

CONGREGATION SELF STUDY

Date Prepared: 7/2/2009

I. For The Record

Name and Location of Congregation: Zion Lutheran Church

311 S. Elm Street

Staunton, IL 62088

Circuit Counselor: Pastor Keith GeRue

Address: Girard, IL 62640

Phone: (217) 965-4816

Vacancy Pastor: Rev. William Gleason

Address: 311 S. Elm Street

Phone: (618) 635-2880

Date when pastoral vacancy began: 6/10/2009

Who is the "official contact person" in the congregation?

Name: David Cisler

Address: 9250 Renken Road

Staunton, IL 62088

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II. Statistical Information

	2008 <u>Present</u>	2006 <u>3 years ago</u>	2004 <u>5 years ago</u>
Communicant membership:	<u>965</u>	<u>871</u>	<u>922</u>
Baptized membership:	<u>1295</u>	<u>1311</u>	<u>1272</u>
Average Sunday worship service attendance:	<u>395</u>	<u>351</u>	<u>358</u>
Sunday School enrollment:	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Average Sunday School attendance:	<u>69</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>66</u>
Bible classes (combined average weekly attendance)			
Adult Bible classes:	<u>30-35</u>	<u>No Record Kept</u>	<u>No Record Kept</u>
Youth Bible classes:	<u>6-8 (High School)</u>	<u>No Record Kept</u>	<u>No Record Kept</u>
Total congregational budget:	<u>\$619552.19</u>	<u>\$542106.48</u>	<u>\$466561.00</u>
Synod/District Mission offerings:	<u>\$12667.14</u>	<u>\$14175.17</u>	<u>\$10342.00</u>
Average per communicant giving for all purposes:	<u>\$364.51</u>	<u>\$311.52</u>	<u>\$297.93</u>

III. General Information

How long did the previous pastor serve? 6 years

Average length of ministry of the last 3 pastors? 3 years

Would you describe your community as: _____ growing; _____ declining; X stable?

What are the major occupations of your membership?

Farmers, Trade Workers

Do you conduct a Vacation Bible School? Yes Most recent enrollment 90

Who is in charge? **Angie Heim, Marlene Kalika**

Are special qualifications or training sessions required for Sunday School teachers? No

Besides the pastor, are others involved in teaching adult Bible classes? Yes If so, are special qualifications or training sessions required? _____

Vicar and field worker- Seminary students

With which hymnal is your congregation most familiar? **Lutheran Service Book**

Does the congregation have a regular evangelism board? Yes If so, how many members are involved? 7 Is a particular evangelism "method" used?

If yes, describe it here:

There is no method for direct Evangelism but several outreach programs are in place.

If no, do you feel a regular evangelism program is needed or desired? _____

Why or why not?

How many people were brought into the congregation during the past year? (2008) 7 by adult confirmation or baptism; _____ by profession of faith; 12 by transfer.

How many people were removed from the congregation during the past year? 9 by removal; 3 by transfer; 8 by death.

What percentage of the membership did not commune at least once during the past year? **40%**

Your average Sunday church attendance is 27% of your total baptized membership.

What type of Stewardship program do you use?

- Every Member Visit
- Cottage (group) meetings
- Personal interviews
- Commitments made during church service
- A variety of programs
- No specific program

What percent of your members make a regular financial pledge? ____%

Do your offerings for District/Synod work come from:

- ____ A regular percent of total offerings
- X** A fixed budget amount
- ____ Separate mission offering envelopes
- ____ Mission festival or other special mission Sundays

Do you have a youth program? **Yes**

If so, how many youth are involved (average)? **6-10**

What percent of eligible youth is this? ____%

Is Bible study a regular part of the youth program? **Yes**

Does the congregation practice woman suffrage? **Yes**

Which, if any, offices or committee memberships are held by women?

What kind of administrative structure do you use?

(Voters' Assembly, Church Council, Lay Ministry Board, etc.)

