

First English/Zion Lutheran Partnership Agreement

ARTICLE I – PURPOSE

The purpose of this Partnership Agreement is to authorize a relationship between the following congregations: First English Lutheran Church, Ortonville, Minnesota and Zion Lutheran Church, Ortonville, Minnesota.

ARTICLE II - MISSION STATEMENTS

First English: By the grace of God, First English Lutheran Church will grow as one family, secure in the knowledge of Christ's gift of salvation, proclaiming God's love to all, and to serve God's people. We are here to offer peace, hope, support, comfort, and a sense of belonging to all who enter our doors and beyond; to walk in faith together sharing in each other's joys and sorrows; to value every person as a child of God, no matter the age, gender, or ethnicity. We are here to be the church, to be love.

Zion: Called and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we, the members of Zion will:

- Proclaim to people the "Good News" of Jesus Christ
- Worship Christ together each week
- Welcome people into our "Fellowship of Believers"
- Witness to God's Grace and serve our communities and the world
- Provide spiritual, emotional and physical support for people in need

ARTICLE III – Partnership Identity

The name by which the Partnership is to be known will be First English/Zion Lutheran Partnership (also referred to in this document by the term: the Partnership).

ARTICLE IV – Congregational Identity

Each congregation will maintain its own identity as it now exists and will be accountable for representation at Southwestern Minnesota Synod and their respective Conference events and for the expenses of such representation at those functions.

ARTICLE V – Property

1. Each congregation retains ownership of its church property and parsonage (if applicable).
2. Each congregation will be responsible for the physical upkeep of their own parsonage (if applicable) and congregational property.

ARTICLE VI – Worship

1. Each congregation may determine its own order of worship.
2. We affirm the integrity of each congregation; therefore, we commit to ensuring weekly worship.
3. worship each Sunday at 9:00 a.m. at First English Lutheran Church, Ortonville and at 10:30 a.m. at Zion Lutheran Church, Ortonville

ARTICLE VII – Financial Obligations

1. Each congregation will be responsible for their own financial obligations, including their property, debt and other staff not included in the Partnership.

2. Pastoral compensation will be shared by each church. First English Lutheran will be responsible for 60% and Zion Lutheran 40% of compensation. First English Lutheran Church will be the fiscal agent providing payroll twice per month with Zion reimbursing First English Lutheran Church once per month for 40% of the compensation by the 15th of the month following the second payroll period.

ARTICLE VIII – Partnership Council

The Partnership Council will consist of the Executive Committees from each congregation. The pastor will serve in an advisory role. The Partnership Council will meet at least quarterly, at times and dates as established by the officers. The meeting locations may be rotated among the churches of the Partnership.

1. The president or any two members of the Executive Board, may call a special meeting.
2. The major areas of responsibility for the Partnership Council will be:
 - a. To continually develop and refine the vision for the ministry and mission of the Partnership. To identify leadership needs of the Partnership and oversee sharing the staff in an equitable way, ensuring pastoral presence and leadership in each congregation.
 - b. Annually review the terms of the Letter of Call and the ministry expectations of the Partnership and pastor.
 - c. Support pastor and spouse.
 - d. Coordinate the scheduling of occasional ministry worship services for Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas Eve/Day, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, etc.
 - e. Approve pastoral salary and reimbursement.
 - f. Initiate the Partnership Call, according to Article XI.
 - g. Designate a special purpose for offerings for special joint ministry worship services or loose offerings will go to the host congregation and each offering envelope will go to the individual ministry designated on the envelope.
 - h. Actively participate in the worship and congregational life of the Partnership.
 - i. Mediate conflict within the Partnership.
 - j. Annually review the Partnership and the Partnership Agreement.
 - k. Draft and present amendments to the Partnership Agreement for approval by the Partnership congregations.
3. A quorum will be at least two representatives from each congregation.
4. Two-thirds majority needed on all votes.
5. All Partnership Council meetings are open to any member of the Partnership congregations.
6. Meeting agendas will be the responsibility of the Partnership Council president, in consultation with the pastor. Additional agenda items may come through the representatives one week prior to any meeting.
7. Minutes of Partnership Council meetings and any other joint Partnership documents will be kept in a central location determined by the Partnership Council for safe and easy access. Copies of Partnership Council minutes will also be maintained by each congregation for reference.
8. If a Partnership council member is not able to attend a meeting, and a quorum would not be possible without their presence, then the Partnership council member may vote by proxy via phone or electronic means.

ARTICLE IX – Partnership Officers and Executive Board

The Partnership Council will appoint from among its membership officers: President, Vice President, and Secretary. The length of term will be one year, not to exceed four consecutive terms.

