

# Meon Bridge Benefice

Corhampton & Meonstoke, Droxford, Exton with Preshaw



**Morning Service**  
with  
**Spiritual Communion**  
followed by an optional  
**Eucharist**  
(Order One – Eucharistic Prayer B)  
**In Time of Pandemic**

**Michaelmas**



## INTROIT HYMN Angel voices ever singing

- 1 Angel voices, ever singing, round Thy throne of light,  
Angel harps, forever ringing, rest not day or night;  
Thousands only live to bless Thee, and confess Thee Lord of might.
- 2 Thou Who art beyond the farthest mortal eye can scan,  
Can it be that Thou regardest songs of sinful man?  
Can we feel that Thou art near us and wilt hear us? Yea, we can.
- 3 Here, great God, today we offer of Thine own to Thee;  
And for Thine acceptance proffer, all unworthily,  
Hearts and minds, and hands and voices, in our choicest melody.
- 4 Honour, glory, might and merit, Thine shall ever be,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, blessed Trinity;  
Of the best that Thou hast given Earth and Heaven render Thee.

Angel Voices Ever Singing  
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## PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

### INVITATION TO CONFESSION **Michaelmas**

We have come to Mount Zion,  
the city of the living God,  
the heavenly Jerusalem,  
to myriads of angels,  
to God, the judge of all,  
and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant. *Hebrews 12.22-24*

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

### COLLECT FOR **Michaelmas**

Everlasting God,  
you have ordained and constituted  
the ministries of angels and mortals in a wonderful order:  
grant that as your holy angels always serve you in heaven,  
so, at your command,  
they may help and defend us on earth;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



### FIRST READING **Michaelmas**

*Genesis 28.10-17*

<sup>10</sup>Jacob left Beer-sheba and went towards Haran. <sup>11</sup>He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. <sup>12</sup>And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. <sup>13</sup>And the LORD stood beside him and said, 'I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; <sup>14</sup>and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. <sup>15</sup>Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.' <sup>16</sup>Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the LORD is in this place – and I did not know it!' <sup>17</sup>And he was afraid, and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'

This is the word of the Lord.

**All Thanks be to God.**

### SECOND READING **Michaelmas**

*Revelation 12.7-12*

<sup>7</sup>War broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, <sup>8</sup>but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. <sup>9</sup>The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world – he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

<sup>10</sup>Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming,  
'Now have come the salvation and the power  
and the kingdom of our God  
and the authority of his Messiah,  
for the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down,  
who accuses them day and night before our God.  
<sup>11</sup>But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb  
and by the word of their testimony,  
for they did not cling to life even in the face of death.  
<sup>12</sup>Rejoice then, you heavens  
and those who dwell in them!  
But woe to the earth and the sea,  
for the devil has come down to you  
with great wrath,  
because he knows that his time is short!'

This is the word of the Lord.

**All Thanks be to God.**

## GRADUAL HYMN Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven

- 1 Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven;  
To His feet Thy tribute bring!  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
Who like me His praise should sing?  
Praise Him! praise Him!  
Praise the everlasting King!
- 2 Praise Him for His grace and favour,  
To our fathers in distress!  
Praise Him still the same for ever,  
Slow to chide, and swift to bless!  
Praise Him! praise Him!  
Glorious in His faithfulness!
- 3 Father-like, He tends and spares us;  
Well our feeble frame He knows.  
In His hands He gently bears us,  
Rescues us from all our foes,  
Praise Him! praise Him!  
Widely as His mercy flows!
- 4 Angels, help us to adore Him;  
Ye behold Him face to face:  
Sun and moon, bow down before Him;  
Dwellers all in time and space,  
Praise Him! praise Him!  
Praise with us the God of grace!

Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven  
Henry Francis Lyte (1793 – 1847). Public Domain

PRAISE MY SOUL  
John Goss (1800 – 1880). Public Domain  
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## GOSPEL READING Michaelmas

Alleluia, alleluia.

Bless the Lord, all you his hosts,  
you ministers of his who do his will.

