

**SHARING THE FAITH: WEEKLY EMAIL DEVOTION  
FOR THE WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 29, 2009**

**Reading for the week ending November 29, 2009, First Sunday of Advent:**

**LUKE 21:25-36**

<sup>25</sup>There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. <sup>26</sup>People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup>Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup>Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

<sup>29</sup>Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; <sup>30</sup>as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. <sup>31</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup>Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. <sup>33</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>34</sup>Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, <sup>35</sup>like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup>Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

**Faith Questions:**

1. What signs do you see in the world today that might indicate that "your redemption is drawing near"?
2. This text could be interpreted as pointing toward a future time, when "heaven and earth will pass away." It could also be interpreted as talking about the Kingdom of God (heaven) on earth, now. The changing of seasons, the cycle of days, the changing of tides—many of the things this text talks about as signs of the Kingdom are happening now. Here is an excerpt from *Velvet Elvis*, by Rob Bell, that says more about how the Kingdom of God (heaven) is here, now:

"When we choose God's vision of who we are, we are living as God made us to live. We are living in the flow of how we are going to live forever. This is the life of heaven, here and now. And as we live this life, in harmony with God's intentions for us, the life of heaven becomes more and more present in our lives. Heaven comes to earth. This is why Jesus taught his disciples to pray, 'May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' There is this place, this realm, heaven, where things are as God desires them to be. As we live this way, heaven comes here. To this place, this world, the one we're living in."

Where do you see signs of the Kingdom of God (heaven) on earth now, in your family, workplace, church, and community?

3. “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life.” What are you worried about? What does Jesus’ image of the Kingdom of God (heaven) come to earth say to you about your worries? How might this understanding of heaven help you when it comes to the things you worry about?
4. How might this text inform us, the congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church, as we enter this time of transition in senior leadership?
5. This Sunday is the first Sunday in Advent. Advent is a time of waiting, watching, and wondering. What are you waiting for? Other than a new Senior Pastor, what might Trinity Lutheran Church be waiting for? What is your broader community waiting for? What is the world waiting for?

**Let us pray:**

Lord, be with us as we wait, watch, and pray, knowing that we wait for your Kingdom, but also believing that it is already here and we are a part of it. Help us to be your instruments in bringing heaven to earth, in all the places where we live and move and have our being.

*For whom else, and for what else, shall we pray? (Insert your own prayer here)*

Amen.

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