



## FAVORITE BIBLE VERSES



### What More Could We Want?

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

This month's favorite Bible verse is: **Psalm 23:1**

***"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want."***

John D. Rockefeller was one of the richest men in the world. An interviewer once asked him, "How much money is enough?" Rockefeller replied, "Just a little bit more."

How many times have we told ourselves that if we had "just a little bit more" we would be happy? A higher-paying job. A larger home. An earlier retirement. Better health. Successful children.

But what happens when those wants are met? Are people truly happy? And what happens when those wants aren't met? When you find yourself unemployed. When in rough times your savings are depleted. When plans for better housing or earlier retirement have to be put on hold. When your health takes a turn for the worse or your children struggle in school. Where do you turn? Turn to Jesus and remember, "The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want."

We might not have everything we want in life, but Jesus, our Good Shepherd, has truly given us everything we need. He's given us his word. He's given us his promises. He assures us that our sins are forgiven and eternal life in heaven is ours through his death and resurrection.

He promises to provide for all of our physical and spiritual needs richly and abundantly here on earth until he takes us to the glorious home that he has prepared for us in heaven. There we will experience the fulfillment of his promise, "You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand" (Psalm 16:11).

Not long after his death, someone came up to the accountant of John D. Rockefeller and said, "We know Rockefeller was a very wealthy man. How much did he leave?" Without a moment's hesitation, the accountant answered, "Everything!" A man who seemed to have it all was forced to leave it all behind in the end. The only things that will go with us from this life to the next are the spiritual treasures that belong to us through faith in Jesus.

What do we want out of life? What we need the most has already been fully and freely supplied by Jesus, our Good Shepherd. So, what more could we want? What more could we need?

## WELS NEWS May 2020

### Decision On District Conventions

After thorough discussion and with great reluctance, the Conference of Presidents (COP) has concluded that the district conventions, scheduled for early June, will be canceled due to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 virus. Even though it might seem somewhat early to cancel the conventions, a decision needed to be reached now to enable districts to cancel their contracts with convention facilities with no penalty.

The COP did consider whether the conventions could be postponed until later in the summer or early fall. However, several districts would not be able to hold district conventions at a later date due to unavailability of meeting facilities and accommodations for delegates. The COP also discussed whether virtual conventions could be held, but several districts concluded that a virtual convention would not be practical. The COP agreed that if some districts could not hold conventions, none should.

On the positive side, a benefit of canceling district conventions will be a significant cost savings. This is in keeping with synodwide efforts already undertaken to reduce expenses in the coming year.

Even though we cannot hold "regular" district conventions as the bylaws state, we will continue to walk together in our common confession of faith and shared mission. It is our commitment to the truths of Scripture and our commitment to carry out God's work that will guide us in times such as these—times that constitutions and bylaws could not have foreseen. Even without specific guidance from bylaws, we are committed to moving forward in a united way, striving to do all things in good order.

With no district conventions, normal elections will not be able to be held. Instead, we will plan to have elections for the district officers conducted electronically. The details of how this will be done are still to be worked out, but we have been assured that called worker delegates and congregational delegates will be able to participate.

Once the district officers are elected, we will follow the bylaw that gives responsibility to the district presidents, with input from the other district officers, to appoint people to serve in offices in which elections would have been held at the conventions. The district presidents will appoint those currently serving to continue in their positions until the next district conventions if they are willing to serve and if they have not reached the time limit for serving. For vacant offices in which there is no incumbent, the district presidents will make appointments using the information that the district nominating committees have assembled.

The decision regarding the proposed changes to the synod's retirement

program will likely be deferred to the 2021 synod convention. The planned discussion of the document "Male and Female in God's World" also will not happen at the district conventions this summer; rather, discussions and study will continue in pastor and teacher conferences.

A digital version of the *Report to the Twelve Districts* as well as other important materials will be made available to each congregation and to district convention delegates.

We pray for the day when lives return to something like normal.

Serving with you in Christ,

WELS President Mark Schroeder

### **April 2020 Home Missions Update**

*Rev. Keith Free, administrator of WELS Board for Home Missions, wrote this update following the spring meeting of the Board for Home Missions.*

For those who enjoy sports, the pandemic put a screeching halt to sporting events. For many athletes, the countless hours they put into preparing and competing with the hope of winning it all have now vanished.

In a sense this is what has happened in WELS Home Missions. The Board for Home Missions meets each spring. Because of the financial question marks due to the pandemic, it does not look like the Board for Home Missions will be able to authorize new funds so new missions can start in the next months, even though there was a tremendous amount of work done by so many on the Home Missions team.

What does a "tremendous amount of work" mean? To get to the point that the Board for Home Missions can authorize funds to be spent on new missions means that district mission boards completed a lot of work to develop locations to be considered for a new mission. District mission boards work with area congregations or core groups of members to gauge the potential of being the nucleus for a new mission. The demographics for the potential target area of the new missions are studied. Costs for land and rental locations for worship are investigated. Ministry plans are developed. Core groups meet in Bible studies to have God's Word fortify and encourage them in this important venture.

As the core group develops and the district mission boards follow the guidelines in submitting a request to the Board for Home Missions, the prayer is that their request will be approved so a new mission can start. Hundreds of hours go into this process and many more are spent by the Executive Committee of the Board for Home Missions as it reviews the requests.

March 25 and 26 the Executive Committee met via videoconferencing to review the 13 new ministry requests. Realizing there is uncertainty about when or if any of these new requests might be funded, the Executive Committee pressed on. After many hours, three new mission requests

received approval to start, pending funding. Those locations are:

- West San Antonio, Texas—Supported by Our Savior, San Antonio, 10 families are forming the core group for this new mission. This group started worship on March 1 (pictured). The first three Sundays an average of 40 people attended worship. Then worship services were suspended due to coronavirus precautions.
- North Liberty, Iowa—Good Shepherd, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has been working to develop a mission in this growing community for years. Nestled between Iowa City and Cedar Rapids, North Liberty is seeing rapid growth. Over the past three years, members of Good Shepherd have been active in various ministry events, including worship at the Community Center in North Liberty.
- Amarillo, Texas—Located 130 miles from the nearest WELS church, a group of 15 WELS members form the core group. The WELS pastor from Lubbock, Texas, comes to Amarillo twice a month to serve the members with Word and sacrament. The prayer is that a full-time pastor will have many opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus Christ so that this small group may blossom into a growing church.

During its March meeting, the Executive Committee also approved subsidy requests for 51 missions. The prayer is that as the Lord blesses these missions with growth, their requests for financial support grow less so that the funds they no longer need can be put toward the funds needed to start the next mission.

In addition, the Executive Committee, working with two Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary professors, prioritized 17 vicar-in-mission opportunities.

Although it is surely important to support seminary students during their vicar year and it is important to continue supporting existing missions, the highlight of the spring Board for Home Missions meeting is the authorization of new missions. This year that isn't happening, even though all the work has been done. Was this futile labor?

As people of God, we know the answer. In 1 Corinthians 15 the apostle Paul writes about Jesus' resurrection for 57 verses. It is a beautiful chapter and shares many wondrous resurrection truths. In the 58th and final verse, Paul writes, "Therefore my dear brothers, stand firm, let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, for you know your labor in the Lord is not in vain." While humanly speaking we don't know what the results will be from the labors of district mission boards and the Executive Committee of the Board for Home Missions regarding new mission starts, we do know that everyone was working in service to the Lord and that labor is not in vain. That is what our God says. That is what we believe.

To learn more about WELS Home Missions, visit [wels.net/homemissions](https://wels.net/homemissions).