

Direction Related to COVID-19 Pandemic for Bodies of Elders

July 17, 2020

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CHAPTER 1 GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

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1. This document contains direction for elders in the Spain branch territory. It is confidential and should not be distributed to others.—Titus 1:8.

2. **Renewal of theocratic activities.** The fact that the government is lifting restrictions does not have an automatic impact on theocratic activities. The branch will inform the congregations as to when they may resume the theocratic activities that were the norm before COVID-19 (including street witnessing, public witnessing, preaching from house to house, and any use of the Kingdom Hall). There is no need to call and ask. The congregations will be informed when the time arrives.

3. **Care for yourself and family.** We encourage you to continue giving attention to your spirituality. Paul encouraged the Ephesian elders to *first* pay attention to themselves and then to the flock. (Acts 20:28) By making time for daily Bible reading and heartfelt prayer, you will be in a better position to impart courage, strength, and comfort to your family and the congregation. Also, please take practical measures to protect your health and that of your family. —Joshua 1:7, 8; 1 Timothy 4:14-16.

4. **Care for the elderly.** During this time period, the elderly feel especially vulnerable and in need of spiritual and emotional support. Please maintain regular contact with them, whether by telephone or videoconference, and encourage other publishers to be attentive to their needs.—James 1:27. If you have not already done so, check with the elderly to see how they are obtaining food and other necessities. Some may have children or family members to assist them with these things. However, if they do not have anyone to help them, the body of elders should consider with the elderly publisher the possibility of someone purchasing necessary items for them via the Internet and having it sent to their home. Another option would be to have a younger member of the congregation obtain what they need and deliver it to their home. Any younger publisher who helps in this way should be careful to exercise proper hygiene, perhaps even leaving the items in front of the door.—Galatians 6:2.

5. **Channel of communication between the branch office and the field.** A channel of communication between the elders, circuit overseers, and branch office is put in place. In this connection, the body of elders should arrange for each group overseer to contact the members of his group once a week. We encourage you to do so on Friday or Saturday. The group overseer may do this by a brief telephone or video call, or a text message. He will inquire as to the welfare of each publisher, making sure they are cared for spiritually and determining discreetly whether they have any material needs. Afterward, the group overseer will share any specific needs or concerns to the coordinator. The coordinator will provide a summary of the condition of the congregation and outline specific needs to the circuit overseer. On Sunday, the circuit overseer will send a report to the branch office outlining (1) the current situation in the circuit, (2) identify if a publisher is in need of material or other help, and (3) communicate matters of concern. We trust this channel of communication will allow the branch office to regularly evaluate the needs throughout the branch territory and respond accordingly.

6. The congregations will report the number of confirmed infected (and deceased, if applicable) only to the circuit overseer. The circuit overseer will then send a weekly report to the branch and indicate the totals (infected and deceased) for each of the congregations in their circuit, not just the total amount.

CHAPTER 2 MEETINGS

Transitioning to use of Kingdom Halls 1

1. **Transitioning to use of Kingdom Halls.** The branch office will inform you when you will be able to resume theocratic activities. Because we highly value life over material things, although the government may resume certain activities, we will continue to take a measured approach based on the facts.

CHAPTER 3 FIELD MINISTRY

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1. **Field ministry.** Many in the community are experiencing great anxiety and some are even grieving because of the loss of a family member or friend. Love of neighbor will move us to seek to comfort them. (Matt. 22:39) Jesus set the example in being sensitive to the needs of others and offering a refreshing message of hope. (Matt. 11:28-30) In whatever form of the ministry the publishers share in, encourage them to be compassionate in their approach, to show personal interest when possible, and to offer comfort from the Scriptures. (Isa. 33:24, 65:17, 21-25; John 5:28-29; Rev. 21:1-4) Such a ministry of comfort will help honest-hearted ones to be drawn to pure worship.