Voter's Assembly, Church Council and Lay Ministry Board

IV. Pastor's Compensation

Do you use the salary guidelines provided by District? **Yes**

Is your pastor's salary ____ above; **X** below; or ____ equal to the guidelines figure?

Is the pastor's salary regularly reviewed? Yes By whom?

Elders/Voters

Amount of car allowance: \$3,500- mileage

Do you furnish:	Parsonage	<u>X</u>	
	Utilities	<u>X</u>	
	Housing allowance	<u>X</u>	(amount? 50% of salary)
	Housing equity allowance	_____	
	Concordia Health Plan	<u>X</u>	
	Disability and Survivor Plan	_____	
	Retirement and Survivor Plan	_____	
	Allowance for Cont. Ed.	<u>X</u>	(amount? \$800.00)
	Pastoral Conference Expenses	<u>X</u>	

If a parsonage is furnished:

How many bedrooms? 4. What size family can the parsonage comfortably accommodate? 5. Are any appliances furnished? X

What are the arrangements for day(s) off and vacation?

Elders must be notified of time off.

Is the study/office provided in the church, or in the parsonage?

Parish center and Parsonage

V. Congregational Expectations and Goals

List several goals toward which your congregation should be working in future years.

- Be more welcoming toward guests (maybe a meet and greet)
- Cut spending- stay within the budget
- School expansion- need to increase number of students
- Continued support of the Day Care, Adult Bible Study, Sunday School, and Day School
- Better support of Pastor and teachers, financially and spiritually
- Better prepare our elected officers to be effective leaders (conferences, seminaries. Etc)
- Contact former members via personal letters and new activities
- Train lay people to assist with congregation growth
- Continue bible studies
- Unity! Get more of the congregation involved
- Stronger relationship with church and school
- Building program to increase available space

List at least 3 areas in which you feel the congregation is strong (things the congregation does well).

- Comes together to complete Church projects and school growth
- Strong outreach to children and young adults- better than ever before
- Sausage Dinner and Auction were successful
- Care for one another through prayer chains and small group meetings
- Community involvement
- Bible study and Christ care groups
- Commitment to the school
- Feeling of community within the Church
- Willingness to volunteer as a congregation
- Visibility in the community
- Reverence during worship, strong maintenance of facilities
- Congregation supports Church gatherings
- Support each other in times of need, friendliness and openness

Are there any new things the congregation should be doing which it is not doing now?

- Continue community outreach
- Stay within the budget- NO OVERSPENDING!
- Get different medical coverage- Not Concordia, requires employees to portino of premium
- Build a parking lot
- Congregation should be more receptive to changes in worship, board needs to be more unified
- Strongly encourage more members to get involved in the community
- More Christcare leaders so more groups can exist
- More organized work groups so burden doesn't fall on same individuals
- More effort in increasing Sunday school attendance-start with young adults
- Better orient service towards younger generation, update music
- Build better relationship with public school, better emphasis on stronger academics
- Make new and old members feel more welcome
- More fundraisers that are group and fun oriented- similar to dinner auction
- Unification of budget school, church and day care

What things the congregation is now doing do you feel could or should be done better. Or, in what areas do you feel the congregation needs most growth?

- Every member should be equal
- No bills should be paid without a receipt; consider hiring a CPA
- Overhaul medical insurance coverage
- Expand membership and school student enrollment
- More upbeat music, less sad, funeral style music
- More peace and joy in the congregation, remove bitterness and hard feelings
- Better follow through with planned meetings
- Assimilating new members or Christian growth opportunities
- Better organized meetings so Pastor is not exhausted
- Improve attendance at council/voters' meeting, improve Sunday school attendance
- Encourage more donation church
- SINGING!
- Be more active in greeting strangers; need more Chirstcare groups
- More democracy and less monarchy
- Continued support of the Vicar Program

What are two things that you feel your congregation needs more than anything else right now, to be most effective?

