

# The Way Around

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Preacher: Pastor Cathy Hall Stengel

- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Good morning. It is good to see you this morning and people as they continue to arrive. It is a beautiful day in the neighborhood and I think some wise person said, I think this should be the last Sunday of this. So just saying.
- It is a beautiful day though. The sun is shining, the snow isn't blowing, and we are gathered here to worship God who is steadfast and good and wonderful, generous God we believe in.
- Just a couple of announcements. One is people are always interested in how the fish fries went. We sold 567 dinners and so woohoo.
- It would have been exactly the same as last week, 569, but somebody didn't come in the snow to get their dinner.
- So that would have been 569 because there were two of them. Just saying. Going along with the fish fry theme, as many of you know, and a couple of, well, including my husband and a couple of friends who came on Friday night, they were amazed by the army of people it takes to bring this all together and serve everybody.
- [ 1 : 2 9 ]     And parts of our army are going on vacation this week. So that means we need other parts of an army to come and fill in for those people.
- So please, if you don't usually help, I suggest you try it. And if you, if helping is beyond your physical ability or means, then talk to Carl Coles and he'll find something.
- He'll find something. But we do really continue to depend on all the people that it takes, the whole village, to carry off this fish fry.
- And it's just a fascinating experience of meeting people, the whole big table of people from the chapel that come week after week after week, and how much they love their church and love our church and love to come and be with us for these fish fries.
- We also want to welcome our Lutheran friends who are joining us for a choir piece this morning. When I walked in this morning, I was like, I don't know these people.
- [ 2 : 5 1 ]     And it was fine that I didn't know them, but they seem to be like a group. So I thought, well, I know the time changed. What else changed? And then it dawned on my time changed brain that this was the morning that the choirs would combine.
- And I'm just so grateful to have you here. And I should introduce myself. I'm Kathy Stengel, one of the pastors here, and just so grateful to have this opportunity.
- And we welcome those who are watching online this morning. We know that there are people who just can't go out in this weather. And so they join us online, and we are grateful to have everyone here with us.
- We are walking through this season of Lent. And we are going on the way, the journey to Jerusalem, the journey to the cross, the journey to Easter.
- And this morning's scripture reading speaks of Jesus using, that's Jesus speaking, using the image of trying to gather the people under the wings of God.

- [ 4 : 0 6 ] Using the image of a hen and chicks and gathering in and holding close. And how resistant we are sometimes to that. So I want to share with you a poem.
- Timidly lifting a wing, crouching close, hiding. Under God's wing, focus on the feathers. Underneath, soft and gentle, providing warmth.
- Under God's wing, there is comfort and protection. A barrier from dangers that may threaten body and soul. Under God's wing, a heartbeat pulses reassuringly, gathering us. Gathering us and others into community, no longer alone. For under God's wing, there is space to breathe and heal.
- Preparing for a new way. A revolution of radical love. It's time. As God's wings lift, the world looks the same.
- [ 5 : 1 2 ] But the time has come to soar. Strengthened from within, warmed and cared for, safe. Released from fear, resurrection promise.
- God's wings are always there. Always calling. Always holding. Amen. Amen. Good morning, everybody.
- Good morning. Good morning to our online family. We have two opening songs this morning. And just as Pastor Kathy so eloquently asked, Will you come and help us serve the fish on Friday night?
- One of our first songs is the summons, and God is calling us as well. So I invite you to stand. Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
- Will you go where you don't know I'll never be the same? Will you let my life be shown?
- [ 6 : 4 4 ] Will you let my name be known? Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?
- Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name? Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
- Will you risk the hostile stare? Should your life attract or scare? Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?
- Will you love the view you hide if I but call your name? Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
- Will you use the faith you found to shape the world around? Through my silent touch and sound in you and you in me?
- [ 8 : 1 0 ] Will you write ■■■ for ■■■■■ Will you fight for cruel and kind and never be the same? Will you always achieve meth.. Who knowsö iki■■■ He and I have horror in you and I may color in you and look like you you.
- rous áng Acts 1 God God hope God God God God Open my eyes that I may see Glimpses of truth thou hast for me Place in my hands the wonderful key That shall unclasped and set me free Silently now I wait for thee Ready my God thy will to see Open my eyes illumine me Spirit divine Open my ears that I may hear
- Voices of truth thou sendest clear And while the wave does fall on my ear Everything false will disappear Silently now I wait for thee Ready my God thy will to see Open my ears illumine me Spirit divine You may be seated Good morning I think our first song this morning Where your love and footsteps grow Thus I'll move and live and grow
- Perfectly tells what How we're supposed to live out the love of God God loves us so much And asks us to go out and love others in return So this morning we're asking you To prayerfully consider your gifts Your talents and your offerings Thanks Your hearts or How we stand■ ni With angels Cry Could your Buddhist Your wish Praise the Lord, for the Son of my love,
- For Jesus, who died and is now on our own. Hallelujah, find the glory.

