

LIGHT & LOVE

1 JOHN

*“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.”*

(1 John 3:16)

## Light & Love

Eastertide is the period of 50 days between Easter Sunday and Pentecost Sunday. It's a joyful time and each Sunday is a Sunday of Easter. This Eastertide we're going to be looking at a book filled with Light & Love!

1 John was written by a man who calls himself the 'elder' and matches the style of the gospel of John. It's written more like a sermon than a letter, designed for Jewish converts to Christianity living in small house church clusters. It seems the churches have just encountered a crisis, probably involving false teachers who have denied the central teaching of the churches about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. It seems things got so bad that many people left these house churches to follow the 'antichrists' (1 John 2:18) who brought about the crisis.

In light of this crisis, John is writing to reassure and unite the people who remain in these churches and to remind them of the centrality of Jesus teachings. He brings them back to the true faith and calls them to love one another, because love comes from God. John sees love as a natural consequence of a heart set alight by God. Love is not only defined by God, but it comes from God.

We live in a very fragmented and divided world where love seems to be in short supply. In 2003, the Black Eyes Peas sang 'Where is the love?'. 1 John says that love comes from God and that God is love. If we want to see love and know love, we need look no further than Jesus. As we rejoice in the love of Jesus Christ this Eastertide may we take delight in the light & love we find in 1 John and may it form us into people who take God's light & love into the world.

*Rev'd David Browne  
Dalby Anglican*

# LIGHT & LOVE

## WEEK 1: WALK IN THE LIGHT

### **Warming up**

What's the closest/strongest relationship you have in your life? What makes it so close?

### **Read 1 John 1:1-7**

1. How do the words used here make you feel? What words stand out for you?
2. What is the main argument in vv.1-4? Who is the focus?
3. What is the choice presented to us in vv.5-7? What is at stake here?
4. What is this passage saying about light?
5. What is this passage saying about love?
6. 1 John was written to a church community rather than a specific person. What does this passage tell us about this church and its people?

### **Read 1 John 1:8-10**

7. What is the choice presented to us here?
8. It seems some in the church to whom John writes thought that they could be fully sinless in this life. What does this passage say about this idea?
9. In what ways in this passage loving and firm at the same time?
10. Can you confront someone's sin and love them at the same time? How?

### **Rubber hits the road**

Write down 1 John 1:9 and place it somewhere you'll see it every day. Try memorising this verse and saying it to yourself every day. As you do this, remind yourself of its truth – you are a forgiven child of God!

## Family Time

**Watch:** 'Overview: 1-3 John' (Bible Project)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3QkE6nKylM>

**Talk:** Why did John write to these church communities? Do you think it's easy or hard to live with people you disagree with sometimes? How can we love people even if we disagree with them?

**Do: 'House Rules'**

*You will need: A4 paper, coloured pens/pencils*

We all live in communities, or 'houses', of different kinds – school, work, friends, family. It's important to understand what rules make our 'family' community work.

Using some paper and bright pens, discuss what kinds of rules are most important in your 'house'. Colour-code these rules as 'non-negotiable' and 'negotiable' (highlighting the difference between necessity and preference). Encourage all family members to participate – this helps children to take ownership over 'house rules' and to feel included.

Make some time each week to check in on these 'house rules' and see how they are helping. Are there any that need to be added? How do they reflect God's light & love?

**Pray:** Dear God, thank you so much that you made us, know us and love us. Thank you that Jesus shows us this love. We are sorry for the times when we have hurt others and you by our choices. Help us to know right and wrong in your eyes. Help us to live as your children, and to love each other in our thoughts, words and actions. AMEN.

# LIGHT & LOVE

## WEEK 2: LIVE IN THE LIGHT

### Warming up

What do you look for in someone's life when you're deciding what sort of person they are?

### **Read 1 John 2:1-6**

1. What reason does John give for writing this letter?
2. What does it mean for Jesus to be our 'advocate' and 'propitiation' (atoning sacrifice)?
3. In v.4, John calls some people 'liars'. What makes them a liar?
4. What contrast does John make in vv.4-5?
5. What is the implication of v.6 in each of our lives?