- Work together as friends and be more open-minded to others' concerns
- Good leadership and God's blessing
- Making a sound budget and adhering to it
- Increase student enrollment, outreach, and membership
- Pastor that can communicate and teach the importance of the scripture
- Effective leadership and communications
- Maintenance of relationships within the congregation
- Loving leader and an open-minded congregation
- Diplomacy
- Bridge gaps between church and the school
- One general fund and not so many different funds, better cooperation
- Faith
- Participation and cohesiveness
- Positive leadership

How would you summarize the purpose for which your congregation exists?

- Preaching the Bible
- Bring non-believers into the faith, support one another in our service to the Lord
- To grow the school and family fellowship
- The work of Jesus for Zion Lutheran Church, spread the Word and grow in fellowship
- To further the Kingdom of God found in the person of Jesus Christ
- Promote growth and knowledge of Christ and Lutheran teachings
- To grow in faith, serve one another and spread God's word
- To spread the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people in our community and world
- To spread the gospel of Jesus through words and actions (via Holy Spirit)
- Act 2: 41, 42
- Bring others to God, Zion school education, worship services on Saturday, Sunday, and Special
- To spread the word the Good News of Jesus, encourage each other in our spiritual life
- God
- To make disciples- more outreach and "in reach" needed
- Our mission statement- "The Work of Jesus for Zion Lutheran Church is to spread the Gospel and grow in fellowship"

VI. Pastoral Expectations

We recognize that the following may be very difficult to do, but we hope it will be helpful to you. Please try to rank the following pastoral functions, traits, and abilities according to what you feel is the order of importance for your parish. A list of explanations for each category is appended to assist you. Please rate each item with a number from 1 to 10, with a 1 rating meaning “of no importance,” and a 10 rating meaning of utmost importance.

<u>8</u> Tact	<u>7</u> Singles Ministry
<u>9</u> Patience	<u>8</u> Older Adult Ministry
<u>9</u> Cooperation	<u>9</u> Family Ministry
<u>9</u> Initiative	<u>8</u> Ministry to Inactives
<u>9</u> Administration	<u>8</u> Small Group Ministries
<u>10</u> Leadership	<u>9</u> Assimilation of New Members
<u>9</u> Innovation	<u>8</u> Lay Leadership Development
<u>7</u> Creative	<u>8</u> Personal Witnessing
<u>9</u> People Skills	<u>8</u> Counseling
<u>8</u> Community Involvement	<u>10</u> Preaching Content
<u>7</u> Personal Grooming	<u>9</u> Preaching Delivery
<u>8</u> Openness to Continuing Education	<u>9</u> Teaching Ability
<u>6</u> Conference Participation	<u>9</u> Worship
<u>7</u> Computer Literate	<u>8</u> Stewardship
<u>9</u> Children’s Ministry	<u>9</u> Visitation (sick, shut-in, outreach, and home)
<u>8</u> Youth Ministry	
<u>9</u> Young Adult Ministry	

What do you feel are the most important personal qualities for a pastor to have?

- True spirituality and a vested interest in the community of the church
- Sense of Humor-Empathy toward people
- Ability to listen to listen to people’s problems and offer sound advice in loving manner
- To relate to all members
- Honesty, compassion, and secure with himself
- Lead by example, concern for the community and its members, live his faith
- Seek the wisdom of God to lead
- Leadership with compassion for the church as a whole
- Good communication skills and prayerfulness
- Patience, committed to teaching God’s truth
- Open, approachable, and friendly

- Cooperation and tact
- Humble and cool-tempered
- Strong speaker, sincere interest in all age groups, ability to relate to all members

What things do you think are most necessary for maintaining good relationships between pastor and people?

- Honesty, steadfast adherence to the Lutheran doctrine
- Open communication
- Openness
- Concern, involvement, and **follow-up**
- Passion for leading according to God's will
- Listening and understanding
- Open mind, respect for the congregation's needs and wants
- Love each member of the church no matters what their family affiliations
- Regular church attendance by the people
- Genuine concern for the welfare of the congregation

Do you feel the congregation is sensitive to the pastor's need for "private time?" (For prayer, study, family, recreation.)

