

God goes with you wherever you go

The title of my sermon seems that we should always realize this as a fact. But, do we? How many times do we believe that God has been guiding our life and cares where we go and what we do? I have chosen scriptures to support that your life is in God's hands from the day we were born.

Joshua 1: vs. 9 says "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

I was born in Eldora, Iowa and I was the youngest daughter joining 2 sisters. We were all 7 and a half years apart. I lived on a farm with both of my parents. My parents took me to the Congregational Church from the time I was 2 weeks old.

However, my life at home was opposite of the Church. My Dad was physically abusive to my mother and I was 8 years old when I witnessed my Dad slap my Mom. I remember going out on the porch and asking God why is this happening. I felt God was protecting me and we moved during my freshman year to Glidden, Iowa where my folks owned a grocery store. My high school years were great as things at home were more peaceful. While in Glidden we went to the Presbyterian Church where as a high school student I taught Kindergarten.

The grocery store wasn't doing well, so it was sold and we moved to Boone, Iowa. In Boone I went to the United Methodist Church. Genesis 28: vs. 15 "I am with you and will

watch over, you wherever you go." Again, I saw the hand of God guiding my life. I married Tom Wirtz and we had 2 boys, Kevin and Ben. When we had been married 7 years Tom was killed by a drunk driver in a tragic accident. The boys were 3 and 5 when he was killed.

Fast forward, I married Paul Cleaveland and he adopted the two boys. We moved from Boone to Des Moines where we went to St. Johns United Methodist Church in Des Moines. Fast forward again, we moved to Indianola, Iowa where we attended the First United Methodist Church of Indianola.

Why do I keep telling you where I went to Church? Because through all these different Churches and all of God's people I have been loved and given a beautiful life. Not perfect and not without trial and tribulation but knowing Luke 1: vs. 37 "For with God nothing shall be impossible".

Paul and I decided we would adopt a daughter as we could not have children. So instead of just 1 daughter we were given 2 boys and a girl so now we had a family of 5 and had been married 4 years.

While we were in Indianola, Paul lay pastored at a Church called North River and I shared Jesus with the children. After 13 years in Indianola, Paul got a job in Omaha and we chose to live in Glenwood, Iowa where we attended Glenwood United Methodist Church. This was the only Church God challenged me by my accepting to be a trustee. It was an

experience I will always remember and God bless the Trustees of the Church.

After 3 and a half years in Glenwood, we moved to Southern California where Paul got a job. This is where the scripture in Philippians 4: vs. 13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Leaving Iowa was scary as I knew no one. We became Free as we joined the Free Methodist Church. Again, we were blessed with a great Church family who loved us with God's guidance. After 6 and a half years we moved to Glendale, Arizona where we were for 23 years and attended Glendale, First United Methodist Church.

Planning to stay in AZ for the rest of my life, I was told by Paul that I should think of moving to Iowa when we were retired. Fortunately, I have had 5 years to process this thought. Paul was missing seasons and I was tired of being so far away from Family. So, the day came when we went house hunting and we both said we weren't moving to Madrid but Paul wanted to look at a floor plan for one of the houses in Madrid. When decision time came we picked the house in Madrid. In three months we bought a house, sold our house and moved in [July 17, 2018](#).

Now, for the next Church we would attend. Knowing no one in Madrid and there was no Methodist Church in town I started Church Cruising as Pastor Dave at the EFree Church said I did. For [Sunday](#) morning we visited EFree Church and St Pauls UCC. I went to Bible Study on [Friday](#) afternoon at the EFree Church and we have also attended a Bible Study which is

ecumenical. We decided we wanted to join this Church family and have been so very blessed.

I hope that as I have taken you on my Church life journey you will remember yours. For I think there is nothing more precious than to worship Our Lord with others and keep spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When we left Glenwood, Iowa, we were singing the hymn "I'll go where you want me to go" and one of the members tapped me on the shoulder and said we will pray for your new adventure.

When we left AZ Church they had a farewell for us which was so amazing and heartfelt. Moving to Madrid is the only place that I haven't struggled to be happy and according to my mother in law I am blooming where I am planted. The assurance that God is with us wherever we go encourages me that if God calls us to go somewhere new I know he will be with us. But for the time being, I will rejoice living in Madrid, Iowa. The town we used to drive through and now live in. Walking with God is an adventure every day.