### **Read 1 John 2:7-17**

6. What is the old commandment that John refers to in v.7?
7. In vv.8-11, we see the repeated theme of 'light and darkness'. What does this passage say about light and darkness?
8. In vv.12-14, what reasons does John give for encouraging the people? Why is this important?
9. Why do you think John says vv.15-16 that it's difficult (impossible) to love the world and love God at the same time? What does it look like to love the world instead of God?
10. Why do you think John puts such emphasis on the way we behave?

### **Rubber hits the road**

Think of three ways you can abide in (keep to) Jesus this week and 'walk in the same way he walked' (1 John 2:6). Try to remember this memory verse: 'we know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands' (1 John 2:3).

## Family Time

**Watch:** '1 John (from Volume 13: God's Kingdom Comes!)' (What's in the Bible)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sCPpb1ROaE>

**Talk:** What are the three things that we need to be true believers of Jesus? How we do this in our thoughts (heads), feelings (hearts) and actions (hands)? Who can we ask for help when we find this difficult? What happens when we make a mistake?

**Do: 'Light and Darkness'**

*You will need: seeds (vegetables/herbs), pots for planting, potting mix, water.*

Take some seeds (we suggest vegetables or herbs suitable for autumn/winter) and plant them into two small, separate pots. Place one pot in the sunshine and one pot in the shade/dark. Water each of them and compare how they grow – what is the difference for the seed 'living in the light' compared to 'living in the dark'?

Check in on your pots each week over this sermon series and reflect – what can this teach us about our own lives and 'living in the light' of God?

**Pray:** God of light and love, thank you that you made us in your image. Forgive us when we forget you and your Son, and when we forget to live in your light. Help us to always stick to true teaching, true living, and true loving, so that we can share your love with everyone we meet. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN.

# LIGHT & LOVE

## WEEK 3: STAY IN THE LIGHT

### Warming up

Have you ever needed to defend your faith in Jesus? What did you say?

### Read: 1 John 2:18-29

1. Why do you think John continues to refer to the readers of his letter as 'children' or 'little children'?
2. Why might John be suggesting that this is 'the last hour' (v.18)? What do you remember about the setting in which John is writing?
3. The word 'antichrist' is used a number of times in this passage. Go through and underline each reference. According to these verses, who or what is the 'antichrist'?
4. What does v.21 tell us about John's readers and what they know about Jesus?
5. What do vv.22-23 tell us about their belief in God and who Jesus is?
6. In v.25, what does John say is the promise that Jesus has made to us?
7. How does John remind us to remain steadfast against deceivers?
8. How does abiding in Jesus increase our confidence and stop us from shrinking in shame (v.28)?
9. What does it mean for Jesus to be righteous? How do we become righteous?
10. Many people argue against Jesus being the 'Christ', our Saviour. What helps give you confidence to stand firm (and loving) when faced with this argument?

### Rubber hits the road

Reflect on your walk to abide in Jesus last week. How do you think you went? Continue to spend time intentionally seeking to build the habit of abiding in Jesus.

Try to remember this memory verse: 'And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming' (1 John 2:28).



## Family Time

**Sing:** 'Stick with Jesus' (Emu Music)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAp6aUOFswA>

**Talk:** What makes something sticky? How do objects (e.g. glue, blue tack, post it notes) lose their stickiness? How about 'sticking' to God as his followers? What things can help us stick to God, and what makes us lose our 'stickiness' (or closeness) with God?

**Do: 'God Glue'**

*You will need: see ingredients and utensils below*

Make some homemade glue to use for craft and activities.

See <https://happyhooligans.ca/homemade-glue/> for more information.

