



The Appalachian Lutheran

Issue #4

appalachianlutheranleague.org

Fall 2026

The Value of a Name

The Appalachian Lutheran League founded a preaching station on August 10th in Gallipolis, OH, a small city on the riverbank of the Ohio River, which separates the Buckeye State from West Virginia. After the service of Prayer and Preaching concluded, all twenty-something folks present sat down for a meal. One of the main courses of conversation pertained to the pronunciation of the word Gallipolis. Was it pronounced Gall-i-police or Gall-i-pol-is (the "o" as in "off")? It was concluded by those native to Gallia County that those who were from the city pronounced it the former; those who lived in the county the latter. This set off numerous other examples, such as: was the town of Patriot, also in Gallia County, pronounced Pay-triot or Pat-riot?



*Prayer and Preaching at the Gallipolis preaching station,
August 10, 2026*

On the one hand, however you pronounce either name, everyone will know where you are referring to. On the other

hand, it's important, particularly for those who live there, that one pronounces it correctly. This is because there is great value to a name. It's personal. Personal names separate humanity from the rest of creation. Animals don't give each other personal names, but my children have yet to capture a toad, snake, or lizard that did not receive a name within minutes of their captivity.

When Moses asked God for His name on Mount Sinai, God simply replied, "**I am who I am**" (Ex 3:14). This "name," which more describes God's eternal attribute, was written down only with the consonants Y-H-W-H (this name appears with the capital letters LORD in your Bibles). The reader needs to supply the vowel sounds. Is it pronounced Yahweh? Yahwah? Yehovah? A lot of people have added letters to *their* name doing research on this very topic. We may not ever know the proper pronunciation for absolute certain. As the case of Gallipolis demonstrated, perhaps there's room for more than one!

We know it can be dangerous to misuse God's name. The Lord says in the Ten Commandments, "**Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain**" (Ex 20:7). The fear of misuse, however, doesn't mean we should avoid it. In fact, the Bible tells us TO USE it. "**God the LORD**" says in Psalm 50:15, "**Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.**" How can one call upon God without using His name? Do we just say, "Hey, you, I need help," and assume the holy Triune God knows we are talking to Him? On the one hand, He does. He is omniscient. He knows all things. But that's not the point. When we pray, we direct our petitions to God the Father in the name of

God the Son with the help of God the Holy Spirit. Our God is personal to us, so we call Him by name. We are baptized into His name, after all, for **Matthew 28:19** teaches, **"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."**

Calling upon God's name whenever we are in any trouble, when we pray, praise, or give Him thanks is part of the life of the Christian, as the 2nd Commandment teaches. The value of a name confesses we have a personal relationship with those whom we address. When we meet new people or visit new places, one of the most important things to do is learn their names. It shows you care. God knows us all by name. It's therefore better to mispronounce – or even misspeak – a name than not to say a name at all. It's offensive to me, for example, when someone does not even try to say my last name. It tells me, "You don't even care to try to learn it." As God called you by name in Holy Baptism, so also we call Him by name in prayer and praise. We owe it to our neighbors to do the same. It demonstrates a personal love and care for them. Though the image of God that we have been created in has been smeared by sin, there is still something special about man's name. Adam, whose name means "Man," may have been the one to name the rest of creation (**Gen 2:20**), but he received his name from God (**Gen 5:2**). When you name something, you claim it. When you claim it, you claim responsibility to care for it. What great value there is in a name! So, use them. "Hey, Mark!" "Praying for you, Mary!" Don't ever let the fear of misuse, i.e., getting the name "wrong," stop you from trying!

In Christ,

Pastor Hromowyk, Zion Ev. Lutheran
Church, Columbus, OH

Preaching Station or Church Plant?

What's the Difference?

From the President, Rev. Daniel Golden

When you hear that A.L.L. is starting a preaching station, you might think a new church is on the way. That's a common assumption. But it's *not* the same thing.

What Is a Preaching Station?

A preaching station is a regular,

agreed-upon location where people meet to hear the Word of God preached to them. That's it. No building. No council. No budget.

It's for people who want a church in their area to go to.

A pastor shows up. He preaches the Word. Whether the Sacrament comes depends on the situation.

Who is in the room shapes what it looks like. Lifelong Lutherans need one thing. New Lutherans need another. People brand new to the Christian faith need something else.

