

Clippings

*Newsletter of Good Shepherd
Lutheran Church
November 2017*



This month, the changes that we saw starting up in October hit full steam. It's tough to continue living in denial in November! Hard to believe another Thanksgiving is almost upon us, with Advent and Christmas following hard after.

The changes that take place in one year, as one season surrenders to another, are matched by another kind of change: the changes that take place from year to year. Comparing this November to last November, or to November 1963 for that matter, can make your head spin!

One thing does not change: God's steadfast love. "His steadfast love endures forever." You can find this phrase 180 times in the Old Testament (110 times in Psalms alone!)—I'd say that's sort of a theme, wouldn't you?

The Hebrew word **HESED** is sometimes translated as "grace" or "mercy", but the English Standard Version mostly uses "steadfast love." Steadfast means rock-steady, like the trunk of a healthy old oak tree, not like one of those orange fiberglass snow stakes that wiggle back and forth with every gust of wind.

God's love, His grace and mercy, is immovable and immutable. Malachi 3:6: "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed." (ESV) It is a part of His character. When He punishes sin, that's His character too, for He is righteous; but He'd really rather be showing mercy. He loves us! It makes Him sad to give us what we ask for, by our rebellious sinful insistence on being our own lord, because what we are asking for is eternal torment. He will not force us to accept His mercy and believe in the sacrifice His Son, Jesus, made to spare us. He calls, He beckons, He woos us and pleads with us to "Take the deal!" of Jesus' innocent life in trade for our sinful one.

The constant and unvarying nature of God's desire to save us is a great comfort in a world that changes by seasons and by years. That's why we sing:

*Change and decay in all around I see
O Thou who changest not, abide with me!*
[LSB878]

May God's steadfast love continue to be your Rock, in whatever this winter brings!

Pastor Fremer

