



## FAVORITE BIBLE VERSES



### Is God Up There?

This year in our monthly articles we are considering favorite verses from the Bible.

This month's favorite Bible verse is: **Genesis 1:1**

***"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."***

"God, if you are up there, please show yourself to me." Have you ever said that to God? Wouldn't it be great if God just came down and showed himself to us?

God does show himself. In the first line of the Bible, God reveals himself to us. He tells us that he made all things. He made the huge galaxies of the universe. He made the tiniest atoms. He made you and me. His creation demonstrates his power, creativity, wisdom, and tender concern for us.

Take time to notice and to marvel at all God made—the colors of the sky, the light of the sun and stars, the mosaic of leaves outside your window, the beauty of the landscape within your view. Consider how God made you. Think of how your body works—your eyes and ears, your arms, legs, fingers and toes, your brain. However, God did not make the world and then stand back as a disinterested observer far removed from it all. He is watching over it all. He continues to care for us by providing for all our needs.

Sadly, we often don't thank him for what he has done for us. We forget him. For that, God has every right to turn his back on us. Amazingly, he still cares for us. More than that, he came down to us and saved us from our wayward ways. He came down in love in the person of his Son, Jesus, and rescued us. Jesus lived the perfect life of thanks that we should live. On the cross, he died the death we should die for our sins. He promises a new and perfect world where all who believe in him will live forever in perfect joy.

Is God up there? Yes, he is! And, thankfully, he was willing to come down here to save us so that, one day, we will see him face to face.

## WELS NEWS

June 2020

### A Long-Awaited Return

It appears that the time we have been waiting for—when we can again gather in church for Word and sacrament—has arrived or will arrive shortly. Some states have already begun to relax or even remove restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 virus. In most places further relaxing of restrictions seems to be coming in the days and weeks ahead.

That means your congregation has probably already been making plans to resume public worship at some time in the coming weeks. (Some congregations resumed limited public worship last Sunday.) At least on a temporary basis, those plans will likely take into consideration common-sense measures to reduce the possibility of spreading the virus. Plans may also call for voluntarily following guidelines provided by federal, state, and local health agencies. As we make these decisions, it will be important for congregations to be aware of what restrictions apply to them so they may evangelically apply biblical principles in keeping with the Fourth Commandment, as we also seek to honor the Third Commandment.

We will also want to act evangelically and respectfully because we realize our members and neighboring congregations may have many different approaches, opinions, or comfort levels. As we try to walk through the various governmental and medical concerns, guidelines, and recommendations, we also want to have a balanced spiritual concern toward our members, realizing some will want to gather in worship as soon as possible and others will still feel hesitant for a while. There also will be divided human opinions on the wisdom of beginning to open up or not to open up at all at this time. We want to encourage everyone to be patient with everybody else and to make those decisions in Christian love and with much prayer.

I pray the Lord has kept you safe and healthy under his protection during these weeks. I also pray the Lord has blessed your congregation's ministry during this time, since the Word always continues to accomplish God's purpose. And

I further pray for the members of your congregations, especially if they are suffering from illness or from any of the other attendant difficulties such as job loss, financial difficulty, or family turmoil. May the grace of our risen Lord Jesus give them—and all of us—his saving peace.

God bless you as you make evangelical, balanced, and thoughtful decisions about when—and how—to arrange for in-person worship. Together, God-willing, we will be back in God's house saying, "It is good, Lord, to be here!"

Serving with you in Christ,  
WELS President Mark Schroeder

### **New Mission Online Event Scheduled**

WELS Home and World Missions and the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society (LWMS) are partnering to offer Taste and See, a first-of-its kind free online mission event from June 27–July 11.

This new opportunity to learn about and support WELS home and world mission fields came about after two in-person summer events—LWMS' national convention and WELS Missions' Taste of Missions—were canceled due to COVID-19 uncertainties.

"Yes, it does make us sad, but we have to be responsible. We didn't feel it wise to put our members at risk," says Mrs. Cynthia Natsis, LWMS president. The LWMS convention, originally scheduled to take place in Athens, Ga., this year, usually draws almost one thousand attendees. She continues, "I pray that this new online event will fill that void of not being able to go and meet with your sisters in Christ."

Taste and See will begin and end with livestreamed worship services hosted at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. Opening worship is scheduled for 11 a.m. (Central), June 27, and will be followed by the LWMS flag presentation, a mainstay at its conventions. Closing worship at 6 p.m. (Central), July 11, will feature the commissioning of new missionaries.

In between, free consume-at-your-own-pace content will be offered online, including

- daily mission-themed video devotions;
- recorded missions presentations that had been planned for the live events, including updates from WELS home and world mission administrators;
- short video updates from home and world missionaries;
- a live question-and-answer panels;
- cooking tutorials and recipes from missionary families; and
- family-friendly activities such as missions-themed scavenger hunts; coloring pages; and create-a-card opportunities.

Event organizers are encouraging people to participate in challenges and activities on Facebook and the event website. Participants also can submit mission questions for the live panels.

"While we are certainly saddened that the physical events have been canceled, we know that God's plan is unfolding just as he's planned," says Mr. Sean Young, director of Missions Operations. "We are looking forward to an even larger audience than we could have hoped for out of a live event!"

Learn more at [wels.net/event/taste-and-see](https://wels.net/event/taste-and-see).

### **New Family Devotions**

WELS Commission on Discipleship has started offering devotions developed for the entire family to use. The devotions will coincide with the previous Sunday's Bible readings. Each devotion is complete with a set of questions for different age groups, a prayer, and hymn verses that can be sung or spoken. Downloadable printable versions are also available.

To access the devotions go to: <https://wels.net/serving-you/devotions/family-devotions/>