

Announcements and Reminders

January 2021

FOR ELDERS

1. **Printed Copies of the *Shepherd Book*:** In April 2021, a revised edition of the *Shepherd* book will be made available for download in a number of languages on jw.org in the PDF, JWPUB, and EPUB formats. We encourage you to make good use of electronic copies of the book. However, if you need a printed copy in regular or large print, please inform the service overseer.

2. **Student Assignments and Other Meeting Parts:** In view of the current restrictions affecting our preaching work, the Life and Ministry Meeting overseer may suggest that those handling student assignments demonstrate how publishers currently handle initial calls, return visits, and Bible studies, whether by telephone, letter writing, videoconference, or other appropriate means. Brothers assigned parts in the Living as Christians section of the mid-week meeting should likewise adjust their parts as needed. Similarly, when appropriate, the *Watchtower* Study conductor may remind the audience that published comments about the house-to-house ministry and public witnessing will apply when the branch office informs congregations that it is safe for publishers to resume these activities.

3. **Publicizing Congregation Meetings:** We would like interested persons in the community to know how to attend congregation meetings while Kingdom Halls are not in use. Thus, a notice should be affixed to the Kingdom Hall meeting times sign to indicate that meetings are being held by videoconference or other means. The notice should include a telephone number for interested persons to call. No details on how to connect to meetings should appear on the sign or be provided in a recorded message heard when the contact telephone number is called. If an individual expresses genuine interest in attending congregation meetings, the details he needs to connect to the program can then be provided to him. A prompt response should be given to any messages received.

4. **Special Talk and Memorial Invitation Campaign:** As in past years, there will be a worldwide campaign to invite as many people as possible to attend the special talk and Memorial. Since our house-to-house ministry and public witnessing have been suspended because of the global pandemic, each body of elders will need to determine how best to cover the congregation's territory using other methods. In addition, publishers can be reminded to invite non-Witness family members, inactive family members, Bible students, return visits, and other acquaintances. If an individual expresses genuine interest in attending, the details he needs to connect to the program can then be provided to him. Although no details on how to connect to the program should appear on invitations or in letters sent to those who have not yet expressed interest in attending, the following statement should be included: "Because of the pandemic, these events will not be held in person." A contact telephone number may be included. As needed, invitations may be printed from jw.org. Since most congregations will enjoy a live talk presented via videoconference, recordings of the special talk and the Memorial talk will not be posted on jw.org as they were last year. Your local campaign arrangements should be explained to the congregation during the midweek meeting part "Memorial Campaign to Begin Saturday, February 27," which is scheduled during the week of February 22, 2021.

5. **Publishers Viewing the Memorial Talk From JW Stream:** If publishers must view the prerecorded Memorial talk on JW Stream, please inform them in advance that when the video shows a black screen they should pause the video, read 1 Corinthians 11:23-25, and

say a prayer over each emblem before passing it to all those watching the recording. (The prayers should be said whether it was possible for those of the other sheep to acquire suitable emblems or not. If a qualified baptized brother is not present, a baptized sister wearing a head covering should say the prayers and pass the emblems.) Thereafter, the publishers should watch the conclusion of the recorded talk. Those who observe the Memorial in this manner are appropriately counted as having attended this important occasion. All should report their attendance, as well as the number of partakers, to the congregation secretary to tabulate and submit as part of the combined attendance for the congregation.

6. Memorial Emblems: If it is not possible for some to acquire the Memorial emblems, they may be informed that extraordinary efforts to obtain the emblems are not needed if no anointed ones will be present.—*w85 2/15* p. 31 par. 4.

7. Special Effort to Assist Inactive Ones: We have been very encouraged to learn that many inactive brothers and sisters have recently resumed attending meetings. Bible prophecy and world events help us to see clearly that the “great tribulation” will commence in the very near future. (Matt. 24:21) It is urgent that elders seek to encourage and strengthen those who are spiritually weak, in imitation of the fine shepherd, Jesus Christ. (Isa. 35:3, 4; John 10:14) To prepare for this year’s special effort to assist inactive ones to return to Jehovah, all elders should carefully and prayerfully review the *Shepherd* book, chapter 25, paragraphs 3 and 12-18.