1. There will be an Executive Board of the Partnership Council whose voting membership will be:
 - a. President
 - b. Vice President
 - c. Secretary
 - d. One member at-large (insuring equal representation from both congregations)
2. The duties and responsibilities of the Executive Board will be:
 1. To serve as a personnel committee
 - a. To be responsible for staff review, and report to the Partnership Council at their 3rd quarter meeting each year.
 - b. To be responsible for salary and benefit recommendations, to submit a report to the Partnership Council at their 4th quarter meeting each year.
 2. To hold meetings as needed between Partnership Council meetings for the purpose of handling emergency Partnership business and to investigate pertinent topics and make recommendations to the Partnership Council as necessary.
 3. To keep minutes of its meetings, these minutes will become part of the Partnership Council records.
 4. All actions of the Partnership Executive Board are to be ratified by the full Partnership Council.

3. Duties of Officers

- a. The President will preside at meetings of the Partnership Council and Executive Board.
- b. The Vice President will preside at meeting in the absence of the President.
- c. The Secretary will keep minutes of Partnership Council meetings and will have custody of the archives of the Partnership.

ARTICLE X – Pastoral Staff

1. Pastoral Staff will be nominated for interview, contract or call by the Partnership Council. Called Pastoral Staff will need a 2/3 majority vote at individual duly called congregational meetings. Contracted Pastoral Staff will require a unanimous vote of the Partnership Council. The staffing required will be determined by the Partnership Council, based on the current needs of the Partnership, and with the approval of all the congregations.
2. Pastoral Staff may include:
 - a. Pastors: Any pastor will be on the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or other denominations in full communion with the ELCA and approved by the Southwestern Minnesota Synod office.
 - b. Synodically Authorized Ministers as defined by the Southwestern Minnesota Synod.
 - c. Interns: Seminary interns preparing for ministry in the ELCA or other denominations in full communion with the ELCA.
 - d. Other: Any other pastoral staff (Partnership nurse, lay, etc.) must meet the approval of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod to provide pastoral care in this setting.
3. Duties of Pastoral Staff - coordinate and provide spiritual leadership through worship, sacraments, visitation, and education for all congregations in this Partnership. Respecting each individual

congregation's traditions and needs is an important priority. Other Pastoral duties may be specific to that pastor's Letter of Call or contract.

1. Schedule:
 - a. Pastor will provide full-time services.
 - b. Hours will be allocated as follows: (24 hours allotted to First English and 16 hours allotted to Zion) Office hours are intended to be flexible for each congregation's visitation and other needs that may need to occur outside the office.
 - c. Set hours allotted are as follows:
 1. 8 hours on Sunday to provide each congregation time for preaching and fellowship (allotting 4 hours to each congregation)
 2. Monday: 8 hours at First English Lutheran Church
 3. Tuesday: 8 hours at Zion Lutheran Church
 4. Wednesday: 8 hours to include confirmation classes at First English Lutheran, allotting 4 hours to each congregation
 5. Thursday: 8 hours at First English

ARTICLE XI – Call Process

1. The Partnership Council will initiate a review of the Partnership and begin the call process.
2. Each of the congregations will appoint their own Call Committee according to the guidelines of their existing constitutions.
3. Both the Partnership Council and Call Committees will coordinate with the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Office during the call process.
4. The Call Committees will recommend the candidate(s) and the proposed compensation to the Partnership Council, who must approve it before sending it to the congregations for a vote.
5. Each congregation will vote on the recommendation of their Call Committee in accordance with its constitution. A call will not be issued unless approved by both of the congregations.

ARTICLE XII – Terms of Agreement

1. Each congregation will commit to this Agreement for a minimum of two years from the formal start date. This is to ensure adequate time is given to develop a successful working relationship. After the initial two years, if a congregation wants to terminate its participation for any reason, it must consult with the Southwestern Minnesota Synod staff, the Partnership Council and notify the other congregation at least six months in advance. During this six-month period, it is understood they will remain part of this Agreement and meet all financial obligations.
2. The Partnership Agreement will be reviewed annually.
3. Amendments to the Partnership Agreement must be passed by a majority vote of each congregation at their annual meeting.
4. Additional congregations may join the First English/Zion Lutheran Partnership, upon a majority vote from both currently participating congregations, and will agree to abide by the terms of this agreement. Interested congregations must first apply to the Partnership Council for consideration. Upon approval,

the Partnership Council will forward their recommendation to the Congregational Councils for consideration, and onto the congregations for a vote.

5. Any other Partnership business submitted to the congregations for approval must pass by a majority vote.
6. The Partnership Council cannot supersede any constitutional powers of any congregation in the Partnership Agreement.

ARTICLE XIII – Adoption

The First English/Zion Partnership was officially formed when First English Lutheran, Ortonville, Minnesota and Zion Lutheran Church, Ortonville, Minnesota voted to ratify and adopt this Partnership Agreement.

Congregation	Church Council President	Date of Approval
First English Lutheran Church	_____ Jon Anderson, President	_____.
Zion Lutheran Church	_____ Sara Tollakson, President	_____.