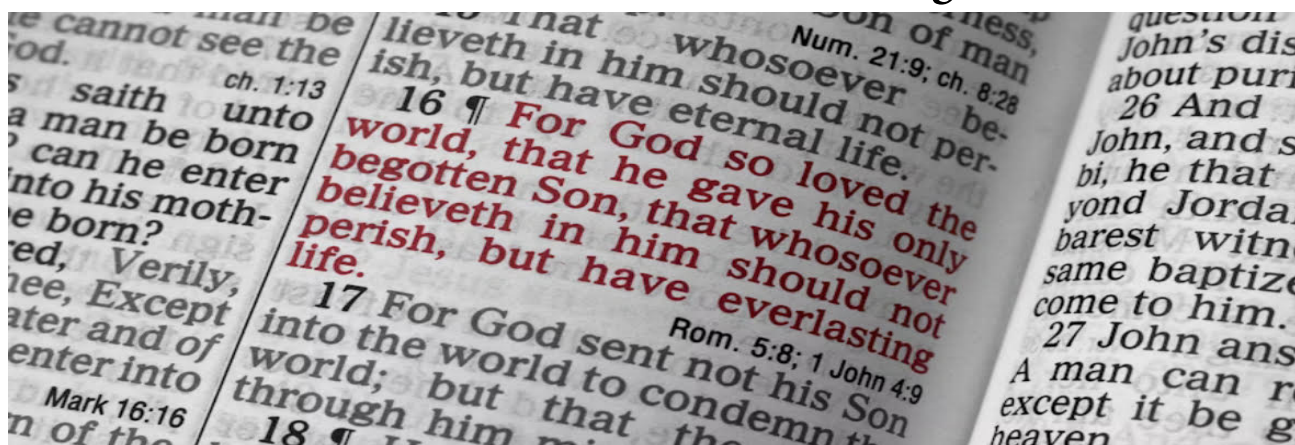


Good News & *Red Ink* May 2025 Blessings & Gratitude



<p>Holy Spirit, Tuckerton</p> <p>Worship Services: Sundays: 8 am Service; 9:30 am Service (Choir; FB) & 9:30 am Sunday School 5 pm - Fire Light Praise Service Contemporary music, FB, w/free dinner Bible Study: Tuesdays, 1 pm, Parish Hall Healing Prayer Service w/Eucharist: Wednesdays @ 10:30 am - The Undercroft Choir practice Thursdays @ 9:30 am https://www.holyspirituckerton.org/</p>	<p>St. Stephen's, Waretown</p> <p>Worship Services: Sundays: 8 am Service and 10am (with music) & 10 am Sunday School Celtic Candlelight Service: Weds., 6:15-6:45pm Bible Study Group, Weds 7:00 p.m., Parish Hall. Morning Prayer with Service of Healing: Fridays, 10 a.m. https://saintstephenswaretown.org</p>
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<p>Important Dates</p> <p>May 1 - May 31 Blessings & Gratitude Campaign; Donations matched 100%</p> <p>Tuesday, May 6, 2:15pm Women's Retreat - "Pressing for the Blessing". Local radio host, Lisa Padula @ St. Stephen's.</p> <p>Thurs, May 22, 11 am Bunco @ St. Stephen's</p> <p>Sunday, May 25th Veterans' Military Celebration, 8 am and 10 am Worship Services, @ St Stephen's</p> <p>(continued on next page)</p>	<p><i>From the Desk of Our Priest</i></p> <p>Dear Church family,</p> <p>Most folks have heard that I love the movie the Passion that Mel Gibson debuted some years ago. Admittedly, it is hard to watch. I remember the first time we saw it the violence had me gasping aloud. I had never seen the passion so vividly and horrifically portrayed.</p> <p>I had also never heard Aramaic spoken -- and found that the movie deepened my faith and Lenten experience greatly.</p> <p>I don't watch it every year, but we do watch every few years. Someone recently sent me an article about the actor who portrayed Jesus in the film. He said that during the filming of the movie, he went to confession every day to keep himself as Holy as possible, so Jesus could work through him.</p> <p>That's a new way to look at confession and right behavior. I love the idea of keeping our souls and lives and bodies as holy as possible so that Jesus and the Holy Spirit can work through us more easily. It makes sense that we are less likely to hear the promptings of God if we are too defiled by our own sin or weakness or bias to receive the message.</p> <p>I find this a greater incentive to holiness than many other arguments. What do you think? What might you clear away to be more holy? What must you abandon or destroy in your life or heart so that God will find you a suitable vessel for the workings of His spirit?</p> <p>In Jesus, Lisa+</p>
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<p>Important Dates - (continued from previous page)</p> <p>Monday, May 26 Bright Obeng, Seminarian at Holy Spirit, graduates from General Theological Seminary, NYC. 5:30 pm. All are invited.</p> <p>Monday, May 26 - Memorial Day - First Day of “Summer” (in Jersey!) Remember those who died so we could be free. Office closed for holiday</p> <p>Wednesday, May 28 - Community Dinner, doors open at 5 pm, Dinner served at 6 pm.</p> <p>Saturday, May 31 - Healing Retreat, 9am -2 pm , @ St. Stephen’s</p> <p>Upcoming</p> <p>October 11 - Pumpkins delivered to both St. Stephen’s and Holy Spirit. Please mark your calendars to help out.</p>	<p>Vestry Happenings</p> <p>Holy Spirit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vestry is working on starting a weekly Bingo. This is being offered as both a way to build community and as a way to raise funds. We are in the process of getting the appropriate state and local licenses. We hope to begin in the early fall. • Our pumpkin sale continues to be a great hit with the community. Please mark your calendars for the pumpkin arrival on October 11th. We will be adding a Harvest Festival on Saturday, October 18th with vendors selling homemade crafts. Stay tuned for more details. • Recently completed work around the church includes: Installed new non-smuggling Altar candle; Awarded Altar paint contract to Hanson Painting, work to start in the near future; Replaced outside light fixture at 4 door entrances. <p>St. Stephen’s Vestry Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced focus on evangelism • More awareness of ways to participate • ECW (Episcopal Church Women) continues to offer ways to connect <p>Noteworthy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Stephen’s has a newly formed chapter of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew’s, a fraternal organization of men focused on prayer, bible study and community outreach. For more information, contact Bill Bodine at 848-210-4206, email Wbodine3@gmail.com or call 732-350-2121. • If you know of someone who is ill, in the hospital, in a nursing home or has experienced a death, and would appreciate a card from the Holy Spirit, please let Lynn Robbins know @ lrobbone@aol.com • Please contact Fr. Chip with special prayer requests or if you believe someone needs a pastoral call. He can be reached at therevchipgraves@gmail.com
<p><i>“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Thessalonians 5:16-18</i></p> <p><i>“Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!” Psalm 107:1</i></p>	

