



Dear friends,

Steadfast...it's not a word in everyday use for me, and probably not for many of us (excepting perhaps our Boys Brigade-ers)...but it's becoming an important word in my life as I reflect upon scripture. Of its two hundred and five appearances in the NRSV translation of the bible, the vast majority come in connection with love, and often also with faithfulness, and the steadfast love referred to is almost always the steadfast love of God.

In the midst of change and uncertainty, it is steadfast love that I find I need. God's loving kindness. Love which has constancy and durability, love which stretches around and beyond this immediate situation, love which will endure, love which is rock-solid and will hold me secure, whatever may happen. Love which is both anchored and anchoring. This is the love which God offers to God's people. This is the love God offers to you and to me.

Paul says "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 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."

Gracious God,  
May your breath be my breath...  
May your Spirit live in me...  
Your steadfast love be the love in which I live,  
and the love I offer to others.  
Amen

On a practical note, this is the first week in which we are trying to prepare our mailing ten days ahead of distribution to ease matters for the office staff, and increase efficiency. We are already discovering the ways in which this can be a challenge, as I reflect on today's Government announcement knowing you will not read this for nearly a fortnight. I am, however, fairly confident that as a result of the current situation we will need our office staff to return to working from home as far as is possible for the foreseeable future.

**Please can I therefore ask that if you think you need to attend the circuit office or resources centre for any reason, you ring ahead of time so that we can make a planned appointment, or attend to your request in another way. Office staff will usually be available on the phone 10am-2.30pm Mon-Thurs, and 10am-12noon on Fridays.**

If you receive this mailing by post, and could receive by email, or, most importantly, if you would prefer to be removed from the postal or email mailing list altogether, **please do let us know.** As we anticipate continuing to share information in this way for some time, it is important that we do not frustrate anyone by sending unwanted mail, while continuing to make sure that all those who wish to receive worship and information in this way can do so.

Over the next few months, we will be sharing reflections from the questionnaires so many helpfully completed over the Summer. One of the important observations which struck us first has been how important people have found connecting with nature and being outdoors during the time when we have had to be away from our usual worship in church buildings. As the seasons change, I wonder how you might continue to, or begin, intentionally spending time with God outside? Scrunching through Autumn leaves, anyone?

Peace, Jo