2. Some publishers are sharing in the letter writing ministry for the first time. There are excellent references to help them to do so effectively. (*mwb*19.03 5, 8; *be* 71-73) Please provide good training and kind reminders to all publishers so that the content of the letters is encouraging and of good quality.

3. **Clarification about alternate methods of preaching.** The announcement of June 9, 2020, stated the following: "Text messages or emails should not be sent to individuals with whom you are not personally acquainted". In view of this guideline, publishers should no longer send text messages or emails to businesses, shops, and institutions, including those that have provided a "contact us" email address.

4. **Preaching in unassigned territories and areas of need.** Due to the pandemic caused by COVID-19, the campaign to preach in unassigned territories for 2020 has been cancelled. At the same time, applications to support areas of need in our branch territory have been suspended until further notice.

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Zeal in the Ministry 4.5

1. **Shepherding.** It is evident that this pandemic will continue for some time. Therefore, our dear brothers and sisters will need loving elders to shepherd them and provide well-prepared, timely spiritual instruction. We encourage you to maintain regular contact with each family in the congregation, making shepherding calls by telephone or video calls.—Prov. 27:23; *sfl* chap. 25 ¶1, 2.

2. Maintain regular contact with publishers to ensure they have good spiritual routine, are able to share in some form of the ministry, and are well cared for.—1 Peter 5:2.

3. Assure the brothers that they are not being unfaithful for taking the above precautions during this time of emergency. Let them know that Jehovah will care for them and give them the support of the holy spirit as they work in harmony with this direction.—2 Chronicles 16:9a; Ezekiel 34:12.

4. Scriptures and references to encourage others

4.1 Illness

(2 Samuel 22:30) “With your help I can charge against a marauder band; By God’s power I can scale a wall.”

(Psalm 94:18, 19) “When I said: “My foot is slipping,” Your loyal love, O Jehovah, kept supporting me. When anxieties overwhelmed me, You comforted and soothed me.”

(Psalm 41:3) “Jehovah will sustain him on his sickbed; During his sickness you will completely change his bed.”

(Isaiah 26:3) “You will safeguard those who fully lean on you; You will give them continuous peace, Because it is in you that they trust.”

(Psalm 147:3) “He heals the brokenhearted; He binds up their wounds.”

(Psalm 31:19) “How abundant your goodness is! You have stored it up for those who fear you, And you have shown it before all men, in behalf of those taking refuge in you.”

(Psalm 37:25) “I was once young and now I am old, But I have not seen anyone righteous abandoned, Nor his children looking for bread.”

(Psalm 84:11) “For Jehovah God is a sun and a shield; He gives favor and glory. Jehovah will not hold back anything good From those walking in integrity.”

(Psalm 55:22) “Throw your burden on Jehovah, And he will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to fall.”

(Isaiah 35:5, 6) “At that time the eyes of the blind will be opened, And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. [...] For waters will burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert plain.”

w91 10/1 13-18 Make Jehovah’s Everlasting Arms Your Support.

w03 9/1 13-19 Trust in Jehovah Completely in Times of Distress.

w08 9/15 5 ¶13 Jehovah – “Provider of Escape” in Bible Times.

w15 12/15 23-27 Jehovah Will Sustain You.

w20.01 11 ¶12 You Can Be “a Source of Great Comfort.”

w20.01 pp. 15-17 “Jehovah Your God Values You!”

w20.01 pp. 15-16 pars. 9-12 “When Dealing With Illness.”

Video: Dealing With Anxiety One Day at a Time (jw.org).

4.2 Anxiety

(2 Chronicles 15:5, 7) “Be strong and do not become discouraged, for your activity will be rewarded.”

(Psalm 3:4, 5) “I will call aloud to Jehovah, And he will answer me.”

(Psalm 109:22-24, 28) “For I am helpless and my heart has been pierced [...]. I am passing away [...]. My knees give way [...]. My body is thin and I am wasting away.”

(Proverbs 10:29) “The way of Jehovah is a stronghold for the blameless one.”

