

## Synod Sunday

*1 John 3:16-24*

<sup>16</sup> We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. <sup>17</sup> How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

<sup>18</sup> Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. <sup>19</sup> And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him <sup>20</sup> whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. <sup>21</sup> Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; <sup>22</sup> and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

<sup>23</sup> And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. <sup>24</sup> All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

## Call to Worship

Leader: No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. As we seek to love our neighbors, may Christ’s love abide in us.

**People: May we abide in love.**

Leader: Let us abide in love, not merely with thoughts, but in truth and spirit. Let us love not only with the words of our mouths, but with the attitude of our hearts.

**People: May we abide in love.**

Leader: Christ commands us, “Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” When we love another, the love of Christ abides in us.

**People: May we abide in love.**

Leader: With heart, soul, mind, and voice, let us worship God in love!

## Unison Prayer of Confession

**You, O God, are love. And in Jesus Christ, your love is made perfect.**

**Christ calls us to love each other as he has loved us. But we must confess, Lord, that loving is hard. Rather than abiding in Christ’s love, we retreat within ourselves. Rather than reaching out, we harden our hearts. Rather than welcoming the stranger, we fall back on our tribal divisions. Rather than love others with all our heart, mind, and strength, we choose to withhold love to ourselves.**

**Open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit to love others as you love us. Tear down the barriers that divide us, destroy systems and structures that segregate us, and set us free to freely love as we should, as you command us.**