Woven throughout the entire Bible, there are stories that compel us over and over to Love our Neighbor. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that the greatest commandment of all is “Love God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” To this, Jesus added a second, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37-38)

Founded in 1976, San Lucas United Church of Christ, located in the Humboldt Park community of Chicago, is a small church with a big heart. Representing a multi-lingual, multi-cultural and intergenerational community, the congregation embodies “Loving their Neighbor.” Under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Marilyn Pagan-Banks, members and volunteers have created a committed team. Amid hunger, homelessness, violence, and economic challenges, exacerbated by gentrification, this team offers a presence of hope. San Lucas UCC’s community meal is an excellent example of one of the offerings presented to the community. Every Tuesday, volunteers from Chicago neighborhoods and suburbs, serve over 100 hot meals to those in need. No one is turned away. Carmen Flores-Rance, lay leader and longtime member, stated, “We do Church here every day, we serve the people of the community here every day – not just on Sunday. That’s what makes San Lucas such a special place.” This humble, Humboldt Park church, boldly and fearlessly, lives into God’s commandment to Love thy neighbor. Philanthropist Charlotte Lunsford Berry reminds us, “We won’t always know whose lives we touched and made better for our having cared, because actions can sometimes have unforeseen ramifications. What’s important is that you do care and you act.” So, let us act so that “They’ll know we are Christians by our love” as the hymn goes, and may we be known by our acts in love of neighbor. As you reflect on the stewardship of resources and sharing provisions to create a just world for all, I invite you to consider how you Love your neighbor through your church community. Who is your neighbor? A single parent, refugee, or elder? Someone across the street or town, or in the pew next to you? Beloved, Love your neighbor.