

CONSTITUTION
ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF CLARION TOWNSHIP
November 15, 2011

PREAMBLE

We, baptized members of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desiring to unite together to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission, do hereby adopt this constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this congregation shall be Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of Clarion Township, La Moille, Illinois.

This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the state of Illinois.

ARTICLE II – CONFESSION OF FAITH

This congregation accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as a whole and in all their parts as the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God and submits to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.

As brief and true statements of the doctrine of the Word of God, this congregation accepts and confesses the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, the unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Catechisms as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.

ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The object and purpose of this congregation shall be to proclaim and propagate the Christian faith through the Means of Grace, and to cooperate in the work and service of the church of Christ. For these purposes, this congregation shall:

A. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the Sacraments are administered.

B. Teach God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone.

C. Sanctify members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling.

D. Provide pastoral care and encourage all members to participate in this ministry.

E. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs.

ARTICLE IV – AFFILIATION

A. This congregation shall operate as a self-governing entity affiliated with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC).

1. This congregation accepts the Statement of Faith of LCMC and agrees to follow its constitution and bylaws.

2. This congregation agrees to contract pastoral leadership in accordance with LCMC's call procedures.

3. To the extent that there is any conflict between the constitution or bylaws of LCMC and this Constitution, the Constitution of this church set forth herein shall govern.

B. A decision to affiliate with any additional or different Lutheran church body or other Christian organization shall require approval by the congregational council and a two-thirds majority consent of the voting members present at a regular or special meeting of the congregation.

C. A decision to terminate its affiliation with LCMC or other Lutheran church body or other Christian organization shall require approval by the congregational council and a two-thirds majority consent of the voting members present at a regular or special meeting of the congregation. A certified copy of the approved resolution shall be sent to the church affiliation being terminated.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

Members of this congregation shall be those who are identified as such at the time this constitution is adopted, or who are admitted hereafter; and who maintain membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and bylaws.

Members shall be classified as follows;

A. Baptized members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been

previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.

B. Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons who have completed adult confirmation.

C. Voting members are those confirmed members who have reached the age of eighteen and who have both communed in and made a contribution to the congregation during the preceding or current year.

D. Associate members are persons holding membership in other Lutheran or Christian congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. They have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights and eligibility for elected offices or membership on the Congregation Council of this congregation.

E. Inactive members are persons who have not participated in any church activities, have not made a contribution and have not received communion for a period of two years. These persons may be contacted to determine their intentions for retaining membership.

F. Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following: death, resignation, or transfer.

ARTICLE VI – POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

A. In all matters of Christian faith and life the authority of the Word of God shall be supreme.

B. In all matters not decided by the Word of God and not subject to civil laws, the congregation itself, not any individual or group within it, shall have the right of decision.

C. All schools, societies, and other organizations within the congregation shall be organized only with the approval of the congregation and shall operate in harmony with its policies.

D. With the exception of those powers and decisions that are expressly reserved herein to the Congregation Council, this congregation is authorized to conduct all other business functions and make such decisions as are necessary to fulfill the Purpose of this Church. Where a procedure for making a certain decision is

established by this Constitution, that procedure shall be followed. Decisions the congregation shall make include, but are not limited, to:

1. Call a pastor.
2. Terminate the call of a pastor.
3. Approve the annual budget.
4. Acquire real and personal property by gift, bequest, purchase or other lawful means.
5. Hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose.
6. Sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means.
7. Elect its Congregational Council and any other necessary committees.
8. Terminate and/or change its church affiliation in accordance with this constitution.
9. Adopt new or make amendment to this Constitution.

ARTICLE VII – LEGAL OWNERSHIP

- A. Title to all real or personal property acquired by the congregation, its organizations, or individuals for use by the congregation and its organizations, shall be held by the congregation.
- B. Real property shall not be purchased, disposed of, or encumbered in any manner except by resolution adopted by not less than a 2/3 majority vote of the voting members present and voting at a legally called meeting of the congregation.
- C. Should the congregation be dissolved or fall into disuse, its real and personal property shall be liquidated to settle its debts, provide for maintenance of the cemetery, and fulfill all other financial obligations. The remainder of the funds, if any, will be distributed to Nonprofit Christian organization(s) as determined by the Church Council.