Media Corner Recommendations ... Blessings and Gratitude



Books:

A Short Guide to a Happy Life.
by Anna Quindlen
A Man Called Ove,
by Frederik Backman
The Extraordinary Life of
Sam Hell, by Robert Dugoni

Movies:

It's a Wonderful Life (1947)
Forrest Gump (1994)
The Pursuit of Happyness (2006)

Music:

Blessings by Laura Story
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKPeoPiK9XE>
The Lord Bless You and Keep You by
Westminster Choir College
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4C9zVg5X_A
Goodness of God by CeCe Winans
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sE5kEnitqE>

How Well Do You Know Your Priests?

Fr. Chip and Lisa+ each gave their responses to the questions below. Their responses are written randomly below. At the bottom, fill in the blanks for which response you think Father Chip gave. Those with the most correct responses from each parish will receive church-branded swag (and bragging rights!)

Correct responses will appear in next month's newsletter. In addition, we will ask some random parishioners in both locations to share their responses in future issues. Let's get to know those we worship with!

- | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Best sandwich? | a) Philly Cheesesteak | b) BLT |
| 2. What's one thing you own that you really should throw out? | a) Old clothes | b) Iron |
| 3. What is the scariest animal? | a) Spiders | b) Crocodiles |
| 4. Apples or oranges? | a) Apples | b) Apples |
| 5. Have you ever asked someone for their autograph? | a) No | b) Yes |
| 6. What do you think happens when we die? | a) Heaven and chocolate
b) We are brought into the presence of Jesus and those we have known before | |
| 7. Favorite action movie? | a) Equalizer | b) Hunger Games |
| 8. Favorite smell? | a) Lemon Grass | b) Lilac |
| 9. Least favorite smell? | a) Dog vomit | b) Freshly mown grass |
| 10. Exercise: worth it? | a) I've heard it is | b) Yes |
| 11. Flat or sparkling? | a) Sparkling | b) Sparkling |
| 12. Most used app on your phone or website on your computer? | a) Amazon | b) Instagram |
| 13. You get one song to listen to for the rest of your life: what is it? | a) Anything by Bocelli
b) "Grace and Peace" by Fernando Ortega | |
| 14. What number am I thinking of? | a) 9 | b) 11 |
| 15. Describe the rest of your life in 5 words. | a) Adventurous, bookish, nappish, dog-hair, family-full b) Best is yet to come | |

----- tear here -----

NAME _____ (so we can give you your prize!)

