

## Week 3: The Final Banquet

1. What stood out to you from the message this past Sunday? Was there anything that seemed timely or relevant to you? Was there anything that made you uncomfortable, or with which you disagreed?
2. One of the themes this week was about the trajectory of history and looking to the future. Do you tend to feel hopeful or pessimistic about the future? In your own life personally and in the world as a whole, what reasons are there for hope? What reasons are there for pessimism?
3. Our theme this week is "The Final Banquet," a metaphor used in scripture about the trajectory of history. Read Isaiah 25:6-9. How does this passage make you feel about your own view of the future? What about this passage feels like a destination or end? What about this passage feels like a new beginning rather than an end?
4. Jesus seems to reference this banquet motif in Luke 14:15-24. Read this passage and, assuming that Jesus is also using the story about a banquet as a metaphor for the future, discuss the following:
  - In what ways is it inclusive and what is the basis of inclusion?
  - In what ways is it exclusive and what is the basis of exclusion?
  - What might be modern day equivalents for the excuses people use not to come to the banquet?
  - How might we exclude ourselves from the banquet?
  - Who might be modern day equivalents for those who actually come to the banquet in the story?
5. Read the first part of the second Hebrew creation story in Genesis 2:4-20. The Hebrew word used for "man" is *adam* which is the same root as the Hebrew word for "ground" which is *adamah*. What does this poetic use of language suggest about the identity of humanity? Look at verses 7, 9, and 19. What do these verses suggest about our connection to nature? What do they imply about how we should treat nature and how nature might treat us?
6. Read Revelation 21:1-5 in light of the discussion about "The Final Banquet" in the Isaiah and Luke passages. In what ways is this an end or a new beginning? In what ways have "Heaven and Earth" been changed? What human inclusivity do you see in this passage? What are the implications for how we should care for the environment?
7. What struck you most about what Melanie shared about environmental justice in the message on Sunday? Take a moment to review this week's Lenten Justice flyer about food justice ([www.crc.org/Lenten-Justice-environmental-justice](http://www.crc.org/Lenten-Justice-environmental-justice)). Discuss how you feel compelled to respond, and then spend some time praying for one another in these endeavors.

### **Practice for the week: Care for our planet**

Take some time this week to take action on the issues you personally identified with in the Lenten Justice flyer ([www.cccc.org/Lenten-Justice-environmental-justice](http://www.cccc.org/Lenten-Justice-environmental-justice)). Take a moment each day to pray for the human communities, animals, and plants that are impacted by environmental injustice.