ARTICLE VIII - CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

- A. The power and authority of this congregation shall be exercised through the congregational meeting, called and held in conformity with civil laws and the provisions of the constitution and bylaws of the congregation.
- B. The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held in January and a semi-annual meeting in June.

- C. A Special Congregational Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, the president of this congregation, or by the written request of at least 20 voting members. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
- D. Notice of all special meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail to the households of all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, and sent to the last known address of such voting members shall be sufficient.
- E. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.
- F. All actions by the congregation shall be by majority vote except as otherwise provided in this constitution.
- G. A Quorum shall be those voting members present.

ARTICLE IX – CONGREGATION COUNCIL

- A. The Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor and at least six (6) but no more than nine (9) members, elected by the congregation at the annual meeting, each for a term of three years with approximately one third of the members elected each year. The number of members, between six (6) and nine (9), to be on the Congregation Council, shall be determined by majority vote of the then existing Congregation Council at the time of the annual meeting. The pastor shall be an advisory member of the congregational council, but without a vote.
- B. No member shall be eligible to serve more than two (2) full terms consecutively.
- C. Members of the Congregation Council must be voting members of the congregation.
- D. The Congregation Council shall oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
- E. The Congregation Council shall maintain supportive relationships with the pastor and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their

calling, appointment, or employment.

- F. The Congregation Council shall arrange for pastoral service during sickness or absence of the pastor.
- G. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs.
 - 1. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.
 - 2. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to \$10,000 for items not included in the budget.
 - 3. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation and shall supervise the expenditure of funds following its adoption.
 - 4. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.
 - 5. The Congregational Council shall annually appoint auditors to oversee all congregational funds.
- H. The Congregation Council may provide for an annual review of the membership roster.
- I. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for adjustments to the pastor's salary, subject to the congregation's approval.
- J. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the appointment, supervision, and salary adjustment of the lay workers of the congregation.
- K. The Congregation Council shall generally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor, the president, or at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.
- L. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council.
- M. All Congregation Council meetings are open to members of the congregation unless the council president has declared an executive session.
- N. The Congregation Council may discipline its own members and declare a council position vacant.

- O. The Congregation Council may appoint a voting member to fill a vacancy until the next election.

ARTICLE X - OFFICERS

- A. The officers of this congregation shall be a President, Vice-President, Treasurer and a Secretary and any other officers as shall be determined by the Congregation Council.
- B. All officers, with the exception of the Treasurer, will be elected by the Congregation Council and shall be elected members of the Congregation Council. The Treasurer may or may not be a member of the Congregation Council and shall be appointed by majority vote of the Congregation Council.
- C. All officers will be elected at the organizational meeting after the election and shall serve for a one-year term.
- D. Duties of the officers:
 - 1. The president shall preside over meetings of the Congregation Council and of the congregation unless the meeting decides otherwise.
 - 2. The vice president shall preside in the absence of the president unless the meeting decides otherwise.
 - 3. The secretary shall keep the minutes of the Congregation Council and of the congregation and shall preserve its archives.
 - 4. The general treasurer shall be custodian of those funds of the congregation which are designated for operating expenses: and shall disburse all such funds in accordance with the decisions of the congregation or the Congregation Council. They shall present an audited report to the annual congregation meeting and such other reports to the Congregation Council as may be required.
 - 5. Other appointed or elected treasurers shall be custodian of their respective funds and shall disperse such funds in accordance with the decisions of the congregation or the Congregation Council. Audited reports shall be presented to the annual congregational meeting and such other reports to the Congregation Council as may be required.

