

Jehovah's Witnesses to resume in-person gatherings, door knocking still on hold
by [Alejandra Molina](#) in the [April 20, 2022](#) issue



A Kingdom Hall in Walsenburg, Colorado. (Photo by Jeffrey Beall/Creative Commons)

Jehovah's Witnesses will begin to meet in person starting April 1, two years after closing their worship buildings due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Door-to-door preaching, however, will not yet resume.

Kingdom Halls—where congregants typically meet twice a week—will, as of April 1, reopen for in-person worship as long as there are no pandemic-related government restrictions forbidding them from doing so. Virtual services will still be available as well.

“This is historic for us because it will be the first time, globally, we’ll be holding hybrid meetings,” said Robert Hendriks, US spokesman for Jehovah’s Witnesses.

These new guidelines come just in time for two global events to be held at Jehovah's Witnesses' 120,000 congregations. A special lecture—dubbed “Where Can You Find Real Hope?”—is scheduled April 10, and the annual commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ will be held April 15. Both gatherings will be held in person at local Kingdom Halls with live speakers.

“Coming to a Kingdom Hall is a personal choice. Our congregants are eager to get back. Some may not. They'll have the option to stay home,” Hendriks said.

That's why Jehovah's Witnesses—a global denomination of 8.6 million—are not yet ready to begin their public ministries, including going door to door and setting up witnessing carts across cities. Letter writing and phone calls, which replaced door-to-door knocking, will continue.

“When we start knocking on doors again, we're not giving our neighbors a choice. Some won't be comfortable with that right now, and we're OK with that,” Hendriks said. “We want to make sure that our neighbors are not only safe but also feel secure, and it's going to take some time.”

Hendriks said cart witnessing may be the first of their public ministries to resume.

“We're going to take one step at a time,” Hendriks said.

During the pandemic, Witnesses shut not only their Kingdom Halls but also hundreds of summer worship conventions in cities across the United States. They canceled almost 800 conventions in 2020, the first time since 1897 that they had not held their in-person conventions.

The year before the pandemic, in 2019, they held 5,752 worldwide conventions, including a meeting of 40,000 Witnesses in Phoenix that contributed an estimated \$60 million to the local economy, according to the *Arizona Republic*.

In total, the 2019 conventions attracted more than 14.1 million attendees from across the globe, including millions who are not members of the Witnesses.

For Jehovah's Witnesses, the pandemic has meant putting principles ahead of personal preferences.

Life is sacred, Hendriks said, and “in-person ministry is not as important as a life. . . . especially when we were able to be so productive virtually.” But also, Hendriks said,

“Jehovah’s Witnesses are in subjection to the government.”

“When the governments say you can’t do something, we don’t fight it, not unless it’s something that God has told us to do,” Hendriks said.

“We don’t go to the government and start complaining about laws. When the government says you need to mask up, we mask up. When the government says you need to get vaccinated, we get vaccinated. When the government says you need to stop meeting in public, we stop meeting in public,” Hendriks added.

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