

Lay Preaching Program 2026 — Meeting summary (grouped by topic, with timestamps)

Meeting date/time: 2026-09-15T23:31:26.000Z Prepared for: Fallon King Participants: Pastor Holliday; John Holliday; Gene Hand; Fallon King; Jeff Livingston; NJ Synod - Dawn; Lynn Perry (Grace, Mendham); Yugaswaroopini Kumaraswamy

1. Opening, attendance, and technical issues

Greeting, intention to possibly go a bit over time, and note about participant count improving to 10. [00:04]

Report and explanation of prior week's Zoom issues: Dawn investigated, found Zoom acknowledged backend maintenance that degraded basic functions; recording availability noted. [03:58]

2. Invocation and leadership transitions

Opening prayer asking Holy Spirit to guide learning and technology; Amen responses. [06:02]
Pastor John introduced session leadership and thanked participants for serving as lay preachers. [06:25]

3. Review and continuation of prior session (Hebrew Bible / First Testament)

Recap of earlier discussion about seeing the Hebrew Bible (First Testament) as foreshadowing Jesus' life, death, resurrection; emphasis on thematic reading. [08:35]

Summary of Psalms and Wisdom literature (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs) and examples of Christ-like foreshadowing (Job, Jonah, Esther). [10:20]

Discussion of prophetic books (17), role of prophets as preachers and their function to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable; mention of major and minor prophets. [12:37]

Historical timeline highlights for the Hebrew Bible: key dates 722 BC (northern kingdom/Assyria) and 587 BC (fall of Jerusalem/Babylonian exile), and the later Persian return under Cyrus leading into Ezra/Nehemiah. [16:30]

4. Canon, authority, and Luther's perspective

Definition of canon as a measuring stick for authoritative Scripture; canon is "open" in that other readings can be used if they don't contradict Scripture. [27:14]

Ways to approach Scripture: Scripture as God's story of relationship, truth, and a combination of history and theme-focused reading (seeking God's activity). [28:05]

Luther's "canon within a canon" idea (centrality of Christ and certain texts that speak most clearly of God's love); personal example books (Genesis, Isaiah, Psalms, Mark, John, Romans). [33:05]

5. Bible study methods and Lutheran theological approach

Exegesis defined as drawing meaning from text; importance of prayer (Holy Spirit's guidance) and tools such as Lectio Divina. [35:10]

Consideration of historical context, original audience, literary genre, translations (Hebrew/Koine Greek), and the distinctives of Lutheran theology (law/gospel interplay). [36:25]

6. New Testament historical context and timeline

Roman world context (Pax Augustus, Roman roads aiding both control and gospel spread); Paul's missionary use of roads and sea routes. [40:12]

New Testament dating overview: Jesus' birth as "year zero," roughly 30 years before public ministry, crucifixion/resurrection/ascension around AD 33; Paul's letters written roughly AD 33–64; Mark as first Gospel (70 AD); Matthew/Luke (80–90 AD); John (~90–96 AD). [41:30]

Importance of AD 70 (destruction of the Second Temple) as a catalyst for reshaping religious practice and its relation to Mark's dating. [44:15]

7. Contents and composition of the New Testament

Overview of 27 New Testament books originally in Koine Greek and general groupings: Gospels, Acts, Pauline letters (undisputed, disputed, pastoral), Hebrews, General Epistles (Peter, John, James, Jude), Revelation. [46:10]

Discussion of the criteria for inclusion: apostolic connection, use in early church, and theological coherence. [48:00]

8. Formation of the Gospels and sources (Mark, Q, Matthew, Luke, John)

Oral transmission of eyewitness testimony followed by gradual writing; Mark uses earlier sayings and sources; theoretical Q source (common sayings material) used by Matthew and Luke; John stands apart with distinct theology and structure. [50:20]

Timeline/flow: eyewitness oral tradition → partial written collections → Mark's Gospel → Matthew/Luke built on Mark + Q + unique material → John as a later, distinct Gospel. [51:40]

9. Portrait of Jesus and Christology

Historical/physical notes about Jesus' likely appearance (shorter, olive-complexion) and caution against "warrior/Rambo" depictions that contradict New Testament portrayal. [54:10]

Explanation of the doctrine of the hypostatic union (Jesus fully God and fully human), described as a mystery essential to preaching. [56:05]

10. Gospel-specific emphases and pastoral implications

Matthew: longest Gospel, traditionally attributed to the former tax collector; audience likely Jewish Christians; themes include fulfillment of Hebrew prophecy, Jesus' Davidic and Mosaic connections, church imagery (Peter, "keys"), Great Commission, Sermon on the Mount, Beatitudes, Epiphany/Magi, and the sheep-and-goats parable. Lectionary Year A noted; upcoming preaching challenge (workers in the vineyard text). [58:00]

Mark: earliest Gospel (~70 AD), traditional author John Mark (companion of Peter); succinct, urgent style (16 chapters), emphasis on Jesus' humanity and suffering—important for pastors to show God's empathy with human suffering. Year B highlighted for Advent use. [01:08:20]

Luke: traditionally Luke the physician (companion of Paul), well-written Greek, strong concern for the poor, outcast, and marginalized; continuity with salvation history, inclusivity of Jews and Gentiles, emphasis on the Spirit, unique parables (Good Samaritan, Prodigal Son), and Acts as Luke's second volume continuing the Spirit's mission. Year C referenced for future preaching. [01:12:05]

John: traditionally John son of Zebedee; latest Gospel (~90–96 AD) with highest Christology—strong emphasis on Jesus as the incarnate Word, light vs. darkness, Book of Signs and Book of

Glory; John is used across all lectionary years and is central to Luther's "canon within a canon" reflections. [01:18:40]

11. Revelation and canonical concerns

Revelation (apocalyptic literature) included in the canon largely due to attribution to John the son of Zebedee; its uniqueness and late acceptance noted. [01:09:00]

12. Logistics and materials distribution

Slides and recording availability: John expected to share slides; presentation recording to be posted at Ascended website for later review. [24:10]

13. Practical preaching reminders and closing

Emphasis on law/gospel distinction in Lutheran preaching; seeing Christ in the neighbor (Matthew's ethic) and preaching with concern for marginalized people (Luke); pastors and lay preachers urged to use exegetical tools, historical context, and prayerful reading. [36:25]
[01:12:05]

Meeting adjournment notes: time management awareness and thanks to participants for their service; screen-sharing and teaching continued until wrap-up. [06:20] [54:00]