### Ingredients

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup water
- 2 tbsp. corn syrup
- 1 tsp. white vinegar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup corn starch &  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup cold water combined
- Food colouring (optional)

### Instructions

1. Combine water, corn syrup and vinegar in small pot
2. Heat on stove over medium-high until it reaches a rolling boil
3. While heating on stove, combine corn starch and cold water in small bowl
4. Whisk corn starch mixture into boiling liquid, stirring constantly until well-blended
5. (Add food colouring if desired)
6. Remove from heat and allow to cool before transferring to glass jar
7. Let sit overnight before use
8. Store refrigerated in a sealed container until ready to use.

**Pray:** Awesome God, you are the God who knows us, loves and sticks with us no matter what. Thanking for loving us, even when we make mistakes, hurt others, and forget to stick to you. Keep us focused on Jesus, so we can live by his example and always hold fast to your love for us. AMEN.

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## WEEK 4: LOVE ONE ANOTHER

### **Warming up**

Think of a time when you knew someone who did something for you out of love. How did you know it was done in real love?

### **Read 1 John 3:1-10**

1. What stands out most for you in these verses?
2. In what ways can you see that God has shown love to you in your own life (or perhaps struggled to see his love)?
3. How can we become children of God?
4. What's the main point that John makes in vv.4-10?
5. Why is the deliberate practice of sin incompatible with a relationship with God (vv.7-10)?

### **Read 1 John 3:11-24**

6. What stands out for you in these verses?
7. Why is Christ's death on the cross the supreme example of God's love (v.16)?
8. In what practical ways might we 'lay down our lives' for each other?
9. How is God's true love seen to be real in the believer?
10. Some people argue that love is giving someone everything they want. How can we respond to this in light of an understanding of God's love?

### **Rubber hits the road**

Remember that 1 John was written to a church rather than to a single person. How can this passage speak to and be applied to your church community? How can you take a role in this?

Write down 1 John 3:16 and place it somewhere you'll see it every day. Try memorising this verse and saying it to yourself every day. As you do this, remind yourself of its truth – Christ laid down his life for you and you should do the same for others!

## Family Time

**Watch:** 'Love God, Love Others' (Douglas Talks)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gj1ptid2jQ8>

**Talk:** Why is it important to love God and to love others? When do you find this easy enough to do, and when is it much harder?

Back in March, we learned about the 'Perfect Ten', or God's Ten Commandments to Moses and the Israelites. Why do you think Jesus tells us to focus on just two commandments? (Hint: these two commandments help us to follow all the others and to live in God's way!)

**Do: 'Mirror Image'**

*You will need: a heart image/shape printed, coloured pens/pencils*

Draw/print/cut out a heart shape. Fold it in half and write the heading 'God' on one side and 'Others' on the other. Brainstorm the ways you can show God and others how you love them, writing them down on their respective sides.

Think about how you love God and love others – if you were to fold the heart up, would they be like a mirror image (i.e. would they match)? Consider how you can make your love for God and your love for others match.

**Pray:** Gracious God, thank you for giving us the Ten Commandments. Thank you that through Jesus, we can live as free people who love God and love others. Keep me focused on your love for me, and to know how to share that love with others. Guide me by your Holy Spirit to be a loving person to everyone. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN.

# LIGHT & LOVE

## WEEK 5: BECAUSE GOD LOVED YOU

### Warming up

Have you ever met someone who claimed to have heard a message directly from God? What was the message, and did you believe them?

### Read 1 John 4:1-6

1. What topic is John addressing here? What is he warning us about?
2. In the first century most people believed in 'spirits', but the idea that God became a human was hard to believe. According to vv.2-3, how can we test if a spirit is from God?
3. In v.4, who is the 'one who is in you'?
4. What are the voices that shape the way you view the world? Are these voices helpful?

### Read 1 John 4:7-21

5. What is John's main point in this section of the letter?
6. How many times is the word 'love' used in this passage? Why is love important?
7. It has been said that 'God is love, but love is not God'. Do you agree with this?
8. How do we know what love is? How do most people define love today?
9. How does God's love speak into our fears and anxieties?

### Rubber hits the road

Write down three truths about God's love that you find in 1 John 4. Challenge yourself to have three separate conversations with the people around you this week about these three truths about God's love. How do you use these three truths to help you overcome the sin and spiritual opposition you face in your life?