(Proverbs 15:15) “The one with a cheerful heart has a continual feast.”

(Isaiah 26:3) “You will safeguard those who fully lean on you [...], Because it is in you that they trust.”

(Isaiah 43:4a, 13) “For you became precious in my eyes [...], I have loved you. “I am always the same One.”

(Colossians 1:11) “So that you may endure fully with patience and joy.”

(Psalm 142:1, 2) “With my voice I call to Jehovah for help; With my voice I plead with Jehovah for favor. Before him I pour out my concern; Before him I tell about my distress.”

(Psalm 145:18) “Jehovah is near to all those calling on him, To all who call on him in truth.”

(Philippians 4:6, 7) “Do not be anxious over anything, [...] let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus.”

(1 Peter 5:7) “While you throw all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.”

(1 Peter 1:6) “Because of this you are greatly rejoicing, though for a short time, if it must be, you have been distressed by various trials.”

(Psalm 34:4) “I inquired of Jehovah, and he answered me. He rescued me from all my fears.”

(Psalm 34:6) “This lowly one called, and Jehovah heard. He saved him from all his distresses.”

(Psalm 34:18) “Jehovah is close to the brokenhearted; He saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

(Psalm 43:5) "Why am I in despair? Why is this turmoil within me? Wait for God, For I will yet praise him as my Grand Savior and my God."

(Psalm 56:8) "You keep track of my wandering. Do collect my tears in your skin bottle. Are they not recorded in your book?"

(Psalm 102:17) "He will pay attention to the prayer of the destitute; He will not despise their prayer."

(Hebrews 13:5) "I will never leave you, and I will never abandon you."

(Romans 15:13) "May the God who gives hope fill you with all joy and peace by your trusting in him, so that you may abound in hope with power of holy spirit."

(Isaiah 41:13) "For I, Jehovah your God, am grasping your right hand, The One saying to you, 'Do not be afraid. I will help you'."

w94 11/15 21 Throw All Your Anxiety Upon Jehovah.

w13 1/15 27 Christian Elders - 'Fellow Workers for Our Joy.'

w13 6/15 30 Elders – Will You Refresh "the Tired Soul"?

w16.12 pp. 19-23 "Throw All Your Anxiety on Jehovah."

w19.01 4 ¶10, 11 "Do Not Be Anxious, for I Am Your God."

w19.06 14 Rely on Jehovah When Under Stress.

w20.02 20 Let Jehovah Soothe You.

w20.04 p. 31 par. 20 "Run the Race to the Finish."

4.3 Positive Attitude

(1 Chronicles 16:10) "Boast about his holy name. Let the hearts of those seeking Jehovah rejoice."

(2 Chronicles 15:7) "But you, be strong and do not become discouraged, for your activity will be rewarded."

(Psalm 62:8) "Trust in him at all times, O people. Pour out your hearts before him. God is a refuge for us."

(Psalm 100:3) "Know that Jehovah is God. He is the one who made us, and we belong to him. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture."

(Psalm 112:7) "He will not fear bad news. His heart is steadfast, trusting in Jehovah."

(Psalm 116:12) "With what will I repay Jehovah For all the good he has done for me?"

(Proverbs 15:13) "A joyful heart makes for a cheerful countenance, But heartache crushes the spirit."

(Proverbs 17:22) "A joyful heart is good medicine, But a crushed spirit saps one's strength."

(Jeremiah 9:24) "But let the one boasting boast about this: That he has insight and knowledge of me, That I am Jehovah, the One showing loyal love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, For in these things I take delight," declares Jehovah."

(Jeremiah 29:11, 12) "'For I well know the thoughts that I am thinking toward you,' declares Jehovah, 'thoughts of peace, and not of calamity, to give you a future and a hope. And you will call me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.'"

(Jeremiah 31:3) "From far away Jehovah appeared to me and said: "I have loved you with an everlasting love. That is why I have drawn you to me with loyal love."

