

Announcement

June 2, 2022

FOR ELDERS IN THE UNITED STATES BRANCH TERRITORY

1. Adjustments to Activities Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic: We warmly commend you for your sincere efforts to apply the principles provided by the organization during this global pandemic. Until recently, steps have been taken to avoid as many risks as possible to prevent cases of COVID-19. However, vaccines and booster shots have proved to be effective against COVID-19. Additionally, in many places, effective treatments are now available. As a result, hospitalizations and deaths have generally decreased, especially among those fully vaccinated. Therefore, it seems appropriate to take a "living with COVID" approach. In view of this, in addition to resuming all aspects of the public ministry with the exception of door-to-door witnessing, further adjustments are being made to activities related to the pandemic. *Direction Related to COVID-19 Pandemic for Bodies of Elders* will be updated with these adjustments in due course.

2. Discontinuation of COVID-19 Location-Specific Direction: COVID-19 location-specific direction will no longer be provided on jw.org. As you consider the impact of the pandemic in your area, you may find it helpful to consult the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) COVID Data Tracker](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19/data-tracker).

3. Use of the Kingdom Hall for Additional Meetings and Events: In addition to in-person congregation meetings, the Kingdom Hall can now be used for all previously-approved activities. This includes use of the Kingdom Hall for weddings, funerals, meetings for field service, Kingdom Hall dedications, elders' meetings, investigating reports of serious wrongdoing, as well as meetings of judicial and reinstatement committees. The use of face masks is strongly encouraged for all activities at the Kingdom Hall.

4. In-Person Meetings for Field Service: It will be left to the judgment of the body of elders if any arrangements should be made for in-person meetings for service. If the elders decide to do so, all such arrangements may include an option for publishers to tie into the meeting remotely. Regarding the use of private homes for meetings for field service, all in the home should be comfortable using their home in this way and no one should feel pressured to do so. The use of face masks is strongly encouraged for meetings for service, including those held in private homes.

5. Hour Requirement for Regular and Special Pioneers: The hour requirement continues to be suspended.

6. Shepherding Visits: In-person shepherding visits are now permitted. The use of face masks is encouraged.

7. Cleaning and Maintenance Activity Organized by the Congregation: While vaccination is recommended, it is not required to participate in cleaning and maintenance of the Kingdom Hall organized by the congregation. However, the use of face masks is strongly encouraged.

8. Congregation Files: These can now be returned to the Kingdom Hall if it is deemed safe to do so.