

Dear Holy Trinity Family,

Thank you all for your loving prayers and acts of kindness during Pastor Mark's recent illness. Before most of you had a chance to read his thank you note in last month's Lamplighter, he had been re-hospitalized. We're grateful he's home now, and able to receive outpatient therapy. He has commented more than once that this amazing community support has enabled him to maintain a positive attitude and heal more quickly. We are indebted to our faith family now, as always!

A silver lining in the cloud of this difficult time has been the chance to meet many wonderful people who serve as healthcare workers. Some of them have shared sacred stories with us, including tales of immigration from other countries. One compassionate young nurse came here from the Philippines several years ago. He told us of enjoying a steak one night at a wonderful restaurant, and all of a sudden thinking, "This is more meat than my parents eat in a month." He was already sending his folks a portion of each paycheck he earned, but after that his checks increased.

I immediately thought of my own stepmother, who immigrated to this country over 50 years ago from Honduras. Decades after becoming a U.S. citizen and establishing her own career and family here, my mom still regularly sends material assistance to our Honduran family. "This is who we are. This is what we do." Mimi's brother Oscar is ill in El Salvador. If he needs them, my mom in her 80s and my dad in his 90s, will go to his side. "This is who we are. This is what we do." I am incredibly blessed by my parents' lifetime witness of generosity: "To live is to give!"

In October we emphasize financial stewardship here at Holy Trinity. This is our prayerful prelude to filling out estimate of giving cards for the upcoming year on the last weekend of the month. An incoming member just asked me, with a smile, "Do you recommend how much people give?" I answered that we let the Holy Spirit do that ☺. We ask people to listen for God's lead, to give joyfully in response to the bounty they have received, to allow blessings to flow from their lives into others. Yes, if our projected gifts support an expanded budget, we would love to follow the recommendation of our Worship & Music and Personnel Committees to increase the hours of our Director of Music, Ned Perwo, to full-time. But no, we are not asking you to put money in the plate in order to pay the electric bill, keep up with my medical insurance premium, buy a new anthem for the choir, or help us send our high school youth to "Jesus, Justice & Jazz," the national youth gathering '09. Your offering **does** help to cover those costs, but the real goal of our giving is to spread and be the Gospel in Word and deed. Our faith family exists to praise God and to serve God's people, including and especially the ones who aren't here yet. Whatever we do, whatever we give, should be directed to "whatever proclaims Christ," as Martin Luther once said.

There's that crazy story about someone saying, "I'll throw my money into the air. Whatever God wants, God will keep, and whatever falls down to the ground is mine!" We know it doesn't work that way. God doesn't take our money; God waits for us to give it. God isn't looking for a certain dollar amount from everyone; our means differ. God is simply looking for a faithful response to the material and spiritual blessings we have received. God bless you as you discern what that might be.

In Christ, who became poor to make us rich,

Pastor Mary Virginia Farnham

☪ARNIE'S CORNER☪

As I sit at my computer putting this essay together, I can't help thinking that five months have passed since Mary Ellen and I were welcomed into the Holy Trinity family.

We want to say: thank you for putting your arms around us and accepting us. Thanks and praise to God for blessing us through Holy Trinity.

On Sept. 14, Ray Kaden and Ken Olsen spent 30 minutes enlightening us about the HTLC budget process. This is simply a precursor to the Stewardship drive we all face. Now, don't sigh and think this is about money, since it is the first thing that comes into the minds of most people. Stewardship is much more than money. Let me define the word "Steward" as it applied to Biblical times.

Steward: this individual was a caretaker of property that he did not own. Today, we think of the caretaker in different terms – gardener, manager, housekeeper, nanny are but a few. There are many different titles, however when you refer to these people they are still the caretakers of property that is not their own.

First Corinthians 4:7b speaks of ownership. It says, "What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?"

Paul is reminding us that everything, yes, even life itself, is to be received as God's gift. So as Christians, when we look at and consider our possessions, we should think of all of them as gifts from God.

