

Christmas Eve
December 24, 2008

Rev. David A. Kind
University Lutheran Chapel
Minneapolis, Minnesota

✧ Jesu juva ✧

HE IS BORN

Micah 5:2-5a; Hebrews 1:1-6; Luke 2:1-20

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God the Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

Behold, the prophetic Word is fulfilled. In the town of Bethlehem the Holy Virgin and her betrothed husband Joseph have taken up residence in a lowly cattle shed. And she who conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word delivered to her has brought forth a Son.

He is born of a Virgin to undo the ancient curse brought upon us when the first virgin in the Garden took and ate that which was forbidden by God. He is born, swaddled in tight binding clothes, that He might loose us from the bonds of death and of our sins. He is born, in the town of Bethlehem, meaning house of bread, who is Himself the Bread of life come down from Heaven. He is born, and laid in a manger, a feed trough for cattle, that we might feed upon Him and be raised from our base estate. He is born as firstborn, not only of Mary, but of firstborn of God the Father. He is born and the angels that worshipped Him in heaven now proclaim His advent upon the earth. "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."



And who would have considered that He should come in a such a fashion if not for the prophecies of Scripture; for Bethlehem, though the city from which David came, and the burial place of Isaac's beloved Rachel, was such an unlikely, unnoteworthy place, that it is mainly known as simply being a town along the road to Ephrath. "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."

And now Bethlehem has received a new and greater king than David. David shepherded his flocks on those Judean hills; but Christ would shepherd his flocks throughout the world. David won renown by fighting the Philistines; but Christ would win renown by fighting sin, death and the devil himself. David would be raised up as king over the nation. Christ would be raised up as King over all heaven and earth. David's kingdom knew little peace, but Christ is our Peace. "And He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God; and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth; and this One shall be peace." Rejoice O Bethlehem, for Christ the Lord, the firstborn and only-begotten Son of God is born in you. Though you were lowly, now you are known throughout all the world!

And now this same Christ comes to you, His Christians, to dwell among you with His salvation and to take up residence in the manger of your hearts. Rejoice! For as He elevated lowly Bethlehem, so now He elevates you. For He who was born also died and rose again. And having ascended now comes to us, His Holy Church, having won our salvation, having fulfilled everything that the prophets proclaimed and that the circumstances of His birth portended. He forgives your sins, has conquered your death, and has removed the curse of God from you. With Mary let us ponder these things in our heart through faith, and with the angels us confess Him before the whole world, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace, good will toward men!" For Christ is born. Amen.

✧ Soli Deo gloria ✧