

Music Blurbs for 9-22-19

### News and Notes

This week we'll sing "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty," "O Jesus, I have promised," and more! The choir will sing "Be Thou My Vision" as arranged by Richard Shephard.

### Sunday Bulletins

The committee that put together our present hymnal ran a survey in 1978 to ascertain the most popular and most used hymns. "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" came out close to the top of the list. What came as a surprise was that the hymn did not enter the Episcopal Church's hymnal until the 1940 edition.

The text, by Joachim Neander, was first published in Bremen in 1680. He was born in 1650 and became a German Calvinist church teacher, theologian, and writer of about 60 hymns, many for which he provided tunes. The tune for this hymn was probably originally a folk tune and had appeared in print in a 1665 collection of secular songs.

By 1674 he became a teacher at a Latin school in Düsseldorf, one step away from becoming a minister. While living there, he walked through the nearby valley to receive inspiration from the natural beauty around him. The valley (thal) became named after him (Neanderthal) where a few centuries later a skeleton of an early species of human was found. There's a story of Neander having to live in a cave in the valley. This never happened.

Because of friction with the minister of the church who was also the headmaster of the school, he was suspended for two weeks but was still paid. He had to sign a statement of contrition and when the minister left, Neander was passed over for being promoted to that position. In 1679, he received a post as minister in his home town of Bremen, but sadly, a year later at the age of 30 he died of tuberculosis.

As with many German texts, Catherine Winkworth translated this hymn in to English. It appeared in 1863 in *The Chorale Book for England*. When it was used in the Episcopal Church's *Hymnal 1940* the text was revised and this is what was used for the present hymnal.