



This sermon series uses the image of a tree, from seed to sprout, to sapling, to fruit bearing and back to seedling for the next generation. As First Church ends 2019, we have the opportunity to look ahead to 2020 praying and working for a new vision, a new way of being in ministry at Third Street and Broadway. The year 2020 will be our 150th anniversary. Being good stewards of the gifts of those who have gone before us, means that those who follow us will have the resources available for years to come. When we think about generosity and giving, part of the motivation is leaving a legacy for those who come after us. We celebrate our confirmation class who have been studying and focusing and learning about faith. Faith is journey, a lifecycle if you will. Seeds are planted and nurtured and then grow and bear fruit. Regeneration is how trees and plants and you and I work toward the future. What a gift to celebrate young people's first deliberate steps in faith. The LifeCycle of Giving is not complete with Consecration Sunday, it needs Confirmation of Faith and deep gratitude. Pray for these new members is this week and in the weeks

Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon: **"I Believe"**

Daily prayer: *O God, our source in all things, you have showered us with blessings. Help us to be rooted and established in your Word and your love so that we may be like trees planted by streams of water, yielding fruit in season. Pour out your spirit on us as your people and guide us in our praying, serving, giving and living. May we offer the best of our lives and gifts out of our faith in Jesus; it's in Christ's name we pray, Amen.*

This week's sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>

Study Guide

Monday, November 18, 2019 Jeremiah 1: 4-7

Young Jeremiah is called by God. Like many other who have been called, Jeremiah has an excuse as to why this is a bad idea. This beautiful scripture is often used when confirming students and when celebrating the gifts of students and young people. Sometimes, their gifts are overlooked, or under appreciated, or minimized. Not what our age, God has given us gifts and talents to share. Sometimes when we are young, we are not certain of all our gifts, but we are still called upon to use them. Our lifecycle of giving is a journey where we grow and learn who we were created to be in God. Today, write a note to a young person and let them know how much you appreciate them and their gifts.

Tuesday, November 19, 2019 Luke 2: 40-43

The end of the second chapter of Luke is often overlooked. We forget about Simon and Anna and we certainly overlook verse 40: "The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him." Jesus grew in grace and wisdom as a child. Our children and youth do as well. They are hungry to learn about God and about how they can deepen their faith. The image of Jesus with that same hunger is encouraging. We are created to long for God and to know that God has created us unique and unrepeatable. How do you encourage children and youth that you know to deepen their faith? How do you see God's favor on them and share God's love and grace with them?

Wednesday November 20, 2019 Luke 2: 44-47

Jesus is at the Temple, a child, but his parents don't know it. They think Jesus is lost, and spend three days looking for him. Can you imagine their panic? When they find him, he is in the temple with some of the most learned men of the day. Those religious leaders were amazed by Jesus' faith and insight and questions. How often are we amazed at the insight and questions of our young people? How often do we just shrug off their penetrating and deep questions over how we do things, why we do things and is there another way? Young people may not always be right, but they are not always wrong either. The same thing is true for adults. How do we as a community of faith engage our children, youth and young adults in ways that not only deepen their faith, but ours? How often do we listen and pay attention to the questions and the challenges our young people give us? How could we do better? Pray today, for our confirmands, our children, our youth and our young adults.

Thursday November 21, 2019 Luke 2: 48-52

Mary, Jesus' mother asked why he would worry them so. Jesus didn't understand why they wouldn't immediately know to look for him. Going home, Mary cherished his words and Jesus "increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor." That is our hope and prayer for our children and youth and particularly our new members from our confirmation class. We know and they know "they don't know everything," but we pray in their lifecycle of faith that they will mature and increase in wisdom and in years. Generations before us, prayed that for us and now we pray the same thing for them. Our confirmands are both the church NOW and the church of the FUTURE. They are gracing us with their faith and understanding and will continue to do so in the years to come. Today, pray for our church, for its ministries, its outreach and its witness through our confirmands and through us.

Friday November 22, 2019 Jeremiah 1: 8-10

Jeremiah is told to not be afraid, for God was going to give him the words he needed for the work to which he was called. He would do amazing things; both build and plant and pluck up and pull down. Our confirmands and all of us are called to plant, to nurture, to encourage, to bear fruit and to harvest and prepare for the next generation. We are called particularly to share with the children and youth and young adults leadership opportunities and to be willing to listen and to follow. As we prepare to enter the week of thanksgiving, say a prayer of gratitude for our congregation, both young and old, for those who went before us and planted seeds of faith within us and for those for whom we plant the seeds of faith.