

# Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

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TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Maintaining Congregation Meetings During COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Brothers:

During the current pandemic, our dear brothers and sisters need loving elders who will shepherd them and provide well-prepared, timely spiritual instruction. (Acts 20:28) Therefore, please *maintain regular contact* with each family in the congregation, including making shepherding calls, perhaps by telephone.—Prov. 27:23; *sfl* chap. 25 pars. 1, 2.

It is also the Governing Body's earnest desire that bodies of elders continue to *conduct regular, weekly congregation meetings*. Allowing the brothers and sisters to meet together, even electronically, and express their faith is much better than simply watching a recorded program. As noted below, making use of JW Stream should be considered only when other alternatives are not possible.

We now direct that gathering at the Kingdom Hall or even as field service groups should not be done. Therefore, meetings should be held as a household or individual. Additionally, keep up to date with advice or restrictions being made by secular authorities. We should be obedient and show that we are "in subjection to the superior authorities."—Rom. 13:1.

At the same time, the body of elders should give serious consideration to the following *alternative ways of conducting the weekly meetings*:

- **Present Programs by Videoconference:** The elders may choose to use online conferencing tools, such as Zoom or Skype. These tools allow the brothers and sisters to see each other, offer comments, and present their meeting parts from home. In this way, they can 'encourage one another.' (Heb. 10:24, 25) If it is not practical to tie-in all publishers in one videoconference, the elders could arrange a number of smaller videoconferences, perhaps according to field service groups. In all cases, publishers would connect from their own homes. There would be no need for them to meet together in person.
- **Present Programs from the Kingdom Hall:** Revising our earlier direction, this is no longer an option.
- **Selective Use of JW Stream:** Making use of JW Stream should be considered only when other alternatives are not possible. JW Stream should not be used as a substitute for congregation meetings week after week. Jehovah's people rejoice at every opportunity to come together for worship and to express their faith by commenting, even if this must take place by videoconference.—Ps. 22:22; 122:1.
- **Memorial:** The Memorial should be held in line with the above suggestions. Each household or individual should have suitable emblems. A capable elder

could give the talk by means of videoconference. If it is not possible to assemble electronically and no qualified speaker is present, publishers and interested ones could use the talk posted on [jw.org](http://jw.org). All should report their attendance, as well as the number of partakers, to the body of elders so that an accurate count can be obtained.

**Updating JW.ORG:** As it is not possible to have the Memorial at the location already listed on [jw.org](http://jw.org), here are some instructions that the congregation secretary should use to update [jw.org](http://jw.org):

- (1) Enter the starting time for the Memorial observance as the time you would have begun your Memorial observance locally.
  - (2) When entering the Memorial location, select “No” to indicate the Memorial is not being held at your Kingdom Hall.
  - (3) Under “Search by Address,” enter the address of your Kingdom Hall to locate it on the map, or manually enter the GPS coordinates of your Kingdom Hall.
  - (4) In the “Location Address and Details” field, overwrite any text that appears with something like this: “The program will not be held at this location.”
  - (5) Select “Next,” and then follow the onscreen prompts to review and submit the information.
  - (6) Remove any additional Memorial times and locations previously entered on [jw.org](http://jw.org), as needed.
- **Inactive:** The elders should reach out to inactive ones and keep them updated as to adjustments in the meeting arrangements. (Luke 15:4-7; *sfl* chap. 25 pars. 13-15) If needed, elders may grant inactive ones access to JW Stream. The world situation may well move some to return to Jehovah.
  - **Disfellowshipped:** The elders should use good judgment in considering whether to grant a disfellowshipped person access to recordings of meetings on JW Stream.

These alternative ways of conducting meetings may need to be adjusted based on local circumstances. Elders should keep in mind that local publishers will have to make decisions regarding meeting attendance based on their personal circumstances.—Gal. 6:5.

We thank you in advance for your fine efforts to care for the spiritual needs of Jehovah’s precious sheep.—1 Pet. 5:2, 3.

Your brothers,  
*Christian Congregation  
of Jehovah’s Witnesses*