt. 24:45-47) Rather than making rules, the emphasis should be on applying Bible principles. When Bible principles are applied, social gatherings can be refreshing and bring honor to Jehovah. —1 Cor. 10:23, 24, 31, 32.

8. While there is no objection to wholesome social gatherings, we have received reports that some have begun to arrange *additional meetings and events for spiritual instruction*, even beginning and ending such meetings with prayer. While the individuals organizing and participating in such meetings likely are well-intentioned, there is no provision for such arrangements.

9. Jehovah’s people receive ample spiritual instruction and encouragement at congregation meetings, assemblies, and conventions as well as through JW Broadcasting and our publications. Under the guidance of his holy spirit and on the basis of his Word of truth, Jehovah provides what is needed through the faithful and discreet slave. Care should be taken not to organize or promote meetings for spiritual feeding beyond what has been provided by the organization. Such meetings could detract from what Jesus Christ is accomplishing through his congregation on earth today. Adhering to this direction will help all of God’s people to “be completely united in the same mind and in the same line of thought” and to remain “stabilized in the faith.”—1 Cor. 1:10; Col. 2:6, 7.

FOR COORDINATORS OF THE BODIES OF ELDERS

1. Announcements for Congregations: Please ensure that the announcements for congregations are read at the next midweek meeting.

2. Special Talk and Memorial Reminders: At the next midweek meeting, please ensure that the congregation is reminded of the local arrangements for presenting the special talk and observing the Memorial. Highlight that with advance planning, it should be possible for most publishers to acquire the Memorial emblems.

3. Public Talk Media Playlist (S-34mp): A playlist for displaying images and playing videos referred to in public talk outlines will soon be released in the “Forms” section of the “Documents” tab when logged in to jw.org. If available in your language, this playlist may be used for the 2021 special talk. Once downloaded, the *Public Talk Media Playlist* will need to be opened in *JW Library*. If an outline calls for a video, the video should be downloaded before the meeting. Some videos can be downloaded using the link in the playlist. Other videos must first be downloaded from the “Event Media” section of the “Documents” tab and then opened in *JW Library*. *Media Playback Using JW Library* (S-144) will soon be updated to include instructions on the use of playlists. Likewise, a new document entitled *Media Playback Using JW Library Sign Language* (S-127) will soon be made available on jw.org. Please ensure that those working with sound and video during congregation meetings are aware of the release of these documents.

FOR SECRETARIES

1. Congregation Information: A new responsibility called “Congregation Reports” has been added to the Congregation Information feature on jw.org. Please use this feature to indicate which ministerial servants, if any, have been approved by the body of elders to enter congregation reports, such as monthly field service and meeting attendance figures and Memorial attendance figures, on jw.org.

2. **Memorial Reporting:** The jw.org feature for reporting Memorial attendance and partakers has been updated. In the “Congregation” section of the home page that appears after logging in to jw.org, select the “Reports” link and then the “Memorial” link.

FOR SERVICE OVERSEERS

1. **Literature Inventory:** In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the semiannual congregation literature inventory will be delayed until further notice.

2. **Medical Matters:** Ensure that a sufficient supply of durable power of attorney (DPA) cards is maintained by the literature servant.

3. **Arrangements for Meetings for Field Service:** Please ensure that those who conduct the meetings for field service are informed of the direction in paragraphs 4-6 of the announcements for elders.

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FOR CONGREGATIONS

1. **Medical Matters:** Baptized publishers may obtain a durable power of attorney (DPA) card at any time from the literature servant. If any publisher (baptized or unbaptized) needs assistance in locating a cooperative doctor and medical facility that have experience in bloodless medicine, the elders will be pleased to assist. Any time you expect to be hospitalized, we recommend that you inform one of the elders ahead of time. When hospitalized, publishers are encouraged to inform the hospital that they would welcome a visit from a minister of Jehovah's Witnesses.

2. **Special Morning Worship on Day of Memorial:** We eagerly look forward to obeying Jesus' command to "keep doing this." (Luke 22:19) Those words refer to the observance of the Memorial of Christ's death, which we will observe on **Saturday, March 27, 2021**, after sundown. In connection with that special day, the Governing Body has approved all who have access to jw.org or *JW Library* to have the opportunity to enjoy a discussion of the text for that day, which will be presented by a member of the Governing Body. The program will also include the Memorial Bible reading for the dates equivalent to Nisan 13 and Nisan 14. Therefore, on the morning of March 27, 2021, we encourage everyone to allow themselves enough time before their daily activities begin to enjoy the 15-minute program. The program may be accessed in the same way as other JW Broadcasting programs.

3. **Enjoy Life Forever!:** Once the new *Enjoy Life Forever!* brochure becomes available in your language, you may use it to start Bible studies. It contains the first three lessons from the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book. After completing the brochure, if the student wishes to continue studying and the book is available in your language, you may continue the study starting in the fourth lesson of the book. If the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book is not yet available in your language, you may continue the study in the *Teach Us* book. Once the new brochure and the book are available in your language, they will replace the *Teach Us* and the *Remain in God's Love* books and the *Good News* and the *Jehovah's Will* brochures in our Teaching Toolbox. The *Enjoy Life Forever!* book covers everything that the student needs to learn to qualify for Christian baptism.

4. If you are already studying with someone in the *Teach Us* or the *Remain in God's Love* book, you may determine when to transfer to the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book and where to begin in the book. However, if the Bible student has already studied the *Teach Us* book and is completing the last few chapters of *Remain in God's Love*, you may decide to complete that publication and encourage the student to study the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book on his own. If your student has completed the *Listen to God* or the *Listen to God and Live Forever* brochure, discuss the material in the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book according to the student's ability. We encourage you to become thoroughly familiar with the new brochure and book, perhaps by studying them during family worship. By doing so, you will be able to use these new tools more effectively.

5. **Writing to Imprisoned Brothers:** Many publishers have inquired about sending letters to brothers who are imprisoned for their faith. There is no arrangement for the branch office to provide addresses for these brothers or to forward personal letters, packages, or gifts to them. Writing to imprisoned brothers is a personal matter. Thus, it would not be appropriate to organize groups or campaigns for the purpose of writing to imprisoned brothers unless instructed by your branch office to do so.

6. We commend you for 'keeping in mind' our brothers who are imprisoned for their faith. (Heb. 13:3) In the first century, imprisoned brothers such as Peter and Paul were greatly helped by the prayers of fellow believers. **(Read Acts 12:5.)** May we never cease praying in behalf of our dear imprisoned brothers, trusting that Jehovah will give them the strength to endure!—Eph. 6:18; Heb. 10:34.