Try to learn this memory verse: 'Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.' (1 John 4:7)

## Family Time

**Watch:** *'The Rizers – 1 John 4:7 (Let Us Love One Another)'* (The Rizers)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ealledf2dl>

**Talk:** What is love? How does God love us? How can we love God? How can we love others like God has loved us?

**Do:** **'Hide and seek'**

God loves us so much that he came to find us, even when we were lost. Play a few games of hide and seek and enjoy some good hugs when you find each other. Use this game to remind your family that God loves us so much, that when we were lost he came to earth to find us.

**Pray:** Loving God, thank you that love comes from you. In a world where lots of things pass as 'love', help us to look to you for true love and acceptance. Thank you for your justice and mercy and how these things show us your love. We can't wait until we get to meet you face to face and experience your love in its fullness. In the meantime, Lord, let the Holy Spirit show us how to keep steady in your love. AMEN.

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## WEEK 6: BORN OF GOD

### **Warming up**

What are some truths about God that you've learned about God from reading 1 John?

### **Read 1 John 5:1-12**

1. What does this passage have to say about Jesus' resurrection? What importance does it attach to this event?
2. If God does the 'overcoming' work, how should we respond?
3. What do vv.6-9 say about the Holy Spirit? How does the Spirit help us day to day?
4. V.9 refers to God's testimony. What does it say about God's testimony and where can we receive God's testimony today?
5. Count the number of references to God, Jesus/the Son, and the Holy Spirit in this passage. What does this show us about the Trinity?

### **Read 1 John 5:13-21**

6. 1 John finishes with some pastoral notes. What are they and what relevance do they have for us today?
7. What does this passage tell us about prayer? How might this help you pray?
8. V.21 ends the chapter and the book with a warning about idols. Is this a helpful ending? Why/why not?

### **Rubber hits the road**

1 John calls for unity and sincerity in the life of a Christian. How can you work on the way you approach church unity in your church and sincerity and authenticity in your life? What are some practices that you can apply to your daily life to help you bring your church family together and help you become more like Jesus on a daily basis?

Try to remember this verse: 'Dear Children, keep yourselves from idols' (1 John 5:21)

## Family Time

**Watch:** *'I am a Child of God / Bible Adventure Worship'* (LifeKids)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s5MeNT1GEAI>

**Talk:** What did Jesus do at Easter? What did Jesus do for me on the cross? Who helps me to stop sinning? Who can keep me away from idols?

**Do:** **'No Deal, Idols!'**

Write a list of things people are often tempted to worship as more important than God (religious statues, money, our jobs, houses, fame, football teams, etc.). Find a creative way of destroying this list as a visual prayer to keep yourselves from idols. You could shred the list or crumple it into balls and shoot it into the bin like a basketball, or you could bury it in the garden. Use this as a symbolic reminder that we should continue to ask God to keep us from idols (1 John 5:21).

**Pray:** Living Lord Jesus, thank you that you are the true saviour of the world. Thank you that you came to earth to rescue me, died to save me, and rose from the dead to assure me of eternal life. Please send your Holy Spirit into my heart so that I might trust you and keep me from sin and trusting in idols. AMEN.

## Daily Prayer

*Just as we eat, sleep and work every day,  
prayer has a place in our daily routine.  
Find a place in your home – inside or outside –  
that you can make your ‘prayer space’.*

*Include all the members of your family – partners, children, animals – in this space.  
Feel free to also include music in this time.*

### **PRAISE**

God is love. Since God loves us, we should love one another.