(Lamentations 3:22, 23) "It is because of Jehovah's loyal love that we have not come to our finish, For his mercies never end. They are new each morning; your faithfulness is abundant."

(Ezekiel 34:31) "'As for you, my sheep, the sheep that I care for, you are but men, and I am your God,' declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah."

(Joel 2:21) "Do not be afraid, O land. Be joyful and rejoice, for Jehovah will do great things."

(Habakkuk 3:17, 18) "Although the fig tree may not blossom, And there may be no fruit on the vines; Although the olive crop may fail, And the fields may produce no food; Although the flock may disappear from the pen, And there may be no cattle in the stalls; Yet, as for me, I will exult in Jehovah; I will be joyful in the God of my salvation."

(Zephaniah 3:17) "Jehovah your God is in your midst. As a mighty One, he will save. He will exult over you with great joy. He will become silent in his love. He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy."

(Joshua 1:7) "Only be courageous and very strong, and observe carefully the entire Law that Moses my servant commanded you. [...], so that you may act wisely wherever you go."

(Ephesians 3:7) "I became a minister of this according to the free gift of God's undeserved kindness that was given me through the operation of his power."

(2 Thessalonians 2:16, 17) "Moreover, may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and gave everlasting comfort and good hope by means of undeserved kindness, comfort your hearts and make you firm in every good deed and word."

(Romans 1:11, 12) "For I am longing to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift to you for you to be made firm; or, rather, that we may have an interchange of encouragement by one another's faith, both yours and mine."

(Matthew 24:13) "But the one who has endured to the end will be saved."

w86 6/1 30 How to Keep a Positive Attitude.

w00 9/1 11-12 Show a Waiting Attitude!

w14 3/15 16 How to Maintain a Positive Viewpoint.

w12 10/15 p. 7-11 "Meeting Today's Adversities With Courage."

w16.07 p. 12 "Seek the Kingdom, Not Things."

4.4 Trust in Jehovah

(2 Chronicles 20:17) "Do not be afraid or be terrified. [...] Jehovah will be with you."

(Psalm 9:10) "Those knowing your name will trust in you."

(Psalm 27:1) "Jehovah is the stronghold of my life. Whom shall I dread?"

(Psalm 127:1) "Unless Jehovah builds the house, it is in vain that its builders work hard on it. Unless Jehovah guards the city, It is in vain that the guard stays awake."

(Haggai 2:4) "And be strong, all you people of the land,' declares Jehovah, 'and work.' "For I am with you'."

(2 Corinthians 4:7) "So that the power beyond what is normal may be God's and not from us."

(Hebrews 5:7, 8) "During his life on earth, Christ offered up supplications and also petitions, with strong outcries and tears, to the One who was able to save him out of death, and he was favorably heard for his godly fear. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered."

(Joshua 1:9) "Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and strong. Do not be struck with terror or fear, for Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go."

(Psalm 5:3) "O Jehovah, you will hear my voice in the morning; In the morning I will express my concern to you and wait expectantly."

(Psalm 3:3) "But you, O Jehovah, are a shield around me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head."

(Psalm 4:3) "Know that Jehovah will treat his loyal one in a special way; Jehovah will hear when I call to him."

(Psalm 6:8, 9) "For Jehovah will hear the sound of my weeping. Jehovah will hear my request for favor; Jehovah will accept my prayer."

(Psalm 34:8) "Taste and see that Jehovah is good; Happy is the man who takes refuge in him."

(Psalm 46:1) "God is our refuge and strength, A help that is readily found in times of distress."

(Psalm 125:2) "Just as mountains surround Jerusalem, So Jehovah surrounds his people From now on and forever."

(Jeremiah 20:11) "But Jehovah was with me like a fearsome warrior. That is why those persecuting me will stumble and will not prevail. They will be put to great shame, for they will not succeed. Their everlasting humiliation will not be forgotten."

(Psalm 23:4) "Though I walk in the valley of deep shadow, I fear no harm, For you are with me; Your rod and your staff reassure me."