*Psalm 103.21*

**All Alleluia.**

The Lord be with you

**All and also with you.**

*When the Gospel is announced the reader says*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to N. (✠)

**All Glory to you, O Lord.**

*John 1.47-51*

47When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' 48Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' 49Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi,

you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' 50 Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' 51 And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

## SERMON St Michael & Angels

The three best known angels are Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, who are named angels in the Bible or the apocrypha. St Michael is mentioned in the Book of Revelation as the leader of the heavenly host. As he leads the heavenly army against the Satanic forces, he has been taken as a patron of soldiers. The Archangel Gabriel appears in the book of Daniel to explain some of the prophet's visions, but he is also the bearer of the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary. St Raphael is found in the Book of Tobit; he is the angel who heals Tobit of his blindness. His name means God heals.

Who seriously believes in them?

Well, angels slip in and out of various biblical stories, and at Michaelmas they are centre-stage. In fact, all three Abrahamic religions speak of Angels. Angels are never at our beck and call, but they are at God's command; more often than not as messengers and 'strengtheners' for an uncomfortable task! Although we often think of them in a rather cosy way at Christmas.

In the letter to the Hebrews we are told that: 'some have entertained angels unawares'.

People in the Bible *often* fail to recognise an Angel -- thinking that it is a man who has visited them and it is only later that their true identity becomes clear. The word angel comes from the Greek word meaning a messenger; the Hebrew word for Angel means the same thing.

In Jacob's dream, he saw a ladder or stairway from earth to heaven, with Angels coming down to bring God's messages of hope, joy and guidance to human beings, and returning to take our prayers up to God. The Bible says that angels are spiritual beings, created by God in the beginning, before the Earth was founded, and they rejoiced in creation as it was completed.

Unhelpfully, the Bible doesn't tell us what Angels look like; in fact, as I've already said, they often appear as ordinary human beings. On one occasion, Jacob thought he was wrestling with an Angel and only later did he realise that it was God himself, disguised as an Angel!

You may remember that Abraham gave hospitality to three strangers, who turned out to be angels, and who subsequently became one.

So, if they really are spiritual beings who carry God's messages, they don't have to have a physical body, and can appear in any form they choose. The Bible asks the question,

'Are not all Angels *spirits* in the divine service, sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?'

As spiritual creatures, angels are not bound by the laws of time and space, as we are. That makes it rather hard for us to understand very much about them at all, and there is certainly no scientific way of proving whether or not they exist.

Jesus said that in the resurrection, we shall be like angels in heaven. So all thoughts of property rights and inheritance are irrelevant when we are talking about us becoming beings with spiritual bodies.

Some people can have a deep faith in God, but never give the angels on second thought. I have to admit I was rather surprised that a newly appointed professor at the University I worked at gave his inaugural lecture on 'angels'. And yet, others claim a close relationship with their own guardian angel.

The doctrine that every individual has a guardian angel has never been defined by the Church, but is the “mind of the Church”, as expressed particularly by St Jerome and St Basil. Guardian angels are implied as present in both the Old and New Testaments.

Jesus said,

“See that you never despise any of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven always gaze on the face of my Father in heaven”. So, even little children have guardian angels, and these angels remain in the presence of God even as they fulfil their mission on earth.

Although we celebrate St Michael with all angels together, a separate feast of the Guardian Angels began in Valencia as long ago as 1411. One of the benefits of this feast is that it reminded people that God cares for us each, individually.

We all know this in theory, but it is easy – in times of depression or temptation – to convince ourselves that we are too small to matter, for good or ill.

Jesus also said that there is joy in the presence of angels when one sinner repents. In today's gospel reading, it said: ‘you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man’. For some Christians that is enough to prove that angels exist.

So whatever you believe about angels, what is clear is that Heaven is open to us: what Jacob saw in the dream is now a reality in Jesus Christ. For that, and all God's provision for us, through the angels, we give thanks.

Let us use this feast to remind ourselves that as well as a general heavenly host, each of us has an angel of our very own angel looking after us. We thank God for our own Guardian Angel.

What a bore and a burden to them some of us are. May we one day be a cause of rejoicing for them also.

It may be better for some of us to think about angels as a poetic way of recognising that there are many things in creation, which we can never understand, but which have great influence upon us.

