

A large stained glass window is the background for the top half of the page. The top portion shows a circular medallion with a figure, likely the Virgin Mary, surrounded by intricate patterns. Below this, the window is divided into two vertical panels. The left panel depicts two figures, one in a red robe and one in a white robe, standing together. The right panel shows a figure in a yellow robe holding a scroll, with other figures below. The bottom of the window features a landscape with green hills and a blue sky with clouds.

# Welcome

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR

**Sunday,**  
**April 28, 2024**  
**10:00 AM**

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**Fifth Sunday**  
**Of Easter**





# Welcome to Worship!

**SUNDAYS @ 10:00AM**

**In-person Worship.** Masks and distance recommended, not required

**Livestream on YouTube.** Live at 10am then available on our channel

**"The Redheaded Preacher" Podcast.** Available wherever you get your podcasts, includes sermon and scriptures only, posted weekly by Tuesday



## Ways to Give

**Text Your Gift.** Text your gift to [844-977-2346](tel:844-977-2346)

After a short set-up the first time, simply text your gift amount

**Use PayPal.** [PayPal.me/stpeteruccskokie](https://www.paypal.com/merchot/?x=1&from=paypal-merchant-directory&to=stpeteruccskokie)

**Send a Check.** Mail to the address below ... this way still works fine

**Set up Vanco.** Contact the church office to enroll in regular giving



## Open Communion

**All Christians** and seekers after God are invited to partake of the Lord's Supper with us the **first Sunday of every month** and special Holy Days (Christmas, Maundy Thursday, and Easter). **At-home Communion** participants are invited to provide their own elements and join when Pastor bids you, "take, eat, and drink."



## About St. Peter's UCC

We've been in the heart of downtown Skokie since 1867. We are a part of the United Church of Christ, which means we are passionate about our faith and open in our thinking. We believe in a Triune God who **loves everyone**, regardless of gender identity, orientation, race, status, or physical or mental ability, and we **joyously welcome all people** to share worship, membership, marriage, baptism, funeral, and fellowship with us.



## Contact, Follow, or Talk to Us

**Rev. Richard Lanford (Pastor):** [revlanford@gmail.com](mailto:revlanford@gmail.com)

In the office Wed-Sat (times vary) and Sundays

**Laura Olson (Office Manager):** [office@stpeteruccskokie.org](mailto:office@stpeteruccskokie.org)

Office hours Mon-Fri 9am to 2pm

**Ben Westphal (Music Director):** [bcwestphal@gmail.com](mailto:bcwestphal@gmail.com)

**Facebook/Instagram/YouTube:** [stpeteruccskokie](https://www.facebook.com/stpeteruccskokie)

**Website:** [www.stpeteruccskokie.org](http://www.stpeteruccskokie.org)

*Like, follow, or join our email list for up-to-date info about events and activities!*



**8013 Laramie Avenue, Skokie, IL 60077 | 847-673-8166**

**St. Peter's United Church of Christ in Skokie  
Order of Worship for  
Sunday, April 28, 2024 at 10:00am  
The Fifth Sunday of Easter**

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*Welcome to worship. The music before the service is intended as a time of silent prayer and preparation.*

**PRELUDE** "Ode to Joy" by Beethoven  
Jim Kendros, Hurdy Gurdy

**THE RINGING OF THE BELLS**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** Peggy Reins

*Will those who are able please stand up*

**CALL TO WORSHIP** *from Psalm 149*

**P:** Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, God's praise in the assembly of the faithful!

**C:** Let Israel be glad in its Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their Sovereign.

**P:** Let them praise God's name with dancing, making melody to God with tambourine and lyre . . . and hurdy-gurdy!

**C:** For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; God adorns the humble with victory. Let us worship our Triune God!

