

Hymn of the Week

Lent III

Praise to the Lord the Almighty. The King of Creation

Words: Joachim Neander (1650 – 1680)

Tune: Lobe den Herren (Praxis Pietatis) – German 17th century

This week's hymn is I think my all-time favourite with uplifting words and a simply magnificent tune. Apparently, the hymn was also a particular favourite of Frederick Wilhelm III of Prussia who reigned at the time of the Napoleonic Wars and was a rather weak ruler but that is another story.

The hymn is firmly based on the words of Psalms 103 and 150 and its message is unequivocally both joyful and thankful.

The author of the hymn, Joseph Neander was born in Bremen and, following a riotous youth underwent a dramatic conversion and became a Christian Pastor. At the age of only 24, Neander became headmaster at the Latin School in Dusseldorf, but his highly independent and unorthodox views combined with his disreputable past landed him in some difficulty with the authorities and he was compelled to sign what we might call today a "gagging declaration". Sadly, Joseph died from consumption at age 30 but in that brief life wrote over 60 hymns many of which are in frequent use today.

The hymn was translated into English by Catherine Winkworth a redoubtable Victorian spinster who spent much of her early life in Germany before coming back to England where, as well as being a prominent translator she was a significant philanthropist particularly in the field of women's education. Among her many hymn translations are "Christ the Lord is risen again", "Wake, O wake for night is flying" and "Now thank we all our God"

Little is known of the origins of the magnificent tune Lobe der Herren other than that Neander is thought to have taken it from a songbook published in Stralsund in 1655.

The hymn is sung here for us by the mass choir of 150 voices from St. Andrew's Kirk, Chennai (better known to many of us as Madras) in Eastern India. The attention they are paying to their conductor is every choirmaster's dream!

<https://youtu.be/odpyfbqR5Os?list=RDodpyfbqR5Os>

Keith Day

4th March 2026