- [ 11 : 53 ] Hallelujah, amen. Hallelujah, find the glory. Revive us again. Hallelujah.  
We praise thee, O God, for thy Spirit of God, Who has shown us our Savior and steadfast love.  
Hallelujah, find the glory. Hallelujah, amen. Hallelujah, find the glory. Revive us again.  
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
- Music. Alleluia, find the glory, Alleluia, Obed, Alleluia, find the glory, Revive us again.
- [ 13 : 08 ] Alleluia, revive us again, Till each heart is high, May each of the year, Reckermom, and fire from above.  
Alleluia, find the glory, Alleluia, Obed, Alleluia, find the glory, Revive us again.  
Alleluia, revive us, revive us, Revive us again.  
Again. Thank you.  
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Praise the Father, whom you have seen, We are still me, L■, We are still God, This is an honor of His strength, With He and■ is Heavenly God, everything we have and everything we are comes from you.
- [ 15 : 20 ] You love us so well. Please help us to do your work and your service and spread your name throughout our world.  
In your name we pray. Amen. Good morning church.  
As we ready our hearts for our time of conversation with God, we know that there is much that burdens us. Always things that weigh heavy on our hearts and we need to get in touch with God in that new way.  
Make that connection as strong as we can make it. We also know that there are things for which we must give God praise. God deserves honor and glory in all things and therefore we must pay homage.  
We must say thank you. Prayer is our conduit. Prayer is the way we stay connected. And so as we move together in prayer, let's be sure that we're giving God our very best.
- [ 16 : 31 ] Let's pray together today. Gracious and eternal Father, your people have gathered this morning. We have gathered and we see your sunshine.  
We have gathered and we hear great voices in song. We gather and there is so much for which we are grateful. Because we have seen smiles of friends.  
We have been able to enjoy just laughter and love as your people. And as we come today, we know that you are moving powerfully, gracefully, and lovingly in our midst.  
We come today knowing that it is you who has made all of this possible. And we come seeking to walk in the path that you have set before us.  
That we would continue on our way. But as we continue on our daily business, we know that there is much that we encounter in our world. Much that we see and much that we witness that needs your loving touch.
- [ 17 : 37 ] So Lord, as we continue to hear horrible stories emerging from the invasion of Ukraine. As we know that there are others around the world who are facing violence and oppression, but whose stories are not in front of us every day.  
We know that there are those in our very community. People who are struggling in ways that we do not see. So Lord, by your Holy Spirit, always keep our eyes and hearts open to the needs right in front of us.  
Let us always be ready to respond with love. Love that actually has legs on it. Love that provides the touch, the food, the shelter, the comfort.

The words that those who are hurt and need. You have done this for us. In all the ways in which we have had times where others had to care for us.

You were there. In that comforting word. In that smile of a friend. In that thing that we needed. However you chose to provide it.

[ 18 : 45 ] So we too will take our turn as the body of Christ. Lord, in all the ways you know.

The names that are on our hearts. The situations that are on our minds. Give us what we need. To speak your truth and be your love in all those ways.

This we lay before you. As we continue to seek your face. Not just your hand. In the name of the one who makes all things possible we pray. Amen. Our scripture today is from Luke chapter 13.

Verses 31 through 34. At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him. Leave this place and go somewhere else.

Herod wants to kill you. He replied. Go tell that fox. I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow.

[ 20 : 12 ] And on the third day. And on the third day I will reach my goal. In any case I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day.

For surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you.

How often I have longed to gather your children together. As a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. And you were not willing.

This is the word of our Lord. Thanks be to God. You should fly with me.

What? You should fly with me. Yeah, right. Turn the car around, pack a bag. Grab your passport, forget your golf clubs. Come on, a father-son trip. It'll be fun.

[ 21 : 14 ] When are you coming back? I don't know. So you don't have a plan? We agreed that if I let you take me to the airport, you wouldn't lecture me about how I'm ruining my life.

I lied. You know, most people don't have the luxury of just picking up and leaving it all behind, Daniel. Well, I'm not most people. If I don't have your blessing, that's fine.

But don't judge this. Don't judge me. My life here might not seem like much to you, but it's the life I choose. You don't choose a life, Dad.

