



## Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide

**Text: Philipp Melanchthon [st. 1] (1497-1560)**

**Nikolaus Selnecker [st. 2-9] (1532-1592)**

**Tune: Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654)**

As the Church endures “these last days of sore distress” (st. 2), we pray for the strength to boldly make our confession of faith. The Reformation hymn, “Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide” is one such hymn. In this hymn we confess the power of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Word to keep us steadfast in the faith until our journey ends.



Nikolaus Selnecker

This is one hymn that has a several authors. The first stanza was written by Philipp Melanchthon, one of Luther’s early coworkers in the Reformation. The remainder of the stanzas were written by Nikolaus Selnecker. Selnecker was born December 5, 1532 in Hersbruck. While he was attending school in Nürnberg he also served as organist at the chapel in the Kaiserburg, where he attracted the interest of King Ferdinand and the royal singers. He eventually graduated from Wittenberg in 1554. While studying at Wittenberg, he was one of Melanchthon’s favorite students. He was ordained in 1558 and was appointed to the Saxon court. While there, the Calvinist influence was rising, especially in regards to the disbelief of the presence of Christ’s Body and Blood in the Lord’s Supper. However, in the Court Selnecker was able to stop their influence, since he was a strict Lutheran, unlike his teacher, Melanchthon. In 1564, after several years of theological battle with the Calvinists, they won, and Selnecker was asked to relocate. In March 1565 he took up a teaching position in theology at the University of Jena. However, while at Jena he was

suspected of holding Calvinist beliefs because of his associations with Melanchthon, who was compromising the Lutheran beliefs to create peace with the Calvinists. This created great tension there, and he stayed only three years. After Jena, Selnecker went to Leipzig and taught theology at the University, served as Pastor at St. Thomas Church (the same church



Philipp Melanchthon

where, a little more than a century later, J.S. Bach would take up the post of Kantor and produce some of his greatest work), and was appointed as Superintendent of Leipzig. In 1574, after several years of quiet work, a bitter doctrinal dispute over the Lord’s Supper arose in Leipzig. Selnecker fought for the Biblical teaching concerning the Real Presence, and teamed with Martin Chemnitz and Jakob Andreae to write the Formula of Concord in 1577. After the theological debates had calmed down, Selnecker devoted his time to growing the Motet Choir at St. Thomas, the same choir that would later become Bach’s choir. Unfortunately, after the Elector died, his son, a Calvinist, dismissed Selnecker. However, that son’s reign was short and Selnecker returned to Leipzig. Despite this, his health was too poor for him to work, and he died there May 24, 1592. During his lifetime he wrote approximately 150 hymns and over 175 theological works. He is remembered as one of the champions of pure Lutheran doctrine.

All of “Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide” is a prayer. It is a prayer to Jesus Christ, that He keep us as the night of sin and false doctrine falls. We need His help by His Word and Spirit, “for we are sluggish, thoughtless, cold” (st. 3). Though this is an indictment of our sinful nature, it is comforting because the power of God’s Word is the same, no matter how we feel or work, and the victory is His and is already won (st. 7). The Word does battle against “the haughty spirits...who over [Christ’s] Church with might would reign” (st. 6). But this “trust weapon”, the “Church’s buckler, shield, and sword” are powerful and destroy sin, falsehood, and error (sts. 5, 8). In this Word of God “we here may live and die.” But by the faith created in this Word, “when our journey endeth here,” Christ will “receive us into glory there” (st. 9).