Paul reminds us that not only our lives are a gift from God, ☪, too, are our minds, bodies and abilities. Therefore, our possessions obtained by our own devices are also from God, since we obtained them by using the gifts that we received from Him. It may seem convoluted, but in reflecting about this it becomes clearer.

We all need to discover for ourselves Paul's meaning in First Corinthians. I'm

simply putting it forward for you to consider. We also need to be aware of our individual talents as well as our wealth. Talents are different for every individual in our congregation. We also need to say "Thank you" for these gifts we have received.

Giving of your time and wealth is a spiritual and a theological issue. We need to think about the mission of our church and we should think of abundance, not scarcity. When we give of ourselves and our possessions it should be done joyously. I am reminded of the offertory prayer in the LBW (pg. 87):

Merciful Father, we offer with you and thanksgiving what you have first given us – ourselves, our time and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of Him who offered Himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

-- Arnie

☪COUNCIL☪

"WATCH WHAT GOD DOES AND THEN YOU DO IT"

Ephesians 5:1a

Wow! What an order for all of us, but when I look around Holy Trinity – the Council, the various committees, the programs, the staff, the volunteers, etc., -- I believe we are working very hard to live out these instructions to our best abilities!

As President of Holy Trinity's Council, I am excited to be embarking on another September with the new service/Sunday School time in place; assistant pastor in place and working very hard; on-going interviews for our Director of Youth and Family Ministry; Confirmation Connection beginning with a total of 23 anticipating being confirmed in 2009 and 18 being confirmed in 2010; Breakfast Clubbers looking forward to their event in New Orleans in July of 2009; our Music

Director up and running with his various choirs, musicians, musical programs, etc.

I could go on and on!

And, in the midst of all this, the Property Committee, along with several other angels, have been repairing, replacing and painting throughout!

The Council has been busy, as always, and as this will be my last year on Council and as President, I would like to thank each and every one of the Council Members for their gift of stewardship, love, and steadfast commitment to Holy Trinity and to our Lord and Savior. It is not always easy but we continue to grow with the help of The Holy Spirit.

Lots of things will be coming up, and we will need your prayers and support:

- Annual Stewardship Campaign
- Discussion of needed work to be done around the church/Fellowship Hall.
- Introduction of a Capital Campaign for the future of Holy Trinity
- Discussion of our Music Director going full-time (which he is already doing but not being paid for).
- MOM (Mission on the Move) Campaign
- Church Security Issue

Let us be ever mindful of our purpose to God and his Church. Let us also realize our mission and our promise to our children as they grow and are nurtured in God's house.

I thank God for all of you and know this year will be a year of peace, love and joy, for each and every one of us.

~~ Cindy Markus
Council President

**NEWS FROM
UUDHENGELO LUTHERAN PARISH
OUR SISTER CONGREGATION
IN NAMIBIA**

For several months I have been unsuccessful in reaching, via email, Pastor Joel at our sister congregation in Namibia, Africa. I had been given another e-mail address as a resource and that did not work – no one responded to me. Recently, Pastor Bruce Ewen supplied me with another e-mail address and I received the email below.

~~ Cindy Markus

From: "The Eastern Diocese"
Subject: RE: Uudhengelo Parish
Date: Thu, 11 Sep 2008 15:10:50 +0000

Dear Friend Cindy Markus:

Thank you very much for trying to keep this partnership growing. Thank you again for keeping remembering your sisters and brothers in your prayers. Last weekend I attended their Annual Deanery Meeting and I met with people from Uudhengelo Parish. They are still there and remember you well. But there is a change done by the Diocesan Council last year 2007. Rev Joel Fikeipo has been transferred to Eloo Lutheran Parish as from September 2007.

Fortunately Uudhengelo gets a very new pastor and her name is Rev Martha Kanyemba. She is a very young pastor and unmarried. She was ordained last June 2008. If you want to communicate with her, it is better to use my e-mail and I will inform her to come and get it, because most of the time they visit our office.

