

THE CONSTITUTION OF ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
MOUNT PLEASANT, MI

PREAMBLE

Whereas Christians enter a fellowship with one another when they are called to be children of God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ [John 1:12, 13; Eph 4:4-6]; and

Whereas the Lord of the Church has directed that the spiritual life of His people be nourished and supported through the fellowship which He has established [Col. 3:16; Eph. 4:1-16; I Cor. 12; Eph. 5:18-21; Hebrews 10:23-25]; and

Whereas Christians are to keep the unity of the faith and to unite in a confession of their faith [Eph. 4:1-6; I Cor. 1:10]; and

Whereas Christians, as a body, should administer the office of the keys [John 20:21-23; Matt. 18:15-20]; and

Whereas the task of preaching the Gospel, enjoined upon us by our Lord Jesus Christ, requires the joint efforts of the members of the body of Christ as well as our private witness [Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:18-20; Rom.10:11-15]; and

Whereas in such body all things should be done decently and in order [I Cor. 14:40]; and

Whereas our fellow Christians in times past have given us an example for such life together as Christians [Acts 2:42];

Therefore we, the members of Zion Lutheran Church, herewith adopt the following Constitution according to which all affairs of this congregation, both spiritual and material, shall be governed.

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this congregation shall be: ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH, MOUNT PLEASANT, MICHIGAN.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this congregation shall be to extend the kingdom of God by the preaching and teaching of the Word of God and by the administration of the Sacraments according to the doctrinal standard of the Lutheran Church [Article III], and to foster Christian fellowship and love.

ARTICLE III – STANDARD OF CONFESSION AND TEACHING

This congregation accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired and revealed Word of God, and all the symbolical books of the Lutheran Church, contained in the *Book of Concord* of the year 1580, as the accurate presentation and true exposition of Christian doctrine drawn from the Holy Scriptures. Specifically, these symbols are: the three ecumenical Creeds, namely the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed; the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; the Apology of the Augsburg Confession; the Smalkald Articles; Luther's Small Catechism; Luther's Large Catechism; and the Formula of Concord.

No doctrine or practice in conflict, or inconsistent, with the above norms of our faith and life shall be taught or tolerated in this congregation.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this congregation shall consist of the following:

A. Baptized Members

Baptized members are all members who have been baptized with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost including children on the membership roster who have not yet been confirmed.

B. Communicant Members

Communicant members are those baptized members of the congregation who have received formal instruction in the fundamental doctrines of the Lutheran Church; have formally declared their acceptance of the doctrinal standard contained in Article III of this Constitution; and hold no membership in any organization

having religious doctrines or ceremonies which are contrary to the Word of God and the calling of a Christian; and have been received into communicant membership by procedures described in the Bylaws of this Constitution.

C: Voting Members

All Communicant members of the congregation who have reached the age of 18 years and have signed the Constitution of this congregation in a regular meeting of the Voters Assembly shall have the right to vote in the meetings of the Voters Assembly except in cases otherwise restricted by this Constitution of its Bylaws.

ARTICLE V – AUTHORITY OF THE CONGREGATION

A: General

The congregation as a body, through the voting members, shall have supreme power to administer and manage all its external and internal affairs.

The establishment and conduct of all institutions and societies within the congregation, such as Sunday School, youth societies, ladies' organizations, choir, etc., shall at all times be subject to the approval and supervision of the congregation. The congregation, however, shall not be empowered to decide anything contrary to the Word of God and the symbols of the Lutheran Church [Article III], and any such decision shall be null and void.

B: Right of Calling

The right of calling pastors and teachers shall be vested in the congregation and exercised through the voting members and shall never be delegated to a smaller body or to an individual.

C: Decisions

Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided by the Word of God; other matters shall be decided by the Voters Assembly by a majority vote of the members present at a legally called meeting unless otherwise specified by the Constitution or Bylaws.

D: Power of Officers

Officers or committees of the congregation, whether elected by the voters or appointed, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them, and whatever power may have been delegated to them may at any time be altered or revoked by the voters.

