



# RUTGERS COMES UP BIG IN BOWL WIN **Sports, B1**

# aily Record

Ice Hockey Morris Knolls vs. Bergen Catholic. **IN SPORTS**

# EXPLAINING THE BIBLE



WILLIAM WESTHOVEN/STAFF PHOTO  
The new baby Jesus figurine sits in Mark and Elaine Romito's Nativity scene.

## Stolen Baby Jesus replaced

### Father, son delight their neighbors in Rockaway Twp.

WILLIAM WESTHOVEN @WWESTHOVEN

A Rockaway Township couple who had a treasured baby Jesus stolen from their front-lawn Nativity scene were delighted by unknown neighbors who replaced the plastic figurine on Christmas day.

Elaine and Mark Romito — whose pre-Christmas plight was reported first in the Daily Record earlier this month before New York TV news crews descended on their Daniel Street home — say a father and son appeared at their doorstep about 3 p.m. on Thursday bearing gifts, including an exact replacement of the Jesus figure they were so heartbroken to lose.

The father-and-son Samaritans also brought a brand-new motion-detector security system for the Romitos to install in hopes of preventing future loss

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## Popcorn Park haven for animals

KATHLEEN HOPKINS @KHOPKINSAPP

LACEY — It began decades ago with a mistreated fawn and an injured raccoon.

Now, some 37 years later, a location in the midst of the Pine Barrens here continues to be a haven for animals of all kinds that have been abused, neglected, abandoned, injured, are sick or are otherwise unwanted or unable to be cared for at other facilities.

One might view the Associated Humane Societies' Popcorn Park Zoo in the township's Forked River section as an island of misfit toys for animals. But it also serves as an attraction for visitors who can get a closeup look at — and

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bishop John Shelby Spong and his wife Christine. Spong will begin a five-part lecture series at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Morristown.

## Morris Plains bishop set to begin five-part lecture series

LORRAINE ASH @LORRAINEVASH

MORRISTOWN — Bishop John Shelby Spong, whose scholarly books on the Bible have sold more than a million copies, will begin a five-part lecture series at St. Peter's Episcopal Church Sunday.

The series marks the end of a busy year for the 83-year-old Spong, known as a key voice for progressive Christianity. In 2014, he traveled from his Morris Plains home to deliver 125 lectures, including three in Paris and one at the famed Chautauqua Institution in New York.

Of late, Spong's talks have explored themes from his latest book, "The Fourth Gospel: Tales of a Jewish Mystic" (HarperOne), released in paperback this fall. The book deals with the Gospel of John, the last of the four Christian Gospels to be written. It was penned circa 95-100

CE. On Sunday, in a talk called "Taking the Fourth Gospel Out Of Its Literal Prison," Spong will address the Gospel of John as an interpretive work and not, as it has generally been presented to Christians, an historical or biographical work.

"When you tell a story 40 to 70 years later, you don't tell it literally," Spong told the Daily Record, "but that doesn't mean it isn't true."

The Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke, called the Synoptic Gospels because they include similar stories and even wording, were written earlier than John's book. The Gospel of Mark was penned in 72 CE, some 42 years after the crucifixion of Jesus, Spong points out, while the Gospel of Matthew was written in 85 CE and the Gospel of Luke, 88 to 93 CE.

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### Learn more

BISHOP JOHN SHELBY SPONG'S FIVE-PART LECTURE SERIES  
» **LECTURE ONE:** Breaking the Fourth Gospel Out Of Its Literal Prison  
**WHEN:** 10 a.m. Sunday  
**WHERE:** St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Parish Hall, Corner of Miller Road and Maple Avenue, Morristown  
**INFORMATION:** 973-538-0555; mking@stpetersmorristown.org

» **LECTURE TWO:** Finding the Clue That Unlocks The Fourth Gospel  
**WHEN:** 10 a.m. Jan. 4  
» **LECTURE THREE:** The Samaritan Woman at the Well and John's Call to Universalism  
**WHEN:** 10 a.m. Jan. 11  
» **LECTURE FOUR:** The Mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple at the Cross: A Call for a New Relationship between Christians and Jew  
**WHEN:** 10 a.m. Jan. 18  
» **LECTURE FIVE:** The Climax of the Fourth Gospel: It's the Crucifixion, Not the Resurrection  
**WHEN:** 10 a.m. Jan. 25

## Donations to needy remain vital

MATT HARPER SPECIAL TO THE DAILY RECORD

This year's Operation Holiday campaign has come to a close, but the needy of Morris County continue to need help even though the holidays have passed. Given the challenges many in the area continue to face, we hope to raise as much as, if not more than, we did last year.

Monetary donations to this year's Operation Holiday campaign will continue to be accepted until the end of January and continue to be needed more than ever.

These contributions will be used to purchase food, clothing and pharmaceutical certificates for people in need. This assistance will help Morris County families and individuals to make it through the winter.

Your donations can help keep the spir-



it of Operation Holiday alive all year long.

Operation Holiday is a unique partnership between the Woman's Club of Morristown and the Daily Record that needs the support of our readers and loyal volunteers to succeed. We hope to continue fostering the spirit of kindness and giving that has taken hold of late throughout the rest of the year, but we cannot do it alone.

With such help, Operation Holiday can continue to assist a variety of Morris residents, including individuals with disabilities or mental illnesses, those left jobless or homeless, or those just barely making ends meet. Many find themselves all alone at this time of year.

Contributions to this year's Operation Holiday campaign can be mailed to The Woman's Club of Morristown, 51 South Street, Morristown, N.J. 07960. Donations are tax-deductible, and every penny goes to help the needy of Morris County. All administrative costs are covered by the sponsors, and all work is done with the help of volunteers. Inquiries about Operation Holiday, including interest in adopting a family and covering its needs for next year from individuals or corporations can be directed to OperationHolidayNJ@gmail.com.

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