Uudhengelo Parish is still alive, they have built a new parsonage but it is unpainted due to finance constraint.

Thank you again for remembering my name. Bruce and some friends of your Synod visited our Diocese and we feel God's blessing upon us for having friends coming to us to share our faith experiences. I'm wishing you all the best.

Thanks a bunch

Halolye A Nashihanga

Nominations

ASK NOT,

**“WHAT CAN MY CONGREGATION
DO FOR ME,”
BUT ASK,
“WHAT CAN I DO
FOR MY CONGREGATION?”**

Recently people have asked Church Council members how Holy Trinity Lutheran Church selects council members. To set all your minds at rest, and to make the job of the Nominations Committee easier, this article will describe the whole process.

The constitution and bylaws of the congregation establish seven standing committees. Christian Education oversees all aspects of teaching and youth work. Stewardship motivates, encourages, and educates the membership, helping us to respond to God’s grace through gifts of time, talent and treasure.

Finance prepares the annual budget and monitors spending to assure it matches the plan.

Property maintains the church and parsonage. They also plan for the long term repair of items like the roof and boilers.

Evangelism invites new members to share in the gospel at Holy Trinity and follows up with the congregation.

Social Ministry performs ongoing outreach including educating us about current social issues and helping to feed the poor, comfort those in need, and provide shelter to the homeless.

Worship and Music plans the services at Holy Trinity working with the pastors, director of music, choirs, and altar guild.

Each committee has two co-chairpeople who serve on a staggered basis for three year terms. Nominees are presented at the annual congregational meeting by the Nominations Committee. Nominees must be confirmed members of Holy Trinity in good standing who regularly participate in the worship life of the church.

For 2009, we expect six openings out of the 15 possible positions.

If you wish to serve on the Council, please prayerfully consider your talents and how you might be able to share them for the glory of God. Contact Pastor Mary, Pastor Arnie or Dennis Blazak* from the Nominations Committee if you believe you are called to serve.

(*Dennis’ telephone number is (732) 323-7544)

✪ CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ✪

Thank you to everyone who made the first weekend of our ‘08/’09 Sunday School year a rousing success! We had over 200 youths participate!

WOW!

This includes children from nursery school through 6th grade, our 7th and 8th graders in Confirmation, and our 9th through 12th graders in Breakfast Club. We are so very blessed to have such a large youth population as part of our Holy Trinity family.

I also want to thank our hard working, and faith-filled pastors, our wonderful church secretary, and the unbelievably talented and hard working volunteers who make this all possible! It takes a huge number of people to bring the Word of God to our children. Confirmation guides, Sunday School teachers and assistants, our Breakfast Club leaders, library volunteers, Sunday School superintendents and (of course), all the adults who bring them to us every week.

Please remember there’s always room for more helpers, to accompany our Christian young people in their faith journeys. If you ever want to help, but aren’t sure where to begin, please don’t hesitate to contact Joy Blazak (the Chris Ed Chair) @ 892-9735 or Joyjoywrid57@msn.com. Even if you just have questions or comments, we’re always around!

Make sure to also keep our search for a full-time director of Youth and Family Ministry in your thoughts and prayers as we continue our interview

process. While we appreciate how great our need is, we want to do our best to hire the right person for this important position. In the meantime let's continue to praise God for all He has given us, and keep up His good work!

-- Joy Blazak

LIBRARY

I loved my friend.
He went away from me
There's nothing more to say.
The poem ends softly as it
began.
I loved my friend.
--Langston Hughes*

This poem by the one of the most important poets of the Twentieth Century is often recited at memorial services, perhaps because it so eloquently expresses feelings of grief over a great loss.

In September I lost a very dear friend, someone whom I had known for 38 years. Ginny was 82 and so ill I could not ask God to prolong her life. She quietly stopped breathing with her daughter at her bedside in Renaissance at Seabrook.

