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South Eastern Minnesota
Sermon Starters for November 2009

November 29, 2009 – Luke 21:25-36

“I will make a righteous branch sprout from David’s line.” It is the beginning of Advent today, and we have heard this text many times, and even though Jeremiah was not predicting Jesus, the words still parallel the hope that is ours as New Testament people in Christ. Jeremiah’s words were meant to offer hope and comfort and restoration for Israel.

The image of the branch sprouting took on new meaning for me when I saw olive trees at the base of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem this summer that go back to the time of Jesus. I discovered that with olive trees, they die down but then sprout new branches from old trunks. The root structure is very strong and even can regenerate when the tree trunk is destroyed. These two thousand year old trees still bear fruit today from those broad and gnarly trunks. In our lives, we are never too old, or too gnarled or too discouraged to share our hope, our abilities our possessions and our love with others.

In the Luke text Jesus speaks also of the trees sprouting leaves as signs of life. Jesus parallels this life with signs of the kingdom of God that is also near.

We too through the stewardship of our lives and resources are signs that the kingdom has entered our lives and our communities of faith as we share. That generosity breathes new life into the world through the gifts we share, and those acts of stewardship also bring restoration, hope and comfort.

How can we be signs of the kingdom in our congregations, our communities and the world? This Advent, may you consider the olive trees that are thousands of years old, and sprout new life as a witness to God’s sustaining power in your lives.



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