

# Announcements and Reminders

June 2020

## FOR THE ATTENTION OF ALL ELDERS

1. **Arrangements for Viewing the 2020 Convention:** It is the Governing Body's earnest desire that all in the congregation benefit fully from the 2020 "Always Rejoice"! convention. To strengthen and unify our brothers worldwide, it is our preference that all publishers view the convention sessions on the same weekends wherever it is possible and practical to do so. Therefore, please consider the following **updated** information as soon as possible.

2. If possible, the viewing of each convention session should be arranged on the weekend indicated below:

Schedule for Viewing 2020 Convention Sessions		
Weekend	Session	Date Available on JW Broadcasting*
July 11-12	Friday morning	July 6
July 18-19	Friday afternoon	July 15
July 25-26	<i>Normal weekend meeting</i>	
August 1-2	Saturday morning	July 23
August 8-9	Saturday afternoon	August 3
August 15-16	<i>Normal weekend meeting</i>	
August 22-23	Sunday morning	August 13
August 29-30	Sunday afternoon	August 24

\*It may take an additional three days for the convention session video to appear in *JW Library*.

- (1) No public talk should be scheduled on the weekend a session is viewed.
- (2) If a circuit overseer's visit or a circuit assembly is scheduled during one of the weeks, the viewing of the convention session should be postponed by one week.
- (3) As a reminder, the Kingdom Hall should not be used for these or any other meetings until further direction is received from the branch office.

3. An abbreviated *Watchtower* Study should be considered by the congregation *before* the convention session is viewed. The study should last 30 minutes and be conducted by means of questions and answers without reading the paragraphs. If a videoconferencing tool, such as *Zoom*, is being used for congregation meetings, this tool should be used for the abbreviated *Watchtower* Study. Although the attendance count should be taken for the *Watchtower* Study, no count of those viewing the convention sessions is needed.

- (1) At the end of the *Watchtower* Study, announce that all who are able to do so should now view the current convention session **on JW Broadcasting** in their homes. This will provide a better viewing experience than watching the program using a videoconferencing tool. Announce that at the conclusion of the session, someone in the home can offer a prayer of thanksgiving.
- (2) After the announcement, sing the second song specified for the *Watchtower* Study and conclude with a prayer, acknowledging the convention program to follow.
- (3) The body of elders can decide if they would like to select a designated time later in the day for those who want to discuss the benefits of the program to meet in smaller

groups by means of videoconference, such as *Zoom* breakout rooms. Or, with the elders taking the lead, publishers could be encouraged to discuss with one another throughout the following week points that they enjoyed from the program.

Additional Considerations:

- (1) If some publishers are unable to access JW Broadcasting, the elders may transmit the convention sessions to such ones by means of a videoconferencing tool, such as *Zoom*. After the *Watchtower* Study, these individuals would stay connected to enjoy the session. The session should be downloaded in advance to the host's computer.
- (2) Be reasonable and flexible. Due to family circumstances or other reasons, some publishers or families may choose to view the sessions at other times.

4. In view of the current pandemic, each *individual or family head* must decide the wisest course when it comes to meeting together as a family or to inviting a few others, such as Bible students, to view the session together. (Gal. 6:5) It would be good to remind the congregation of the need to continue applying the basic principles of health and safety, such as frequent handwashing, physical distancing, wearing a face covering, and limiting physical contact with older and high-risk persons.

5. **2020 Convention Badge Cards and Programs:** In view of the special arrangements for viewing the convention in July and August, a limited supply of printed programs and badge cards will be shipped directly to congregations. Depending on local conditions, some congregations may not receive their shipments before the convention sessions are viewed. In any case, once these items have been received, they may be made available for anyone who would like a copy.

