**Springfield Presbyterian Church**

**May 22nd, 2022**

**The God of Transformation and Transitions**

1. The Sentimental…

This past Friday, I celebrated the anniversary of my ordination as

I enter my sixth year of ministry with you here at Springfield. I’m admittedly feeling a little sentimental, because I’ve watched many of you grow up right before my eyes, or if not in front of my eyes, I’ve heard your parents and their pride and their stories. If five years makes me mushy, I can’t imagine what another five will do.

But then I simply remember all these good folks in the pews with you. They’ve known you since you were itty-bitty and they have had the wonderful privilege to watch you grow up. They have seen you struggle and succeed, and Springfield continues to be that safe place. We hope you always know you have a home here, where you can be fully yourself, and God and this community will hold you with loving encouragement.

There’s a few things I need to say before I get to our Scripture today, because I feel called to share these words with before you head off on a new adventure.

One. You have faced something that none of us in this sanctuary have had to face – trying to go to school in the time of a pandemic. You have had to learn how to be flexible and adaptive. You have grieved those celebrations you weren’t able to make because of confinement. You have risen above the challenges before you by learning new ways of doing things and you all have succeeded beyond measure. While none of us would have wanted this challenging covid school experience, I believe you will be able to lead with that adaptiveness and creativity that you have learned and will be able to guide us into the future in new and innovative ways.

Two. I’m only 35 and I feel like I’m talking about the good ole’ days when I say this but – in some ways, school has demanded more out of you than many of us. In talking with many of you, I’ve heard how much school work you’ve had, how social media creeps into every part of your life, and in some ways, you don’t get to simply ‘turn off.’ I think we need some school reform, but that’s another sermon for another day. What I’m seeking to convey is that you have carried an enormous weight of work that many of us don’t see until adulthood and you’ve done it with grace. You have navigated those challenges and you will be walking across a stage, turning your tassel, and very deservingly celebrating your capacity to manage all that these years have held.

Third – and my last personal point here – something I’m so incredibly proud of is that if you read each of your mini-bios, you have each chosen a field where you help other people. Whether that’s psychology, nursing, deaf studies, engineering for a better future, teaching, and more – you have felt a call to help others and we are grateful for you following that call. It is cheesy to say, but it is indeed true – our future is much more promising with each of you in it.

1. To the Scriptures

Now, let me circle around to the Scriptures we have heard this

morning. I have to admit that we often focus on the older characters of the Bible, or at least, older in Biblical years. We tend to look at Abraham or Paul rather than people like David or Jeremiah.

While we didn’t have a text on David today, we know the story well – we know that David was this little shepherd guy, short in stature, and had a slingshot and faced the giant called Goliath. Others laughed David off, thinking – what is this kid doing, going into the battlefield, but in his bravery and cleverness, he defeated the giant. Be like David – go into this world, let people shrug their shoulders, and then go into the field and do great and unthinkable things. Be like David – even when it’s scary, even when the odds are against you, choose to stand up against the giants of the world. We need more David’s in this world.

Then I think about Jeremiah, who we heard a little bit about today. Jeremiah was a boy and felt God calling him, but he said that he was too young, that he didn’t have the words to speak. God calls him regardless – he tells him that he will put his words in Jeremiah’s mouth and from this he will see nations moved and changed by his actions. Jeremiah went onto being one of the greatest prophets in the Old Testament and indeed did all that God said he would. Be like Jeremiah – trust that when you don’t feel like you have the words, trust that God will give them to you. Be like Jeremiah – keep walking forward even when you think you are too young, too inexperienced, or too ‘fill in the blank’ – you are enough, you are more than enough. We need more Jeremiah’s in this world.

Timothy, from our second reading today, has a bit of a different history from the New Testament perspective. He was a son of a gentile and in the very midst of the first churches coming into creation. We know that he knew the Scriptures from a young age and he tells us that we should not let anyone tell us we are too young, too small, too ‘again, fill in the blank’ to do the work of Christ.

We often forget that in youth, we have a sense of the impossible as possible. As we get older, even me, I must admit, we get a little jaded – we take things for what they are worth and press on. We forget how marvelous things are – like seeing something for the first time. God knows that our youth are ones who are ready to be transformed, ready to hear the call, ready to approach the world with the capacity to meet the challenges ahead.

1. The Call

So my friends, whether you are headed off to college, graduated

college and starting a new adventure, or you are exploring what is ahead, I ask that you trust the God of transformation.

God, from the very time you were little – with tiny hands and tiny feet, has started a good work within you and has loved you in every breath. Trust that God that you know, the one whose love overflows within you, and know that as you continue to transform from teenager to young adult and beyond, that God is with you in the journey. May you know you are never alone and may that always be a comfort.

May you also know that God is the God of transitions. God is the Creator – God has seen creation change over centuries and yet God remains God. God is ready to hold you as you move through this transition – he’s an expert – so let the God of all hold you in the midst of it.

And again, may it be said again and again – we are so proud of you and this place is always your home. When transition feels like it’s just too much, I hope you pick up the phone, walk in the door, send an e-mail and say, “Can we talk?” and know that you will be met with love. When God’s work of transformation feels intimidating, may you do the same and send a text – and we can remind you that we’ve seen you transform and that we love you and believe in you. We know that God is doing a good work within you.

How do you end a sermon like this? There are not enough words for me to gather together in one place to share the deep and abiding love that surrounds you. Maybe a blessing will do…may the God of love, the God who knows you, cares for you, transforms you, and walks with you through every transition be with you in every moment and every breath. Amen.