- Response was very divided but there is a slight consensus that the congregation is sensitive to the pastor's need for private time, but a better job could be done to respect a pastor's personal needs.

RATING CATEGORIES FOR THE PASTORS

TACT: Speaks and acts in a manner to maintain good relations with people, and works at not intentionally giving offense. Works to deepen good relations with all people, and loves people as redeemed souls in the blood of Jesus Christ. Is careful and sensitive in regard to what he says and does in order not to impede the proclamation of the true word of God.

PATIENCE: Bears the burdens of the ministry without complaining, gives people the benefit of the doubt and is a good model of putting the best construction on what people say and do. Is not hasty or impetuous in his actions and decisions. Exhibits the Scriptural virtue of "longsuffering."

COOPERATION: Cooperates with the people as the Priesthood of Believers, seeks to work in concert with the leaders of the congregation. Is a team player, and makes a conscious effort to maintain a good working relationship with all the people of the parish, being particularly sensitive to local traditions, practices and concerns.

INITIATIVE: Works at being a good leader, is a self-starter and energetic and faithful in his work. Can be depended on to do his work well and without constant supervision.

ADMINISTRATION: Exhibits good leadership and management skills. Works well with boards and committees of the congregation so that the work of the church is faithfully carried out in an efficient, orderly, evangelical, and doctrinally sound way. Works at equipping people in the parish for their tasks and takes the time to properly inform and train them for their duties. Evangelically calls people responsible for various tasks to be accountable for those tasks. Maintains parish records in a responsible manner, and completes reports in good order and in a timely fashion. Supervises staff in an efficient, caring, and responsible manner.

LEADERSHIP: Keeps before the people of the congregation a vision of where they are to be going and what they are to be doing. Has a good understanding of the mission of the church and the priorities necessary to accomplish that mission. Encourages the support and participation of the people in the work to be done without being dictatorial.

INNOVATION: Being faithful to the Scripture, he brings ideas and advice to matters which the congregation is addressing, or needs to address. Will examine or try new ideas, methods or devices.

CREATIVE: Is imaginative, and able to effect a course of action or behavior with new techniques or approaches.

PEOPLE SKILLS: Successfully works hard at getting along with all people, has a pleasing personality, and is sensitive, pleasant, and empathetic. Is well regarded by his people and peers.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Is engaged with the community in ways that he is able to help and assist, and is visible and known in and by the community. Is sensitive and responsive to the needs of those outside the congregation.

PERSONAL GROOMING: Is clean and well appearing and dresses in a way that does not offend nor draw undue attention to himself. His appearance is consistent with his position, and does not reflect poorly on his congregation.

OPENNESS TO CONTINUING EDUCATION: Is willing to continue studying and learning in order to remain well informed and well trained in his Calling.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION: Is faithful in attending pastor's conferences, and takes an active role in such conferences, convocations, and the like.

COMPUTER LITERATE: Is familiar with computers and able to use them competently in his work and in service to his congregation.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY: Relates well to children, and communicates successfully with them. Has a high regard for the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and other children's ministries in the congregation.

YOUTH MINISTRY: Has an interest in and skill for working with young people. Understands that young people are also the church and works to equip them with God's word, saving faith, and the ability to live the Christian life. Is patient with youth, and understands the special challenges that they face.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY: Works well with this age group (18 – 30), and is sensitive to their special perspective on things and the needs in their lives.

SINGLES MINISTRY: Is comfortable and able to work with single adults and is sensitive to their special challenges and circumstances in the world. He understands that they do not at times fit into social structure that caters to couples and families.

OLDER ADULT MINISTRY: Has an interest in and skill for working with older adults. Is sensitive to their needs, willing to listen to their concerns, and gentle and patient with them in their weaknesses. Is faithful and conscientious in providing Word and Sacrament ministry to the shut-ins.

