**The Bread of Bethlehem**

Micah 5:2-5a

*2 But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,*

*who are one of the little clans of Judah,*

*from you shall come forth for me*

*one who is to rule in Israel,*

*whose origin is from of old,*

*from ancient days.*

*3 Therefore he shall give them up until the time*

*when she who is in labor has brought forth;*

*then the rest of his kindred shall return*

*to the people of Israel.*

*4 And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord,*

*in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.*

*And they shall live secure,*

*for now he shall be great*

*to the ends of the earth;*

*5a and he shall be the one of peace.*

Here we are, standing at the threshold of Christmas. Advent’s waiting is almost over—the candles are nearly all lit, and the promise of the one who will "shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord" is drawing near. The one of peace is about to arrive. Tonight, as we reflect on this passage from Micah, we’re invited to dwell on a profound truth: God’s abundance and nourishment often emerge from the humblest of places.

Micah tells us that Bethlehem, "one of the little clans of Judah," will be the birthplace of a ruler whose greatness will extend to the ends of the earth. Bethlehem—a town so small it’s almost overlooked. Its name holds deep significance. In Hebrew, Bethlehem means "House of Bread," a place of sustenance and provision. And in Greek, Βηθλεέμ (Bethlehem) carries the same meaning, pointing directly to Jesus, the Bread of Life, who would be born there. This is no coincidence—Bethlehem, the "House of Bread," becomes the home of the One who nourishes the world.

And here, in this "House of Bread," we catch a glimpse of the Trinity’s work in the Bread of Life. The Creator provides the grain of the earth, Christ embodies and offers this Bread as life for the world, and the Spirit leavens it within us, bringing it to life and nourishing us in faith and transformation. Bread, in its simplicity, reflects God’s abundance and unity. It is three-in-one: grain harvested from the earth, water poured from the heavens, and fire that transforms it into something new, sustaining and strengthening us for God’s work.

Today, Bethlehem is still a place of contrasts—its deep spiritual significance intertwined with the realities of conflict. It is a city where bread must be shared across barriers, where daily life reflects the tension of the world’s brokenness. Through organizations like Bright Stars of Bethlehem, our mission offering this season, this bread of God continues to be shared in transformative ways. Bright Stars supports Dar al-Kalima University, the first and only university of arts and culture for Palestinians. Their work fosters creativity, resilience, and empowerment in Bethlehem, nourishing not

just individuals but entire communities. It reminds us that bread—whether shared as sustenance, art, or justice—has the power to transform.

Bethlehem, the "House of Bread," reveals the extraordinary within the ordinary. In Christ, the Bread of Life, God fills our deepest longing for peace and wholeness. As this bread is broken for the world, we are called to bear God’s nourishment and justice to those in need.

This Advent, as our waiting ends, may we trust in the promise …

*In Bethlehem,*

*God is kneaded into the world,*

*rising to meet us,*

*broken to feed us,*

*shared to renew us.*

Just as Bethlehem was enough, and just as bread is enough, so too are we enough for God to work through us by grace alone, given in Christ alone.
**Amen.**