(John 1:16) "For we all received from his fullness, even undeserved kindness upon undeserved kindness."

(Hebrews 13:6) "So that we may be of good courage and say: 'Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'"

(Matthew 6:8) "So do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need even before you ask him."

(Deuteronomy 31:6) "Be courageous and strong. Do not be afraid or struck with terror before them, for Jehovah your God is the one marching with you. He will neither desert you nor abandon you."

w11 3/15 12-15 Trust in Jehovah as the End Draws Near.

w13 9/15 13-16 Make Jehovah's Reminders the Exultation of Your Heart.

4.5 Zeal in the Ministry

(Psalm 145:10-12) "All your works will glorify you, O Jehovah, And your loyal ones will praise you."

(John 15:11) "So that my joy may be in you and your joy may be made full."

(1 Corinthians 2:4, 5) “I preached [...], so that your faith might be [...] in God’s power.”

(Ephesians 3:8) “This undeserved kindness was given, so that I should declare to the nations the good news.”

(2 Timothy 4:7) “I have fought the fine fight, I have run the race to the finish, I have observed the faith.”

(1 Corinthians 15:58) “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord.”

(1 Thessalonians 2:2) “We mustered up boldness by means of our God to tell you the good news of God in the face of much opposition.”

(1 Corinthians 3:9) “For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field under cultivation, God’s building.”

w05 1/1 12-15 Trained to Give a Thorough Witness.

w09 7/15 15-19 Imitate Jesus – Teach With Love.

w12 1/15 pp. 9-13 Learn Watchfulness From Jesus’ Apostles.

w13 5/15 pp. 8-9 Are You “Zealous for Fine Works.”

w18.05 17-19 Why We “Keep Bearing Much Fruit.”

CHAPTER 5 THEOCRATIC FACILITIES AND CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

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Design and Construction Program during the COVID-19 pandemic 4-5

On-going Projects 4.1

Assembly Halls 4.2

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Cancellation of visits to the Remote Translation Office in Mataró 7

1. Transitioning to use of Kingdom Halls. The branch has given approval for congregations in areas that are in phase 3 to clean and disinfect the Kingdom Halls. The maintenance trainer in your area will contact you shortly to share a few final reminders. You should not clean or disinfect the hall until he has given you approval to do so.

2. Once you have completed the cleaning, the Kingdom Hall should not be used. The branch office will inform you *when* the hall is approved for a certain activity. Nonetheless, at this point, if there are publishers who do not have access to publications in digital format, you may assign a brother from your congregation to discreetly enter the hall and obtain what is needed. This may include convention programs, badge cards, the study edition of *The Watchtower* or the *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*.

3. The oversight of the contracted energy company will be handled directly from the branch office (see 6:4).

4. Design and Construction Program during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are all grateful for the instructions that we continue to receive regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and the effect these are having on our theocratic activities. The Governing Body has no desire to put at risk the lives of the thousands of brothers and sisters working in the various aspects of the Design and Construction Program worldwide. For this reason, instruction has been provided to suspend all Kingdom Hall and Assembly Hall construction and remodeling projects until September 1, 2020. Following are some details of what implementing these instructions will entail:

4.1 On-going Projects. All on-going projects are put on hold. In addition, visits from the maintenance trainers, site evaluations, and all activities that require in-person meetings are suspended. On the other hand, work that can be done remotely is still being carried out as usual.

4.2 Assembly Halls. Assembly Hall overseers have received instructions to refrain from calling volunteers to do maintenance or any other type of work at the Hall. Those who are living at these sites, or those who are temporarily residing in an Assembly Hall, will assist with any necessary repairs where appropriate.

4.3 Construction Volunteers and Servants. Many construction volunteers returned to their homes while the authorities still permitted travel. Others will return as soon as it becomes possible. Many construction servants are doing tasks related to planning, design, and training which will allow them to restart the projects as soon as permission is granted. In some cases, construction servants have returned home in order to support their families during these difficult times.