FAMILY MINISTRY: Is sensitive to the needs of families, is helpful in bringing Biblical truth to bear on such issues as parenting, discipline in the family, and special issues arising in single parent families.

MINISTRY TO INACTIVES: Is concerned about members who are not active in the parish, visits in their homes, and works at bringing the back into the active life and service of the congregation.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES: Works well with small groups, such as Bible study groups, peer groups, special interest groups, and the like. He understands small group dynamics, and can identify and train small group leaders.

ASSIMILATION OF NEW MEMBERS: Is good at nurturing new members and helping them feel at home in the congregation. He assists the new members in becoming active and contributing members of the parish. He is sensitive to the special needs of people who are new to a congregation.

LAY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: Is capable to identifying people with good leadership qualities and then training and encouraging these people to assume leadership roles in the parish. Works at equipping people to carry out duties and responsibilities in the congregation.

PERSONAL WITNESSING: Has a genuine concern for the lost, and conveys that concern to the people of the parish. Makes evangelism calls and encourages and trains the congregation to do the same. Maintains his personal life so that he is an example of good witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

COUNSELING: Open and assessable as a pastoral counselor to God's people with God's word, but clearly understands his limits in terms of needs outside of the spiritual realm. Knows when he can help, and when he should refer to others. Carefully keeps all information in regard to counseling confidential. Is a good listener, is not judgmental, and uses God's word appropriately.

PREACHING CONTENT: Understands that preaching is more than a presentation of Biblical narrative and Confessional soundness, but must communicate and proclaim Law and Gospel. Knows that preaching which edifies is presenting Law and Gospel in such a way that even a child can understand it. Makes the Gospel prominent in preaching, but preaches the whole word of God with faithfulness. Makes clear application of the word of God to lives of the people of the congregation. Is faithful to the Scripture and Confessions in his sermons.

PREACHING DELIVERY: Preaches in a manner that makes the sermon interesting and understandable. Preaches with confidence and with a passion for the word of God and for the people that God has placed in his care. Preaches in an engaging manner using good communication skills, and makes good use of illustrations.

TEACHING ABILITY: Understands that teaching is more than lecturing, and uses methods appropriate to his hearers, whether children or adults. Works to present material so that people grow in knowledge, attitude, and skill in regard to the Christian faith and life. Works to train teachers in the parish so that

others in Sunday School classes or Bible classes may assist him in his work of teaching God's word in the congregation.

WORSHIP: Understands nature of worship and leads the congregation in worship on a regular basis, and in appropriate manner and form. Carefully prepares for each worship service, and leads the congregation in understanding that in true Christian worship, that God is present in His Word and Sacraments and through these means of grace is delivering to His people the gifts that He has for them in Jesus Christ. He teaches and encourages the people to attend the worship services in God's House faithfully, and works hard to make each service Spiritually rich and nourishing.

STEWARDSHIP: Teaches God's people the Biblical principles of Christian stewardship, and models that in his own life. Works to help the people understand and practice what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

VISITING: Understands that personal contact with members of the congregation and prospective members is very important. Makes visits to the homes of the people of the congregation, and also maintains a posture of availability to members who want to come and visit with him. Reaches out to people and is assessable to all, and is sensitive to the needs of the sick and shut-in. Gives high priority to individual soul care.

Handwriting is a bit difficult for me, so I'm going to cheat and answer your questions on here, sorry for any inconvenience.

Q: What do you feel are the most important personal qualities for a pastor to have?

We need someone who is outgoing. We also need someone who is willing to become familiar with our families and personal situations. We (the members) do not want to simply be another face in the crowd.

Q: What things do you think are the most necessary for maintaining good relationships between psator and people?