We are taught to expect the death of friends and family - and of ourselves - as we grow older. But expectation does not lessen the pain. We grieve, for death is a mystery we do not understand.

Sometimes death comes in mid-life, sudden, totally unexpected. The death of a child is hardest to bear. And we grieve, for death is a mystery and we long for resurrection.

When trying to explain death to a child, sometimes a book can help. Most books about death written for young children are about the loss of a pet, such as *The Forever Dog*, by Bill Cochran. Mike loves his dog Corky in spite of his "short skinny legs, crooked ears, more fur than any one dog deserved, and a scruffy tail that never

stopped wagging." Corky was only seven weeks old when he was given to Mike and the two did everything together. Mike told Corky that the two of them would be best friends forever. That was the plan. But one day Corky was very sick and despite everything the vet tried, Corky died. Mike couldn't believe it. First he was sad and cried like he had never cried before. Then he got angry. Corky had broken his promise. He hadn't kept the Forever Plan. Mom understands how Mike feels and asks him to remember all the things he and Corky did together. She helps Mike realize that "Corky the dog had to go away. But Corky your best friend will be with you forever." (Located in the For Parents and Teachers section)

Edward's Eyes, by Patricia MacLachlan (author of the Newbery Medal book, *Sarah, Plain and Tall*) for children in the middle and upper grades is a story of loss and hope. It's about a boy who loves baseball - "he could throw a perfect knuckleball, a pitch no one could hit." And Edward loved people - he "could make anyone laugh and everyone think." One day while riding his bike he is distracted, runs into a pole, and is killed outright. His family struggles with the why of his death. They decide to donate Edward's bodily parts to those in need, and, as it happens, a baseball player is the recipient of Edward's very special eyes. (Located in the Older Readers section)

And God Cried, Too: a Kid's Book of Healing and Hope, by Marc Dellman is a wonderful book. Unfortunately, it is one of the books missing from our library. This loss is compounded by the fact that the book is no longer in print, which makes it irreplaceable. Please check your bookshelves at home and if you find it please return it to the library as soon as possible. Thank you.

For adults, there is *A Time to Mourn, a Time to Dance: Help for the Losses in Life*, by Margaret Metzgar, founder and primary therapist at the Transition and Loss Center in Seattle,

Washington, et al, published by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. This book treats different kinds of loss, not just death. It includes a section on helping children cope with loss, suggestions for comfort and coping, and an index of helpful Bible passages. (Located in the For Parents and Teachers section)

~~ *Ellin Greene*

*You can read about the life of this famous African-American writer in *Langston Hughes, American Poet*, by Alice Walker, located in the Prayer, Poetry, and Song section of our library.

⌘ EVANGELISM ⌘

Dear Parents of College Students,
Holy Trinity's Evangelism Committee sends care packages filled with goodies and love to our college youth. They are packed and mailed twice a year. In this way we let our youth know their church family is thinking of and praying for them while they are away from home!

Each family is asked to contribute a **jar of peanut butter and a box of crackers** with their child's name clearly marked on the bag. Bring this to the church office **no later than October 19**.

Homemade goodies are always a hit and you may designate them for your child or as a general donation. If you bake homemade items, **please leave them in the church kitchen on Saturday, Nov. 1** and they will be included in the packing on Sunday, Nov. 2.

Suggestions for items to be donated:

- Home baked cookies & brownies
- Canned fruit or pudding (snack size)
- Cup of Soup
- Microwave popcorn
- Individual packages of chips
- Raisins
- Tuna fish

Hard candy
Lifesavers
Gum

Peanut Butter
Granola bars
Crackers
Juice boxes
Cookies
Pretzels

No glass containers or personal items, please.

Last year's mailing list and a form to be completed and returned with your child's updated information are on the Evangelism bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

Thank you for your participation in this fun and meaningful outreach program to our youth!