**RESPONSE: "Christ Arose" SSB #39 (v.1 and Refrain)**

1. Low in the grave he lay, Je-sus my Sav-ior, wait-ing the com-ing day,  
 2. Vain-ly they watch his bed, Je-sus my Sav-ior; vain-ly they seal the dead  
 3. Death can-not keep its prey, Je-sus my Sav-ior; he tore the bars a-way,

*Refrain*

Je-sus my Lord! Up from the grave he a-rose, (he a-rose) with a

might-y tri-umph o'er his foes; he a-rose a vic-tor from the  
 (o'er his foes)

dark do-main, and he lives for-ev-er, with his saints to reign. He a-

rose! He a-rose! Hal-le-lu-jah! Christ a-rose!  
 (he a-rose) (he a-rose)

**CALL TO CONFESSION** *Isaiah 53:6*

- P: It's a fitting call to confession given the Scriptures we have today: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."
- C: It's true we often go through our days and nights without thinking to ask God for God's desires in our decisions. It's first nature to automatically go with our own will and plans, just assuming God does not have a better idea or a concern.**
- P: Going our own way can get us into some pretty serious trouble, and for sure create some distance or estrangement from the Lover of our Souls. Let's draw near to the throne of grace, to ask for God's forgiveness and renewal.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

P: O God, we have ignored our origin in You and denied Your rule over the nations. We have pursued illusions of self-interest rather than abiding in Your love.

**C: We have turned away from brothers and sisters as if they were enemies to be despised. We are afraid to love those who differ from us or who have the power to harm us.**

P: We hesitate to take the risks of caring, for fear that we may be hurt. Discipleship seems too demanding, Jesus!

**A: O God, release us from our fears and failures to trust Your love and live with bold generosity. Forgive us, we pray, and restore us to Your fold. In the name of Christ Jesus we pray. Amen.**

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON** *First John 3:16*

P: John wrote of Jesus, “We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us – and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.”

Jesus laid down His life for us before He was even born; Paul wrote about the Son’s self-emptying of himself into a human being, to be for us the perfect Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world. The laying down of His life for us on Calvary actually began with the Incarnation years before. All of it is grounded in God’s love for us, God’s human flock, to bring us back to God as one flock with one Shepherd. Will the church join me in words of praise for God’s grace by saying . . .

**All: Alleluia! Thanks be to God!**

## HYMN "The Day of Resurrection!"

#165

*Jubilantly*

1. The day of res - ur - rec - tion! Earth, tell it out a - broad,  
 2. Our hearts be pure from e - vil, That we may see a - right  
 3. Now let the heavens be joy - ful, Let earth her song be - gin;

The Pass - o - ver of glad - ness, The Pass - o - ver of God!  
 The Lord in rays e - ter - nal Of res - ur - rec - tion-light;  
 Let the round world keep tri - umph, And all that is there - in;

From death to life e - ter - nal, From this world to the sky,  
 And, lis - tening to His ac - cents, May hear, so calm and plain,  
 In - vis - i - ble and vis - i - ble, Their notes let all things blend,

Our Christ hath brought us o - ver With hymns of vic - to - ry.  
 His own "All hail!" and, hear - ing, May raise the vic - tor strain.  
 For Christ the Lord is ris - en, Our Joy that hath no end. A-MEN.



*The congregation may be seated*

**MISSION MOMENT**

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Karen Christianson

Psalter:

Psalm 22:25-31

Epistle:

I John 4:7-21

**MUSICAL MEDITATION “Amazing Grace”**

Jim Kendros, Hurdy Gurdy

*Will those who are able please stand up*

**THE GOSPEL**

John 15:1-8

**RESPONSE**

“Alleluia!”

#495

*The Congregation may be seated*

**PASTORAL AND SILENT PRAYERS**

**THE LORD’S PRAYER**

**A: Our Father, who art in heaven,**

**Hallowed be Thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,**

**on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread,**

**And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil;**

**For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and**

**the glory forever. Amen.**

## **OFFERTORY**

*If you donate electronically, feel free to place a yellow "Electronic Giving" card into the plate as it comes around so you can enjoy participating in the physical act of giving.*

*Will those who are able please rise to sing*

# RESPONSE “We Are an Offering”

SSB #11

We lift our voi - ces, — we lift our hands, — we lift our  
 lives — up to You, we are an of - fer - ing; — Lord, use our  
 voi - ces, — Lord, use our hands, — Lord, use our  
 lives, — they are Yours, we are an of - fer - ing. —  
 All that we have, — all that we are, —  
 all that we hope to be we give to You, we  
 give to You. — We lift our  
 voi - ces, — we lift our hands, — we lift our  
 lives — up to You, we are an of - fer - ing, — we are an of - fer - ing. —

*The congregation may be seated*

**SERMON** “The Fruitful Vine of Love”

*Will those who are able please stand up*

**HYMN** “O God, In Your Love”

*Sing to the tune of “Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise”*

**O God, in your love, you have made us unique:  
In gifts and traditions, in service we seek,  
In race and in culture and family design  
Diverse are the branches in Jesus the Vine.**