6. **Evaluation of PREGROUPS and GROUPS:** In recent years, Jehovah's people have responded to the call to expand their ministry by learning another language in order to reach honesthearted ones, and publishers should be commended for their self-sacrificing efforts in this regard. Nevertheless, it has been noted that in some cases pregroups or groups show little evidence of growth, with few progressive Bible studies and few, if any, progressing to baptism. In harmony with 1 Corinthians 9:26, the Governing Body wants to be certain that we are making our blows count when it comes to pregroups and groups. Thus, please note the following updated guidelines, which in due course will be reflected in the *Organized* book and the *Shepherd* book. Circuit overseers will now be responsible to submit to the branch office recommendations to form pregroups and groups. As noted in the announcement for congregations, circuit overseers have been asked to review all pregroups and groups as they visit congregations during the next six months and to provide the Service Department with a recommendation regarding whether each pregroup or group should continue to function or be discontinued, based on the updated guidelines.

7. **Requirements for Forming PREGROUPS:** A pregroup is used to test whether or not a language community has a significant interest in learning the truth. The circuit overseer will ensure that the following requirements are met before he submits to the Service Department a recommendation to form a pregroup:

- (1) A significant population—perhaps at least a few thousand individuals—is dependent on the language and lives in close proximity to the Kingdom Hall. Members of this language community would have little or no understanding of the language of an already established congregation. The size and location(s) of the language community should not make it necessary to travel long distances or spend many hours in search work.

- (2) At least a few exemplary local publishers are fluent and preach in the target language.
- (3) The body of elders is willing and able to take the lead in organizing and evaluating the preaching in that language.

8. Pregroups do not hold weekly meetings. However, test meetings should be held from time to time to determine if individuals dependent on the target language are interested in attending meetings. Caution is needed here as many who wish to learn the language may attend such test meetings. We must focus not on the number willing to learn the target language but on the number of interested persons dependent on the language who attend. If only a few such individuals from the field attend test meetings, then there would be no need to form a group.

9. What should be done if there is no significant population but there are a few interested individuals who are dependent on the target language? The interest may be followed up by a publisher elsewhere in the branch territory who speaks the language, perhaps by telephone or videoconference.

**10. Requirements for Forming Groups:** In addition to the requirements for a pregroup, the following requirements must also be met before the circuit overseer submits to the Service Department a recommendation to form a group:

- (1) Progressive Bible students from the territory wish to attend meetings and have expressed a preference to attend in the target language.
- (2) More than a few local publishers are fluent in or depend on the target language and are committed to supporting the group.
- (3) At least one qualified elder is fluent in the target language and is willing and able to conduct at least one weekly meeting.
- (4) At least one weekly meeting—or one portion of a weekly meeting, such as a public talk or a *Watchtower* Study—would be conducted in the target language. These meetings are for the benefit of publishers and interested persons who are dependent on the language rather than those who are learning the language. Since it is preferred that the meetings be conducted locally, groups should not rely solely on watching recorded programs on JW Stream.

**11. Temporary Reduction of Your Standing Magazine Requests:** Due to current restrictions affecting the ministry, and to prevent magazines accumulating, your standing request of public magazines will be reduced by 50 per cent. This applies to the following issues usually featured in September to December: *The Watchtower* No. 3 2020; *Awake!* No. 3 2020. This is a temporary arrangement. Surplus copies of previous issues may be used once we resume the public ministry.

**12. Meeting Workbook and Study Edition of *The Watchtower*:** Due to the lack of deliveries of these items, please can elders print copies for publishers who cannot access them electronically.

**13. Literature Deliveries:** To improve the literature delivery service, we are pleased to inform you that a contract has been negotiated with another company – DB Schenker. This will take effect as soon as the branch office makes the decision to resume deliveries. Further details will be sent later.

**14. Helping Publishers to Make Donations:** The branch is receiving many enquiries, particularly from elderly ones, who need help in making donations by via donate.jw.org or some other method. We encourage group overseers and other elders to be alert to assist such ones, using the information in the online help or FAQ document found on the site. Assistance should be offered with discretion and a brother offering such help should not save the jw.org password of individuals or retain their credit or debit card details.