In the poetic words of Henry F. Lyte, in Praise my Soul the King of Heaven:

Angels, help us to adore Him;  
Ye behold Him face to face;  
Sun and moon, bow down before Him,  
Dwellers all in time and space.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise with us the God of grace

Rather like not recognising angels when they are there for us, we cannot see God; but, we know from our own experience, and that of millions of others, that when we trust God, he will always be there for us. Amen.

## THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

### THE PEACE **Michaelmas**

*Please stand when the President says these or other seasonal words:*

Hear again the song of the angels:  
'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.'

*All* The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you.**

### **OFFERTORY HYMN** Come let us join our cheerful songs

- 1 Come, let us join our cheerful songs  
with angels round the throne;  
ten thousand thousand are their tongues,  
but all their joys are one.
- 2 'Worthy the Lamb that died,' they cry,  
'to be exalted thus';  
'Worthy the Lamb,' our lips reply,  
'for he was slain for us.'
- 3 Jesus is worthy to receive  
honour and power divine;  
and blessings, more than we can give,  
be, Lord, for ever thine.
- 4 Let all that dwell above the sky,  
and air, and earth, and seas,  
conspire to lift thy glories high,  
and speak thine endless praise.
- 5 The whole creation joins in one  
to bless the sacred name  
of him that sits upon the throne,  
and to adore the Lamb.

Come let us join our cheerful songs  
Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

NATIVITY  
Henry Lahee (1826-1912)

Kevin Mayhew Publishers (No Organist? No Problem! (AMNS)

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## PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

### TAKING OF THE BREAD AND WINE

God of glory,  
as you appointed angels to minister in your presence,  
so may all our worship bring you worthy praise;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

### POST-COMMUNION HYMN **Around the throne of God a band**

- 1 Around the throne of God a band  
Of bright and glorious angels stand;  
Sweet harps within their hands they hold,  
And on their heads are crowns of gold.
- 2 Some wait around him ready still  
To sing his praise and do his will,  
And some, when he commands them, go  
To guard his servants here below.
- 3 Lord, give thine angels every day  
Command to guard us on our way,  
And bid them every evening keep  
Their watch around us while we sleep.
- 4 So shall no wicked thing draw near  
To do us harm, or cause us fear;  
And we shall dwell, when life is past,  
With angels round thy throne at last.

Around the throne of God a band  
John Mason Neale (1818-1866)

ANGELS' SONG  
Orlando Gibbons (1583 – 1625)  
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### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION **Michaelmas**

*Silence is kept.*

Lord of heaven,  
in this eucharist you have brought us near  
to an innumerable company of angels  
and to the spirits of the saints made perfect:  
as in this food of our earthly pilgrimage  
we have shared their fellowship,  
so may we come to share their joy in heaven;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**



## **RECESSIONAL HYMN** Ye holy angels bright

1. Ye holy angels bright,  
Who stand at God's right hand,  
Or through the realms of light  
Fly at you Lord's command,  
Assist our song, or else the theme  
Too high doth seem for mortal tongue.
2. Ye blessed souls at rest,  
Who ran this heavenly race,  
An now, from sin released,  
Behold the Saviour's face,  
God's praises sound, as in His sight  
With sweet delight you do abound.
3. Ye saints, who toil below,  
Adore your heavenly King,  
And onward as ye go  
Some joyful anthem sing;  
Take what He gives and praise Him still,  
Through good or ill, Who ever lives!
4. My soul, bear thou thy part,  
Triumph in God above,  
And with a well-tuned heart  
Sing thou the songs of love;  
Let all my days till life shall end,  
Whate'er he send be filled with praise.

Ye holy angels bright,  
Richard Baxter (1615 – 1691) and John Hampden Gurney (1802 – 1862)

DARWALL'S 149<sup>TH</sup>  
John Darwall (1731 – 1789)  
Harm: William Henry Monk (1823 – 1889).  
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## **BLESSING Michaelmas**

God keep you in the fellowship of his saints;  
Christ protect you by the ministry of the angels;  
the Spirit make you holy in God's service;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

*All* **Amen.**

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**Michaelmas**

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