The ones that work best are usually **60 to 90 minutes** from the nearest LCMS congregation. That's not a rule. It's a pattern we've seen. When there's no church within reach, a preaching station meets a real need.

And yes, it can meet in **your home**. You don't need a rented hall. A living room works just fine.

What Do the Local People Bring?

A place to meet. A time to meet. And the **word of mouth**.

You know your neighbors. We don't. The invitation is yours to carry.

How Often Does a Pastor Come?

Most preaching stations get a pastor **once a month**.

Gallipolis gets one twice a month. That's because several pastors live close enough to share the drive. Don't expect that everywhere. It depends on who is nearby.

What Is a Church Plant?

A church plant is the local people in a new location doing the hard work of planting a congregation.

Here's the key point. Pastors do not plant churches alone. Outside groups don't either. **ONLY the local people plant a congregation.**

Where A.L.L. Fits

A.L.L. does not plant churches. We *assist* the local people who are planting one. We help with what they can't cover on their own. The planting is theirs. We back them up.

Can One Become the Other?

Yes. A preaching station *can* become a church plant. But only with the **earnest desire of the local people**. Not on our timeline. Not because a donor hopes for it.

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." (1 Corinthians 3:6)

A preaching station is worth doing even if it never becomes anything more. The Word is preached. That is enough.

Can a Preaching Station Fade?

Yes. And we want to be honest about that.

Sometimes interest dries up. Sometimes there is no pastor within a couple of hours to get there.

And sometimes the locals decide an LCMS church is worth the drive. They join it. That's not a failure. The station did its job!

Not Sure Yet?

Maybe you're curious. Nothing is decided. That's fine. A visiting pastor can come to your home for catechesis and Bible study. **No strings attached.**

