Coming to a City Near You
Carol Penner

Jesus comes to Jerusalem, the city nearest you. Jesus comes to the gate, to the synagogue, to houses prepared for wedding parties, to the pools where people wait to be healed, to the temple where lambs are sold, to gardens, beautiful in the moonlight. He comes to the governor's palace.

Jesus comes to Jerusalem, the city nearest you, to new subdivisions and trailer parks, to penthouses and basement apartments, to the factory, the hospital and the Cineplex, to the big box outlet centre and to churches, with the same old same old message, unchanged from the beginning of time.

Jesus comes to Jerusalem, the city nearest you with his Good News and...
Hope erupts! Joy springs forth!
The very stones cry out,
"Hosanna in the highest,
blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"
The crowds jostle and push,
they can't get close enough!
People running alongside flinging down their coats before him!
Jesus, the parade marshal, waving, smiling.
The paparazzi elbow for room,
looking for that perfect picture for the headline,
"The Man Who Would Be King".

Jesus comes to Jerusalem, the city nearest you and gets the red carpet treatment.

Children waving real palm branches from the florist, silk palm branches from Wal-mart, palms made from green construction paper.

Hosannas ringing in churches, chapels, cathedrals, in monasteries, basilicas and tent-meetings.

King Jesus, honored in a thousand hymns in Canada, Cameroon, Calcutta and Canberra.

We LOVE this great big powerful capital K King Jesus coming in glory and splendor and majesty and awe and power and might.

Jesus comes to Jerusalem, the city nearest you.

Kingly, he takes a towel and washes feet.

With majesty, he serves bread and wine.

With honour, he prays all night.

With power, he puts on chains.

Jesus, King of all creation, appears in state
in the eyes of the prisoner, the AIDS orphan, the crack addict, asking for one cup of cold water,
one coat shared with someone who has none,
one heart, yours,
and a second mile.

Jesus comes to Jerusalem, the city nearest you.

Can you see him?

Carol Penner (PhD, University of St. Michael's College) is a theologian and pastor in the Mennonite church who reflects on the presence of God in difficult places. She teaches practical theology at Conrad Grebel University College, where she is the Director of Theological Studies. See her blog of worship and learning resources called Leading in Worship. (at www.leadinginworship.com)