Sincerely,
Pat & Chuck Augustine
(732) 282-0813

Project Linus

Project to Benefit Soldiers' Children

This Sept. 3, 500 members of the 50th Brigade of the New Jersey Army National Guard were deployed to Iraq. They left behind approximately 1500 children who will anxiously wait their safe return. Members of 50th Brigade, which is based in Mercer County, come from across New Jersey.

Blankets and hats will be distributed to newborn infants and children up to 18-years-of-age, so all styles, genders and sizes are welcome.

If you are interested in contributing handmade blankets and hats to this worthwhile effort (and for more information) please contact Gloria Smith. Gloria's telephone number is (732) 449-1942.

Blankets can be left in the church office. Deadline: Nov. 20.

The Blanketeers will meet at 1 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 13, in the room behind the kitchen in Fellowship Hall.

Thank you for your support.
~~ Gloria Smith

☞ STEWARDSHIP ☞

Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share

"Declare how much God has done for you." – Luke 8:39

"We cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard!" – Acts 4:20

We all have stories to tell: humorous happenings, learning experiences, news about our families, triumphs and tragedies, and plans for the future.

As the people of God, we have stories to tell about what God has done for us and about the difference that God's grace has made in our lives. Sometimes we are less aware of these stories until they are coaxed out of us—but they are there, part of who we are.

That's not all. Whether we know it or not, we also have stories to tell about what God has done *through* us — stories about how God has used us to make a difference in the lives of others. Getting to know those stories makes us even more aware of God's grace.

God has given us so much — and the gifts of God are for sharing.

The Bible is a collection of stories about people with gifts to share — stories about people whose lives were so changed by God that they were able to make a difference in the lives of others. During the month of October, we will be focused on *storytelling* and on *giving*—thinking of both storytelling and giving as grateful responses to the grace of God.

Volunteers Sought

The Meridian Health Hospice Program is seeking volunteers throughout Monmouth and Ocean Counties to provide companionship and support for patients and families with advanced diseases. Training classes are provided, free of charge, by Meridian

Hospice. The next training classes will meet from 6 to 9 p.m. Fridays, October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 and Nov. 7 at Ocean Medical Center, 425 Jack Martin Blvd., Brick. (Note: Applicants must be at least 18 of age.)

For more information or to register for the next class, please contact Joy Blazak. Joy's telephone number is (732) 751-3794.

☞ SPIRITUALITY ☞

Let Go of Your Ego

Our next book discussion will center on Eckhart Tolle's *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*.

Pastor Mary will lead the discussions, which will be held in the morning and evening – from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29; from 8 to 9 p.m. on Oct. 1 and from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Oct. 8, 15, 22 and 29.

Please call the church office to sign up for yourself (and a friend!)☺.

Blessings on Your Pet

We will bless our furry, feathered, finned and scaly friends in the Holy Trinity parking lot at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 5. All creatures great and small are welcomed!

☞ WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA (WELCA) ☞

Elizabeth Circle will meet at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, Oct. 13 (Columbus Day) at the church. Members will bring in their completed health kits. Eleanor Gaiser will be our hostess and Ellin Greene will prepare our devotions.

Treasures & Treats Charity Event

9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 22

WELCA is having a charity event and we need your help! We are looking

for items to sell. Only "new" items will be accepted. No books, stuffed animals, clothing, videos, music, furniture – nothing used will be accepted, except jewelry.

We want gifts you have received and would like to donate (sort of a "regifting" sale). We will accept Christmas items that are special and new.

A luncheon will be served and provided by the Hope Circle. Coffee and desserts will also be available. We will need your contributions for the baked goods table.

We are having a planning meeting at 9:45 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 12. Please check the weekend bulletin and the WELCA bulletin board for the sign-up poster and more information.

Please help us make this event a
SUCCESS!

∞ LOVE AND MARRIAGE ∞

Jennifer Courtney Gibney and Frank Cinelli were married Sunday, Sept. 14 in the Holy Trinity sanctuary. Pastor Mary officiated.

Kelly Dadian and Peter Cardella served as Maid of Honor and Best Man, respectively.