**Lord Jesus, you came to bring God's love on earth;  
You welcomed the outcasts and showed us our worth.  
You reached out to people whom others despised  
You said all are precious in God's loving eyes.**

**O Christ, with your welcome your church feels unease:  
We stand at closed doors tightly holding the keys.  
Yet this is your body, the church that you love  
O Lord, do you weep for your church from above?**

**So may your church welcome in loving accord  
All people who want to serve Jesus our Lord.  
O Spirit, unite us in Jesus the Son  
In mission and ministry, God, make us one.**

*Included in [Gifts of Love: New Hymns for Today's Worship](#) (Geneva Press, 2000). Hymn Use Permission: [Gifts of Love: New Hymns for Today's Worship](#) by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette (Geneva Press, 2000) includes a permission note for those who own this book to use this hymn (along with the 44 other new hymns in the book) in their local church's worship. Pastor Lanford owns this book.*

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**CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

P: Go in peace;

**RIGHT SIDE: Keep the faith;**

**LEFT SIDE: Love one another;**

**ALL: Serve the Lord!**

P: And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
which is amazing,

**C: The love of God, which is broad and deep,**

P: And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
gentle but strong,

**C: Be with all of you, now and forever.**

**A: AMEN!**

**POSTLUDE**                      “Celebration in C”                      by Martin

*The music after the service is intended as a time of reflection. Pastor will be pleased to greet you at the Sanctuary doors as soon as the postlude has concluded, and our livestream has stopped.*

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**FOR WORSHIP TODAY**

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MINISTER    Rev. Richard Lanford

MUSIC DIRECTOR    Ben Westphal

DEACON    Barb Bailey

LIVESTREAM RECORDING    Beth Sterba

NURSERY ATTENDANT    Rita McMahon

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## **Put your faith into action with an Offering of Letters!**

*As people of faith, we are called to give of our time, talent and treasure for a greater purpose. Bread for the World invites you to use your voice to help end hunger.*

### **WHAT**

Bread for the World Offering of Letters from St. Peter's UCC is one way to honor the teachings and example of Pastor Richard Lanford and his wife Beth.

### **WHY**

As Christians, we are called to care for those experiencing hunger and poverty and to seek justice. Bread for the World focuses on advocacy because federal nutrition programs provide roughly ten times as much food assistance as churches and charities combined. With the stroke of a pen, our government leaders have the power to create policies and programs impacting millions.

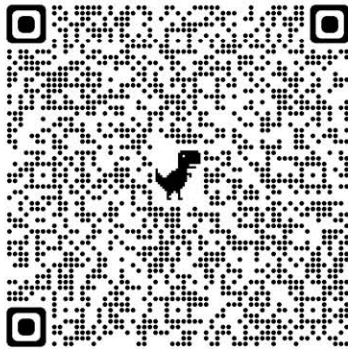
### **WHO**

Bread for the World is a Christian advocacy organization with a mission to educate and equip people to advocate for policies and programs that can help end hunger. Bread for the World Institute conducts nonpartisan policy research and analysis on hunger and strategies to end hunger worldwide.

## **WHEN AND HOW**

Bread for the World's Offering of Letters is an annual campaign. This year, St. Peter's participation in the Offering of Letters runs through May 5th. It launched with a special coffee hour on April 14th and will conclude with a final collection of letters when our church's anniversary is celebrated on the first Sunday in May. You may write your letters anytime between now and then and put them in the offering plate or the designated basket in the memorial room.

To submit your letter online follow the QR code below or use this link: <https://tinyurl.com/tr3hhtzp>



**THANK YOU! YOUR LETTER IS AN OFFERING OF  
LOVE AND GRATITUDE!**



CELEBRATING PASTOR RICHARD & BETH AT THE



# Spaghetti Dinner

**Sunday  
May 19th  
at 5pm**

**RSVP by May 12! See form on back**



# Spaghetti Dinner

**May 19th at 5pm**

**\$5 Adults | \$3 Children  
Suggested Donation**

*Extra donations and proceeds from Raffle Baskets will be directed to the Lanford Celebration Fund.*

Return paper form to the Office or put in offering plate  
- OR -  
click [HERE](#) or scan the QR code below to RSVP



## RSVP ORDER FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Adults: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Children under 10: \_\_\_\_\_

