

## ***A Child is Born***

".....and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger...." (Luke 2:7). At the heart of the account of Jesus birth, is our story. A man and a woman fall in love and marry. Then one day, the wife says: "We are going to have a child." The child grows and matures unseen within her. Then, at just the right time, the child is born. A new life comes into the world, full of promise. The new parents ponder the destiny of the child in their cradle. Will he or she grow up to become a great doctor, lawyer, scientist or even our Prime Minister?

With all its similarities, Jesus' birth is so very different. It was announced at the very beginning of time that Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit. They had obeyed Satan, masquerading as a serpent, rather than God. As a consequence, they lost their innocence and death came into the world. Yet, God promised: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Genesis 3:15). These words promised that a child would be born whose destiny would be to undo the curse on mankind inflicted by the Devil's cunning. Martin Luther noted that in all other instances in the Old Testament, a child is described as coming from a man's seed: Abraham begat Isaac.... etc. However, Genesis 3:15 clearly promised that this conquering savior would be a woman's seed." God, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, made clear what Moses had written: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14). God had announced the virgin birth of Jesus in the Garden of Eden.

Centuries after the fall in the garden, the angel Gabriel came to a woman named Mary, a virgin, betrothed to a man named Joseph, who lived in the village of Nazareth, in the Holy Land. He announced to Mary: "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35). God watched as His infant Son was knit together in Mary's womb. He pondered the great things that Jesus would accomplish. All the things that were written in God's word. (Psalm 139:16). At just the right time, when his body was fully formed, Jesus was born.

The Old Testament promised that God's Son would save us from our sin, the Devil and death by his innocent suffering, death and resurrection from the dead. The Books of the New Testament declare that Jesus, God's Son, suffered, was crucified, died and was buried, rose from the dead on the third day and ascended into heaven. Jesus promised to come back, judge everyone and give eternal life to all who believe.

With Jesus' ascension into heaven, God began knitting together another body on earth. The Apostle Paul declared: "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." (1 Corinthians 12:27). As Jesus' Great Commission to the church is fulfilled and people are baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and become disciples of Jesus Christ, God builds the Body of Christ, the Holy Christian Church.

For more than two thousand years, whenever the Gospel is proclaimed, God has called people out of this world. Each person responding to God's call is a new cell added to the 'Body of Christ.'" The number of cells God has added to the Body of Christ are impossible for us to calculate and comprehend. God watches as the church is knit together, one cell at a time, all under His divine direction and control. One day, at just the right time, when the Body of Christ is fully formed and the last cell is added, like the Holy Infant Jesus, the Body of Christ will emerge, will become manifest, and new life will begin, eternal life with God.

God knits something together in each person He integrates into the Body of Christ. He creates faith in us. This faith becomes manifest in us as a desire to gather together to worship God, study the Scriptures and to love and serve one another and our neighbors. As a consequence of this faith, parts of the hidden growing Body of Christ become manifest from time to time. It will become manifest when we celebrate Jesus' birth on December 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 and 7:00 PM and December 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 and 10:30 AM. It is manifest on Sunday mornings at 9:00 AM (Contemporary) and 10:30 (Traditional). God is still calling people out of this world and into the Body of Christ. Is God calling you? Come and see.

In Christ, Pastor Ed Skutshek