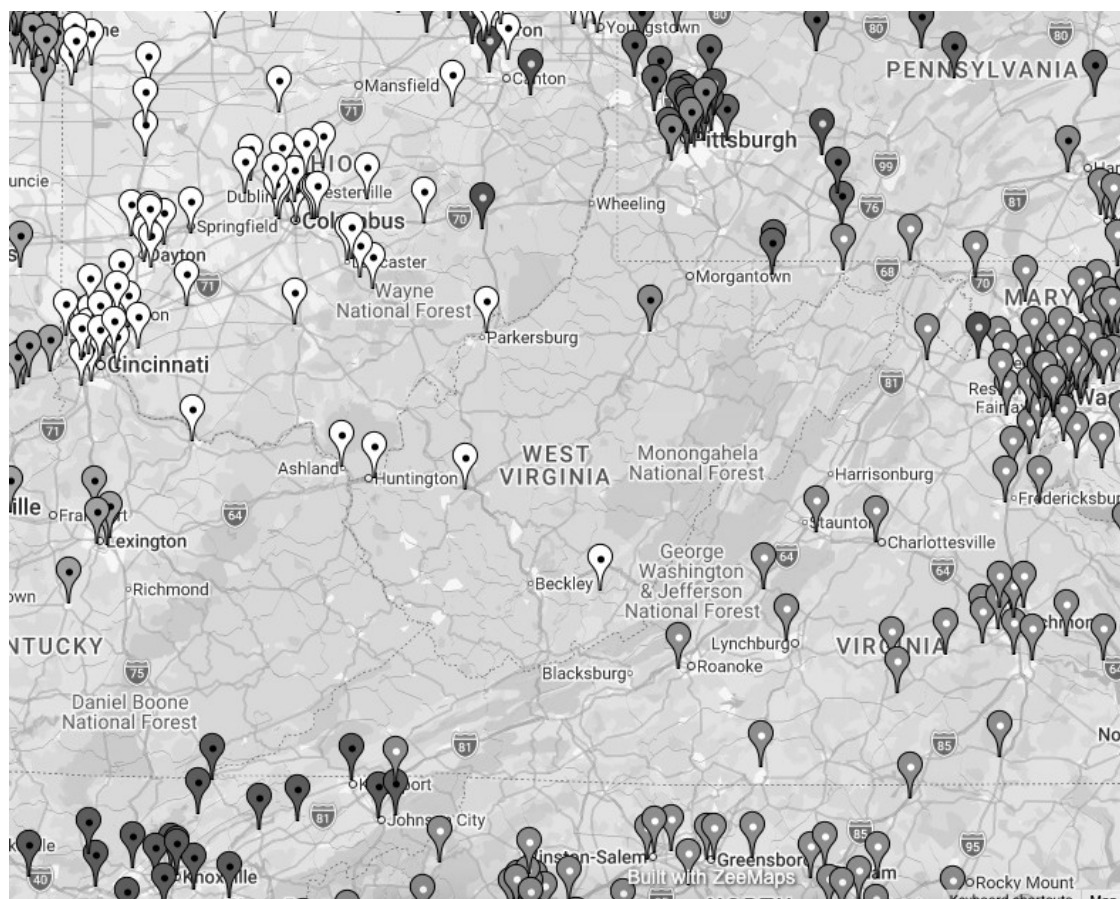
Let's Talk

Are you ready to plant a congregation where you live? Do you want a preaching station in your area? Or would you just like a pastor to visit?

Email us at

AppalachianLutheranLeague@gmail.com.
We'd love to hear from you!

Where Are the LCMS Churches?



Current LCMS congregations in and around Central Appalachia. Map built with ZeeMaps. Map data ©Google.

Take a look at this map. **Every pin is a current LCMS congregation.**

Now look at the middle. Central West Virginia. Eastern Kentucky. Southern Ohio. Hardly a pin.

People live there. Many of them are more than an hour from the nearest LCMS church.

That is where preaching stations belong. The best ones sit **60 to 90 minutes**

from the nearest LCMS congregation. Right in those empty spaces.

Do you live in one of them? Email us at

AppalachianLutheranLeague@gmail.com.
Let's put a pin on the map!

How to Start a Preaching Station

From the President, Rev. Daniel Golden

Do you want a preaching station where you live? Here is how it starts.

1. Email Us

Write to
AppalachianLutheranLeague@gmail.com.
Tell us where you are and who might come.

2. Let's Talk

We will ask a few questions. How far is the nearest LCMS church? Who is coming? Lifelong Lutherans, new Lutherans, or folks brand new to the faith? The answers shape what your station looks like.

3. Pick a Place and a Time

A rented room works. So does **your living room**. Just make it regular and agreed upon.

4. Spread the Word

This part is *yours*. You know your neighbors. We don't. Invite them.

5. We Send a Pastor

A.L.L. finds a pastor and **covers the cost** of getting him there. Most stations have a pastor once a month.

Not Ready Yet?

A visiting pastor can come to your home for catechesis and Bible study. **No strings attached.**

No building. No council. No budget.
Just the Word preached where you live!

St. John's Lutheran Church Establishing a Preaching Station in Morgantown

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bridgeport, West Virginia, is preparing to establish a new LCMS preaching station in Morgantown, with regular gatherings beginning during Advent.

This new work is envisioned as a "town and gown ministry," serving both the wider Morgantown community and the students, faculty, and families connected with West Virginia University. The preaching station is intended to bring faithful Lutheran preaching, catechesis, prayer, pastoral care, and Christian fellowship to a community that currently has limited access to a confessional Lutheran congregation.

St. John's plans to gather each

Wednesday evening in Morgantown for a shared meal, Bible study, and Vespers, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Christopher Harrison.

The congregation especially hopes to connect with Lutheran families, college students, young adults, and others in the Morgantown area who are looking for a confessional Lutheran church home. With WVU drawing students from across West Virginia and around the country, fellow Lutherans can play an important role simply by helping make connections.

If you have a child or grandchild (or anyone, for that matter) attending WVU, a family member living in Morgantown, a friend who has recently moved to the area, or anyone else who may benefit from a connection with the Church, please put them in touch with Pastor Harrison. He would be glad to hear from them personally, answer questions, provide pastoral care, or help them become connected with the new gathering.

Pastor Harrison can be reached by phone or text at 304-608-3597 or by email at pastorharrison@stjohnslutheranwv.org.

This work is also being strengthened through the support and encouragement of neighboring Lutherans. St. John's is especially grateful to the Rev. Benjamin Hertel and Zion Lutheran Church and St. John's of the Cove in Accident, Maryland, for their partnership and support as the Morgantown preaching station takes shape.

More information about the Morgantown preaching station, including updates as the ministry develops, is available at: stjohnslutheranwv.org/morgantown

Those who would like to help St. John's establish and sustain Lutheran ministry in Morgantown can also support the work financially. Gifts may be designated for the Morgantown mission through St. John's giving page: stjohnslutheranwv.org/give

Joseph Solberg

A.L.L. Board Member &
Congregation President

St. John's Lutheran Church, Bridgeport, WV

Christ Our Savior of the Valley, Alderson, WV

Have you ever been to Alderson?

