



Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

675 Red Mills Road Wallkill NY 12589-3292 Phone: (845) 306-1100

March 11, 2016

TO ALL CONGREGATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES BRANCH TERRITORY

Re: 2016 Bethel Visitors Information

Dear Brothers:

At Psalm 27:4, the psalmist David expressed his heart's desire in song: "One thing I have asked from Jehovah—it is what I will look for—that I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life, to gaze upon the pleasantness of Jehovah and to look with appreciation upon his temple." Today, many have shared similar feelings after visiting Bethel. We were overjoyed to have 115,236 respond to the invitation to come tour the Bethel complexes in the United States during the past service year. Please note there are significant adjustments this year because of the move out of Brooklyn, as highlighted below.

The following overview of what you can expect to see during your tours at each location may help you in planning your itinerary. For the most up-to-date tour information, please visit jw.org. Look under ABOUT US > OFFICES & TOURS.

Brooklyn Bethel: The last day for guided tours at Brooklyn Bethel will be **May 31, 2016**, and the last day for self-guided tours will be **July 15, 2016**. The guided tour features a number of displays highlighting how the worldwide work is directed by the world headquarters and the supportive role played by the United States Bethel family. The 25 Columbia Heights lobby has two self-guided exhibits. "A People for Jehovah's Name" depicts the history of Jehovah's people from the first century until the present. You should allow 90 minutes to view this exhibit. An additional 30 minutes will be needed to view the display entitled "The Bible and the Divine Name." A literature counter is also available. *Guided tour time: 1 hour.*

Patterson Bethel: The guided tour will describe the work being done at theocratic schools, such as the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead and the School for Branch Committee Members and Their Wives. You will also see displays describing the work done by departments, which include Art, Audio/Video Services, and Legal. Before or after your guided tour, you may wish to view displays in the main lobby highlighting the modern history of the worldwide Bible educational work of Jehovah's Witnesses. You should allow at least 30 minutes to view these displays and videos. A self-serve literature counter is also available. *Guided tour time: 2 hours.*

Wallkill Bethel: The guided tour will enable you to see how Bible literature is printed, bound, and shipped to congregations in the United States, the Caribbean, and other parts of the world. A portion of this tour also includes the Bethel Home and an explanation of the production and processing of food for the United States Bethel family. Before or after your guided tour, you may wish to view tour videos and displays in the main lobby highlighting the history of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines, and the history of farming and computer operations. You should allow at least 45 minutes to view these displays and videos. A literature counter is also available. *Guided tour time: 1.5 hours.*

Warwick or Tuxedo Properties: There are currently no tours available of the Warwick or Tuxedo properties, and we request that no one drive by these properties. For the most up-to-date information, please check jw.org. Look under NEWSROOM. Please note that congregations will be notified in the future when tours are scheduled to begin.

Dress and Grooming: Before you plan your visit, it would be good to review the brochure *Dress & Grooming for Visitors Touring Bethel*. Please check with a member of the Congregation Service Committee in this regard. At all times our dress and grooming should reflect the decency and dignity that befit servants of Jehovah God. (*km* 3/08 p. 3; *od* pp. 125-126) Our clothing should have a positive influence on others as to how they view the true worship of Jehovah.

It has been noted that when visiting Bethel, some brothers and sisters tend to be extremely casual in their dress. Such dress is not appropriate when visiting any of the Bethel homes. In this matter, as in all other aspects of our Christian life, we desire to maintain the same high standards that distinguish God's people from the world by our doing all things for God's glory. (Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 10:31) It is also good to speak with our Bible students and others who may be visiting Bethel for the first time and remind them of the importance of giving attention to proper dress and grooming. Since considerable walking is involved while on tour, it would be practical to wear dignified shoes that are comfortable to walk in.

When visiting Bethel, ask yourself: 'Is my dress and grooming modest?' (Compare Micah 6:8.) 'Does it reflect well on the God that I worship? Would others be distracted or offended by my appearance? Am I setting the proper example for others who may be visiting for the first time?' We want to 'recommend ourselves as God's ministers in every way,' including by our appropriate dress and grooming.—2 Cor. 6:3, 4.

