

St. Michael and All Angels (September 29)

“Lord God, to Thee We Give All Praise” (*Lutheran Service Book*, #522; *Christian Worship*, #196)

“Angels and Ministers”

One of the benefits of observing the festival of St. Michael and All Angels is that it not only breaks up the long “green” season of Pentecost, it also gives us a moment to contemplate those extraordinary creatures of God’s vast cosmos—his heavenly beings. These “messengers” of his profound grace are continually praising him around his throne in heaven (Revelation 12:7-9) , are particularly watchful over children (Matthew 18:10) , rejoice over every penitent sinner (Luke 15:10), and most of all, counter the efforts of their (and our) eternal adversary—Satan.

In fact, our version of (Martin Luther’s good friend) Philipp Melancthon’s hymn proclaims the virtues of angels in six of the stanzas but also warns us of Satan’s presence and actions in three of them. What a comfort to know that they stand around us as we resist the devil’s wiles and schemes. How important they are to us in our daily walk of faith!

Everlasting God,

you have ordained and constituted in a wonderful order the ministries of angels and mortals. Mercifully grant that, as your holy angels always serve and worship you in heaven, so by your appointment they may help and defend us here on earth; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

(P. S. What other mentions of angels in the Bible come to your mind? (A beginning list of texts includes Daniel 10:13, 12:1; Jude 9, 2 Kings 6:15-17, Malachi 2:7...)



Barry L. Bobb
Carmel, IN

Lord God, to thee we give all praise,
with grateful hearts our voices raise,
That angel hosts thou didst create
around thy glorious throne to wait.

They shine with light and heavenly grace
and constantly behold thy face;
they heed thy voice, they know it well,

in godly wisdom they excel.

They never rest nor sleep as we;
their whole delight is but to be
with thee, Lord Jesus, and to keep
thy little flock, thy lambs and sheep.

The ancient dragon is their foe;
his envy and his wrath they know.
It always is his aim and pride
thy Christian people to divide.

As he of old deceived the world [not included in *Christian Worship*]
and into sin and death has hurled,
so now he subtly lies in wait
to undermine both Church and state.

A roaring lion, round he goes, [not included in *Christian Worship*]
no halt nor rest he ever knows;
he seeks the Christians to devour
and slay them by his dreadful power.

But watchful is the angel band
that follows Christ on every hand
to guard his people where they go
and break the counsel of the foe.

For this, now and in days to be,
our praise shall rise, O Lord, to thee,
whom all the angel hosts adore
with grateful songs forevermore.

Original Latin text (four stanzas): Philipp Melanchthon, 1497—1560;
German version (thirteen stanzas): Paul Eber, 1511—69;
English translation (eleven stanzas): Emanuel Cronenwett, 1841—1931, alt. First appeared in *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnal*, 1880 of the Ohio Synod (one of the predecessors to the ALC).

Tune (LSB): ERHALT UNS, HERR. *Geistliche Lieder auff's new gebessert*, Wittenberg, 1543, edited by Joseph Klug.

(CW): DEUS TUORUM MILITUM, Antiphoner, Grenoble, 1753.

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[This devotion was prepared for the website of the Center for Church Music. It may be downloaded and duplicated for local use.]