

"Anna, the Magi and Me"
Micah 7:7-9

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Emmett, Idaho

6 December Anno Domini 2000
1st Wednesday in Advent
Pastor Michael L. McCoy

Dear Baptized,

*"The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great Light;
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
Upon them a Light has shined" (Isaiah 9:2).*

Micah the Prophet lived 700 years before the night when Bethlehem of Ephratha cradled the Incarnate Son of God in a manger. Indeed, the Word of the LORD *"came to Micah the Morashtite in the days of Jothan, Ahaz and Hezekiah, the kings of Judah" (Micah 1:1)* and Micah, the man whose name is a question, "Who is like Jehovah?", faithfully spoke what had been revealed to him. This man from the tribe of Judah proclaimed the consequences of personal sin against Jehovah and national transgressions against Yahweh. The consequences of both remain with us today and will continue for as many tomorrows as the LORD God grants.

The faithful one sits in the darkness of this world's day and waits as God continues to fulfill His promises. The Church congregates as she beholds the result of Sin and sins ... the effects of which are experienced and felt by the faithful one. Indeed, the faithful one is not immune from the Disease within that has infected mankind nor the plagues which befall one here and another there. Nevertheless, there are many that wait upon the LORD. On this first Wednesday evening in Advent, on the basis of Micah 7:7-9, we consider several of the faithful ...

... *"Anna, the Magi and Me"*

"I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; My God will hear me. Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; When I fall, I will arise; When I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a Light to me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD, Because I have sinned against Him, Until He pleads my case and executes justice for me; He will bring me forth to the Light, and I will see His Righteousness."

Thus far the Word of the LORD our God.

"Anna, the Magi and Me." Do you not behold the eldest of the trio in your mind's eye? She is a woman named *"Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher" (Luke 2:36)*. The

old woman has lived 84 years and she is a widow whose husband had died seven years after they were married. Anna serves God with her prayers and fastings both at night and during the day. The woman whose name means "grace" does not depart from the Temple in Jerusalem for here the gracious Lord promises to be present. Anna waits in faith and looks for her Redeemer — namely, the LORD Whom she seeks — the One promised of old Who *"will suddenly come to His Temple"* (*Malachi 3:1*).

"Anna, the Magi and Me." Now cast your eyes to the east and see those whose eyes are in the heavens as they seek, among the moons, the planets and the lights of the universe, a Star that *"shall come out of Jacob"* (*Numbers 24:17*). The magi, the wisemen, these men of old whose ancestors had received the inscribed Word when they took the children of God into the first Babylonian Captivity of the Church, they watch for the Advent of the promised Light. In that Word was the promise that the Star out of Jacob would shine and be the Scepter of Israel's King. The Magi lift up their eyes unto the western skies as they wait for the Advent of the King at Whose feet they will bow down and worship.

"Anna, the Magi and Me." Who is the *"me"*? Well, it is not *"me"* your pastor speaking to you. It is *"me"* namely *"you"*. Just as Micah spoke on behalf of the Church and each faithful one when he scribed, *"I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation"*, so does the pastor speak on your behalf. So listen to yourself. "I am here this night in the House of the LORD. I am sitting in this pew in the presence of the LORD. I will look to the LORD. I will wait for the God of my salvation. Oh LORD, be merciful to me. Look upon me with Your favor, for I am poor and weak. I wait for the LORD; my soul doth wait, and in His Word do I hope."

"Anna, the Magi and Me."

Anna, the daughter of Phanuel and the daughter of Eve,
The Magi, children of the East and heirs of Nebuchanezzar.
And Me? Conceived in sin and a child of wrath.
"I will bear the indignation of the LORD,"

Anna, descendant of a tribe destroyed centuries earlier,
The Magi, recipients of a promise made even longer ago.
And Me? I see myself in Anna and the Magi.
"I will bear the indignation of the LORD,"

Anna has drooped her widowed head and tasted grief,
The Magi have lifted their heads and not seen the Star.
And Me? Death takes my people and I myself wait.
*"I will bear the indignation of the LORD,
Because I have sinned against Him."*

The wondering Jew seeks her Savior
as she rests in His Temple,

The wandering Gentiles search the Scriptures
as they recline with their eyes in the heavens.

And Me? I come to the House of the LORD,
to hear His Word concerning my Sin and my Savior.

*"When I sit in darkness,
the LORD will be a Light to me."*

Each sits in darkness ...

Anna sits in the Temple awaiting the true Mercy Seat,
The Magi sit in the night and look for the Light from above.
And Me? I sit in the darkness of the season and of my days.

*"When I sit in darkness,
the LORD will be a Light to me."*

This is Advent and each has a promise and each waits for the Light of the LORD ...

Anna for her kinsman Redeemer,
The Magi for the heavenly King.
And Me? for the return of the Redeemer King.

*"I will look to the LORD;
I will wait for the God of my salvation."*

This is Advent and each knows what lies ahead ...

The old woman knows of the Suffering Servant,
The men know of the Seed of Jacob Whose heel would be bruised.
And Me? I know of Jesus' taking my place on the cross to atone for my sins.

*"I will bear the indignation of the LORD,
Because I have sinned against Him,
Until He pleads my case and executes justice for me."*

There is one Advent accomplished ...

For Anna when 40 days after the Jesus' Birth He suddenly comes to His Temple,
For the Magi when 40 days earlier the Star of Jacob appeared over Bethlehem.
And for Me? When Jesus came into my life through Holy Baptism.

*"He will bring me forth to the Light,
and I will see His Righteousness."*

For the old woman when beholding the Infant Redeemer in Jerusalem,
For the troop when worshiping the King in a house where the Holy Child stayed.
And for Me? When I hear the Word of absolution and I am forgiven.

*"Do not rejoice over me, my enemy;
When I fall, I will arise;
When I sit in darkness,
the LORD will be a Light to me."*

Each one is in the Presence of the LORD ...

Anna with the Baby in the Temple where the prophet promised Him to be.
Magi with the Child in the House where the Micah told them He would be.
And Me? With the LORD in this place where He has promised to be.

What are we to do between that Advent and the time when He comes again?

Faithful Anna gave thanks to God,
hung around the Temple,
told others of the redemption,
and became as a prophetess.

Grateful wisemen cow-towed to Immanuel,
presented their gifts,
listened to the Word,
and departed for their own country by another way.

And Me? To Feast on and in the Lord,
to remain faithful unto death,
to share this Good News,
and to depart in peace according to the Word of the LORD.

Anna was likely called home before Justice was executed on the cross,
The Magi returned home sooner and with the Gospel and they are no more.
And Me? Well that is not for me to know, but in the meantime ...

"I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; My God will hear me. Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; When I fall, I will arise; When I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a Light to me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD, Because I have sinned against Him, Until He pleads my case and executes justice for me; He will bring me forth to the Light, and I will see His Righteousness." Amen.