Tour Hours: For up-to-date tour hours, please check jw.org. Look under ABOUT US > OFFICES & TOURS. The facilities are open to tours Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. However, for 2016, no tours will be offered on March 23 (Memorial) or on May 13 (spring cleaning). When preparing for your visit, please keep in mind the amount of time required to tour each location, and plan to arrive early enough to receive a complete tour. If you are planning on touring Bethel on a busy tour day (for example, on a national holiday), you can expect large crowds with delays on the tour route. This will require patience and understanding during such times. If you plan to visit more than one of the facilities, be sure to allow sufficient travel time between locations (see next page) and time for you to make your own meal arrangements. *If you would like more information regarding any of these facilities, please write to the Central Tour Desk at the address shown in the following paragraph.*

Large Groups: If traveling with a small group, there is no need to call in advance, since tours begin every half hour. However, if your group includes **20 or more persons**, the group coordinator should obtain a copy of the *Watchtower Tour Group Information* form from a member of the Congregation Service Committee. The completed form should be returned to the branch office at least **three weeks** in advance of your visit. Please mail, e-mail, or fax the form

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to Watchtower, Central Tour Desk, 100 Watchtower Drive, Patterson, NY, 12563-9204; Phone: (845) 306-1000; E-mail: centraltourdesk@jw.org; Fax: (845) 306-0200.

For large groups traveling by bus, the Central Tour Desk can also assist in arranging your itinerary so as to reduce the wait time for a tour during busy periods. Please remember that buses are not able to travel on all highways. No buses visiting Brooklyn should enter Brooklyn Heights. Maps with recommended routes are provided upon request by contacting the Central Tour Desk.

Transportation Information: Please exercise due caution while in the New York City area. Carefully read parking signs, and do not leave items exposed in your vehicles. Reduced-rate parking information for Brooklyn can be obtained from the Bethel lobbies. Those using a computer mapping program may use the following addresses to map a route:

Brooklyn

25 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Patterson

100 Watchtower Dr. (2891 Route 22)
Patterson, NY 12563

Wallkill

900 Red Mills Rd.
Wallkill, NY 12589

Travel times and distances between the United States Bethel facilities:

Brooklyn Bethel to Patterson Bethel	1.5 hours	70 miles
Brooklyn Bethel to Wallkill Bethel	2.25 hours	94 miles
Wallkill Bethel to Patterson Bethel	1.25 hours	52 miles
Travel time subject to traffic. Buses add 30 minutes to travel time.		

Lodging Information: If you would like to visit sometime during the upcoming year, please see a member of the Congregation Service Committee. He has been provided with information, including the *Bethel Visitors Lodging and Car Rental List*, which will be useful to you in preparing for your visit.

Before making *any* hotel reservations, please read the information at the beginning of the *Bethel Visitors Lodging and Car Rental List*. Those instructions outline the arrangements that have been made with the hotels. When contacting hotels on the list, please adhere closely to those instructions. We suggest you have two or three alternate dates and/or hotels in mind when making reservations, especially if you are representing a group.

Negative reports have been received regarding the conditions at some bed and breakfast accommodations in the vicinity of Brooklyn Bethel. Standards of cleanliness and service at these establishments can be very inconsistent. Unless you have visited the bed and breakfast yourself or it is recommended by someone who has, it would be wise to exercise caution with this kind of accommodation.

We are confident that your visit to Bethel will prove to be both encouraging and motivating. May Jehovah continue to bless your efforts in serving his Kingdom interests.

Your brothers,

c: Circuit overseers

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

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PS to Congregation Service Committee:

At the next midweek meeting, please arrange for the following announcement to be made to the congregation:

“Regarding visiting the Bethel facilities, please note that the last day for guided tours at Brooklyn Bethel will be May 31, 2016, and the last day for self-guided tours will be July 15, 2016. A letter with 2016 Bethel visitors information has been posted on the information board.”

The *Bethel Visitors Lodging and Car Rental List*, the *Watchtower Tour Group Information* form, and a copy of this letter should be placed in the congregation file along with other material related to visiting Bethel. Additionally, each member of the service committee may wish to keep a copy of each item. If in the future a publisher would like to visit and tour Bethel, a member of the service committee should consider this material with the individual. When doing so, please note the emphasis being given to dress and grooming. Remind the individual to follow the guidelines at the beginning of the *Bethel Visitors Lodging and Car Rental List*.