Praise to the Lord, The Almighty, the King of Creation

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear, now to his temple draw near;
praise him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who over all things so wondrously reigneth,
shelters thee under his wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires ever have been
granted in what he ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, O let all that is in me adore him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before him.
Let the amen sound from his people again,
gladly for all we adore him.

Words: Joachim Neander (1650-1680), 1680
trans. Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878), 1863;
March is my fifth month here at St. Stephen’s and I’m just barely getting to know the people and the Parish. As a trained Interim Priest my primary role is to help the Parish prepare for the new permanent rector. St. Stephen’s is such a busy place with so much going on that we all can forget that my position here is not permanent but transitional — helping the Parish get ready for something new.

And with priests changing over every two or three years for the last eight years I am sure many people feel St. Stephen’s has been in interim mode for a long time. And yes, that does create a lot of anxiety about what’s happening or not happening. But at our Vestry we made a commitment to move beyond half time priests to something more solid that will help us grow—a commitment to moving past a holding pattern. The Parish has made a commitment to being able to afford a three-quarter time priest with the hope of eventually moving to full time. I want people to know we are working on these goals.

The Canonical Committee met for the first time last week and they will be providing us with regular updates on the process. A huge part of their work involves not only collecting data but creating a Parish Profile that describes the heart and soul of the Parish.

We will be looking at a Stewardship process in the coming months as it will be very important to be able to show that the People of the Parish are committed to being able to pay for a three-quarter time Priest.

And of course, we will continue with all the activities that make St. Stephen’s special — our Thrift Shop, our work with refugees, our work with Cameron School, our Prayer groups, and, of course, Sunday worship. Parish Council has just agreed to make room for the Progressive Housing Society’s Mobile Outreach Van to park here once a week to minister to people struggling with issues of homelessness.

I am writing this in the third week of Lent as the Church moves towards Easter and celebration of the resurrection. This also describes the journey of our Parish. We are still struggling through a long Lenten time but doing so in faith that there is a Resurrection coming! I love this quote from St. Paul’s letter to the church at Corinth— “Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness.”

Let that be our motto as well. Our Parish is living in the in-between place — where things are changing and the new life has not yet revealed itself.

Easter is a celebration and reminder that God’s plan always includes new hope and new life. I wish you all a joyous and hope-filled Easter.
Meet Chester Filbert. He lives at 5264 One Hundred and Seventy-Seventh Street. He is frowning because, as the title of the book explains, nothing ever happens on his block. The reader soon discovers, however, that the joke is on him, because a lot happens on Chester’s street. While he sits there moping, firemen put out a fire, police catch a thief, a gardener finds a treasure and so on.

Just like Chester, we often feel like nothing ever happens in our lives that draws us close to God. Other people have amazing experiences of God, but—sigh—not us.

Meanwhile, the joke is on us. That uncontainable love of God is spilling out all over the place, yet we hardly notice it. To help us become aware of God’s attentive love, we can use Ignatius of Loyola’s Consciousness Examen. This is one of the prayers we are trying out for twenty minutes a day during Lent. The instructions are on a coloured prayer card on the table between the sanctuary and Fellowship Room.

Here’s how it’s done. Take five minutes and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind a moment in the past day or week for which you were most grateful. Perhaps you forgot where you parked your car and found it anyway or maybe you were touched by what someone did or said to you. Whatever it was, take time to enjoy that moment again with Jesus.

After you have enjoyed revisiting a grateful moment with Jesus, take another five minutes and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind the moment in your day for which you were least grateful. Picture yourself with Jesus and relive that experience with
The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.

– John 1:14 (The Message)

Credits:
Nothing Ever Happens on My Block was written and illustrated by Newbery award winner Ellen Raskin (March 13, 1928 – August 8, 1984) in 1966.

References:
Luke 2:19, “But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.”

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A Word from the Wardens at St. Stephen’s
Elaine Renforth and Colleen Butterley

It’s a New Year

Colleen and I are very pleased to be able to serve as Wardens this year. Colleen was selected by Bishop Melissa as Bishop’s Warden, and Elaine was elected by you the Parish as People’s Warden.

As Wardens, we are automatically selected to be on the Canonical Committee, along with the two Synod Delegates and the two Alternate Synod Delegates. This is a very serious and responsible committee because we will pick the next Priest for St. Stephen the Martyr. The process will probably take eight months to a year to complete, but we are going to be working hard to do this as quickly as possible.

We will probably be asking you to help us out with data that we need for our Parish Profile and we know that, as always, you will do what you can to help. If you have any questions in regards to the Canonical Committee, please do not hesitate to talk to us.

St. Stephen the Martyr will be looking at having new neighbours on the next door property in the form of apartment and town homes and this will be creating a lot of disruption to the neighbourhood including the Church. One of the changes will be a new driveway into the Church which is in the process of being planned by the developer, us, and the City of Burnaby. You will be hearing a lot more of these plans in the coming months. Again, please do not hesitate to ask questions and we will do our best to answer them.

Colleen and I both look forward to a very busy and exciting year and hope you are all ready to take this ride with us.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elaine Renforth
People’s Warden

Colleen Butterley
Bishop’s Warden
Easter 2017 at St Stephen’s
You are invited to join us!

Sunday, April 9 - Palm Sunday:
10 am Holy Eucharist

Thursday, April 13 – Maundy Thursday:
6 pm Worship

Friday, April 14 – Good Friday:
10 am Children’s Worship
11 am Worship

Saturday, April 15 - Easter Egg Hunt
10:00-11:30 am

Sunday, April 16 – Easter Sunday:
10 am Holy Eucharist
ST. STEPHEN'S COMMUNITY
EASTER EGG HUNT

Saturday, April 15th
10:00 – 11:30 AM
St. Stephen's Anglican Church
9887 Cameron Street

Please meet at the Church Hall

ALL AGES WELCOME!!