It sits in the Greenbrier Valley in southern West Virginia. Most folks know it for the Fourth of July festival. Six decades strong!

It is also home to **Christ Our Savior of the Valley Lutheran Church**. A faithful LCMS congregation in the heart of southern West Virginia.

Christ Our Savior has been a mission for **ten years** now. **Rev. Paul Becker** serves them semi-regularly. He preaches the Word. He brings the Sacrament. He cares for the people.



*The people of Christ Our Savior with Rev. Paul Becker,
September 20, 2026*

This photo is from the **September 20** service. Three generations in one room. Little ones on laps.

This is what the work looks like. A small congregation. A faithful pastor. God's people gathered around His gifts.

If you are ever in the Greenbrier Valley, stop in and worship with them!

**103 Railroad Ave., Alderson, WV
24910**

Lutheranism FAQ

Aren't you Lutherans just "Catholic" light?

Do you worship Martin Luther?

Did Martin Luther King Jr. start your church?

Are you even Christians, or are you some kind of cult?

These are all great questions. I have been asked all of these questions. These

questions come from visitors or others I interact with. These are important questions because, in the absence of answers, one tends to fill in gaps in our understanding. One will use snippets of things we have heard, rumors others have shared, or skepticism. You may have heard about Lutherans and wondered some of these same questions. You may have wondered, what do they believe? So, my goal in this article is to clarify some of these questions and let you know that we are a church built on Christ Alone!

We are not a cult. This is so important. My wife was asked this question at the beauty shop just last year. She was talking to the hairdresser, and my wife mentioned that her husband (me) is a Lutheran pastor. (Our local church has been in town for over 50 years, but we are in an area of Ohio with very few Lutherans.) And the hairdresser then said, "Are you guys even Christians? Are you a cult?" I think part of the reason people think this is because our church body takes its name from a person, Martin Luther. Back in the 1500s, to disparage the Reformation, people referred to the new "Evangelical" church as "Lutherans." We kind of just took on that name, and it stuck.

So, are we talking about Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK)? No. Martin Luther King Jr. lived in the mid-1900s, and Martin Luther lived in the 1500s. But there is a connection between the two. When MLK was born, he was named Michael. His father, also a reverend, went to Germany and toured the places that played parts in the life of Luther. Upon his return, Michael Sr. changed his own name and the name of his son to Martin Luther. The senior King saw Martin Luther as a rebel and was impressed with the words defending the idea of Faith, Christ, and Scripture alone: "Here I stand, I can do no other." The senior Martin wanted the junior to grow up to be a rebel as well.

We do not worship Martin Luther. Martin Luther was a man that lived in the 1500s, and he started the Reformation. It was not his desire to start a new church, but rather to reform the abuses and mistakes the church in his day was committing. We remember the 95 Theses that Luther nailed to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany, on October 31, 1517. As the movement grew, others with the same understanding became involved, and out of that a new denomination was formed. Most of our confessional documents were written by other authors than by Luther

himself. The Lutheran Church derives its theology from the Scriptures, Alone! Our confessional documents found in the Book of Concord are not just for Lutherans but were written for all Christians.

What those confessions do is, through the Scriptures, bring comfort to troubled souls. Lutherans have faith in Christ alone, through the Scriptures alone, through Grace alone. We have faith in the incarnate Christ that died on the Cross for the sins of the whole world. Those that have faith in Christ benefit from that death. This makes us part of the “catholic faith.” So, we are part of the Church Catholic, the universal church which trusts in Christ. We are not part of the Roman Catholic Church. That was the church Martin Luther tried to reform, but in the end he created a church that broke away from that church. While our services have resemblance to the Roman Catholics’, we are not “Catholic Light.” Our service is merely an effort by poor sinners to God that He gives us through His Son, Jesus, and the salvation He alone provides.

This October is the month we are drawn to remember the Reformation and Martin Luther. It is in October our church body remembers the Reformation and the freeing of the Gospel message. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to the Appalachian Lutheran League or any LCMS pastor. In the meantime, here are a couple of videos you can watch to learn more:

The Thrivent *Luther* movie: Apple and Amazon. Also, on YouTube there is a channel by Matt Whitman, and he has a series on the Lutherans and one on the Reformation.