ARTICLE XI THE PASTOR

A. The Call

1. Authority to call a pastor shall rest in the congregation. Such authority to call shall be exercised by at least a two-thirds majority vote of voting members present at a meeting properly called for that purpose.
2. When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of six voting members shall be appointed by the Congregational Council. Term of office will terminate at installation of the newly-called pastor.
3. Only pastors who are in agreement with Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church's Constitution, Bylaws, Values and Core Beliefs, and meet the requirements for certification or contract call for the Lutheran church body (if any) with which this church is affiliated may be called and retained as pastors for this church.
4. When the congregation has voted to call a pastor, it shall issue a Letter of Call, signed by the President and Secretary of the Congregation Council, to the pastor-elect. The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in the Letter of Call.
5. Normally a call shall be for an indefinite period of time; however a contract may be issued for a specific amount of time.

B. Duties and responsibilities of the Pastor

1. Consistent with the faith and practice of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, the pastor shall preach the Word, administer the sacraments, conduct public worship, provide pastoral care, offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead. The pastor shall consult with all schools and organizations of the congregation: shall install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council, and with the council administer discipline.
2. The pastor shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, new members, and members dismissed or transferred from the congregation. The pastor shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the congregation.
3. The pastor shall submit an annual report of his/her ministry to the congregation.

C. Termination of a Call

1. If the pastor receives a call to another congregation, the pastor shall consult with the congregation council before coming to a decision. The pastor shall attempt to reach a decision as quickly as possible, normally within one month. If the call is accepted, the pastor shall terminate his ministry no sooner than one month.
2. If in the judgment of the congregation the pastor is no longer able to serve it satisfactorily, the pastor may be requested to resign. However, before the resignation is requested, the matter shall first be carefully considered at a meeting of the congregation council and in consultation with the church's affiliation. A resolution requesting the pastor's resignation must be adopted by not less than a 2/3 majority of those voting members present at a Special Meeting of the congregation called to consider such a resolution. Not less than ten days' notice of such a meeting must be given. When the pastor's resignation has been requested in the manner here specified, the pastor shall vacate the office at such a time as the congregation shall specify.
3. The call of a pastor shall be terminated only for any of the following reasons:
 - a. Mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term of years.
 - b. Resignation of the pastor.
 - c. Inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor.
 - d. The physical or mental incapacity of the pastor.
 - e. Disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty.
 - f. The dissolution of the congregation.
 - g. In the case of alleged local difficulties which imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the congregational council shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a legally called meeting of the congregation.
 - h. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of the pastor, competent testimony shall be obtained from a professional with expertise

in the area of the alleged incapacity. When such disability is established, and after consulting with the church affiliation, the congregational council may declare a temporary vacancy of no more than three months. At this time the situation may be reassessed and the congregation shall be consulted.

4. The congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation.
5. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be appointed with the consent of the congregational council.

ARTICLE XII – COMMUNION

- A. This congregation invites all of its members, who have been prepared to receive the Sacrament, to participate regularly in Holy Communion.
- B. Preparation for Holy Communion will normally be provided for persons as young as ten years of age.
- C. Participation in Holy Communion shall be open to all persons who accept that the Lord's Supper is the reception of "The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ given with bread and wine instituted by Christ Himself for us to eat and drink." We hold that a "person is well prepared and worthy who believes these words, given and shed for you for the remission of sins. But anyone who does not believe these words or doubts them, is neither prepared nor worthy, for the words for you require simply a believing heart." It is further urged that communicants be individually mindful of the need and importance of sincere repentance and the earnest desire to amend one's sinful life.
- D. Record of participation in Holy Communion shall be entered upon the books of the congregation. If a member of another congregation communes, notice shall be sent to same congregation upon request.

ARTICLE XIII – BYLAWS

- A. This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.
- B. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member provided

however, that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular Congregational Meeting and that the Congregation Council notify the congregation of the proposal with its recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregational Meeting. Notification shall include a written publication and announcement at worship service. Adoption will be by a majority vote of those voting members present.

ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS

- A. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least 10 voting members or by the Congregational Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the members of the proposal with their recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- B. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:
 - 1. Be approved, with or without change, at a properly called meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of voting members present.
 - 2. Be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of voting members present.
 - 3. Have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.
- C. A new Constitution may be proposed, approved and ratified according to the same procedures established for Amendments by this Article.