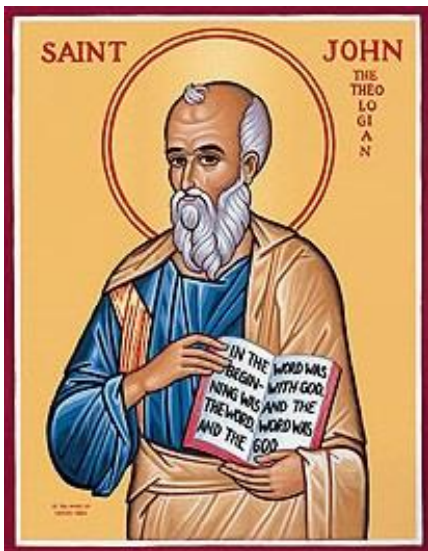




Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.



1 John 2:17

¹⁷ And the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God live for ever.

1 John 4:7

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

2 John 5b-6

^{5B} Let us love one another.

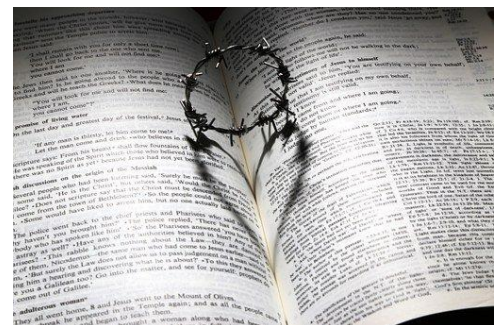
⁶ And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment just as you have heard it from the beginning – you must walk in it.

We all have friends or family with whom we have an affinity, a close relationship, where they have a particular loving nature. Two of my nephews are such people and they have that close ‘giving’ relationship with others.

Likewise, letters and articles have that personal touch, and this is so with John’s Gospel and his letters, which are generally believed to be written by the same person, due to their tone and nature. By this time John was living in Ephesus, in modern Turkey, and the church was fifty or sixty years old. He had been one of the inner circle, one of the leaders of Jesus’s disciples, and later of the church in Jerusalem. With James and Peter, he was able to see Jesus transfigured, saw him restore Jairus’s daughter to life and was with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus committed his own mother to John’s care as they stood at the foot of the cross at the crucifixion. So, we get a clear picture of John’s loving nature. The letters from John continue on from his Gospel with the same theme of Love. Without it, we cannot serve God: God is light because Jesus is the light of the world. We are not perfect, but God’s presence and his nature is with us, showing us when we do wrong. To know God is to obey him, if we want to give our lives for him. Then in 1: John chapter 4 verse 13 John reminds us that we have everlasting life and the courage that, if we ask for anything according to HIS will, he will listen and provide it.

John’s message overall, then, is of Love. It is of self-giving, not self-seeking: praising members in a local church in his second letter and Gaius in his third for doing just that. The letters are very short and worth the reading, for us to follow as individuals and as Emmanuel Church.



Prayer:

Loving God,
help us to be your loving disciples
living out your nature in our lives,
so in turn, to enable others to come to know you as their Lord, Saviour and Friend.
In the name of Jesus, we ask it, Amen.