- (1) For this year, the Congregation Service Committee should soon meet to confirm which elders are in the best position to contact inactive ones living in the congregation’s territory. The effort should be well-organized so that no inactive one is overlooked.
- (2) In view of the pandemic, it would be best for contact to be made by videoconference, telephone, letter, or other appropriate means. It is usually best for two elders or an elder and a qualified ministerial servant to work together.
- (3) If an inactive one has made it clear that he does not want to be contacted by the congregation, his wishes should be respected.
- (4) Before contacting an inactive one, pray for Jehovah’s guidance and give advance thought to the Scriptural encouragement that will be shared. Such encouragement could include reminding the person that the concern of the elders reflects Jehovah’s love and that our heavenly Father does not forget any of his sheep who have strayed. (Ezek. 34:11, 16a) Express confidence that the person can respond to Jesus’ voice and follow him once again.—John 10:4, 16.
- (5) Ensure that inactive ones understand how to benefit from congregation meetings during the pandemic. Give them an invitation to the special talk and Memorial, and provide them with a copy of the *Return to Jehovah* brochure.
- (6) The service committee may assign a publisher to conduct a Bible study with an inactive one.—Col. 2:7.

8. Disfellowshipped or Disassociated Ones: For this year, prior to the special talk, the Congregation Service Committee should meet to assign elders to make brief contact with disfellowshipped or disassociated ones who qualify for a visit. (*sfl* chap. 25 par. 20) Contact should not be made with an active apostate, with one who is trying to lead others into sin, or with one who has made it clear that he does not want to be contacted by the congregation.

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. **Midweek Meeting Part on 2020 Governing Body Update #9:** The video *2020 Governing Body Update #9* should be played during the week of January 18, 2021, in place of the 15-minute part “Annual Conventions—Opportunities to Show Love.” Twenty minutes should be allotted for the part. The timing of the Congregation Bible Study should be reduced by five minutes. If your congregation has a circuit assembly the week of January 18, the video should be shown the week before. Please assign a qualified elder to apply the material to your local situation. In an appealing way, he should highlight the importance of loyally following the direction of the Governing Body and the Branch Committee. He should warmly commend the congregation and remind them that Jehovah treasures everything we do in his service, even though our circumstances may limit us.—Col. 3:23; Heb. 6:10-12.

3. **Circuit Overseer’s Visit:** As indicated in the announcement for congregations, circuit overseers have been given more flexibility in their schedule. Therefore, please wait to hear from your circuit overseer before finalizing the schedule for his next visit to your congregation.

FOR SERVICE OVERSEERS

1. **Annual Meeting Releases:** Modest quantities of the *Enjoy Life Forever!* publications will be consigned to congregations. Language-coordinating congregations should wait to receive the consignments before submitting requests for additional supplies. (The mnemonic *lff* or the item number 5445 should be used when requesting the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book. The mnemonic *lffi* or item number 65445 should be used when requesting the *Enjoy Life Forever!* brochure.) When submitting requests, please keep in mind that while the *Enjoy Life Forever!* brochure will be displayed on public witnessing carts, the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book will not be displayed. Also, the digital formats of the publications will include many interactive features that are not available in the printed formats. For these reasons, language-coordinating congregations may not need to request as many *Enjoy Life Forever!* books as the number of *Teach Us* books usually kept in stock.

2. **Publications to Be Replaced by *Enjoy Life Forever!*:** Because of the decreased use of printed publications during the pandemic, many congregations have surplus copies of the *Teach Us* and *Remain in God’s Love* books, as well as the *Good News* and *Jehovah’s Will* brochures. To make good use of these publications, we encourage you to share your stock with nearby congregations when it is safe to do so. Once this stock runs out, language-coordinating congregations may continue submitting requests to the branch office for replenishment until they are informed otherwise. Also, when public witnessing resumes, the *Teach Us* book and the *Good News* brochure may be displayed.

