

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

1. John's Gospel — themes and purpose

Emphasis on women in leadership (Mary Magdalene as “apostle to the apostles”) and the unique theological emphasis found in John’s Gospel: written so people might come to faith and believe in Jesus as Messiah. [00:00]

2. Book of Acts — overview and key episodes

Acts as Luke’s second narrative: includes the Ascension (40 days after resurrection) and Pentecost (coming of the Spirit, multilingual proclamation). [03:10]

Relationship and complementary roles of Peter and Paul across Acts; structure: early chapters focus on Peter, later on Paul; shared feast day (June 29) and traditional martyrdoms in Rome. [03:36]

Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus and Ananias restoring his sight (Acts 9). [04:30]

Peter’s vision in Acts 10 and the opening of the gospel to Gentiles. [05:15]

“Acts 29” metaphor: the church and believers continue the mission under the Spirit. [06:00]

3. St. Paul — background, ministry, and theology

Paul's background: born Saul, Pharisee, Roman citizen, tentmaker, multilingual, not an original disciple but authored many New Testament writings and influenced Christian theology. [06:36]

Paul's churches and letters: Thessalonica (likely earliest preserved: theology of election; baptism as sign of being chosen), Corinth (church plant with themes like theology of the cross; Christ crucified as “foolishness” to some, wisdom to others), Rome (Paul’s magnum opus; justification by grace through faith). [08:04]

Theology of the cross: God revealed in unexpected weakness (manger, Golgotha), “treasure in earthen vessels,” strength in human weakness (2 Corinthians 4 and 12). [10:08]

Justification by grace through faith emphasized in Romans; “a person is justified by faith, apart from works of the law.” [11:12]

Martin Luther’s affinity for Paul and influence on Lutheranism. [12:00]

4. Revelation — nature and purpose

Revelation described as apocalyptic literature, symbolic and dealing with eschatology; examples of similar literature include Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah. [12:36]

Purpose: intended to bring hope to oppressed churches in Asia Minor; vision of the New Jerusalem and restoration (garden imagery, Tree of Life as image connected to the cross). [13:36]

Concluding pastoral note quoting Julian of Norwich: “All will be well... and if it isn't well, well, it isn't the end.” [14:36]

5. Questions and participant interactions

Reminder the session was recorded and will be available; transcript being transcribed. [15:00]

Question about biblical historicity (Gene): discussion about focusing on core themes (e.g., Jonah, Exodus deliverance) vs. literal details; Bible as truthful with some events recounted as they happened while emphasis is on God’s saving action. [15:40]

Question about Melchizedek (Jeff): explanation of Melchizedek as a mysterious priestly/kingly figure in Genesis and Hebrews, typologically linked to Christ (priestly and kingly functions). [17:10]
Fallon's question about resources/studies on how the biblical canon was formed and the Apocrypha: John unaware of a packaged Augsburg Fortress program; has done ad hoc studies and suggested potentially asking Augsburg Fortress for material; Fallon noted reading Justo González's Story of Christianity as a possible class resource. [18:44]
Clarification about upcoming sessions: next two weeks will cover Lutheran theology led by Pastor Eric Trozo; Pastor Holliday will be absent next week due to council meetings. [21:00]

6. Sermon assignment logistics

Discussion between Gene and NJ (Dawn) about sermon text selection: participants may choose a text and email Pastor Lisa (email details in the program letter/online) or be randomly assigned a passage; assignments will not be obscure. [22:36]

7. Closing and logistics

Final thanks, blessings, and good nights from leaders and participants; reminders about recorded sessions and upcoming speaker schedule. [20:48]

Participants (for context): John Holliday, Pastor Holliday, Fallon King, Lynn Perry (Grace, Mendham), Gene Hand, Jeff Livingston, Laura Dec, tbisgaard, Yugaswaroopini Kumaraswamy, NJ Synod - Dawn.
Meeting start time: 2026-09-16T00:32:43.000Z; current date: 2026-09-24T21:11:36.782Z.