See above. Years ago when I attended Zion, as a non-member, I don't think the pastor ever introduced himself to me, or otherwise went out of his way to make me feel welcome. The same could be said, at least at that time, of members. It wasn't until Pastor Reek came and met me at my grandmother's house did I feel included. We need someone who will seek out the newer members or guests and make them feel like they are welcome to be part of the team.

Q: Do you feel the congregation is sensitive to the pastor's need for private time?

No, probably not. Until right before he left, I was not aware Pastor Meador had set time off.. I also know people....we need a clear guideline of when the pastor is available and when he is not.

Q: List several goals toward which your congregation should be working in the future years.

Expanding the base of younger members. There are not that many, and while past that is because of how younger people are these days. (I'm astounded by the number of non-Christians I meet), in 20 years numbers are going to be in trouble if we can't keep younger members involved.

Q: List at least three areas in which you feel the congregation is strong.

The congregation does feel like a family, once you are known. I feel there are a number of people who are involved in the church that I could approach with the help if I needed it.

The congregation is still involved in local events, especially where things like the sausage supper are concerned. There are a number of churches in town but I could not tell you who they were, but Zion is known throughout town.

The congregation is also great about sticking to our traditions. I'm not all that interested in bringing in fireworks and clowns to "shake things up." Everything changes, but I have been to other churches that don't even feel like churches.

Q: Are here any things the congregation should be doing which it is not doing now? There is only one that comes to mind. This year's Easter Week services included an event from Vicar Todd's church, an all night prayer vigil. Now, it seemed like there were not many volunteers, but I was one of them. I went planning to stay from 1-2am, and I ended up staying until almost 4:40. It was one of the most powerful experiences I have ever had, and I would love to see this continued on a yearly basis. It's something we could do that's not expensive, and the idea of payer cards was wonderful. This event took place at a time of great turmoil in our own lives here, and it really put things into perspective. Of course, if this event continued, Vicar Todd would no longer be with us, but the new vicar or elders could run things. I would acutally be interested in volunteering if help was needed (especially in overnight hours). It was probably the neatest experience I have had since I joined the church.

Q: What things is the congregation is doing now do you feel could or should be done better? Or, in what areas do you feel the congregation needs the most growth?

One of things that I noticed as a new member was a slight lack of information Things are moving in the right direction in this area, (for example, the blue cards that were added to each row explaining Lutheran service). However, there were some things that we found a bit confusing. Thankfully, we did have several meetings with Pastor Meador, and he was able to explain some things. It would be nice to put together a new member packet, or maybe something with a bit more information could be given out. This is going to get especially important while we search for a new pastor. Some questions that we had we didn't have an easy-to-find answer included:

How often do you have to have adult instructional classes? I only knew about them because I'd take them once before.

If a stranger is sitting in our pew, how do they know how to become part of the family?

Who are our board members? Who is available to answer questions? Who are the leaders among the congregation?

Information on Sunday School is a little vague. Our kids would like to join, but we have never found out how it works. How do you sign a child up? Where do you go to get started?

General information could be a bit more available. For example there is some of this information in the back of the church, and we all know that, but do visitors and guests? Let's get together a packet that included basics, mentions the great stuff the congregation does, (sausage supper, etc.) and give people a reason to come back. I do also was the mention that this is one area that Vicar Todd has excelled in. I know one week we brought guests with us to church, and shortly thereafter he showed up at their house to talk to them about the church. I understand some people aren't interested, but I do feel like we should have come and gone for weeks and still not been real clear about who talk to or where to get some basic information.

Q: What are two things you feel your congregation needs more than anything else right now?

Right now, we need to stick together and all work towards the same goal. As expected some have decided this is a good time to leave the church. I love Pastor Meador, but I don't to church to worship him. The second we need is to work to all be kept up to date on where things stand as far as finding a new pastor, and so far, everyone seems to be on the right track with that one.

Q: How would you summarize the purpose for which your congregation exists?

To spread the word of the Lord, both literally and by our actions!!!

Thanks for your time,

Dave Dittmaier