Father Chip said response "A" or "B"

- | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ | 3. _____ | 4. _____ | 5. _____ | 6. _____ | 7. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 10. _____ | 11. _____ | 12. _____ | 13. _____ | 14. _____ | 15. _____ | |

Ask a Priest:

Can you help me understand this Bible verse?

Each month a reader-submitted question will be addressed by our priests. Our first reply will be in June.

Dear Reverend,

My favorite Bible verse is Philippians 2:6, "Christ was truly God. But he did not try to remain equal with God." (Contemporary English Version) Although, truthfully, it's been my favorite for so many years I usually quote this as, "although He was in the form of God, He did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at."

I join this verse with the Gospel story told in all four Gospels of Jesus' overturning the tables of the money changers in the Temple, "And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; " (John 2:15, KJV)

Growing up, there were so many *rules*, about everything. I felt I had to be perfect. My father said, "anything worth doing is worth doing well." My mother said, "always wear clean underwear. If you are in an accident, I'll be so embarrassed if you aren't wearing clean underwear!" Lol. We weren't allowed to get mad at anyone who was older or in authority, and that seemed like everyone. Jesus overturned tables in the temple, and used a scourge! But he was God, and God can do anything he wants!

I "got" at an early age that Jesus was God. It took me decades to truly begin to understand and "get" what Jesus did was also human. And if the behavior is good enough for Jesus, it's good enough for me. So I work on allowing myself to be angry, although hopefully without damaging anything, and never using a scourge, lol.

It's sometimes very hard for me to figure out, "did Jesus, the human, do that, so I can, too" or did "Jesus, the God, do that, so I'm not allowed?" Yes, I know it's a "dual nature" and "He's both". But I'm pretty sure I'm not allowed to just come in to Church on Sunday morning and start throwing things! Meanwhile, I use this story and this verse to remind myself only *GOD* is perfect. Expecting it of myself or of others is a recipe for disaster.

Any other insight into my interpretation, right or wrong, or to this story and verse would be greatly appreciated. I'm looking forward to reading your response next month.

Sincerely,
Trying to Learn More

"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:40

Let's Talk About: Blessings and Gratitude

By Cathy Trapani

Of course we are grateful when a child is born healthy, our cancer is declared in remission, or when the forest fire is contained without any loss of life or residences. We thank God for these blessings. But is it only the big things for which we are grateful? I wrote the essay below in March 2021, during the pandemic. I updated the essay this week.

My Hands

As I reach for the door knob, I notice my hands: freckled, wrinkled, age spots. My knuckles are cut and scraped and I cannot remember why. The neutral color nail polish is chipped, not just one finger, but every finger. The finger joints are swollen, just a few, not yet every finger. My hands are well-used.

I am so grateful for my hands.

Through the years, my hands have swung a tennis racquet and paddled a canoe; pulled the ropes on sleds for my kids, as well as held the snow shovel. I've dug into the dirt to plant seeds and clipped the blooms for a fresh bouquet. These hands bring me physical joy.

These same tired and sore hands have often been the most useful tools as I earn my living. These fingers press the keyboard, without looking, to enter data into spreadsheets, to write memos, to edit research. My fingers are the tool that communicate my results to the world, bringing me a sense of accomplishment and self-respect. These hands bring me mental joy.

These hands reach for others. They have carried casserole-filled dishes to neighbors' homes, written birthday cards, and hugged those who are crying. My hands embrace family and friends, giving me community and belonging. These hands bring me emotional joy.

Each week my hands are lifted during the Eucharist to receive the Body of Christ. When I am serving on the altar, my hands lift the processional cross and offer the chalice of Christ's blood to the faithful. I am one of the many who act as Jesus' hands in this time and place. These hands bring me spiritual joy.

I am blessed to have my hands.

Blessings and Gratitude Campaign

But sometimes, the situation demands a greater response than a prayer of gratitude and an essay.

Action, not words, may be needed. For me, this is such a situation. I invite you to continue reading and prayerfully consider making a charitable donation to an organization of your choice during the month of May.

