

1 John 1:1-4 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

## The Word of Life

**1** We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— <sup>2</sup>this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us— <sup>3</sup>we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>We are writing these things so that our<sup>[a]</sup> joy may be complete.

1 John 2:1-17 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

## Christ Our Advocate

**2** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; <sup>2</sup>and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

<sup>3</sup>Now by this we may be sure that we know him, if we obey his commandments. <sup>4</sup>Whoever says, "I have come to know him," but does not obey his commandments, is a liar, and in such a person the truth does not exist; <sup>5</sup>but whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the love of God has reached perfection. By this we may be sure that we are in him: <sup>6</sup>whoever says, "I abide in him," ought to walk just as he walked.

## A New Commandment

<sup>7</sup>Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word that you have heard. <sup>8</sup>Yet I am writing you a new commandment that is true in him and in you, because<sup>[a]</sup> the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. <sup>9</sup>Whoever says, "I am in the light," while hating a brother or sister,<sup>[b]</sup> is still in the darkness. <sup>10</sup>Whoever loves a brother or sister<sup>[c]</sup> lives

in the light, and in such a person<sup>[d]</sup> there is no cause for stumbling. <sup>11</sup>But whoever hates another believer<sup>[e]</sup> is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has brought on blindness.

<sup>12</sup>I am writing to you, little children,  
because your sins are forgiven on account of his name.

<sup>13</sup>I am writing to you, fathers,  
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young people,  
because you have conquered the evil one.

<sup>14</sup>I write to you, children,  
because you know the Father.

I write to you, fathers,  
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young people,  
because you are strong  
and the word of God abides in you,  
and you have overcome the evil one.

<sup>15</sup>Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; <sup>16</sup>for all that is in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches—comes not from the Father but from the world. <sup>17</sup>And the world and its desire<sup>[f]</sup> are passing away, but those who do the will of God live forever.

1 John 3:1-2 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

**3** <sup>1</sup>See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup>Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he<sup>[a]</sup> is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

April 15, 2018

“Children of God, I write to you because...”

Kerra Becker English

Sermon Series on 1 John – Why this letter?

Scholars have wondered that too - General letter, sermon, religious tract

Church division – even then – represents ONE SIDE of a family quarrel, half of a facebook argument

Similar in language to the Gospel of John – but either not the same writer or a different time/circumstance – in the Johannine tradition

I write to you because...

Emphasizes Jesus in the flesh, love among Christians, morality/sin, end times

In these sections –

eternal life, to explain joy,

morality (not to sin), obedience to Jesus’ teachings, ought to obey his word and walk as he walked

light/darkness – if you hate another believer, you are in the darkness

to the young, to their parents, because you are strong

don’t love the world for it’s “things” – do the will of God and live forever

We will be “like Jesus” in the final revelation

Maybe this is like a mission statement – we want to be “this” kind of church, not “that” kind of church

Maybe all faiths point to God in their own way – with blessings and flaws

But we can only be the way that we are, and strive not to be too judgmental of others

Problem with trying to be everything to everybody – letters like this stress that’s not possible

Explain what we did as a Session with our discernment...

**Kerra's list of "why" we do what we do – beliefs she affirms, preaches, teaches as a leader**

*Hopefully you will find these things in my preaching, teaching, and even more importantly, to the best of my ability, in the example of my life.*

I believe that people are capable of growing in their faith at every stage of life. (Thus my commitment to Spiritual Guidance as my side job, and my love for working with seminary students)

I believe that growth is important to the spiritual life. Stagnation stunts our lives of faith. Therefore, I'm not going to have or promote the "one list" of right answers. This actually empowers me to be courageous in my proclamation of the gospel – still knowing that I could be wrong and grow from learning something new from someone else.

I believe that God calls us to love our neighbor, to love the stranger, and to even love our enemies. Love is the essence of the law. The call to love describes my stance on both moral law and spiritual truth.

I believe that service is the pathway to understanding God's love. Following Christ is choosing to live a life of service. I derive any gifts of pastoral leadership I may have, hopefully, from the willingness to learn and serve first of all.

I believe that God is knowable in essence and truth, and unknowable in completeness. There's always more to learn about who God is. So experiences of God are as important to me as learning about God in scripture and tradition (which is also exciting and important).

These beliefs inform my understanding of who Jesus is as the incarnation of God. He is known to me as Teacher, Healer, and Servant.

The Spirit of God is the sustainer of community – the life breath of who we are as human beings, and who WE are as a particular community of believers.

**Session's List of why we do what we do:**

I believe that...

Christ has called us to be a caring people.

We follow Christ's example.

God's gifts manifest in us in the ways that we love others.

Through spiritual growth, we grow closer to God.

We take our spiritual gifts with us into all places (not just the church).

Giving of ourselves impacts the coming of God's Kingdom.

What we do here is relevant and affirming – through our beliefs.

Mistakes are allowed.

God's love is transformative.

Jesus exists (can be seen) in every person.