“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 Melanchthon’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...)*

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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 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, 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).

(CW): DEUS TUORUM MILITUM, Antiphoner, Grenoble, 1753.
The text and both tunes are in the public domain.

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