In May 2015, I was traveling home from my office in Washington, DC on an Amtrak train, heading to Metropark, NJ, near where I lived. It had been a great day at work, productive and enjoyable, and it was a beautiful spring evening. I was working on the train because I had a business trip coming up the following week, advising teachers and Department of Education officials in the U.S. Virgin Islands. I was so excited to go and work with them (and to swim in the Caribbean!).

As we left the 30th Street station in Philadelphia, having reached full speed, the train started swaying. Back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. I feared we were going to tip over and crash and I couldn't imagine surviving that. When it became obvious we were going to go over I expected to die, thinking, *I never got to say goodbye to anyone. Oh God!* This was my last conscious thought.

God heard my prayer and I survived the train which derailed at more than 100 mph. Others did not. Hundreds were injured.

I did not expect to live through the experience. When I regained consciousness, I was trapped between two rows of seats. The train car I was in was laying on its side, almost overturned on a downward incline. I would need to wait my turn for the First Responders to come and use the Jaws of Life to extract me from the wreckage. I would be put on a stretcher, carried across live electrical wires, and placed in a Paddy Wagon serving as an ambulance, because they had run out of ambulances. After 2 days in the ICU and 2 days in a general ward, I'd be sent home from the hospital. I would come to find out I had seven broken ribs, internal bleeding, bruises and cuts, a collapsed lung, PTSD, and a traumatic brain injury. Although I went back to work after about five months, I also had post-concussion syndrome, which made anything involving lots of thinking very difficult and painful. It's been a long journey but I'm doing fine and life is good.

I knew that I was blessed when I came-to in the wreckage, and I've never stopped believing that. (Even when I'm complaining about living with a brain injury or being in pain, I'm happy I'm here to whine!) I am happily married for 38 years, have 3 grown (and happy) children, I am mostly healthy now and I live in one of the most relaxing and enjoyable places I've ever had the pleasure to live in, where I have met wonderful people and am part of a community. I have had wonderful medical care, fantastic friends have helped for ten years, and my extended family is always there to support me. I am able to contribute to the world and know the goodness of life. I have my faith in God, his Son, and the Holy Spirit.

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of my accident, grateful for my survival, my recovery, and all the blessings I have received, *I am giving thanks to God for everything He has given me. I ask you to prayerfully consider if you are in a position to join me in making a charitable donation, in gratitude for what God has given you.*

In gratitude for my life and blessings, I will match 100% of donations made by parishioners in May 2025.

- I am grateful to God for everything I have and hearing my plea for safety. Therefore, I will make a 100% match of any non-pledge donations made to Holy Spirit or St. Stephen's during May, 2025.
- I am grateful for the response of the First Responders, many of whom were not on duty that night but came to help when they saw the news. Therefore, I will make a 100% match to any donations made to Great Bay Regional EMS, Waretown Fire Dept, Parkertown Fire Department, or West Tuckerton Fire Dept during May, 2025.
- I am grateful for the support I received dealing with a Traumatic Brain Injury. Therefore, I will match 100% of any donations made in May 2025 to The Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey or Alzheimer's NJ.
- Lastly, because I believe no one should ever go hungry, I will match donations to the Tuckerton Food Pantry and St. Stephen's Food Pantry or any food bank of your choice.

These are the people and organizations that / am particularly grateful to at this time. However, *you* may have other blessings and concerns. Therefore, I also offer to match **any** charitable donations you may make during the month of May, 2025.

Lastly, we help others through our **time, talent and treasures**. Many of us donate our time or talents to others. Since I believe that giving of ourselves is at least as important as giving money, I promise to do my best to match any volunteer work you do during the month of May, by any member of our congregation. Do you volunteer at the Tuckerton Food Pantry once a month for two hours? I will join you the next time you go. Work at the Laurel Thrift Shop? Bring the Eucharist to a nursing home? Let's go together.

If you have a talent that could help the Church of the Holy Spirit or St. Stephen's, I encourage you to talk to Fr. Chip, Rev. Lisa or a vestry member to discuss how you might help our community. There's a place for everyone to serve others.

Thank you for considering whether now is the right time for you to make a donation to those in need. If you can, your donation will be doubled through the match. Regardless of whether it's the right time for that, it's **always the right time to thank God for our blessings**. Please write a quick note about the things you are grateful to God for. We have special envelopes for that, too, and we will offer these up to God in June, as well.

With thanks to God and for our community,
Cathy Trapani,

PS If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at cathtrap@gmail.com or call or text me at 908-499-1876.

Blessings and Gratitude Campaign Logistics

1. **Envelopes:** There are *two special envelopes available*. These envelopes are available at Holy Spirit at each of the main entrances to the church and in the parish hall. At St. Stephen's the envelopes are in the narthex.
2. **Gratitude Envelopes** are for you to write your private thoughts to God, expressing that for which you are grateful.

