



Rex Williams <bishoprexawilliams@gmail.com>

Hearts Knit Together in Love

Rex Williams <noreply@churchofjesuschrist.org>

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Reply-To: bishoprexawilliams@gmail.com

To: bishoprexawilliams@gmail.com

Hey there friend,

I'm so glad you care enough to read this. It means a lot. Really.

It's an interesting thing, this email, just words on a page, but it connects us in a unique way. A way that before the pandemic or before I started writing these emails you might have not believed was possible.

Many beliefs have changed since the pandemic. Because of the need to work together and interact while still being isolated, society figured out a way to do it with tools that mostly already existed. And I know during that time many of you appreciated the ability to continue connecting with our ward family in new ways that weren't previously considered.

The video streaming of meetings has been a wonderful blessing to all of us who could not have attended due to the pandemic. It wasn't exactly the same as meeting in person, but it was as close as we could get with the technology available. Even though the pandemic has subsided, we will continue to use this technology to connect those who cannot attend for various reasons.

It's so important that the General Handbook for serving in the church has been updated to include how we should be using this streaming capability. I'd like to include some sections here below so you understand the guidance and direction:

From Section 29.7:

"When possible, Church members should strive to attend meetings in person. However, sometimes this is not possible. Streaming and holding virtual meetings make it possible to reach those who otherwise would not be able to attend. These people may include (but are not limited to) those who:

- Live in remote locations or have limited ability to travel.
- Have physical, mental, or emotional health challenges.
- Are immunocompromised or in a care facility or hospital.
- Are essential workers or otherwise are required to work on the Sabbath.
- Care for someone who is homebound and cannot be left alone.
- Need sign-language interpretation.
- Have allergies that put their health at risk in a meeting.

For the benefit of these members and others, the bishop may, as an exception, authorize a livestream of sacrament meetings and of funerals and weddings held in the meetinghouse. Streams allow others to see and hear a meeting remotely but not participate directly."

Later in the section:

"For some meetings, the bishop or stake president may authorize members who cannot attend in person to participate virtually. These meetings may include:

- Leadership meetings, such as presidency or council meetings.
- Quorum, Relief Society, and Young Women meetings.
- Sunday School classes.
- Primary classes and singing time.

Unlike streams, virtual meetings are interactive. Those who join remotely can contribute by asking questions, making comments, and participating in other ways."

And further in the section, some counsel:

"Streams and virtual meetings are not meant for the convenience of those who could reasonably attend in person. For example, the bishop does not authorize streaming of sacrament meeting for ward members who are traveling and could

attend another ward."

I'd like you to notice something specific in that direction. When it says, "...to reach those who otherwise would not be able to attend. These people may include (but are not limited to) those who:..." the part in the parenthesis, "but are not limited to" allows the Bishop to authorize streaming to people who are in unique circumstances that may not be listed.

If you find yourself in a situation where you cannot attend in person, but would like to be able to watch the broadcast, please reach out to me and I will prayerfully consider whether to provide you the link to our service.

We do have wonderful services. You, our ward members, have given incredibly powerful and heartfelt messages, that frankly are so good, they should be broadcast to the world! But if you think about the purpose of our meetings in the church, they are to worship, teach and uplift each other, and gather in unity.

Here's a statement from the General Handbook, section 29:

"Latter-day Saints meet together to worship, edify each other, and teach and learn the gospel (see Alma 6:6; Moroni 6:5–6). The Savior promised, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Meeting together is one way our hearts can be "knit together in unity and in love" (Mosiah 18:21)."

So, if possible, we'd like to see you in person so we can do that 'knitting' :)

We actually do have a place where we have 'broadcast your messages to the world' in the form of text, and that is our ward web site at <http://pennycreek.org>. If you have an uplifting story you'd like to include there, just send it to me by email.

Yes, we have the ability to record and broadcast to the world all the church meetings throughout the church, but that's just not the purpose of our sacrament meetings. The church has wonderful, uplifting material that is broadcast to the world through the web site, <http://churchofjesuschrist.org>

Spend some time there to be uplifted and connected to the church worldwide.

You are loved. We want you to join us in our meetings so you can feel that love. Our bodies and spirits are amazing things that work in ways we don't fully understand. I know you can experience a measure of love virtually, through text, audio, and video, but there's something more in person.

I hope to see you in person soon so we can experience that 'something more'.

With all the love I can give through text,

Bishop Williams

P.S.

To help me know your needs and individual situation, we are creating a new link for our Penny Creek ward sacrament meetings starting next week. Please reach out to me and let me know if you need it.

Other announcements:

Stake Conference meetings:

- **Saturday, April 23rd,**
 - - 4:00 p.m. - Stake Priesthood Leadership Meeting
 - - 7:00 p.m. - Adult Session (18 and older)
- **Sunday, April 24th, 10:00 a.m.** - Stake Conference General Session
 - If you have health or other legitimate reasons why you can't attend in person, let me know, and I will send you the broadcast link for the General Session on Sunday.
- **Friday, April 29th, at 7:00pm** - Penny Creek Ward Bingo Night. Fun for the whole family!
- **May 14th, 1:00 pm** - Brother Robert Van Hover's memorial service at our Penny Creek building.
- The full-time missionaries in our ward would love to have dinner with your family and share a spiritual message. Call or text them at 425-280-5035 to schedule a time.

You received this email because you made your email address available to your local Church leaders. It was sent by Rex Williams, whose calling is Bishop.