

# **ZION EVANGELICAL CHURCH**

**Millstadt, Illinois**

**Founded – January 17, 1835**

**CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS**

**Revised June 9, 2013**

## **ARTICLE I**

### **NAME**

101 Name;

The name of this church shall be Zion Evangelical Church, Millstadt, Illinois.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **PURPOSE**

102 Purpose:

It shall be the purpose of this organization to establish in its community a Christian congregation for worship, to promote the Christian life, and to advance the Kingdom of God by all available means, both at home and abroad.

## **ARTICLE III**

103 Polity:

The government of this Church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all of its affairs, subject to the laws of the State of Illinois relating to religious congregations, as is or may be amended.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **FAITH AND COVENANT:**

104 Faith:

This church acknowledges as its sole head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of humankind. It acknowledges as brothers and sisters in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the word of God, the Holy Scriptures of the old and new testaments, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed into the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own. This faith is expressed in the Apostles' Creed and the Evangelical Catechism. In accordance with the teachings of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

105 Covenant:

We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the word and will of God. We purpose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in the entire world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice and peace. As did our forebears, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

## **ARTICLE V**

### 106 Meetings:

Congregational meetings shall be held in January and November of each year and such other meetings as are provided for in the by-laws.

### 107 Quorum:

Fifty communicant/active members shall constitute a quorum.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **MEMBERSHIP:**

108: All persons who have been baptized and who have been duly received into its communion by confirmation, by letter of transfer, or by profession of faith shall be communicant/active members of this congregation and shall be entitled to the full share of fellowship and blessings of the church.

109: Only communicant/active members shall have the right to voice and vote in the congregation, and also to represent the congregation on the council or other judicatories of the church, as provided by the By-laws.

110: Persons who are members in good standing of another Christian denomination, and who wish to be affiliated with Zion Evangelical Church for the purpose of the use of the church and make annual contributions, may, under special circumstances, and with agreement of the pastor and church council, become associate members of this congregation. These circumstances may include, but are not necessarily limited to, such considerations as a short tenure in the community (i.e. college and seminary students), or marriage to a member of this congregation, when the person is a member of another denomination and wishes currently to remain within that denomination. Associate members are invited to participate in the life of the congregation, just as any other member, however, they would need to become communicant/active members of the congregation before they would be eligible to vote or serve on boards or committees.

111: Inactive members are those who have failed to fulfill their responsibilities as communicant/active members as stated in the By-laws.

112: Members who have permanently changed their residences to other communities or cities and who do not prefer to retain their affiliation here, shall be urged by the pastor to obtain letters of transfer, and as soon as possible, unite with another congregation.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **THE COUNCIL**

113: The congregation shall have a council.

114: The council shall be composed of nine members plus one youth, along with the pastor and treasurer serving as ex-officio members. It shall have jurisdiction and oversight of the congregation and all its' organizations. Five members shall constitute a quorum. It shall organize as provided for in the By-laws.

115: To serve on the council, they must be a communicate/active member of the church for at least one year, chosen by the congregation, and installed to their offices.

116: The manner of election, terms of office, and rights and duties shall be defined in the By-laws.

117: If a youth under 21 years of age wants to serve on council they may do so, and shall serve as liaison to the youth of the congregation.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **THE PASTOR**

120: The Search Committee shall nominate one candidate to the congregation. The congregation shall consider only one candidate at a time and vote by ballot for or against his/her election. If he/she is elected the Council shall tender him/her a contract.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **PROPERTY**

121: The congregation may, in its corporate name, sue and be sued, hold purchase and receive title by gift, grant or other conveyance of and to any property, real or personal, with power to mortgage, sell or convey the same, providing the state laws permit.

122: In case of division in the membership of the congregation, it takes 2/3 majority to submit the question of the right to the property to an unbiased mediator and the decision of said judiciary shall be binding on all members of the congregation. In case of dissolution of the congregation, the title to property shall vest in the Village of Millstadt.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **ORGANIZATIONS**

123: All auxiliary organizations within the congregation are subordinate to the council and shall report annually to the congregation at its annual meeting.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **AMENDMENTS**

124: Additions and alterations of this constitution and its by-laws may be proposed in any regularly called meeting of the congregation. They shall be referred to the council, which shall consider the same and report to the duly called meeting of the congregation. Said additions and alterations can be adopted only by two-thirds majority of all communicant/active members present and voting.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **PREAMBLE**

These By-Laws, consistent with the Constitution of Zion Evangelical Church, further define and regulate provisions and church policy.

### **SECTION 1. OFFICIAL CHURCH YEAR**

A. The official year of this congregation shall be from January 1 to December 31.

### **SECTION 2. PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS**

A: All members shall receive the blessed privileges of a Christian congregation: The Christian compassion, joy and support of members; a right to religious education and ministerial service; invitations to join in fellowship of auxiliary church organizations. Communicant/active members also receive the privileges of voice and vote in congregational meetings; opportunities to serve on committees, boards and church council; and opportunities to represent the congregation as delegates to meetings and assemblies.