∞ CHILDREN OF GOD ∞

Holy Trinity recently welcomed the following children into the Body of Christ through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism:

Name:

Ava Lyn McCoale Fredricks

Date of Baptism: Sept. 6

Ava Lyn's parents are Kara McCoale and Donald Fredricks. Her sponsors are Kim Cabrera and Scott Fredricks. Holy Trinity member Ellin

McCoale is Ava Lyn's proud grandmother.

Name: Siena Mazur Librizzi

Date of Baptism: Sept. 21

Siena's parents are Lisa Mazur and Anthony Librizzi. Her sponsors are Melissa Hoffman and Stephen Librizzi.

Name: Kellan Fischer Quinn

Date of Baptism: Sept. 28

Kellan's parents are Leah and Robert Quinn. His sponsors are Sherry DeSibio and Jack Quinn. His brother, Jack, is 4 years old.

Name:

Charles Hubert Kauffman IV

Date of Baptism: Sept. 28

Charles' parents are Deborah and Charles Kauffman III. His sponsors are Kevin Kauffman and Gretchen Buys.

∞ REST IN PEACE ∞

Kirk Werner died Aug. 2, 2008.

Pastor Mary officiated at a memorial service for Kirk on Saturday, Sept. 6, in the Holy Trinity sanctuary.

∞ BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY ∞

On the first Sunday of each month, Holy Trinity offers bereavement support to those grieving a loss or a change of some kind. The group will meet at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday, Oct. 5 in Pastor Mary's study. Chris Ann Waters, author and nationally certified bereavement specialist, leads the discussion. Consecutive attendance is not required and people are welcome to attend as needed.

Transitions, a monthly devotional written by Ms. Waters that addresses matters of grief and change, is printed on the next page for the benefit of Lamplighter readers.

*I pray not that thou shouldst
take them out of the world but that thou
shouldst keep them from the evil.
--John 17:15*

ABCs of GRIEF

September is a time for beginnings. The start of the school year is predominant in September. For people in the throes of transition due to a loss, facing *this* September will be different and difficult. Below is a brief explanation of grief's way to consider as grief is experienced this September season.

Amazement. However loss meets us—anticipated or tragically—there is no preparation for grief. It is spellbinding. Grief captivates emotions, senses, thinking, and physiological equilibrium as few experiences do. It thrusts people into places—interior and exterior—that were unimaginable prior to a painful loss. Only the reality of losing someone or something of significant importance can amaze and perplex us as we come to see new dimensions of who we are due to grief and transition. However, no matter how encompassing grief is, it is contained within the circumference of God's amazing love. His love holds us in the pain. We are to trust God, even when it hurts. God is still there.

Bewilderment. Grief is a labyrinth. It is filled with many unknown twists and turns. As steps are taken in uncharted territory, a host of unpredictable emotions accompany the process. However we arrive at grief, it is certain to bewilder as it presents the unfamiliar due to the absence of someone or something dearly held. Confusion and absentmindedness is common in grief. When grief has its stay, sometimes for a long season, days and the pattern of life can seem fruitless. In such a state, the Christ of purpose, of commitment to His own, and of compassion, will make meaning out of pain. Jesus will be the trustworthy leader

throughout all bewilderment. He promised.

Courage. Courage is not a word associated with grief. It should be. Courage is the underlying component that supports grievers. The grief process depletes one of energy and, therefore, disguises active courage at work. To continue is essential for those who survive a loss or significant change. To press on takes courage. However, when the familiar structure of life is altered by serious changes, the courage required to continue must be received from Jesus. Jesus is the stay. He remains the fortress and portion to keep us courageous—in seen and unseen ways. His steady presence is there to give us courage for each new day. Rely on His courage.

Faithful God, You see the beginnings in this season. You see those who trod the path of grief. By the might of Your Spirit, amaze by Your grace those torn by grief. By the power of Your Word, inspire those who are bewildered with reminders of ancestors You brought through unknown territory. By the strength of Your love, fill Your people with courage to continue and to hope. All this we ask in Christ Jesus, our portion and our fortress forevermore. Amen.

