

Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation

Text: Latin Hymn, 7th c.
Tr. by John M. Neale, 1851

Tune: UNSER HERRSCHER
by Joachim Neander, 1680
Arr. by Lyndell Leatherman

The origin of “Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation” is shrouded in antiquity. From a Latin poem thought to have been written in the 7th century, “Urbs Beata Jerusalem,” two English hymns were later derived—“Blessed City, Heavenly Salem,” and “Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation.” The latter was translated in 1851 by John Mason Neale (1818-1866), a minister in the Church of England. Caught up in the Oxford Movement, he became interested in the original languages—specifically, Greek and Latin—that had cradled the early liturgies of the Church. He became a renowned translator of ancient hymns—among them, “Good Christian Men, Rejoice,” “All Glory, Laud, and Honor,” “Of the Father’s Love Begotten,” “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” and “Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation.”

Joachim Neander, born in 1650, came from a distinguished line of German clergymen. However, as a young college student Neander joined his peers in a wanton lifestyle that directly contradicted his upbringing. At the age of 20, he happened upon a service at St. Martin’s Church, Bremen, where a new pastor, Theodore Under-Eyck, was speaking. Initially intending to scoff at the proceedings, Neander was so convicted by the powerful presentation of the Gospel that he instead remained to pray the prayer of a repentant prodigal. The following year, he launched into a teaching career which included tutoring students at the University of Heidelberg, and then serving as rector in a church-sponsored Latin School at Düsseldorf. At the age of 29, he returned to Bremen to serve as assistant to Under-Eyck at St. Martin’s. Shortly thereafter he fell sick and, after several months, died in 1680. However, he created several hymn texts in the last year of his brief life—most notably, “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty.” In addition, he is credited with composing the tune UNSER HERRSCHER which has since been utilized as the setting for several hymns, including “Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation.”

Steady $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 60$

tacet

*

Organ or piano: no ped.

3

5

*Quoting J.S. Bach’s “Prelude and Fugue in B♭ Major”

L'istesso ♩ = ca. 110

(S) B \flat F B \flat B \flat / \bar{D}

7

1. Christ is made the

Organ or piano: add ped.

10

Gm E \flat / \bar{G} F sus F Gm F F 9 / $\bar{E}\flat$ B \flat / \bar{D} B \flat E \flat 6 F B \flat

sure foun - da - tion, Christ, the head and cor - ner - stone,

13

Gm E \flat / \bar{G} F \#7 Gm Gm E \flat / \bar{G} F sus F Gm F C m6 / $\bar{E}\flat$ B \flat / \bar{D} B \flat E \flat 6 F F 7 B \flat

Cho - sen of the Lord and pre - cious, Bind - ing all the Church in one;

Majestically ♩ = ca. 96

17

tacet E \flat C m6 B \flat / \bar{D} Gm E \flat 6 F F 7 B \flat (D.S.)

Ho - ly Zi - on's help for-ev - er, And her con - fi - dence a - lone.

rit.

Organ: no ped. *Organ: resume pedal*

2. To this temple where we call Thee,
 Come, O Lord of Hosts, today.
 With accustomed lovingkindness
 Hear Thy people as they pray,
 And Thy fullest benediction
 Shed within its walls away.

3. Laud and honor to the Father,
 Laud and honor to the Son,
 Laud and honor to the Spirit,
 Ever three and ever one:
 One in might and one in glory,
 While unending ages run.