You live one. You don't choose a life.

You live one. Father and son, in that place where one is reaching out to grasp all that life has to offer and feels that that is the way to do that is by traveling, seeing the world, experiencing the world that has been given to them and to him as one who is finding life.

[ 22 : 43 ] one who is traveling across the world to see what is it that the world has to offer me. What do I bring to the world? And a father for whom golf friends work.

Golf friends work. And you did hear Daniel say, don't take your golf clubs. How is it sometimes when we think about this particular scripture and I was thinking about this this morning, you think about these words, tell that fox I've no time for him right now.

this would be one of those I won't do it but just drop it. Mic drop. Tell that fox I have no time for him.

Jesus comes across as kind of a definitive I am not afraid of what you are about.

I will not hide. I will not back down. I have healing to do. I have baptizing to do. I have people to save. I have lepers to cleanse and lame to rise up on their feet and walk.

[ 24 : 02 ] I will not back down. Today and tomorrow clearing out the demons healing. What a life he has.

And he has come with an agenda to make things new. To make things new. And Herod is trapped in a path of destruction.

Destruction both of those around and himself within. You look at Tom, the dad and Daniel, the son and I am not in this message in any way going to compare them to Jesus and Herod.

But we, we grow up, we become adults and we have people who have expectations of who we shall be and what we should do.

I am not sure that Herod thought that there would come a point when he would be chasing after and persecuting the savior of the world.

[ 25 : 18 ] I don't think that Herod had in his heart, in his very heart depths, all of him, a desire to kill the hope of the human race.

but I think he got caught in a web of expectations and teaching and ferocity and an expectation that he should rule in the way that he did.

We see that in culture, in the world and sometimes people truly are seemingly possessed with a sense of evil.

But most people don't intend to grow up to be mean or hurtful or hateful.

Daniel did not grow up with an intention of hurting his father nor did his father grow up with an intention to kind of abandon his son because he doesn't understand them.

[ 26 : 27 ] So how do we do this whole expectation thing? When you were young and growing up did anybody ever tell you what they thought you should be?

Anybody? You should be a teacher, you should be a nurse, you should be a doctor, you should be a plumber, you should be whatever.

Those expectations that sometimes fit us and sometimes don't. Why aren't you married? Are you going to have children? When are you going to get a real job?

Those weren't necessarily my stories growing up, but I know that they have been other people's stories. Expectations that somehow we should be different or something that we didn't see in ourselves.

And often these are the categories. Career, school, marriage, children, home, retirement. Oh, there's no better sight than a child crawling in the aisle.

[ 27 : 50 ] Oh, darn, captured. You know, if it was up here, I know you would all be looking, but this one was for me.

The thought, you know, I had a young pastor who was a bit of a, I don't know, I don't use this word, but I think people would say a whippersnapper.

And he came up to me and said, well, until people like you get out of the way, you know, how are we going to lead the church forward?

With all credit to his gifts, we're still waiting for that particular person found that that wasn't really the way to move into leadership in the church.

You don't take other people down in order to get yourself into a position. One, we, I'll show you a picture.

[ 29 : 07 ] This is me with each one of our children. children. And our oldest son, Marty, on the left, he was a chef in this particular restaurant in New York City, and I went to visit him, and a chef was never anything I really thought he would do.

But he's the one child that I don't think I ever had a thought of what, not what he should do, but what did I dream, what did I imagine him doing? And then Katie, our daughter in the middle, who's a school counselor in Arizona, and the biggest thing with her is that you can see, you know, I'm not that tall, and she's not as tall as me, and when she said she was going to work with high schoolers, I was like, they are going to take you down.

Oh, no, they don't. I got two brothers. I can do this. And then our youngest on the far right, who I thought would be a great engineer or a doctor, methodical, but a tender heart and all of this stuff.

And, well, he's an administrator for a nursing home, and it kind of brings all that together, but I never imagined that that's what he was doing.

It would be doing, it's perfectly wonderful what they're all doing, but it wasn't necessarily what I picked for them. Fortunately, we didn't live in a home, and they weren't raised with the thought, you should be this or you should be that.

[ 30 : 36 ] We wanted to see how God would unfold their lives into who they might be. Our only expectation was that at some point they would be able to make a living and we would stop supporting them.

Because, you know, I've discovered this, and if your children are still young enough, here's the deal. If there's no money involved, then you go ahead and do whatever it is that God calls you to do. But if there's money involved, my money, then that might make things a little bit different.