### **SECTION 3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMUNICANT/ACTIVE MEMBERS**

A: Members shall pledge themselves to attend the regular worship of the church and the celebration of the Lord's Supper; to live the Christian life; to share in the life and work of the church; to contribute to its support and benevolence; to seek diligently the spiritual welfare and harmony of the membership and community. They shall present their children for baptism at the earliest opportune time after birth, sincerely resolving to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They shall send them for religious instruction at the proper time so that they might be confirmed.

### **SECTION 4. INACTIVE MEMBERSHIP**

A: Any member may be transferred to inactive membership on his or her own request.

B: Members who for a period of one (1) year, have not communicated with the church, attended services or contributed to the support of the church, or whose addresses have been unknown, may be transferred to inactive membership. Prior to such transfer, the church shall attempt to communicate with such members, and ask whether they wish to be considered communicant/active members, inactive members, given letters of transfer to another church, or dropped from the membership. The responses of such members shall be honored as given. Such members who do not respond may, by a vote of the council, be transferred to inactive membership. In order to be reinstated as a communicant/active member, an inactive member must submit a written request to the church council for approval.

C: Inactive members shall have the right to participate fully in church services, to receive the Sacraments, and to be listed on the rolls of the church as inactive members. Inactive members will not be included on the church's mailing list or offering envelope list.

## **SECTION 5. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

A: Congregational meetings shall be held in January and November of each year, at a date and time to be set by the council. Only business listed on the agenda may be transacted at a congregational meeting. Items to be considered for inclusion on the agenda must be submitted by communicant/active members at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting.

B: Special meetings may be called by the council or upon written request of five percent of the communicant/active members. The council shall issue a call for such meetings within two weeks after the request has been received. Proper notice shall be given of the time, place and purpose of a special congregational meeting. Only such business as has been mentioned in the call may be transacted at such special meetings.

C: When the council decides an emergency exists that could effect the health and the safety of members of the congregation, and/or when a lack of immediate action could result in damage to church property, they can call an emergency congregational meeting waiving the two (2) week notice.

D: There may be at least one annual in-put meeting with each lay organization represented and members at large, for the good of the church.

E. Unless otherwise provided for, all proceedings of the congregation shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

## **SECTION 6. NOMINATIONS**

A: Nominations for council members are to be made at the time of the November congregational meeting. At least one person shall be nominated for each council opening by an appointed nomination committee and there shall be adequate provision for nominations from the floor of the meeting.

## **SECTION 7. ELECTIONS**

A: The council shall be elected at the November congregational meeting. If there are two or more candidates for any office, election shall be by ballot by a majority of the votes cast. They shall be elected for a full term of three years or until their successors have been elected and shall not be eligible for re-election before a full year has elapsed after the termination of their previous full term as a member of the council. Person(s) under 21 will be elected annually, not to exceed two years.

B: Any vacancy occurring in the church council during the year shall be temporarily filled by appointment of the church council until the next annual meeting. Should two or more vacancies occur simultaneously, the congregation in a special meeting must fill the vacancies for the unexpired term.

## **SECTION 8. COUNCIL**

A: The administration of the congregation is vested in the council. The council is composed of 9 members plus one youth along with the pastor and treasurer as ex-officio members.

B: The council shall transact the business of the church, make provisions for the preparations and raising of the budget for the congregation, and other benevolent purposes; be empowered to employ annually such salaried workers as may be required and not otherwise provided and make complete provisions for adequate support of the staff of workers. It shall keep a complete and accurate reporting of its proceedings, be the custodian of all congregational records, and report to the congregation at the annual meeting.

C: The president of the council shall appoint three members of the congregation, not active members of the council, to make an audit of the books and records of the church, who shall report to the congregation at the January annual meeting or special meeting called for the purpose of their findings and make recommendations as they see fit.

D: The council shall direct the pastor to keep a complete record of baptisms, confirmations, marriages and deaths. All records shall be property of the church and as such are open to inspection by regular constituted authorities of the church. Upon dissolution of the congregation, its records shall become property of the Village of Millstadt.

E: The council shall approve all bills before payment and shall instruct the treasurer to pay same when approved.

F: The council may authorize any required or extraordinary expense, but if such expense exceeds the sum of three thousand dollars (\$3000) it must receive approval of the congregation.

G: The council shall, through its president, appoint such committees, as it may find necessary to accomplish its work.

## **SECTION 9. COUNCIL MEETINGS**

A: The incoming council members will be installed the first Sunday in January of each year. Immediately after installation, the Council shall meet and elect officers. The Council shall meet at least once a month at a place and time convenient to the members for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it. Special meetings are subject to the call of the President, Pastor, or three members of the council.

## **SECTION 10. COUNCIL OFFICERS**

A: The council shall organize itself by electing a President, Vice-President, and a Secretary, who shall hold office for one year or until their successors have been elected.

## **SECTION 11. DUTIES OF COUNCIL OFFICERS**

A: The President is to preside at all congregational and council meetings. He/She shall remind the Pastor to announce all regular and special meetings in accordance with the constitution. He/She shall sign all minutes and documents of the congregation and council.

