

Come to the Banquet

“Let him lead me to the banquet hall,
and let his banner over me be love.”

Song of Solomon 2:4

LCA/NZ Simultaneous Art Exhibition
2023



**LUTHERAN
CHURCH**
OF AUSTRALIA



**COMMISSION
ON WORSHIP**
Lutheran Church of Australia

FEATURED IMAGE: "LORD'S CUP AND BREAD AND BIBLE" BY JOHN SNYDER, CREATIVE COMMONS 3.0 VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

These resources are brought to you by the Commission on Worship Visual Arts Working Group. Our mission is to encourage and support the use of Visual Arts in worship and in the life of the church.

If you would like to be a part of our team, please contact us via our website:

<http://visualarts.lca.org.au/>

Invitation

A great joy for Christians is the chance to offer hospitality to people, caring for them in times of need and sharing our faith and hope along with good food and a warm and welcoming atmosphere. As we are able to welcome people back into our churches, schools and aged care facilities, we have a great opportunity to share the love of Christ through our creativity .

Reflecting this idea, LCA Visual Arts have chosen *“Come to the Banquet”* as the theme for the 2023 Churchwide Simultaneous Art Exhibition.

Who: Artists of all ages, stages and media are invited to participate in exhibitions in their local communities.

Where: Exhibitions can be held anywhere – in your school hall, your church, the local coffee shop. You may wish to share your work with your online communities too!

When: August, 2023 to coincide with the South Australian Living Artists program which runs at that time. Please feel free to adjust the timeframe – just let us know when and where you are exhibiting so we can help you publicise your event!

In this resource pack, you will find a devotion, some suggested Bible passages and discussion questions, activity ideas and stimulus activities to help you explore the theme and start planning.

To register your interest in this project, please visit our website <https://visualarts.lca.org.au/> or contact libby.krahling@lca.org.au

RSVP: May 30, 2023

*“Let him lead me to the banquet hall,
and let his banner over me be love.”*

Song of Solomon 2:4

Come to the Banquet

You're invited...

An invitation comes. There's a special occasion, a big party, maybe a wedding. A banquet will be provided – good food, good drinks. If you're invited to a banquet, you know there will be lots of people there, and that it will be abundant. Generous.

There are many food and feasting images in the Bible. Often, they create a picture of God's love and provision in the midst of hardship. Think of the Israelites receiving manna and quail in the desert (Exodus 16). As Psalm 34:6 says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him."

Kings and important people throughout the Old Testament throw feasts to celebrate victories, to show off their wealth and power, to bless their guests with their generosity. Seven feasts are celebrated by the Israelites, each marking something really special God had done for his people. These festivals, like Passover or the Festival of the Booths, are an opportunity to make special sacrifices, to gather together as a faith community, to pass on the story of God's goodness to the next generations.

These feasts of the Old Testament all point to Jesus. He is the Passover lamb. It's no coincidence that the Last Supper happens on the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread. Jesus eats with his disciples, and institutes the great feast – Holy Communion (Matthew 26: 17-30).

Throughout the gospels, Jesus reveals his identity at meals, through parables about banquets and in his conversations with the disciples: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35)

The wedding banquet is a frequent metaphor for Christ and his church being united in love, a long-anticipated promise fulfilled. The love poetry in Song of Solomon is full of food images, as the church is the bride waiting for her bridegroom: "Let him lead me to the banquet hall, and let his banner over me be love." (Song of Solomon 2:4)

In the New Testament, it is clear that the grace and mercy of Christ is for everyone. Jesus tells the parable of the wedding banquet, when the first round of guests turn down their invitations because they have other things to do, distractions and jobs and all the busy things of life. So the king's servants go out to invite those who are often left out – the poor, the ill, the outsiders. During Jesus' lifetime, he often sits down to eat with people whom others despise, like the tax collectors and prostitutes.

What is this banquet? The prophet Isaiah speaks of the mountain of the Lord, “On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine – the best of meats and the finest of wines” (Isaiah 25: 6).

Jesus makes it clear that heaven is like a banquet, laid out in lavish abundance, prepared before time for the Father’s guests. It doesn’t matter how old or young you are, how rich or poor, where you were born, who your family is, what matters is accepting the invitation.

The invitation is yours – please come!

