Opening Prayer (to be read by facilitator)
Dear God, help us in this dialogue to be humble and to suspend judgment. Remind us that we are all created in Your image. Give us the courage to remain curious about one another by asking questions and seeking to understand. Thank You, God, for this opportunity to come together. May our time together help us grow closer to one another and closer to you. **AMEN**

Opening Questions: What's something you were absolutely certain about when you were younger that turned out to be hilariously wrong?

Sermon Title & Synopsis: Life After Death: Judgement
In the final week of our Life After Death series, we explore the difficult questions of God's judgment, hell, and what happens to those who don't believe. As we wrestle with the tension between God's justice and God's relentless grace, we're reminded that we don't have to know every answer to trust the God revealed in Jesus. Ultimately, our hope calls us to leave others' eternal destinies in God's hands and live out our faith by loving others, extending grace, and working toward a world where justice and healing prevail.

Bible Reading
Reading the Bible is about reading for practice and spiritual formation – spiritual formation, in which the reader seeks to be formed by the Spirit of God.

Read: Matthew 25:31-46 (CEB), 31 "Now when the Human One comes in his majesty and all
his angels are with him, he will sit on his majestic throne.32 All the nations will be gathered in
front of him. He will separate them from each other, just as a shepherd separates the sheep
from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right side. But the goats he will put on his left.
34 "Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who will receive good things from
my Father. Inherit the kingdom that was prepared for you before the world began. 35 I was
hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger
and you welcomed me. 36 I was naked and you gave me clothes to wear. I was sick and you
took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.'
37 "Then those who are righteous will reply to him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and
feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? 38 When did we see you as a stranger and welcome
you, or naked and give you clothes to wear? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and
visit you?'
40 "Then the king will reply to them, 'I assure you that when you have done it for one of the
least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me.'
41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Get away from me, you who will receive terrible
things. Go into the unending fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 I was
hungry and you didn't give me food to eat. I was thirsty and you didn't give me anything to
drink. 43 I was a stranger and you didn't welcome me. I was naked and you didn't give me
clothes to wear. I was sick and in prison, and you didn't visit me.'

44 "Then they will reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and didn't do anything to help you?' 45 Then he will answer, 'I assure you that when you haven't done it for one of the least of these, you haven't done it for me.' 46 And they will go away into eternal punishment. But the righteous ones will go into eternal life."

- Was there a word or phrase that stuck out to you, if so, why?
- What does this passage reveal about the standards Jesus uses in the final judgment, particularly the difference between those welcomed into the kingdom and those who are turned away?

Colossians 1:20 (CEB), He (God) reconciled all things to himself through him (Christ), whether things on earth or in the heavens.

- Paul says God reconciled "all things" to himself through Christ, which includes things on earth and in the heavens. What does the scope of that phrase suggest about the extent of Christ's work, and why might it matter that reconciliation reaches beyond humanity to the whole of creation?

From the Sermon

- When have you struggled to reconcile what you believe about God's judgment with God's love and grace? How has that tension shaped the way you view or treat people whose beliefs differ from your own?

Digging Deeper on Your Own: Book Recommendation: **Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived.** In *Love Wins*, pastor and author Rob Bell takes on one of Christianity's most debated questions: what happens after we die? Bell challenges the traditional view that a small number of people go to heaven while the rest face eternal punishment, asking whether that picture fits with the God of love described in the Bible. He explores heaven and hell as realities that begin in the present, and he raises the possibility that God's love may ultimately reach further than many believers have been taught.

Practicing Gratitude and Prayer

What is something that you're grateful for and is there anything your small group can be praying for this week?

Close in Prayer