**15. Worksheets for Sign-Language Meetings: (Applicable for sign-language congregations and groups only.)** Worksheets for the study edition of *The Watchtower* and the *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook* have been made available as a study tool for those who use sign-language publications. Group overseers need to ensure all publishers are aware of these tools, and encourage them to make the most of these study aids.

#### **FOR FOLLOW-THROUGH BY THE COORDINATOR OF THE BODY OF ELDERS**

**1. Announcements for Congregations:** Ensure that the announcements for congregations are read at the next midweek meeting. Before reading the announcement regarding arrangements for viewing the 2020 convention, inform the congregation of the local arrangements decided by the body of elders. The schedule may be provided to publishers.

**2. Meeting Workbook and Study Edition of *The Watchtower*:** Arrange for printing as needed.

**3. Literature Deliveries:** If the depot coordinator is in your congregation, make sure that 1) he receives a copy of the above announcement, and 2) that he updates the branch office with any changes in his contact details, including phone number(s) and email addresses.

#### **FOR FOLLOW-THROUGH BY THE SECRETARY**

**1. Applicant Photos on JW.ORG:** Please review the photos of all those with active applications on jw.org. (Go to CONGREGATION PERSONS > ACTIVE APPLICATIONS. For each person listed, go to VIEW MORE > PERSONAL INFORMATION.) Please ensure that clear, recent passport-style and full-length photos of each applicant (with plain backgrounds) are provided. The applicant should be alone and dressed as he would for a congregation meeting. If a photo needs to be replaced, please ask the applicant to update his profile.

#### **FOR FOLLOW-THROUGH BY THE SERVICE OVERSEER**

**1. Standing Magazine Requests:** Inform the literature servant of the reduced request. If the 50 per cent reduction will leave you with insufficient magazines, please inform us by email to maglitqueries.GB@jw.org.

# Announcements and Reminders

June 2020

## FOR THE CONGREGATION

1. **Arrangements for Viewing the 2020 Convention:** We greatly anticipate viewing the upcoming “Always Rejoice”! convention program in July and August. Understandably, due to family circumstances or other reasons, some publishers may find it necessary to view the convention sessions on their own at other times. This is left to the good judgment of each family head.

2. Publishers are encouraged to discuss points that they enjoyed from the program with one another throughout the week after viewing each session. We are confident that this convention program will heighten our appreciation for the need to strengthen one other as a unified organization during these difficult times.

3. **Audio Descriptions for the 2020 Convention Videos:** For the benefit of the blind and visually impaired, a separate set of the 2020 convention videos will be published with audio descriptions in English or Spanish. These videos provide descriptions of action that may not otherwise be understood by visually impaired persons. The videos will be available in a separate collection on [jw.org](http://jw.org) and *JW Library*. (On [jw.org](http://jw.org), go to LIBRARY > VIDEOS > PROGRAMS AND EVENTS. In *JW Library*, go to MEDIA > VIDEOS > PROGRAMS AND EVENTS.) They can also be found on [jw.org](http://jw.org) by typing the words “audio description” in the search box. These video editions will also be available on the JW Broadcasting app on Amazon Fire, Apple TV, and Roku.

4. **Evaluation of PREGROUPS and GROUPS:** After carefully and prayerfully considering the needs in foreign- and indigenous-language fields, the Governing Body has asked circuit overseers to review all pregroups and groups. Over the next several months, this review will determine whether each pregroup or group should continue to function or be discontinued. If a pregroup or group that you are currently supporting is discontinued, please do not view this as an indication of failure. We warmly commend all those who are supporting the foreign- and indigenous-language fields. Your zealous efforts and fine work do not go unnoticed by Jehovah or his organization. (Heb. 6:10) We are confident that Jehovah will continue to bless your wholehearted service and the preaching work in foreign- and indigenous-language fields as we follow the leadings of the holy spirit to accomplish our primary goal of making disciples.—Matt. 28:19, 20.