Bible Passages You Might Like to Explore

- Exodus 12 (The Passover)
- Isaiah 25:6
- Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, John 13
- Matthew 25:34-45
- Psalm 34
- Exodus 3: 7-10
- John 2: 1-11
- Psalm 119: 103
- 1 Corinthians 10:31
- Matthew 14:13-21 / John
- John 6:35

*“Let him lead me to the banquet hall,
and let his banner over me be love.”*

Song of Solomon 2:4

Activity Suggestions

- In a group or on your own, brainstorm everything you can think of related to banquets, feasting, meals and foods in the Bible, how God feeds us, what kind of host God is...You might like to create a mind-map like the one in this package.
- Choose a Bible passage from the list (or another one related to banquets), and spend time reading it through, noticing images, interesting thoughts and thinking about connections to your own experience. Start drawing or journaling your thoughts.
- Working with others from your community, see if you might be able to incorporate some kind of hospitality into your exhibition. This might be the perfect opportunity for a community lunch, for hosting a launch dinner or lunch and inviting the community to come, serving morning or afternoon tea...
- Congregations might like to have a special service to coincide with their exhibition. A celebration of Holy Communion might be especially appropriate.
- If you are charging for entrance or collecting donations, consider donating to a food-related ministry – such as your local community kitchen or food packages for people in need, or ALWS' work feeding the hungry overseas.
- Consider hosting a workshop for interested artists. You could begin with the devotion in this pack, and then use the stimulus cards and mind map to help people unpack the theme and excite their imaginations. Don't forget to include some chances to share food and conversation!

Consider Collaborative Artwork

If you are working with a group with mixed abilities/experience, or you have people who don't feel very confident exhibiting a solo piece, you might like to work on a collaborative artwork. There are lots of ideas on Pinterest for collaborative art (see our Pinterest page, "LCA Visual Arts").

Some ideas:

- Have people design placemats for a banquet table featuring their favourite verse related to this theme or favourite table grace. Have them decorate it using whatever means they like and then laminate them. Consider setting a table in your display space featuring these placemats.
- Create a patchwork quilt or wall hanging where everyone creates their own square related to the theme.

Stimulus Cards

You might like to use the stimulus cards on the following pages. Print them out double-sided and cut out each card. You could laminate them if you are likely to pass them around or use them for more than one group.

You can use these in lots of ways:

- As discussion starters – put them in a pile and have people draw one out at random to discuss with a partner or small group. Share your thoughts with the whole group.
- As journaling tools – have people choose an image which speaks to them, and give them time to draw, collage or journal about the stimulus on the back of the card. This is a great way of drawing out deep, personal connections to the topic.
- As a teaching resource – some of the cards would work well as classroom or group study activities. You could use a couple of cards to get the group started, and then let them choose whichever card or image they want to respond to.



What is your favourite food memory? Is there something you eat which instantly takes you back to a special occasion or memories of a special person?

An invitation arrives in the mail. How do you feel?

Would you rather have a simple meal with people you love, or a big fancy dinner with people you don't know?

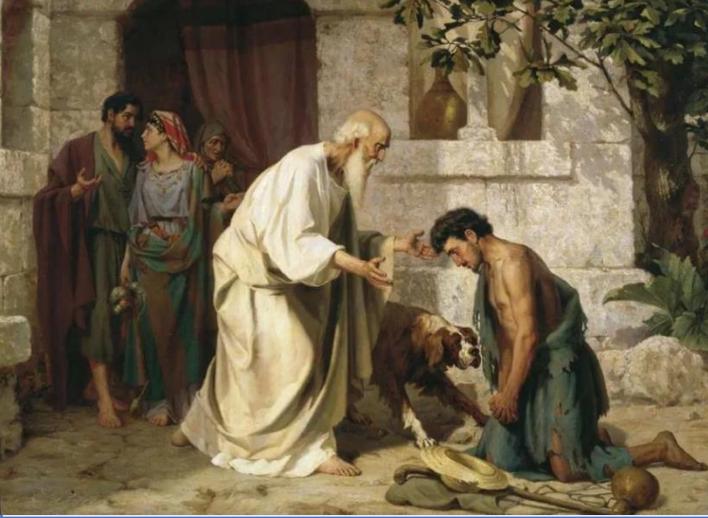
What's the best thing about a wedding reception?

If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, who would you invite?
Who does God invite to his banquet?

How is communion like a banquet?

What is your favourite table grace?
Why do we say grace before eating?

Imagine you are going through a tough time, and then someone brings a homemade dinner or beautiful cake around to your house. How do you feel?



When a huge crowd was hungry and tired, Jesus fed them all with just two fish and five loaves of bread.

How generous is our God?

Luke 9: 10-17

The father orders a feast for the prodigal son when he returns home.

Why? What do they eat?

Luke 15:11-32

Jesus shared the Last Supper with his disciples. What ongoing feast did he institute at this dinner?

