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August 5, 2020

Today's message has been prepared by David Kai. David and spouse, Marly Bown are our Voluntary Associate Ministers (VAMs).

### **Our God Goes With Us**

Our God goes with us wherever we may roam,  
Our God goes with us, makes each new place our home,  
As God goes with us we live by faith, not fear,  
Thanks be to God, ever 'fore us, ever near.

These words are the chorus of a hymn I wrote for my home congregation, the Centennial-Japanese United Church. It is an affirmation that no matter where we go and whatever the future holds, we need not fear, for God goes with us. It is an essential message for us in difficult times like these, but the message was originally written for my home church as it was preparing to move from its historic building on Dovercourt Road in Toronto.

The hymn, "Our God Goes With Us" takes us through the history of the congregation's people from Vancouver days, to internment camps, to Toronto and eventual amalgamation with other congregations; first with the Centennial United Church and most recently with Oriole-York Mills UC to form the Bayview United Church.

You can hear the hymn sung by our daughter Mariko at this link:  
<https://youtu.be/jQ9iINYaAR8>

Our God Goes With Us

Chorus:  
Our God goes with us wherever we may roam,  
Our God goes with us, makes each new place our home,  
As God goes with us we live by faith, not fear,  
Thanks be to God, ever 'fore us, ever near.

The Spirit moved, blew boats across the sea,  
brooded in hearts that struggled to be free,  
New life, new faith, new challenges to dare,  
through blood, sweat, toil, bitter tears, our God was there. (Chorus)

The Spirit wept as hatred's flames were fanned,  
as trains of tears streamed from the promised land,  
In lonely mountain paths our God was found,  
Faith, hope and love making ghost towns holy ground. (Chorus)

The Spirit urged, go forth and start anew,  
rebuild my church, a sanctuary true,  
Welcomed by friends, their paths entwined as one,  
stronger united with ev'ry rising sun. (Chorus)

The Spirit leads; the future, still unknown,  
is not to fear, we trust in God alone,  
Be with us still as we move on again,  
strengthen, inspire us, our Saviour and our Friend. (Chorus)

Words and music by David Kai ©2005      Tune: Lemon Creek  
*(It is my custom to name my hymn tunes after camps and ghost towns where Canadians of Japanese descent were interned during the Second World War; in this way I hope to ensure that these names and places will not be forgotten.)*

Just as God's presence, symbolized by the Ark of the Covenant, traveled with the people of Israel through their years of wandering in the wilderness, so God moves with us. In all our journeys, God has always gone with us, for us and 'fore us. Thanks be to God.

Grace and peace,

David  
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