

Some Important Information About the 2021 MSOP Lectureship

Dear brethren and friends,

The Memphis School of Preaching Lectureship is always one of the highlights of our calendar year. It is a faith-building and joy-filled week of fellowship. That is why cancelling the 2020 MSOP Lectureship last year was such a difficult and unpleasant decision. Because the pandemic was new to us, we decided to exercise an abundance of caution, and move the same theme, topics and speakers to the 2021 lectureship. We were thrilled that all of the same speakers were able to commit to their same topics and time slots.

We had hoped that, by the time the 2021 lectureship rolled around, the pandemic would be in our rearview mirror. With 8 weeks to go before the scheduled start for our 2021 Lectureship (March 28-April 1, 2021), some things are better than last year. The *overall* survival rate for those who contract the virus is still very high. Vaccinations were not even an option last year in the weeks and months leading up to our lectureship. This year, some, who have been vaccinated, and others, who have built up antibodies in overcoming the virus, will feel comfortable attending, whereas they may not have felt equally comfortable doing so last year.

Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that there are still a number of “unknowns.” We do not yet know if the freedom of our speakers/guests to travel and gather will be in any way limited during the last week of March and early April. We do not know how many folks, who wish to take the “vaccine,” will be able to do so between now and the end of March. We do not know yet what the level of cases will be in our area 8 weeks from now.

In view of these uncertainties, we thought it prudent to explore alternate possibilities, just in case. We contacted our speakers to see if there was any way they could come and speak if we moved the date of the 2021 lectureship to May 23-27, 2021. This would afford an extra 8 weeks for people who wish to get vaccinated to do so. The weather will be warmer also at the end of May than at the end of March.

The response of our speakers was overwhelming and encouraging. Virtually every single speaker can come in May. Some of our older speakers even preferred the later date. **Consequently, we are announcing officially that the 2021 MSOP Lectureship will be conducted from May 23-27, 2021.** We know that this change may affect some who had time off in March, and who may not be able to come in May. We also know that some who would not be comfortable coming in March will now be able to come in May. I wish we could find a date that would be satisfying to all parties, but all things considered, the May date gives us a better chance for having a safer and healthier week together. We hope to see you then!

His servant and yours,

B. J. Clarke
Director, MSOP