I need a high-chair: Y / N

*Vegan, gluten-free, low-sugar and low-sodium options are on the menu!  
Contact Rich Schneider for details.*

## HELPING (Optional)

*We need servers, greeters, setter-uppers, kitchen-helpers, and cleaner-uppers. Rich Schneider is handling the menu and the cooking, but we'd love to return to the "spirit" of the Spaghetti Dinner and invite former Youth Fellowship members who have participated in the past to greet, serve, and clean up if they can.*

\_\_\_\_\_ I can help set up on Saturday May 18th (10am-12pm)

\_\_\_\_\_ I can help prep before the Dinner on Sunday May 19th (3pm-5pm)

\_\_\_\_\_ I can help serve during the dinner (5-6pm)

\_\_\_\_\_ I can help clean up after the dinner (Many hands make light work!)

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to say a few words during the Roast and Toast  
(I promise to talk for less than 2 minutes to make sure everyone else gets a turn!)

**St. Peter's United Church of Christ | 8013 Laramie Street, Skokie**

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# News in the Pews

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**Jesus said, “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples” (John 15:8, NRSV). Part of discipleship is worship, which strengthens us to bear the fruit of love. Welcome.**

**Yes, there is a Coffee Hour today!** Your Church Council is launching a series of special coffee hours on the fourth Sunday of each month. The plan is to spend just a bit of time in intentional conversation. We are having these coffee chats after worship so that it is easy for you to drop in. The Fourth Sunday Conversations are NOT about planning next steps after Pastor’s departure, but they are about matters of the heart and how we thrive today, tomorrow, and for years to come. We want to listen together and learn from the experiences, knowledge, and feelings of everyone—and we mean everyone. The questions posed at our café tables are sure to spark interesting conversation and joy in the strength of fellowship. So come on down, grab a cup of coffee, and find your seat at the table!

**THANKS to Carol Iannotti, Laurie Mitchell, Heidi Tarzian, and everyone** who worked hard, donated raffle items, or just helped by attending to make last night’s Bunco Card Party and Raffle a lot of fun!

**Many thanks to Jim Kendros for his gift of music uplifting our service today!**

**If you missed our Offering of Letters Coffee Hour,** you still have time to craft a letter. See your bulletin insert for more details. You can bring your letter to the church anytime by May 5<sup>th</sup> or you can

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submit your letter online by going here:

<https://tinyurl.com/tr3hhtzp>. If you have any questions, please contact Peggy Reins at [peggy.reins@gmail.com](mailto:peggy.reins@gmail.com).

**Spaghetti Dinner with “Roast and Toast”** - St. Peter’s is bringing back the Spaghetti Dinner for a special evening of memories, fellowship, and traditional Spaghetti Dinner food\* and drinks. During the meal, we’ll have a “Roast and Toast,” of Pastor and Beth - we want to hear your favorite funny, meaningful, or celebratory stories about their positive impact here. Short personal anecdotes are welcome from everyone! This will be an informal gathering for St. Peter’s family, not open to the public, with a special focus on the over 40 youth that have been a part of Pastor’s ministry, whether through Sunday School Chapel, Youth Fellowship, Confirmation, or the softball team. A \$5 suggested donation for adults and \$3 for children under 10 covers the cost of food, and there will be Raffle Baskets to bid on. Reservations are requested so we can plan our space accordingly – see the insert in your bulletin to RSVP by May 12th!

**Misericordia days are here again, and our very own Ricky can use your donations!!** Ricky was born prematurely in January 2006 and as many of you know is developmentally about 5 years old - and is sunshine in human form. He has an intellectual disability and will not be able to live independently when his parents, members of St. Peter's, can no longer take care of him. Misericordia is a beautiful place that offers living arrangements and assistance to people like our Ricky. Please consider donating to this beautiful organization that helps people that are unable to care for themselves, *and use the link following to do it, to make sure the Riley family gets credited.*

<https://secure.frontstream.com/misericordiacandydays2024/participant/AnnaRiley>

Thank you so much for your consideration!

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**Next Sunday is our Anniversary Sunday** as St. Peter's U.C.C. turns 157 years! We will also offer a blessing upon all the letters to members of Congress in support of the parts of the Farm Bill supported by Bread for the World. Bring yours or a copy of it if you have it! There will also be a COFFEE HOUR to celebrate our church anniversary, so please plan to stay if you can!