There are places and times, even in marriage, when we have expectations of what our spouse should be or become.

And one of the things that we encounter is that when couples get married, they are sometimes getting married with something in their mind that's imagined about what that person will be like.

You hear the operative words? What that person will be like instead of looking at the person that they're going to stand at the altar with and realize, this is the person I'm marrying.

[ 31 : 46 ] Not someone in the future, not someone I will shape into who I want to be married to. This is the person that I am marrying.

we sometimes can't keep ourselves from having thoughts about what other people should do.

Jesus, in this space and place, I don't know if people thought that that's how Jesus would respond when the Pharisees said, run for your life, he's coming for you.

I don't know about you, but when Jesus responds, you tell that fox, I don't have time for him. I'm like, yes! That's the Jesus that we believe in.

The one who says, I will not succumb to the desires and the thoughts of who other people think I should be. this is the Savior who says, my life, my physical life, while I have it, this is how I'm going to use it.

[ 32 : 58 ] I'm going to heal, cast out demons. I'm going to change for the better. Running and hiding is not in the vocabulary of the man Savior who was sent to be with us.

us. That is simply not how it worked. When people underestimate us, when they underestimate what we've been called to do with this one precious and wild life, I've always said to people, you have two options.

Mostly, when people find themselves criticized, put down, put out by friends, by colleges, by work life, by whatever it is, when people do that, I'm like, prove them wrong.

Prove them wrong. Don't live up to the lowest expectations that people have for you. Because that is not what God called you to do.

do. So if we look back at Tom and Daniel, two different people with two different senses of what it is that they were to do with this one precious life that they had.

[ 34 : 27 ] The only hard part about this is that they were not able to explain to each other what that meant.

there was a peace that happened that broke some of that and that is when Tom's wife and Daniel's mother died. And Tom buried himself in golf and drinking and work and his friends who played golf and drank and were all doctors.

daughters. Daniel decided that upon the death of his mother that some of the things, the expectations in life just didn't fit anymore.

Why would he waste his life in a PhD program and when there was a chance he might not live to be old? And many people who've lost a parent at a young age wrestle with that.

they wrestle with the uncertainty of the future. And so Daniel says I'm going to take this one wild and precious life and I'm going to go experience it.

[ 35 : 42 ] So in Tom's trip, first to go get the ashes and then to walk the Camino de Santiago in Daniel's place is not just on a journey to find Daniel, he's on a journey to find himself.

Now, we could get all 70s touchy-feely about finding yourself, but it's a very real thing to learn about who you are as long as you are still alive on this earth.

There is something rich and wonderful to discover, not, but right here. Who am I and what is it that God is calling me to do with this one wild and precious life?

One of the things that my father, who when I told him that I was going to become a United Methodist pastor, did kind of one of these like, you kidding me?

he was a quality control engineer and it was all about moving up the corporate ladder. So, he said, but you'll never get to go anywhere.

[ 37 : 01 ] You'll never get to travel. And up in the far left picture, you can see not very clearly, and that's okay, a picture of me having been asked to preach in a church in Manila in the Philippines.

I sent him a picture. This is also the same father who said, taking pictures at my ordination and when I received my doctoral degree, who said that he needed an umbrella over his camera because he was just crying with such pride, so don't let him fool you.

Daniel and Tom, and sometimes our relationships can feel a little bit like this. Listen, my doctorate, I'm not going to finish it.

You mean this year? I mean, ever. Margaret Mead didn't become a great cultural anthropologist by staying in school. And when was the last time you traveled abroad?

And I'm not talking about for business. I mean, before mom got sick. Nepal, Morocco, India, Papua New Guinea, Europe.

[ 38 : 30 ] I gotta go to these places. I gotta go, I gotta go. I gotta go. When was the time when Daniel would become a cultural anthropologist?

When was the time when Tom would face his grief over the loss of his wife? When do we become our most human?

For people that Jesus was about to heal, for the places where Jesus was about to cast out demons, they didn't want to wait.

They'd been waiting for so long for a savior to come, for anyone to come who could heal their woundedness. The time was now.

And as Tom held the picture of he and his wife and he and his wife and son, he was grabbing and embracing and looking for all the love and life that that meant.

[ 39 : 47 ] And the Jesus who came who said, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who sent you, how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings and you were not willing.

We can demonize the ones who are not willing. But if we make it human, it's the ones who are just not ready. The ones who are not ready to acknowledge that what it means to be under the wings of God is not to be kept from the world.