✂ MAILBAG ✂

Gloria Smith, who co-ordinates the Holy Trinity Blanketeers' efforts to support Project Linus, NJ, shares this note from the organization:

Thank you for your wonderful support and generosity. Your 15 blanket donation to Project Linus NJ was great. They will be going to Trinitas Hospital Pediatric Department in Elizabeth.

Thank you for your amazing volunteer spirit!

-- W. Jones, Project Linus, NJ

Dear Holy Trinity Church Family & Friends:

Please forgive me for not sending out personal "thank you notes" to everyone who has been so kind and wonderful in gifts, food delivery, cards, blessings and, especially, prayers to our family during my most recent hospitalizations at Hackensack Hospital/Cancer Center, Brick Hospital and my home stay. I have not felt well enough in these last few weeks to follow through with my original plans to at least make phone calls!

Knowing you are there and so willing to help us has given me peace and raised my spirits numerous times. A heartfelt thank you to one and all!

I must acknowledge a special thanks to Rosalie and Emidio Caruso's daughter, Barbara, a wonderful nurse and a blessing sent to me during a time of isolation and loneliness at the hospital, (by a twist of fate or Divine intervention perhaps?). She recognized my name while working on my floor my first evening at the hospital. She helped take care of me, visited when she was working and made special trips when she wasn't. She brought "Holy Trinity" to me.

Another special thank you to good friends Rae and Paul Starke, Meta Querns and Barbara Corson, for your daily calls from Florida and Manasquan, for updates, prayers and hospital visits. You all continue to amaze me daily.

When you are in a hospital a distance away, the loneliness and boredom can be overpowering at times. Once again, Pastor Mary has come to the rescue despite her own worries and trips to be with Mark in another hospital, in another state, during the same time. I am so grateful to have you as my pastor and friend. God certainly moves through you! Thank you for your visit, flowers, prayers and, especially, our daily text

messages. You provided my daily "soul food."

We all know blessings often come when least expected or when most needed. Sometimes they can be a little harder to find, but I know I have again been blessed. Even as my Multiple Myeloma suddenly went out of control (canceling the second stem cell transplant; my kidneys failing; causing additional health/heart problems), I realized I did not have control over this disease, nor did I ever. That I truly am in God's hands. I have questioned God several times in these last weeks, I will admit it – "So, what's your plan for me?" and the question I am sure that God is often asked: "Why me?" I know God has a plan for me and that I am in His hands and the power given by God to my physicians.

I am blessed each day by family and friends. I enjoy the sun and breezes, flowers, even the mosquitoes, more each day. Before cancer, I had little time or took little time to enjoy even these simple pleasures. Life was too hectic and there always was something to do or someone to take care of. Perhaps the answer to my "Why?" question to God was for me to "slow down" to see and hear what I was missing.

In the last few years, I had felt burdened in helping care for Bob for so many years. It wasn't until the tables turned and my family had to take care of me that I had the answer to my other question to God – "What is your plan for me?" It was to learn patience and understanding again in caring for my husband, to understand the daily pain and hardships Bob has endured for the last 15 years from arthritis. After all, our wedding vows were for "... sickness and health!"

Blessings continue each day. As a parent you can only hope you have

raised your children with goodness in their hearts and good, Christian values. Katie and Tom have more than proven that Bob and I and Holy Trinity have raised them well. They have taken care of us both, re-arranged work and schedules, to take care of home and finances, get us to hospitals, physician appointments, etc. Never complaining and always compassionate, except for a comment made by Katie as we sat in a pew in the back of the church one day during prayers, "Really, Mom! I can't believe I have both parents on the prayer list!"

Thank you to everyone for all your past and I know future prayers for the Hudson Household! Please take time to see and hear the blessings surrounding you.

-- Kerry Hudson