### **SENTENCE OF SCRIPTURE**

Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore me to the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me

*Psalm 51:10-12*

### **BIBLE READING**

*At the end of the reading:*

Hear the Word of the Lord,

**Thanks be to God**

### **PRAYERS**

Loving God, thank you for this day.  
Thank you for your love and care for us.  
Thank you for making each of us special.  
Help us today to be kind to each other. **Amen.**

God of mercy, we are sorry that we have not always done what you wanted us to do.  
We have not loved you with all our heart, and we have not cared enough for other  
people. Forgive us, for Jesus' sake. **Amen.**

Lord Jesus, at Nazareth you shared in the life of your family. Help us to live together in  
our family with love and respect for each other. Make our home a place of blessing,  
peace and joy for everyone, to the glory of God the Father. **Amen.**



### **A COLLECT**

In darkness and in light,  
in trouble and in joy,  
help us, heavenly Father,  
to trust your love,  
to serve your purpose,  
and to praise your name,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **A PRAYER FOR GOD'S LIGHT**

Eternal God, shed your light on us who watch for you,  
that our lips may praise you,  
our hearts bless you,  
and our lives glorify you,  
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

*Include your own personal prayers.*

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. **Amen.**

### **THE GRACE**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all. **Amen.**

## **'Bible in Two Years' Reading Plan**

### *Numbers – 1 Samuel (Days 86-198)*

86. Numbers 1	124. Deuteronomy 13-14	162. Judges 6
87. Numbers 2	125. Deuteronomy 15-16	163. Judges 7
88. Numbers 3	126. Deuteronomy 17-18	164. Judges 8
89. Numbers 4	127. Deuteronomy 19-20	165. Judges 9
90. Numbers 5	128. Deuteronomy 21-22	166. Judges 10-11
91. Numbers 6	129. Deuteronomy 23-34	167. Judges 12
92. Numbers 7	130. Deuteronomy 25-26	168. Judges 13
93. Numbers 8-9	131. Deuteronomy 37	169. Judges 14-15
94. Numbers 10	132. Deuteronomy 28:1-35	170. Judges 16
95. Numbers 11	133. Deuteronomy 28:36-68	171. Judges 17-18
96. Numbers 12-13	134. Deuteronomy 29-30	172. Judges 19
97. Numbers 14	135. Deuteronomy 31	173. Judges 20
98. Numbers 15	136. Deuteronomy 32:1-27	174. Judges 21
99. Numbers 16-17	137. Deuteronomy 32:28-52	175. Ruth 1-2
100. Numbers 18-19	138. Deuteronomy 33	176. Ruth 3-4
101. Numbers 20	139. Deut 34, Joshua 1	177. 1 Samuel 1
102. Numbers 21	140. Joshua 2-3	178. 1 Samuel 2
103. Numbers 22	141. Joshua 3-4	179. 1 Samuel 3-4
104. Numbers 23	142. Joshua 5-6	180. 1 Samuel 4-5
105. Numbers 24-25	143. Joshua 7	181. 1 Samuel 6-7
106. Numbers 26	144. Joshua 8	182. 1 Samuel 8-9
107. Numbers 27-28	145. Joshua 9	183. 1 Samuel 10
108. Numbers 29-30	146. Joshua 10	184. 1 Samuel 11-12
109. Numbers 31	147. Joshua 11	185. 1 Samuel 13
110. Numbers 32	148. Joshua 12	186. 1 Samuel 14
111. Numbers 33	149. Joshua 13	187. 1 Samuel 15
112. Numbers 34-35	150. Joshua 14	188. 1 Samuel 16
113. Numbers 36	151. Joshua 15	189. 1 Samuel 17
114. Deuteronomy 1	152. Joshua 16-17	190. 1 Samuel 18
115. Deuteronomy 2	153. Joshua 18	191. 1 Samuel 19
116. Deuteronomy 3	154. Joshua 19	192. 1 Samuel 20
117. Deuteronomy 4	155. Joshua 20-21	193. 1 Samuel 21-22
118. Deuteronomy 5-6	156. Joshua 22	194. 1 Samuel 23-24
119. Deuteronomy 7-8	157. Joshua 23-24	195. 1 Samuel 25
120. Deuteronomy 9	158. Judges 1	196. 1 Samuel 26-27
121. Deuteronomy 10	159. Judges 2	197. 1 Samuel 28-29
122. Deuteronomy 11	160. Judges 3	198. 1 Samuel 30-31
123. Deuteronomy 12	161. Judges 5	



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