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## Our People

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**Hospitalized:** Jane Abramchik continues for now at the McGaw Care Center, Frank Murdough Pavilion, in Evanston. Dorene Schurman remains in hospice care in Ohio, and MaryLou Noorts is in hospice care at The Arbor in Glenview. Also in hospice: Dorothy Stielow, 95, at 908 Talbot, Lake Bluff, IL 60044-1562.

**This week Pastor will start Wednesday**, May 1st at the 8:30 AM gathering of the Niles Township Clergy Forum and then have his 10:30 weekly meeting with Laura. The Open and Affirming Committee meets that same evening at 6:30 PM in the Memorial Room.

**This coming Saturday is the Spring Meeting of our CMA** (Chicago Metropolitan Association), at which our Pastor and some lay leaders will attend – barring any unforeseen circumstances. The meeting is to be held from 9 AM to 3 PM at the Church of the Good Shepherd, U.C.C., 5700 S. Prairie Avenue, Chicago.

**According to the schedule**, next week's Lector will be Rita McMahon, the Nursery Attendant, Annie N., and Peter S. will be our live streamer.

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**Birthdays** this week belong to David Rees, H. Dayle Zelenka, Dale Todd and Bill Karol. May they all enjoy blessings from God on their birthdays!

**Pictures of Pastor and Beth needed!** As we adjust to the news of Pastor's retirement, we ask all you folks to go through your old photos and share them with us. You can email the church office with the photos [office@stpeteruccskokie.org](mailto:office@stpeteruccskokie.org), or bring or mail them in and we'll scan and return them to you. Thanks so much for your help!

*Our Prayer of Confession this morning is reprinted by permission of United Church Press from Led by Love by Lavon Bayler, copyright 1986 by United Church Press.*

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### CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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PRESIDENT	Peggy Reins
VICE-PRESIDENT	Beth Lanford
TREASURER	Chad McCoy
SECRETARY	Annie Noorts
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Maria Altmayer

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## Regular Reminders!

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**We are always grateful for any and all offerings** to the church. No amount is too small! See inside the bulletin's front cover for details on how to donate.

**Let us know you were here!** Please sign the attendance sheet in the black pew pads and when you think your pew is ready, please pass the pad towards the center aisle of the church.

**Pastor's podcast is available wherever you listen to podcasts!** Just type in "The Redheaded Preacher" in your podcatcher's search engine and you'll find us!

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## MISSION MOMENTS

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**April 28, 2024**

**Fifth Sunday of Easter**

**“Abiding in Love”**

**John 15:1-8**

“We are aware that there has been increased violence against indigenous women and transgender persons. Our increased awareness of these issues that disproportionately affect women will impact our response as global advocates.” –Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson

On this Break the Silence Sunday, churches can raise their awareness of gender-based violence by participating in Thursdays in Black.

\*Thursdays in Black grew out of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998), in which the stories of rape as a weapon of war, gender injustice, abuse, violence, and many tragedies that grow outward from such violence became all the more visible. But what also became visible was women’s resilience, agency, and personal

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efforts to resist such violations. Join Wider Church Ministries, and our partners, in the campaign by doing the following:

Pause

Pause for a moment of silence on Thursdays at noon your local time to remember and honor those who have died at the hand of sexualized or gender-based violence.

Pray

Pray with us:

We stand with invisible victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

We see you. We hear you. You are not forgotten.

Post

Post your prayers, photos, or inspirations on social media using the hashtags #ThursdaysinBlack, #UnitedChurchOfChrist, and tag us.

If you or someone you know is in an abusive relationship, please seek help immediately. You can call the 24-hour National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).

\*<https://www.ucc.org/what-we-do/wider-church-ministries/thursdays-in-black-campaign/>

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**Psalm 22:25 - 31**

<sup>25</sup> From you comes my praise in the great congregation;  
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.

<sup>26</sup> The poor shall eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek him shall praise the LORD.

May your hearts live forever!

<sup>27</sup> All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD;  
and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

<sup>28</sup> For dominion belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations.

<sup>29</sup> To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;  
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,  
and I shall live for him.

<sup>30</sup> Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord,  
<sup>31</sup>and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,  
saying that he has done it.

**FIRST JOHN 4:7-21**

"Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we



also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

"By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

"God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also."

### **JOHN 15:1-8**

Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."