3. **Printed Copies of the *Shepherd* Book:** Please ensure that requests for printed copies of the *Shepherd* book are promptly submitted to the branch office in the same way that requests for other special-request items are submitted. (The mnemonic *sfl* or the item number 5436 should be used when requesting the regular-size *Shepherd* book. The mnemonic *sfllp* or the item number 54366 should be used when requesting *Shepherd—Large Print*.) Requests should be submitted no later than **Monday, February 1, 2021**. The books will be wrapped to ensure confidentiality and will be labeled for delivery to the coordinator of the body of elders.

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FOR CONGREGATIONS

1. **Annual Meeting Releases:** Two new provisions for conducting Bible studies were announced during the first JW Broadcasting segment of the annual meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. The PDF format of the *Enjoy Life Forever!* brochure is now available for download. The full digital formats of the brochure will be available after March 1. The PDF format of the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book will be available after March 1. The full digital formats of the book will be available in mid-April. Printed copies of the publications will be made available in due course. If you begin using the printed publications prior to the release of the full digital formats, you will have to use the links in the PDF format to access the many videos and other referenced materials that are part of the *Enjoy Life Forever!* publications.

2. **JW Stream–Studio:** We are pleased to inform you that, where possible, the 2021 circuit assembly with the circuit overseer (CA-co) program and the 2021 special meeting with regular pioneers, special pioneers, and field missionaries program will be broadcast via a product called JW Stream–Studio. This product will allow attendees to watch a live stream of their circuit's programs from their homes. If this provision will be used in your circuit, the circuit overseer will provide further information to the elders.

3. **2021 Special Talk and Memorial:** On Saturday, March 27, 2021, we will observe the Lord's Evening Meal. (Luke 22:19) No weekend meeting will be scheduled that week. With advance planning, it should be possible for most publishers to acquire the emblems. Some may find it helpful to review the December 15, 2013, issue of *The Watchtower*, page 23, paragraphs 5-7, and the video *How to Make Memorial Bread*, available on jw.org.

4. **Circuit Overseer's Visit:** We wish to express appreciation for all the support you have given to the visits of circuit overseers. No doubt all of us value their tireless efforts in our behalf, especially the encouragement we have received from them since the beginning of the pandemic. Many of these brothers are spending countless hours on the telephone or in videoconferences to give talks, conduct meetings, make shepherding visits, and take the lead in the ministry. In view of the unique circumstances, circuit overseers and their wives have been given more flexibility in their schedule. We are sure that you appreciate receiving this update and will continue to give loving support to our circuit overseers and their wives as they fulfill their assignment to strengthen the congregations.

5. **Preaching Work:** Because of the high risk of transmitting or contracting the COVID-19 virus, the house-to-house ministry and public witnessing continue to be suspended until further notice. This includes not making in-person return visits or conducting in-person Bible studies. Please continue to take advantage of other methods of witnessing. While the elders will be pleased to provide you with training, no one should feel pressured to participate in any specific method of preaching, since each publisher's circumstances are different. Regardless of the methods of witnessing you choose, be assured that Jehovah is pleased with your whole-souled service.

6. **2020 Governing Body Update #9:** We encourage all to watch the *2020 Governing Body Update #9* video presented by Brother Lett of the Governing Body. In view of its importance, please arrange for your entire family to watch the 15-minute video as soon as possible. To

access the video on jw.org, go to LIBRARY > JW BROADCASTING > NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS. To access the video on *JW Library*, go to MEDIA > VIDEO > JW BROADCASTING > NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS. Please note that the video will be played during the midweek meeting during the week of January 18, 2021, in place of the 15-minute part “Annual Conventions—Opportunities to Show Love.”