

Women of the Bible: Anna

Pilgrim Lutheran Church Mary/Martha Society Gathering – 2026 May 17

Rev. Dr. Jayson S. Galler, Pastor

- Invocation and Prayer
- Last time, April 19, 2026, we considered the Virgin Mary, including her purification and Jesus's presentation in Jerusalem as narrated in Luke 2:22-40. Today we take a closer look at Anna in vv.36-38 of that passage. (See the page on Pilgrim's website with the working chronological list of all the women whom we both have studied and will study, linking our handouts when available: www.pilgrimlc.org/bible-studies/women-of-the-bible.)
- Luke 2:36-38 (ESV)

³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.

Old Testament prophetesses include Miriam (Exodus 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), and Huldah (2 Kings 22:14) ... Anna may have foresaw and foretold the future, but she did not come before the people with a message of judgment and grace (law and Gospel), though Luther already recognized someone might falsely draw female "pastors" from the example of Anna ... "Anna" is the same name as "Hannah" (1 Samuel 1:2), meaning "gracious" ... "Phanuel" means "the face of God" ... Asher, which name means "happy", was Jacob's second son with Leah's servant Zilpah ...

She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin,³⁷ and then as a widow until she was eighty-four.

Greek text has advanced not in "years" but in "days", though the English idiom is probably better and years are mentioned ... "until" can have change or no change after its point ... the 84 years (7x12) could be how many years she lived as a widow, making her something like 105 years old (confer 1 Timothy 5:3-16) ...

She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.

Greek text continues the introductory "sentence" ... women served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting (Exodus 38:8; confer 1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22) ... she may have lived in a side room ... Anna's presence at the temple was not inconsistent with her expectant hope in the Christ ... more-literally "fastings" and "petitions" (confer Judith 8:6), perhaps for the fulfillment of the Messianic promises ... distributed "night and day" is the Jewish order ... God not mentioned but undoubtedly the recipient of her service ... she did not think there was nothing she could do ...

³⁸ And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Greek text might be translated more-literally "acknowledge fully" or "confess" God, confirming what Simeon said (and answering what God had done), seeing the 40-day-old Jesus as the Messiah ... she confessed Jesus as the long-promised Redeemer also in keeping with her vocation (confer Luke 24:21 and Luke 23:51 and Mark 15:43 of Joseph of Arimathea) ... consider faithful remnant as in Wednesday night's Midweek Study ...

- We have previously discussed "prophetesses" with reference also to *TLSB* p.389.
- About what else does our consideration of Anna raise questions or prompt discussion?
- Concluding Prayer, *LSB* 855 (stanzas 1, Anna, 3, and 4), and Benediction.
- Next time (June 14) on Salome (for example, Mark 15:40; 16:1).

855 For All the Faithful Women (stanzas 1, Anna, 3, and 4)



1 For all the faith-ful wom - en Who served in days of old,



To You shall thanks be giv - en; To all, their sto - ry told.



They served with strength and glad - ness In tasks Your wis - dom gave.



To You their lives bore wit - ness, Pro - claimed Your pow'r to save.

2. Like Anna, who in patience
Would tarry day and night
Where she would see her Savior
When He appeared to sight,
Oh, may we also linger
Where we may see You, Lord,
Still come as our redemption
In Sacrament and Word.

3 O God, for saints and servants,
Those named and those unknown
In whom through all the ages
Your light of glory shone,
We offer glad thanksgiving
And fervent prayer we raise
That, faithful in Your service,
Our lives may sing Your praise.

△ 4 All praise to God the Father!
All praise to Christ the Son!
All praise the Holy Spirit,
Who binds the Church in one!
With saints who went before us,
With saints who witness still,
We sing glad Alleluias
And strive to do Your will.

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