Springfield Presbyterian Church

December 24th – Christmas Eve

Generation to Generation - We Tell the Story

1. A Review

During this Advent season, we have been preparing our

hearts and minds by engaging in a series called “Generation to Generation.” We have remembered and continue to embrace the reality that the church is not one generation – it is many – and each generation has something vital to share with us as we hear this story told every year. As each week has rolled on, we have lit our Advent candles, representing hope, peace, joy, and love. In the center of all the candles lies the Christ candle, the one we have been waiting for, the one we light tonight.

As a pastor preaching on this sacred night, this meditation was difficult to write. We know the story well, whether we are here every Sunday or maybe once or twice a year. I feel like I should have some profound academic epiphany or revelation to share with you. I could give you some great discourse on a Greek verb or hone in on a particular verse as some theological exposition. But that’s not why you’re here. I’m a nerd and all, and I assume many of you are a nerd with me – and please know I use that term endearingly – but that’s not why you are here tonight.

You are here tonight because, from generation to generation, you have found the elements of the Advent candles – hope, joy, peace, and love – resounding as we hear the story. Maybe you remember your small child-sized hand clasped in your grandmother’s hand as she brought you through sanctuary doors long ago on a night like this. Or perhaps, you are the grandparent, and you bundle a new grandchild in your arms, just as Jesus was cradled this night, and you bring them into a sanctuary to hear the story. Perhaps you’re my age, somewhere in the middle of this life, where memories have been crafted around this story, but you know there are many more to craft in the future. From generation to generation, there is a reason we keep on telling this story – there is a reason it doesn’t get old – it brings us back inside these sheltering walls. It centers us in these moments where we feel the love surrounding us in the birth of Jesus Christ.

As you wake up tomorrow morning around a bustling Christmas tree or listening quietly to some carols on the radio, I encourage you not to let this moment slip away. The story doesn’t get old, but after a few days, in this hectic and busy life, it’s easy to let the mystery and miraculousness of this night dissipate.

It doesn’t matter what generation you are from – you are called to continue the story in your own life. Keep the story alive, keep the story alive by living out the Advent values – by choosing peace when it would be so much easier to choose disunity, by choosing hope even when things seem like they might fall apart, by choosing joy every chance you get, and by choosing love – love for neighbor, love for yourself, and above all, love for God in all you do and say. As you keep these themes of peace, love, joy, and hope alive, may they be held together by the story you hear tonight and the candle that holds the central place in the wreath and in our hearts – the Christ candle – the child we come to celebrate with our whole selves this night. Amen.