Gratitude Offering to God

Please enclose a list, or a letter, or a note, telling God what you are grateful for.

We will offer these envelopes to God during Worship Services in June. We also hope to share some of the responses in next month's newsletter. However, we are aware that your prayer may be confidential.

Please Circle One:

- 1) Confidential--For God's Eyes Only - DO NOT OPEN. Shred after Worship Service.
- 2) Can Be Shared in Next Month's Newsletter -- Anonymously
- 3) Can Be Shared in Next Month's Newsletter with my Initials and parish.

3. **Special Collection Box:** Please place both envelopes in the **special collection box** located in the parish hall or narthex. These boxes will be brought to the altar as part of the offertory at worship services in June.

4. Donation envelope. If you have multiple things to record, you may combine them all in one envelope, or use separate, additional envelopes. Whichever makes most sense to you. We will contact you if there are any questions.

Sharing Our Blessings to Bless Others - circle one or more recipient

Treasure: Holy Spirit Church

St. Stephen's Church

Great Bay Regional EMS West Tuckerton Fire Dept

Parkertown FD

Waretown FD

Brain Injury Alliance of NJ

Alzheimer's NJ

Tuckerton Food Pantry

St. Stephen's Food Pantry

If Another Organization: Name _____

Contact info (website, etc.) _____

Donation by (circle) "Check enclosed", "cash enclosed", "QR code/Vanco", "Recipient's website"

TIME: Total **volunteer** hours _____ @ _____ (charities)

For questions, who should we contact? _____

How? email or phone _____

5. "Treasure"

a. Cash

- i. All loose plate donations made during May will be matched and given to the church.
- ii. If you have another specific charity you'd like to support with cash, please use an envelope and complete the requested information.

b. Checks

- i. Please make your check out to the organization you are supporting. All donations will be acknowledged by that organization for tax purposes.
- ii. Our churches are only acting as a pass-through facilitator.

c. Online with Credit card

- i. If you choose to make a donation via a recipient's website, please put the name of the organization, the website address/URL or other contact information, and the amount you donated onto the envelope. I trust your information and will match your donation to the organization.

- ii. If you'd like to make a donation to Holy Spirit or St. Stephen's, you can use your smart phone to scan the appropriate QR code and make a donation online. The church will let me know the total I will be matching.



HOLY SPIRIT -use "Donations"



ST STEPHEN'S - use "Free Will Offering"

4. **'Time'** - Please complete a "Blessings" envelope listing how many volunteer hours and for whom. Please make sure there is enough information for you to be contacted for more information.
5. **'Talent'** - If you want help finding an organization that can use your talents, include a note and we will do our best to help you find that group.
6. **'The Small Print'** -- (Requested by my husband, so he can still retire this year, Lol)
 - a. There is a per-person, per-organization, donation match limit of \$1000.
 - b. No matching donations to political organizations of any kind.
 - c. There is an organizational maximum donation match of \$4000 to:
Church of the Holy Spirit
St. Stephen's
Brain Injury Alliance of NJ
 - d. There is an organizational maximum donation match of \$2000 to:
Great Bay Regional EMS
West Tuckerton Fire Department
Parkertown Fire Department
Waretown Fire Department
Alzheimer's NJ
Tuckerton Food Bank
St. Stephen's Food Bank
 - e. There is a \$4,000 total limit on matching donations to all other organizations,
 - f. The total of all matching donations cannot exceed \$30,000.
 - g. If eligible donations exceed \$30,000, the complete amount will be distributed in proportion to the gifts already made.
7. A full accounting of donations made, matches made, and volunteer hours completed will be made by the end of June.

For more information on these community and charitable organizations, you can visit:

Holy Spirit: <https://www.holyspirittuckerton.org/>

St. Stephen's: <https://saintstephenswaretown.org/>

St. Stephen's Food Bank: <https://saintstephenswaretown.org/min-food-pantry>

Tuckerton Food Pantry: <https://tuckertonborough.com/services/tuckerton-food-pantry/>

Great Bay Regional EMS: <https://www.greatbayems.org/>

West Tuckerton Fire Department: <http://www.station71.org/>

Parkertown Fire Department: <https://www.station70.net/>

Waretown Fire Department: <https://waretownfire.org/>

Brain Injury Alliance of NJ: www.bianj.org

Alzheimer's NJ: <https://www.alznj.org/>