5. We will keep you informed of any other adjustments that might arise related to the work of the LDC here in Spain.

6. **Cancellation of Bethel visits.** Following the guidelines from the Coordinator's Committee of the Governing Body, all planned visits to the branch are cancelled. These cancellations affect those who made a reservation to visit the branch, lunch guests and overnight guests at Bethel.

7. **Cancellation of visits to the Remote Translation Office in Mataró.** All guided tours for the Remote Translation Office for Catalan in Mataró (Barcelona) are temporarily cancelled.

CHAPTER 6 CONGREGATION EXPENSES

Financial issues 1

How to care for the basic needs of the publishers 1.1

How to proceed if congregation funds are running out 1.2

Donations for Local Congregation Expenses by Bank Transfer 2

Monthly Congregation Accounts Announcement 3

Reduction in the cost of electricity 4

1. **Financial issues.** Please keep in mind the following information:

1.1 How to care for the basic needs of the publishers. Analyze whether the basic needs can be met in the following manner: (1) Help from relatives, (2) Government assistance, and (3) Help from other publishers (Acts 4:32; *od* 12, ¶13-14). If, after having exhausted these methods, meeting the basic needs of the publishers remains an issue, the body of elders can decide to use congregation funds to meet these needs. As an exception, during the COVID-19 pandemic, these expenses can be considered as routine expenses. (*Instructions for Congregation Accounting* [S-27b] ¶21) and as such, presenting a resolution to the congregation is not necessary. It is best to provide families with the supplies they need, instead of giving them cash. You can request direction from the circuit overseer if any questions in this regard should arise.

1.2 How to proceed if congregation funds are running out. The following steps may be taken:

- (1) Assist the publishers that are in a position to make donations, to do so using donate.jw.org, instead of saving their contributions until the Kingdom Halls are opened again.
- (2) Consider the possibility of reducing or eliminating some of the expenses related to Kingdom Hall maintenance. Where several congregations use the same Kingdom Hall, the Kingdom Hall Maintenance Committee, could perhaps reduce or suspend the monthly contribution from the congregations for a few months, especially if the maintenance account has sufficient funds.
- (3) Reduce or suspend the monthly contribution by the congregation to the worldwide Kingdom Hall and Assembly Hall Construction Fund. If necessary, and as an exception, you may close off all of the contribution boxes in the Kingdom Hall except for the box for congregation needs.

If, after taking these steps, there are insufficient funds to cover the Kingdom Hall expenses, or to cover the basic needs of the publishers, inform the circuit overseer of the existing need.

2. **Donations for Local Congregation Expenses by Bank Transfer.** Please consider the following information and make sure it is received by the accounts servant:

- **How to record in the *Accounts Sheet* donations for the local congregation expenses received by bank transfer.** In the application, use the tab *Contributions>Contributions by Transfer*.



Congregations in Gibraltar should follow the *Instructions for Congregation Accounting* (S-27b), paragraphs 19 and 39.

- **Transfers received in the congregation’s bank account indicating that the donation is for a purpose other than “Local Congregation Expenses”.** Transfers to the congregation’s bank account should be made only for “Local Congregation Expenses”. If someone sends a transfer indicating that the amount donated or part of it is for another purpose (Worldwide Work or Branch Construction), the donor should be notified that this method should not be used for that type of donation. Donations for the “Worldwide Work” or for the “Branch Construction” should be done as indicated in the appropriate option on donate.jw.org.

If, as an exception, the congregation receives a donation in their bank account indicating that the amount or part of it is a donation for the “Worldwide Work” or for the “Branch Construction”, this should be recorded in *Accounts Sheet* using the tab Contributions>*Collecting Contributions*:



Congregations in Gibraltar should record these amounts as if they had been collected from the contribution boxes. Evidently, even though in this unusual case the contributions will be recorded using the option “Collecting Contributions” (or code “W” in the case of Gibraltar), filling out a *Transaction Record* (S-24) form will not be necessary. The corresponding bank transfer receipt will be the supporting document for this entry, and section “Verification of Receipts” in the *Congregation Accounts Audit Report* (S-25) will not apply in this case.

