

Unmoored (All Saints A; 1 John 3:1-3)

## **We are living in a season of immense upheaval.**

by [Layton E. Williams](#)

October 30, 2020

*To receive these posts by email each Monday, [sign up](#).*

*For more commentary on this week's readings, see the [Reflections on the Lectionary](#) page. For full-text access to all articles, [subscribe](#) to the Century.*

*For the 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time readings, see our [online archives](#).*

Throughout my life I have often used the word *anchors* to describe those things in my life that keep me feeling grounded and steady and safe.

It might be friends, or family, or a sense of purpose, or even just a neighborhood that feels like home. Often, I won't realize how much something is an anchor for me until it's gone. But seasons when I feel unmoored always align with the loss of an anchor or several.

We are living in a season of immense upheaval. So many anchors have been lost that we cannot keep track. People are separated from family, isolated from friends and community. Even the reliable consistency of life's small pleasures and ordinary routines—going out to dinner and a movie, commuting to work—have been utterly upended. I imagine many people have been feeling unmoored in these pandemic days and weeks and months.

Life as we knew it has gone, and whatever comes after this time will be a different world, a different reality, a new normal. Much like this scripture passage describes, "what we will be has not yet been revealed." Will we tear each other apart? Will we develop greater compassion for one another, and greater awareness of the fragility and exploitation of our systems? Will we become better than we have been?

Only time will tell us. But these verses remind us that even in a world upended, unhinged, uncertain, and unwieldy, we have not lost every anchor. Indeed, we have not entirely lost our families and friends and communities, nor our capacity for small and simple pleasure. Perhaps in many ways, we are even discovering new avenues to these things, new lines to tie to them in new ways. Perhaps we are merely simplifying what it is that we rely on and take comfort in.

Regardless, as the text says, one truth remains steadfast and invincible: we are children of God. We know God and are known by God and claimed in love by God. No pandemic, no worldly upheaval can change that fact. Ultimately, our hope doesn't lie in the anchors of this world, not in the markers of the old normal, and not even in our families and communities. Our hope is rooted in the knowledge of whose we are. When Christ is in our midst, when the Holy Spirit is at work in and around and through us—even in the midst of chaos, we will recognize them and can find comfort in them, along with a calling to follow the way of God's love into whatever future world awaits us.