Praise to Thee and Adoration
Text: Thomas Hansen Kingo (1634-1703)
Tune: Louis Bourgeois (1510-1561)

As we draw closer to Holy Week, our penitential tone deepens. Though our services take a more somber tone until Easter, there still is room for praise. The hymn "Praise to Thee and Adoration" is a fitting hymn for our Lenten praise, as we thank Jesus Christ for His sacrificial death for our sin, but ask Him for strength to endure in this sinful world until we receive the heavenly home He has prepared for us.

Thomas Kingo was Denmark's first great hymn writer. Be was born in Slangerup, Denmark, in December 1634. He spent his boyhood in the Latin school in Slangerup. He completed courses in his preparation for the Ministry in 1658 and spent the next 10 years as a tutor and assistant Pastor. In 1668 he became the Pastor of the church in Slangerup. During his youth, Kingo was known for his fine poetry, though most of it was secular in nature. His first foray into religious poetry was in 1673 when his *Aandelig Sjungekors förste Part* (Spiritual Songs, First Part) was published. 5 is collection made such an impact that it was influential in Kingo becoming the Bishop of Fyen. The introduction to this volume included a challenge to the Danes, encouraging more to develop the gift of poetry, since almost all their hymns in use were of other origins.

Thomas Kingo

By the time the second volume of his Christian poetry was released, King Christian V desired to have a new hymnal for Denmark to replace the one that had been in use since 1569. The official request was given to Kingo in 1683 and he was given very specific guidelines: some of his own hymns should be included, few changes should be made to the existing hymns, and Luther's hymns should appear unaltered. Kingo produced this hymnal at his own expense, and in 1689 the first part appeared, but it was disapproved because Kingo had not observed the guidelines. However, of its 267 hymns, 136 were Kingo's, reflecting the expanse of his body of work. However, a 1693 attempt by Sören Jonassön was also denied (it did not contain any of Kingo's hymns), and Kingo was asked to make a second attempt. This version found acceptance and by 1699 was introduced into all the churches of Denmark. Kingo died shortly after his hymnal's release, dying in October 1703.

The hymn's tune was written by Louis Bourgeois, a French composer and music theorist during the Renaissance. He is most famously known for his work composing hymn tunes for Calvinist hymnals. His most famous melody, Old 100th, is the tune for the Common Doxology ("Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"). Little is known of Bourgeois' early life. His first publication was a collection of folk songs in 1539 in Lyons, France. By 1547 he was teaching music in Geneva where he began to write tunes to which the Psalms could be sung. However, on December 3, 1551 he was arrested for writing new tunes for some Psalms. John Calvin freed him from prison, but the controversy continued. People did not want to learn new tunes and the town council ordered that his work be burned for being "too confusing." Shortly after, Bourgeois returned to Lyons, never to return to Geneva. In 1560 he published a collection of secular folk songs, even though he denounced the style while in Geneva. This was his last publication before his death in 1561.

Though this hymn was originally written for Christmas, it is appropriate in a Lenten context, as we sing in the first stanza of Jesus taking on flesh and blood to serve His own creation. This is what we mark in this Lenten season, as Christ bears in His own body all our sin. In the second stanza, we pray that we may be given the grace to follow Christ and be faithful to Him, no matter what challenges we may face in this life. This is especially meaningful as we consider Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and as His disciples fled at His arrest. Finally, we pray that Jesus would always keep before our eyes His work for our salvation, His birth, life, and Passion, and especially His death and resurrection.