- **Cash deposits made directly by donors into the congregation’s bank account.** Although the congregation’s bank account details are made available for donations by bank transfer, if, as an exception, someone decides to donate by depositing cash into the congregation’s bank account, the aforementioned procedures will apply as well.

3. Monthly Congregation Accounts Announcement. This announcement includes a sentence reporting the amount collected from contribution boxes for the “Worldwide Work”. While meetings are not held in Kingdom Halls, there will not be contributions in the boxes. Thus, when this amount is 0, this sentence can be left out from the announcement.

Furthermore, announcing that a copy of the report will be posted on the information board will not be necessary either until meetings are held at the Kingdom Hall again.

4. Reduction in the cost of electricity. We have worked to reduce the cost of electricity for Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls. The state of emergency laws, decreed by the authorities, have simplified the requirements for these arrangements. In most cases we have requested a decrease in the contracted energy usage. Once the state of alarm has been lifted, and permission to use the Kingdom Halls has been renewed we will request an increase. Since these arrangements are handled by the Branch Office, nothing will be required of the local elders unless the LDC or any of its representatives specifically request it. We hope that these measures will lighten the financial burden of the congregations for as long as this situation exists.

CHAPTER 7 JUDICIAL MATTERS

1. The branch office has approved that, once the Kingdom Hall has been cleaned and disinfected, the bodies of elders may hold judicial hearings there without the need to consult with the Service Department. However, please keep in mind the importance of abiding by the following safety guidelines:

- (1) All should be reminded of the need to take the necessary precautions to reduce the risk of being exposed to infection.
- (2) Good hygiene, use of masks, and maintaining a safe physical distance are vital. Make sure disinfectant gel is available at the Kingdom Hall.
- (3) All in attendance must be in good health and not be considered as high risk individuals.
- (4) The laws and recommendations imposed by the local authorities should be followed.

CHAPTER 8 CONVENTIONS AND ASSEMBLIES

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[Cancellation of Circuit Assemblies until December 31, 2020 3-5](#)

1. **Baptism Candidates.** According to the May and July 2020 *Announcements and Reminders* (S-147), the Governing Body has provided direction for the elders to arrange for baptism candidates to be immersed locally. There is no provision for this to be organized by circuit.

2. When considering how to arrange for the baptism, if you decide to use an inflatable pool, please remember that it should be installed on a surface that is in direct contact with the ground. It should not be installed on a terrace, flat roof, balcony, etc. The brothers who perform the baptism should take the necessary precautions that have been established by the secular authorities in connection with COVID-19. Also, in view of the global pandemic, there is no provision for a large group of brothers to gather and observe the baptism such as is done at the circuit assembly. However, the elders may decide to arrange for others to observe the baptism via Zoom or some other electronic means. The branch office will leave such details to the good judgment of the local elders. Finally, pools that the branch has stored throughout the country should not be used.

3. **Cancellation of Circuit Assemblies until December 31, 2020.** The cancellation of circuit assemblies in our Branch territory has been extended until December 31, 2020. Therefore, if our circuit assembly was to be held during these dates, we will be able to watch it via JW Stream. The recorded program does not include a summary of The Watchtower, therefore, preparations should be made according to local circumstances.

4. Jehovah's organization adapts its protective measures to the characteristics of Jehovah's people, made up of young ones and the elderly, in order to care for our spiritual and physical health. One of the provisions that allows us to adapt to the pace of the more vulnerable ones, is the use of technology to continue holding our assemblies via JW Stream.

5. In the month of October we will reevaluate the situation based on the development of the pandemic in Spain. Based on the information available we will decide if we can again hold our assemblies under safe conditions in public gathering venues after January 1, 2021 or, if it will be necessary to postpone that date, or cancel the assembly.