

# “Continue the Journey...”

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*First Presbyterian Church  
Wilkes-Barre, PA  
Romans 8:26-39*

A week ago last Thursday evening Rabbis Kaplan, Lerner and I sang the Star Spangled Banner at the Yankees game at the stadium. They lost.

Which reminds me of a story about a minister who was worried about asking the congregation for money for needed repairs, so he asked the organist if he could play some inspirational music to get the congregation in a giving mood after he made his pitch.

“Don’t worry” the organist said, “I’ll think of something.” During the service the minister said, “We still need \$6,000.00 more for the new roof. Would those who can pledge at least \$100.00 please stand up. Just then the organist began playing “The Star Spangled Banner.”

Now I (and John) would never do that! But, seriously, thank you for your contributions to the building fund. They are needed, and appreciated.

My friends, this morning I want to thank you, and challenge you, as followers of Christ and Christians at First Presbyterian Church. I want to thank you for your continued financial support to our beloved church, founded and established way back in 1772. We began our journey as a church within this community in the 18<sup>th</sup> century – committing ourselves to the proclamation of Christ, and involvement in the Wyoming Valley – our home.

We continue our Christian journey here at First Presbyterian Church in the year 2009, and into the year 2010!

We have much to be thankful for! Our giving is up this year. You have been faithful. In faith, with a vision of forward growth - we are moving in the right direction!

- Increased giving!
- Increased invitations!
- Increased programming!

All focusing on the Gospel of Christ and his call to love and justice, heralding that we are a Friendly, Inclusive and Welcoming Church!

My friends, you will be hearing more about these events, but here is a preview of upcoming Sunday worship events:

- Next Sunday – World Communion - Breads from Around the World
- October 11 – Blessing of the Pets
- October 18 – Grandparents’ Celebration Luncheon
- October 25 – Wyoming Seminary Chorale Singers
- November 15 – Rabbi Kaplan, Kantor Abraham, and myself singing together
- November 22 – Military Thanksgiving Service

And that's all before Advent!

The church, our church, First Presbyterian Church is your weekly place of solitude; place of renewal; place of inspiration, for the new week.

For Christians, Christ is our foundation, our rock. Yes, we go through difficult times in our lives – sometimes extreme. Sometime we can barely hold on. But, the foundation remains! Which brings me to some of the most inspiring and powerful scriptures we are blessed to possess, Romans 8:38-39! (I am using the words from the King James Version.) Paul has gone through a litany of horrors, problems, and catastrophes in his life and the life of his Christian brothers and sisters, and yet he declares, in spite of all his and their problems, they are “winners,” “conquerors” through Christ!

Paul declares, standing on the firm foundation of Christ and Christ's teachings, what we desperately (you and I) need to declare in 2009.

For I am persuaded!! This is faith filled! It flies in the face of a closed, limited, uncaring universe and it supplies a vision of what it means to be a human being!

For I am persuaded! This isn't irrational, infantile! It is directed and determined.

For I am persuaded... Yes, this is the way I'm going to live! Through the living God, as revealed in Christ to Christians!

I need a foundation!  
You need a foundation!

For I am persuaded... that life has meaning and purpose...

<sup>38</sup> For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angles, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We will continue the journey!

Personally - continue the journey! (If you need someone to talk to, to pray with, please let me know).

Corporately - we will continue the journey!

In the near future you will receive in the mail information about making your financial commitment to our church. Begin to pray about your part in this part of our ministry.

I'm excited about the possibilities that await us into our future! For I am persuaded that nothing can separate any of us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Nothing!

Amen.