

Announcements and Reminders

December 2020

FOR ELDERS

- 1. 2021 Special Public Talk:** The special public talk in 2021 will be given during the week of March 15, 2021. The theme is “Have You Found a ‘Pearl of High Value’?” (S-34 No. 24) Congregations that have the circuit overseer’s visit or a circuit assembly the week of March 15 may present the special talk the week of March 8. If a congregation has both the circuit overseer’s visit and a circuit assembly during these two weeks, it may present the special talk during the week of March 1. Each body of elders should select a local or visiting speaker to give the special talk to the congregation. The prerecorded special talk on JW Stream should be used only by publishers and interested persons unable to tie in to a live meeting or by small congregations, groups, and pregroups that have very few qualified speakers.
2. The 2021 special talk outline, along with its accompanying artwork and video, will soon be made available on jw.org. The previous public talk outline No. 24, “What God’s Rulership Can Do for Us,” should not be given after the week of March 1, 2021. Please ensure that public speakers who give that talk are made aware of this direction.
- 3. 2021 Memorial Talk:** The Memorial will be on Saturday, March 27, 2021. Each body of elders should select a local or visiting speaker to give the Memorial talk to the congregation. The prerecorded Memorial talk on JW Stream should be used only by publishers and interested persons unable to tie in to a live meeting or by small congregations, groups, and pregroups that have very few qualified speakers.—Please review the direction in the *Shepherd* book, chapter 20, paragraphs 6-8, regarding selecting a Memorial speaker, selecting brothers to offer prayers at the Memorial, and selecting Memorial meeting times.
- 4. Audio/Video Guidelines for Those Giving Public Talks via Videoconference (S-178):** Poor audio quality, distracting backgrounds, and improper video framing can detract from the presentation of Bible truths and make public talks less effective. (1 Cor. 14:8) To assist public speakers in this area, a document entitled *Audio/Video Guidelines for Those Giving Public Talks via Videoconference* will soon be posted on jw.org for viewing by all elders and ministerial servants. While those who are approved to give public talks should carefully review this document, the principles will benefit all brothers assigned to present parts at the meetings.
- 5. Automated Clearing House (ACH) on donate.jw.org:** Please be prepared to assist ones in your congregation who would like to use this service on donate.jw.org. If publishers inquire, it can be explained that ACH is a method for transferring funds electronically from one bank account to another. It can also be called direct debit, electronic funds transfer, etc. As a body of elders, select a contact who can help ones in your congregation who request assistance. Please provide the name of the designated brother(s) assigned in the announcement to the congregation. If a technical problem cannot be addressed locally, please send an e-mail to the Accounting Department using jwpub e-mail or direct the publisher to contact the branch for assistance.

FOR CONGREGATION SERVICE COMMITTEES

1. **Provision for Reporting Less Than 15 Minutes:** Until further notice, there is no need for the Congregation Service Committee to determine which publishers qualify to report field service in 15-minute increments. (*sfl* chap. 22 par. 14) If any publisher shares in the ministry for less than an hour during a month, even if this amounts to less than 15 minutes, the secretary should simply note on the *Congregation's Publisher Record (S-21)* that the publisher participated in the ministry that month. There is no need to ask such publishers to specify the number of minutes they shared in preaching. In the monthly report to the branch office, the publisher would be counted among those reporting field service and would be counted in the total number of active publishers.

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 and that the brother making the announcements is informed of the date of the special talk in your congregation.

2. **Audio/Video Guidelines for Those Giving Public Talks via Videoconference (S-178):** Please ensure that all elders and ministerial servants approved to give public talks are made aware of the need to review *Audio/Video Guidelines for Those Giving Public Talks via Videoconference*.

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FOR CONGREGATIONS

1. **2021 Special Public Talk and Memorial:** You may wish to mark the following dates on your calendar. The Memorial will be on Saturday, March 27, 2021. To generate enthusiasm for the Memorial, the special talk will be presented during the week of March 15, 2021. The theme is “Have You Found a ‘Pearl of High Value?’” Congregations that have an assembly or the visit of the circuit overseer the week of March 15 will usually have the special talk one week earlier. For our congregation, the special talk will be presented on [Date]. Most congregations will enjoy a live talk presented via videoconference.

2. **Provision for Reporting Less Than 15 Minutes:** We deeply appreciate your efforts to share in the ministry each month despite the restrictions imposed upon us by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have no doubt that Jehovah understands your circumstances and treasures your whole-souled service. We are therefore pleased to inform you that, until further notice, any publisher who shares in the ministry during a month, even if this amounts to less than 15 minutes, will continue as an active publisher. If you share in the ministry for less than one hour, all you will need to do is to inform your group overseer that you shared in the ministry during the month. You do not need to specify the number of minutes you shared in preaching. As you do what you can to fully accomplish your ministry, please be assured of our warm Christian love and best wishes.—**Read 2 Corinthians 8:12.**

3. **Maintaining Precautions During the Pandemic:** In many communities, COVID-19 is spreading very quickly. While we may be alert to take safety precautions when caring for essential matters that require us to come in contact with the *public*, we may be inclined to let our guard down when we have necessary contact with *family and friends* outside of our household. Therefore, we kindly remind you of the importance of taking safety precautions *at all times*. Such precautions include wearing face coverings, maintaining physical distancing, and washing hands regularly. If you experience cold or flulike symptoms, it would be best for you to stay home and notify your health-care provider.

4. **Automated Clearing House (ACH) on donate.jw.org:** We are pleased to announce a new donation method available on donate.jw.org. Those who wish to make donations to the worldwide work, the local congregation, a regional convention, the circuit, and construction projects may do so by means of ACH direct debit. You can use this option to make one-time donations, as well as set up monthly recurring donations. ACH donations will be directly withdrawn from your bank account. The process for using this method is similar to creating a recurring payment for a utility or another provider. To use this service, you will need to have a United States dollar bank account and a personal login account on donate.jw.org. You may access this feature by typing the URL donate.jw.org into your web browser or by selecting the “Donations” icon on the home screen of the *JW Library* app. If you need assistance, [include name of local contact] is available to answer questions. No matter how you support Kingdom interests, you are truly to be commended as you continue to “honor Jehovah with your valuable things.”—Prov. 3:9.