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SERMON TITLE: Counselor: *The Life & Times of Jeremiah*

SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 29:4-7

DATE: December 8, 2019

Check out the service at www.fpcd.org.

Advent Two

"Lessons and Carols," FPCD Children's Christmas Pageant

Meditation by Pastor Ginger

Ross began the service with words close to his heart:

"We thank God for the extraordinary gift of the children God has entrusted to us."

You, the congregation said:

"We praise God for the gift of our children and the responsibility that goes with it."

At First Presbyterian we take that responsibility seriously because families are very important to God. And, families are important to us!

When the people of Israel were exiled and displaced to another country, it was a topsy-turvy time. What would bring stability? Jeremiah tells us about the plans the Lord has for us in difficult times. Take a look at the verse in your bulletin:

This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile to Babylon from Jerusalem: "Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare" (Jeremiah 29:4-7).

See what God values?

- ~ building,
- ~ planting,
- ~ marriage,
- ~ having children,
- ~ marrying them off so you can have many grandchildren.
- ~ You working for the peace and prosperity of the city.
- ~ You praying for your city and as a result it will do well. And so will you.

Knowing the Lord is a family affair which reaches to the next generation and the next—and so on and so on! Everything you do to help a young child or young adult grow and stand on his or her own feet in the knowledge of the Lord makes your city better.

Our staff has stepped up this fall. Nyadia, Dameron, Ross, Jennifer, Sean and Brittany—thank you for taking the lead. They have passion for what they do, and they use it for the good of these children. **And so do you** when you get involved and support them.

What are children learning here? **HOPE**. What are they gaining here? **The COUNSEL of the Lord**. When you show up to help, when you cook dinner or contribute to their fundraisers, when you teach Sunday School, help with plays or open your home to the youth for activities, **you show them you believe in them**. There's nothing more important.

God wanted God's people to survive and even thrive at a difficult and topsy-turvy time. Do you think we are now in sort of a topsy-turvy time? We survive by following the instructions of God:

- ~ building,
- ~ planting,
- ~ getting married,
- ~ having children,
- ~ marrying them off so you can have many grandchildren.
- ~ You working for the peace and prosperity of the city.
- ~ You praying for your city and as a result it will do well. And so will you.

This is wise counsel. This helps the church—you and I—carry on in difficult times, and in this way we will thrive. We practice our faith. We bear hope for the future. We are the special objects of God's love and concern. When we follow him, we are blessed way beyond the present generation.

Let this congregation multiply. We will do this by blessing and nurturing these children; we will accomplish this by blessing and nurturing this community. We do all of this by prayer—committed, intentional prayer.

We are a small community but we are invited to work in the larger public community around us. Along the way, our children will learn to step into our footsteps and prosper too.

What are you doing to follow God's counsel?

AMEN