B: The Vice President shall assume the duties and have the power of the President in his/her absence or disability. He/She shall also do all in his/her power to be of assistance to the President and prepare the annual usher schedule.

C: The Secretary shall keep a record of all transactions at the meetings of the congregation and council, issue all notices where so required or ordered and attend to all correspondence. He/She shall sign all contracts, deeds or loans with the President.

## **SECTION 12. DUTIES OF COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

A: Strive to act as Christians in all cases and circumstances.

B: Be concerned with everything in the life of the congregation and community.

C: Set a good example for the members of the congregation by regular attendance at church services and functions.

D: Counsel with and respect the rights of the Pastor.

E: Respect the opinions and have due regard for the efforts of their associates in all manners pertaining to their office and shall be guided by the conclusions of the congregation.

F: Refrain from discussing problems of the church in public.

G: Determine the use of the church property by individuals, or by organizations not connected to the church.

H: Be charged with the duty of securing funds necessary for the support of the church in its various activities and benevolences and to that end, appeal to the members of the church to support the programs of the church and attend church services regularly.

I: Stand by in a body when the Lord's Supper is celebrated. Provide and serve, together with pastor; the elements of the Lord's Supper.

J: Control and have care of all physical property of the congregation concerning the need for repairs or replacement.

K: Supervise and control all the valuable documents of the church and at the end of the year make an audit of the records kept by the pastor and report the findings to the congregation at its annual meeting.

L: Have the care and control of the bequests, legacies, perpetual trust funds, whether real or personal, including the supervision, investment and administration of the same; and all money securities and real estate so received, including reserves set up by the congregation, shall be invested and the income there from turned over to the treasurer of the congregation for general purposes unless otherwise specifically prescribed by the donor.

### **SECTION 13. THE PASTOR**

A: The pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period. In order to terminate the relationship, three months notice shall be given either by the Pastor or the congregation, unless by mutual consent.

### **SECTION 14. DUTIES OF THE PASTOR**

A: It shall be the duty of the Pastor to set a good example to his/her congregation and to conduct all services on Sundays, holidays and such other days as the congregation may desire, to direct the work of religious education, administer the Holy Sacraments, visit the sick, comfort the distressed, and to perform such duties as belong to the pastor's office. He/she shall keep a record of all services performed and make an annual report of his/her work to the congregation.

### **SECTION 15. RIGHTS OF THE PASTOR**

A: The pastor is an ex-officio member of the council and all organizations within the church as long as he/she is the pastor, no other clergy shall perform any religious ceremony in the church without his/her consent. To invite a speaker; either during the temporary absence of the pastor or for special occasions, the consent of both pastor and council are necessary. The pastor's salary shall be paid promptly in semi-monthly installments and shall be sufficient to relieve him/her of temporal cares as far as possible and to preserve the dignity of his/her calling, subject however to the provisions of the contract between the pastor and the congregation. His/her moving expenses, when he/she assumes the charge, shall be borne in full by the congregation.

### **SECTION 16. FINANCES**

A: The finances of the church shall be administered by the budget system.

B: The Budget Committee shall be composed of the President of the congregation as convener and chairperson; church treasurer; the pastor (ex-officio); and three members of the congregation approved by the council who shall serve three year terms with a new member appointed each year. The Budget Committee shall prepare and present to the congregation at its November annual meeting or other meetings when so requested, a budget for the operation of the church for the prospective outgo of the congregation for the period for which the budget is set up. The budget shall be only directive, and not binding.

## **SECTION 17. THE TREASURER**

A: The council shall employ a treasurer; who will be an ex-officio member of the council.

B: It shall be the duty of the treasurer to keep accurate records of all financial transactions, attend all council meetings, sign documents where required and assist the council with necessary financial information.

## **SECTION 18. THE PASTOR OR MINISTER OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

A: The Council shall employ a Pastor or Minister of Christian Education who will be an ex-officio member of the Board of Christian Education and the Council.

B. It shall be the duty of the Pastor or Minister of Christian Education to administer, encourage, and approve all educational programs involving children, youth, and adults in cooperation with the Pastor and the Board of Christian Education.

## **SECTION 19. BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

A: This congregation shall always maintain a Sunday School and shall provide facilities and equipment that are adequate for an effective program of Christian education. The Board of Christian Education shall use its own discretion in the selection of lesson materials and periodicals.

B: The Board of Christian Education shall be composed of three members of the congregation, each member serving a minimum term of three years, one of which shall be elected annually at the congregational meeting. The Christian Education Director and the Pastor shall be ex-officio members of this Board.

C: The Board of Christian Education shall have primary responsibility for the Sunday School, its regular operation, and the securing and training of the teachers. They shall also have responsibility for securing youth counselors and to have continuing interest in the youth programs. They are to be aware of the confirmation program of the church and give the pastor any needed guidance in its operation. They are to assess needs and promote Christian education such as Bible Studies, Daily Vacation Bible School, or any other project of Christian education in which it seems wise for this congregation to participate.

## **SECTION 20. STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY**

A. We believe that term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.

B. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

C. We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

D. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

E. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

F. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church.