Mark 14: 12-25

Jesus started his ministry at the wedding at Cana.

What did he do that revealed him to be someone very special?

John 2:1-11

Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

Proverbs 16:24

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

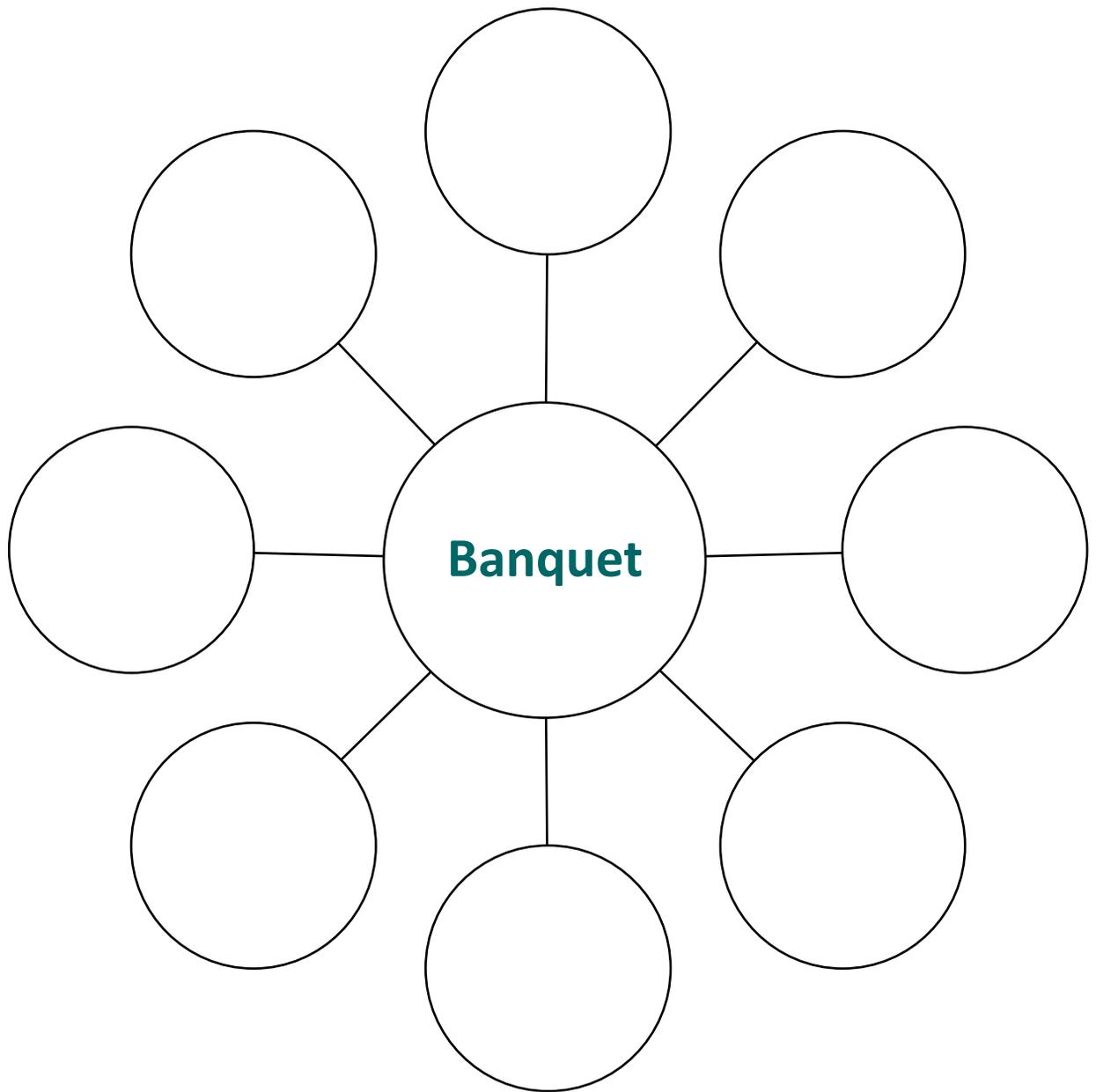
John 6:35

On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine – the best of meats and the finest of wines.

Isaiah 26:6

Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

Psalms 34:8



This is a mind-map. You can use it to brainstorm as many ideas as you can related to banquets. In the circles around the central words "Banquet", write down your ideas. You might like to think about feasts/meals/special occasions in the Bible, about individual foods, about what feasting and banquets might mean in general, and what they mean to Christians.

Add in more circles, write notes around the outside – have fun!