E: Removal from Office

Any officer, pastor or teacher may be removed from office by the congregation, by ballot, in Christian lawful order, for one of the following causes: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, and willful neglect of official duties or evident and protracted incapacity to perform the function of the office to which that person has been called. Such action shall, however, require a 2/3 majority vote.

ARTICLE VI – PRIVILEGES OF WOMEN

Women who have reached the age of 18 years may hold voting membership in the congregation and serve as officers and as members of boards and committees as long as these positions are not directly involved in the specific functions of the pastoral office [preaching, the public administration of the sacraments, church discipline] and as long as this service does not violate the order of creation [usurping authority over men]. Accordingly, they shall not serve as members of the Board of Elders, as chairman of the congregation, or as vice-chairman of the congregation.

ARTICLE VII – FULL-TIME PROFESSIONAL CHURCH WORKERS

Only such candidates shall be called and elected to serve as pastors or as full-time professional church workers who profess acceptance of, and pledge faithful adherence to, the confessions of this congregation as set forth in Article III of this Constitution and are qualified for their work. Such full-time church workers shall, in the call extended to and accepted by them, be pledged to this doctrinal standard.

The office of pastor and teacher shall furthermore be conferred upon such ministers, teachers, and candidates only as are members of, or have applied for membership in, the same orthodox synod to which the congregation belongs, and have been properly and rightly called by the congregation.

In the absence of adequate cause for dismissal, as defined in the Constitution of the congregation, the tenure of office of a called pastor or Christian day school teacher shall be the remainder of his active life, or until the Lord calls him into another field of service.

ARTICLE VIII – OFFICERS

The officers of this congregation shall be such officers, boards, or committees as the Bylaws of this congregation may prescribe.

ARTICLE IX – CHURCH PRACTICES

Only such hymns, prayers and liturgies shall be used in the public services of the congregation and in all ministerial acts as conform to the doctrinal standard of Article III. Likewise, in all classes for instruction in Christian doctrine only such books and materials shall be used as conform to this standard.

ARTICLE X – PROPERTY RIGHTS

If, at any time, a separation should take place on account of doctrine within this congregation, the advice of the officers and District and Synod shall be sought. If, despite all efforts to compose differences in peace and love, a division into factions of the congregation shall occur, the property of the congregation and all benefits therewith connected shall remain with those members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to Articles III and XI of this Constitution.

In the event the congregation should totally disband for any reason, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be transferred to the Michigan District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

ARTICLE XI – SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

The congregation shall hold membership in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as long as this synod remains true to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. The congregation and its pastor shall participate in the district convention of the synod in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of said district.

ARTICLE XII – BYLAWS

This congregation may adopt such Bylaws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purpose in conformity with this Constitution.

ARTICLE XIII – UNALTERABLE ARTICLES OF THE CONSTITUTION

The following articles of this Constitution or sections thereof shall be unalterable and irrevocable: III, IV, VII, IX, XIII.

ARTICLE XIV – CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws may be adopted at a regular meeting of the Voters Assembly provided the following requirements are met:

1. Proposed amendment must not conflict with the Word of God or the symbols of the Lutheran Church as enumerated in Article III.
2. All voting members shall receive a copy of the proposed amendment in writing prior to the meeting in which the amendment is to be proposed.
3. The proposed amendment to the Constitution shall receive an affirmative vote of a 3/4 majority of the members present at two consecutive regular meetings of the Voters Assembly.
4. The proposed amendment of the Bylaws shall receive the affirmative vote of a 3/4 majority of the voting members present.

Date Adopted: 4 January 1981

Amended: 14 November 1982

NOTICE

All changes or amendments to this constitution must be approved by the Committee on Constitutions of the Michigan District of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod before such changes or amendments can become effective. [See the Synodical Handbook, paragraph 1.21]

All changes and amendments which are to be submitted to the Committee on Constitutions are to be sent to the District President of the Michigan District of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.