



Christ, the Lord of Hosts, Unshaken

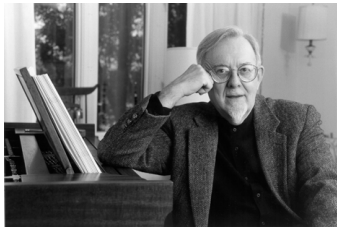
Text: Peter M. Prange (b. 1972)

Tune: Carl F. Schalk (b. 1929)

As “the singing Church,” one of our joys is enlarging our hymnody with new hymns, written by faithful poets of the Church. Today’s hymn is one of them, written at the close of the Twentieth Century. It is also one of the most vivid hymns, second only to some of the outstanding hymns of Luther and Gerhardt.

The text was written by the Rev. Peter M. Prange, a Pastor in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The Rev. Prange was ordained in 1998, and since 2005 has served at Jerusalem Lutheran Church in Morton Grove, Illinois.

The tune was written in 1967 by Carl F. Schalk. Dr. Schalk is distinguished professor music, emeritus, at Concordia University Chicago (CUC; formerly Concordia University, River Forest). He taught actively at CUC from 1965-1994.



Carl Schalk

For The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Schalk has been a shaping factor in our music, teaching many of our finest church musicians in the Synod today. He took key roles in three Lutheran hymnal projects, namely *Worship Supplement* (1969) and *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978), and ultimately *Lutheran Worship* (1982). Schalk has written in excess of 100 original hymn tunes, many of which are known well beyond the LCMS. He has also received several awards. In 1992 he was named a Fellow in the Hymn Society of the United States and Canada; in 1999 he received the prestigious Wittenberg Award from The Luther Society; and in 2002 received the Distinguished Composer award from the American Guild of Organists. Schalk has written eight books, numerous pamphlets, and countless articles in

journals across disciplines and denominations.

One of the most striking elements of “Christ, the Lord of Hosts, Unshaken” is its imagery. As one sings this hymn, he can see what St. John describes in Revelation 12:7-12. This imagery makes this hymn wonderful for children, since the text helps to fuel their vivid imagination. The first stanza depicts Christ slamming Satan into his steely cage while stanza two bring St. Michael and the good angels into the picture, with their battle, the battle whose ending was known from the foundation of the world. However, Satan thinks he wins the battle by tempting Adam and Eve when he “made forbidden fruit look sweet.” Jesus overcame this by taking the whole worlds sin on His shoulders and the news of His victory “floods the earth and fills the sky.” Jesus’ glorious wounds are Satan’s eternal wounds by which He is forever defeated. Finally, we pray for the guidance of the angels, which God has promised us, and await Christ’s return, for which the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels prepares us.



St. Michael the Archangel
defeating the dragon, Satan.

Martin Chemnitz said of the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels: “From antiquity the church year, for very good reasons, has been divided into certain festivals, in order that the chief articles of the Christian doctrine can be taught to people in a definite order and inculcated by annual repetition. Thus the festival of the holy angels has also been established...so that we should never overlook this doctrine and its benefits. But because Scripture has spoken of certain angels by name, such as Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, we have a feast called the feast of the angel Michael, in order that by this very name itself we should be instructed in the most important things to be learned in this life about angels and what we ought to believe and know about them” (*Loci Theologici*, v. 1, p. 172-3).