It is not to be hidden away from the needs or the wants or the fun of the world. That being under the wings of God means that no matter where your day takes you, no matter how you might feel separated from all that matters in your life, no matter where you find yourself, your faith will keep you under the wings of a God who created you and gave you life.

We are resistant. Sometimes we're resistant because we're like Tom who's strong and independent and stubborn.

Anybody relate to stubborn? Probably so. I see some fingers pointed. You know, this means oh right me.

[ 41 : 29 ] I'm not a particularly stubborn person around most things. But I do think that we sometimes are stubborn when it comes to recognizing what it is that God brings us under his wings.

God when the world is tempest tossed, when it's thrown this way and that, when the storms are raging, when you can go through all the hymns and all the songs and you'll find this, that when everything is upside down, that we can't fix, then where do we go?

We go in our faith to the God who says you are mine and I am yours and we will do what we can do.

We will pray, we will reach out in friendship, we will care for one another, we will look after those who are under our care.

We will see the people who don't know the wings of God under which we are invited. We will look into the mirror and see it is I, Lord, it is I, standing in the need of prayer, in the need of comfort, in the need of calm, and some relative amount of healing when the world is broken.

[ 43 : 18 ] I must be on my way, he says. I must be on my way. I will not be beaten, I will not be strangled, I will not be held captive.

He ultimately will. But not today. Not today because he has healing to do, raising to do. Perhaps compassion, salvation, justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

And the reality is that we too, when Daniel, when Tom was standing there, sitting in the hotel room with Daniel's belongings around him, he had two choices.

He could discard all of Daniel's belongings, he could pack them and take them on a flight back to the United States, or he could literally put on Daniel's clothing and walk the walk.

He could put on his son and discover what did it feel like to live as Daniel. Could he stretch himself?

[ 44 : 40 ] Could he find what it was that was missing in his heart and his life. And he put the backpack on his back and went looking for something he didn't understand.

He went on his way to healing. Sometimes all that any one of us can do, all that you can do, all that I can do is one foot in front of the other with sometimes no idea where we're going.

But the Jesus who said, you tell that fox out of my way. I've got things to do.



We as people of faith, until we're dead, we're not done. Until we're dead, we're not done. And we don't know when we're going to be dead, so for now, for today, for tomorrow, we're just not done.

We're not done hearing and claiming the good news of Jesus Christ. We're not done believing that healing might be possible. We're not done.

[ 46 : 04 ] Friends, we're just not done. Let's pray. Lord, in your mercy, hear our hearts and our prayers.

Know our thoughts. Let us not hide anything from you in our hopes and desires. Let us, in the places where we can't see the road ahead, know that your wings are over and around us and you nudge us one foot at a time.

We may not go with bravery. We may go in fear. We may go in triumph and confidence, but Lord, let us not walk.

without you. In Jesus' name, we pray and hope. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 48 : 14 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[ 50 : 44 ] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.

[ 54 : 22 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen. And now let us pray together the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen. Amen.

[ 56 : 18 ] Amen. Amen. Will today's service join us down front?

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Very close.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[ 61 : 20 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. We started the service with God's invitation. Will you come and follow me? Will you let my love be shown?

Will you leave yourself behind? Will you risk the hostile stare? Will you love the you you hide? We're going to close with the last verse of the summons today leading into take my life and let it be.

And the second line of that hymn is consecrated Lord to thee which means to be set apart. Which if we can trust in those wings that cover us with love and protection and guidance.

[ 63 : 58 ] We can come to accept who God has made us to be and hopefully live into that. So I invite you to stand for the final songs. Lord your summons echoes true when you might call my name.

Let me turn and follow you and never be the same. In your company alone where your love and footsteps show.

Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you within me. Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee.

Take my moments and my days. Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Let them flow in ceaseless praise. Take my hands and let them move.

[ 65 : 29 ] At the impulse of the love. Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee.

Swift and beautiful for thee. Take my will and leave it thine.

It shall be no longer mine. Take my heart it is thine own.

It shall be thy royal throne. It shall be thy royal throne.

Henry David Thoreau is credited with these words. Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you've imagined. And I say to you. Go confidently in the ways and places that God guides you to go.

[ 66 : 46 ] Don't wait for somebody to tell you. God says go. God says be. God says. You are mine.

And I will gather you under my wings. Come. Let us serve the Lord. Amen. You are mine.

God says be. God says. He is heavenly. God says be.

Lord do you, too. Come Mistress of force is shared with you. What is the Lord doing to you? How to understand the Lord"? But a time is bearing with you when you exampel. You are mine, Lord. Come'Maw please. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[ 69 : 33 ] Amen.