Refreshments will be provided

Please RSVP by April 11th
Call or text 604 788-3637
or email ststbby@shaw.ca

Visit us at: ststbby.ca
Blossom Time

Blossom time is here once more,
As laden boughs to heaven soar,
With every shade and tint and hue,
Each shining petal, bright and new.
Hawthorn, sorbus – creamy white,
And elderberry, shining bright.
Rhododendrons all aglow,
From palest pink to indigo.
Cherry, apple, almond, pear,
Put on a show beyond compare.
Wisteria tassels, lilac’s haze,
Vie with laburnum’s golden blaze.
It seems that they all coincide,
To colour town and countryside.
Small wonder that our spirits sing
When blossom blooms again in spring.

The Welcome Sun

At last we feel the welcome sun
As winter slips away,
And hope returns to lift the hearts
On this, the first warm day.
Green shoots are growing quickly now,
We see the earth awake,
The daffodils are dancing, too,
Beside the peaceful lake.

The birds are nesting in the trees
And butterflies appear,
The whole of life renewed once more.
Rejoice, for spring is here!
And, though the showers will return
And sometimes skies look grey,
Enjoy each moment in the sun
On this, the first warm day!

Into the Garden

Now the springtime has returned
And winter months have passed,
It's time to turn my thoughts and mind
To gardening at last.
For spears of green and growing shoots
Are thrusting through the ground,
The tired old earth has sprung to life
In secret – without sound.
The crocus cups, like coloured gems,
Have popped up everywhere,
And, peeping out midst gnarled roots,
A primrose here and there.
And all the trees in misted green
Are glistening with spring rain.
It's wonderful to be outside
In the garden once again.

Renewal

As spring comes dancing through the woods
With palette in her hand,
She dips her brush and splashes colour
Right across the land.
It seems that all the countryside
Is clothed in misted green,
As swelling buds and tiny leaves
Appear upon the scene.

From feathered throats come fluted notes
Floating on the breeze,
And catkins dangle dainty tassels
Trembling on the trees.
The daffodils are shooting through
With heads up to the sun,
Crocus cups and bluebells, too –
And primrose time has come.

There is a freshness in the air –
Renewed vitality,
For all of nature’s bursting forth
With strength and energy.
For spring has brought a sudden surge
Pulsating through the earth,
Awakening all the dormant things
And bringing them to birth.
OFFICE & THRIFT STORE HOURS

Office Hours:  Tuesday—Friday, 9:30 AM—1:30 PM
Thrift Store Hours:  10:00 AM—2:00 PM
3rd Saturday of the month:  April 22, May 20, June 17

Facts of Interest
by Audrey Watson

Did you know.....?

Lent’s traditional games are marbles and skipping which were stopped on the stroke of twelve noon on Good Friday. In some places, the day was actually called the Marble Day or Long Rope Day.

The first day of spring is called Vernal Equinox. “Vernal” and “equinox” are Latin terms meaning “spring” and “equal night”. The day has 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness. This fell on March 20 this year. The first day of spring in the southern hemisphere is the day of the autumnal equinox in the northern hemisphere! Isn’t it nice to know that when things are winding down for winter in one part of the world, rebirth is just beginning in another?

The Anglo-Saxon name for April was Eostre monath or Eastremonath, and this is thought to be where the name “Easter” came from.

Small numbers of bees will start to buzz about at this time of year. These large, slow bees are the surviving queen bees and are searching for nectar and pollen to convert into honey for their new hatching broods.

The cheery daffodils are blooming, bringing with them the joy of spring and a symbol of hope. In Victorian times, they represented chivalry. In China, they represent wealth and good fortune.

Marigolds are flowering in spring, and the colourful blooms can be used in tea blends. The petals are through to have medicinal properties, and aid in easing stomach upsets and ulcers. They can taste bitter, so be sure to add some honey or sugar.

Baby birds learn to sing during springtime. They are born with the ability to sing, but do not know the songs. They must learn the specific songs of their species and often learn them within two months of being born.
Book Corner
by Audrey Watson, Librarian

Bible Stories
by Martin Manser

Bible Stories is an exciting introduction to the world of the Bible to be enjoyed by all the family. This unique collection features stories from both Old and New Testament, retold in a lively style and brought to life by dramatic illustrations.

However, it is not only a retelling of the most popular and the less-familiar stories from the Bible but is also a fascinating reference book.

The stories from both Old and New Testament bring the reader into a vivid, action-packed world, peopled with a vast range of colourful characters. Alongside the stories, reference side-panels contain information about the daily life and customs, the culture and background, and the geography and politics of the time.

In addition, special reference pages develop the side-panel information on a wide variety of subjects. These include topics on the following: Plants and Animals; Daily Life in Old and New Testament Times; The Holy Land; Bible Lands; Kings of Israel; and God’s Chosen People.

With the help of maps, photographs, and diagrams, the ancient worlds of the Bible are set in a context which can be readily understood.

In addition, specially written homilies help to educate today’s young reader in understanding the Bible’s meaning and its relevance for everyday life.

• Why did the Egyptians pursue Moses and his people?
• Who was Bathsheba?

Find the answers to these and hundreds more fascinating facts within the colourful pages of this beautiful book.

More than 200 Bible stories, psalms, proverbs, prophecies, laws, and letters.

Also included:
• Who’s Who in the Bible.
• Maps and Diagrams.
• Bible Quiz.

About the author:
Since 1980, Martin Manser has worked as a compiler and editor of a wide range of reference texts, including dictionaries, and Bible study material. His interest and involvement in a local church has led him to concentrate more specifically on Christian writing. He enjoys the challenge of making Biblical material fresh, accessible, and interesting for today’s young reader.