In the Name of Jesus,
Rev. Mark Hartsough, Senior Pastor, New
Hope Lutheran Church, Granville/Newark,
OH

Will I See My Pet in Heaven?

A Devotional from Pastor Golden

Will I see my pet in heaven?

Sooner or later, someone will ask you. Usually a child.

Some say no way. Some say of course. Even Lutherans don’t agree.

I thought about it the other day as I buried my dog. It was raining, because of course it was. And all I could think about was the beginning.

God made the animals before the fall. They were in Eden. Somewhere along the way, people tamed some of them into pets.

God uses all things for His will. And His will is good. I’ve talked with people who live alone with a dog or a cat. That pet is a gift from God. **No doubt about it.**

God gives comfort through companionship however He wants. Even through a dog. He is God, after all. So as I shoveled the dirt, I was thanking Him.

Scripture gives us a glimpse of the new heavens and the new earth.

“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat.... They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain.” (Isaiah 11:6, 9)

Animals are there. And they live in peace. We say a wolf and a lamb are “naturally” enemies. Like a dog and a cat. But in a world without sin, **peace is what’s natural.** Fighting is not.

Revelation shows us the same thing. The river of life. The tree of life. *“No longer will there be anything accursed.” (Revelation 22:3)*

That’s Eden again. And Eden had animals.

So will there be animals after the resurrection? I think so. Will you see Fido? Scripture doesn’t say. Animals are not given the gift of the Spirit the way we are. My opinion? I don’t think you will.

But I can tell you this. **You won’t miss Fido.**

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” (Revelation 21:4)

Instead, you may find yourself thanking God. For the companion He gave you, right when you needed it most.

What Does It Cost?

From the President, Rev. Daniel Golden

You give to A.L.L. So where does your money go?

A Preaching Station

One preaching station costs **\$250 to \$600 a month.** The range depends on how far the pastor drives and how often he comes.

A.L.L. covers that cost. The local people bring the place, the time, and the word of mouth. We get the pastor there.

A Church Plant

A church plant is different. The costs

are comprehensive. That money comes from the local congregation and LCMS church planting grants.

A.L.L. funds preaching stations. *Not* church plants.

Where We Are Now

Right now, our average monthly cost is about **\$750**. That covers everything.

But that number is not fixed. **Every new preaching station adds to it.**

Your gift does more than keep today's stations going. It opens the door to the next one!

When Giving Falls Short

We'll be honest. If giving comes up short, the pastor may come less often.

Give Where You Care

Any gift can be designated to a specific preaching station. Is there a town you care about? Tell us. Your gift goes there.

Meet the Board

Appalachian Lutheran League Board of Directors

Who is behind A.L.L.? These are the people responsible for your gifts and for this work.

Rev. Daniel Golden, President

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Parkersburg, WV

Joni Burns, Secretary & Treasurer

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Parkersburg, WV

Rev. Paul Becker

Retired, Kingsport, TN (serves Christ Our Savior, Alderson, WV)

Adam Cranford

SMP Vicar, Silver Valley, NC

Rev. Mark Hartsough

New Hope Lutheran Church, Granville & Newark, OH

Rev. Wesley Hromowyk

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Columbus, OH

Joseph Solberg

President, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bridgeport, WV

Other Pastors Serving in Appalachia

These men make the drive. Keep them in your prayers.

Rev. Christopher Harrison

Serving in Morgantown, WV

Rev. Christopher McCarthy

Helping serve in Gallipolis, OH

Rev. Roger Sayre

Helping serve in Gallipolis, OH

Rev. Richard Sovitzky

Helping serve in Chillicothe, OH

Morning Prayer

In the morning when you get up, make the sign of the holy cross and say:

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this little prayer:

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Then go joyfully to your work, singing a hymn, like that of the Ten Commandments, or whatever your devotion may suggest.

Evening Prayer

In the evening when you go to bed, make the sign of the holy cross and say:

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this little prayer:

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Then go to sleep at once and in good cheer

Information about the Appalachian Lutheran League can be found at
appalachianlutheranleague.org

To support A.L.L., checks may be made out to Appalachian Lutheran League and mailed to:
3500 Broad St, Parkersburg, WV 26104. Electronic giving is also available on our website.

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We appreciate your prayers.

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