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NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS FORM 10-900 (Rev. 8-86) OMB No. 1024-0018 [SD-SHPO # ECA-OH-597-1/89]
[use paper with at least 25% cotton rag content, use NLQ or LQ printer]

**United States Department of the Interior -- National Park Service
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES -- REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering "NA" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Zoar Norwegian Lutheran Church
other name/ site number: NA

2. Location

street & number: 7 miles east & 5 miles north of Grenville /NA/ not for publication
city, town: Grenville /XX/ vicinity
state: SOUTH DAKOTA code: SD county: Day code: SD 037 zip code: 57239

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property:		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
/XX/ private	/XX/ building(s)	<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u>	buildings
/ / public-local	/ / district	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
/ / public-state	/ / site	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
/ / public-federal	/ / structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
	/ / object	<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	Total
Name of related multiple property listing: NA		Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: <u> 0 </u>		

11. Form Prepared by

name/title: Harvey K. Bue, Chairman; with technical assistance by John Rau, SHPO staff	date: June 27, 1990
organization: Zoar Cemetery Corporation	telephone: 605-886-6105
street & number: RR 2, Box 135	state: SOUTH DAKOTA zip code: 57201
city or town: Watertown	

page 2: Zoar Norwegian Lutheran Church
property name

, Day
county

, SOUTH DAKOTA
state

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] Signature of certifying official 9/22/90 Date

Salt Dept SHPS
State or Federal agency or bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- ____ see continuation sheet
- ____ determined eligible for the National Register
- ____ see continuation sheet
- ____ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ____ removed from the National Register
- ____ other, (explain) _____

Arlene Byrum Signature of the Keeper 10/25/90 Date

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property name

, Day
county

, SOUTH DAKOTA
state

6. Function or Use (enter categories from instructions)

Historic functions:

RELIGION/Religious Structure

Current Functions:

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

(enter categories from instructions)

Late Gothic Revival

Materials:

(enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Wood

roof Wood Shingle

other Concrete

Describe present and historic physical appearance: /XX/ see continuation sheet

8. Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in
relation to other properties: / / / / /XX/

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria /XX/ A / /B / /C / /D

Criteria Considerations /XX/A / /B / /C / /D / /E / /F / /G

Areas of Significance (enter from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage-European

Period of Significance

1904-1940

Significant Dates

NA

Significant Person

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations,
and periods of significance noted above /XX/ see continuation sheet

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property name

, Day
county

, SOUTH DAKOTA
state

9. Major Bibliographical References /XX/ see continuation sheet

Previous documentation by NPS:

- / / preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- / / previously listed in the National Register
- / / previously determined eligible by the National Register
- / / designated a National Historic Landmark
- / / recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- / / recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- /XX/ State historic preservation office
- / / Other State agency
- / / Federal agency
- / / Local government
- / / University
- / / Other

Specify repository:

South Dakota Historical Preservation Center

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property: Less than one acre

UTM References:

A = /14/	/637-480/	/5044-610/	B = / /	/ /	/ /
C = / /	/ /	/ /	D = / /	/ /	/ /
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

Quad: Drywood Lakes

Scale: 1:24000

/ / see continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description:

/XX/ see continuation sheet

Boundary Justification:

/XX/ see continuation sheet

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Situated on a hill overlooking Pickerel Lake in the extreme northeastern corner of Day County, South Dakota, Zoar Norwegian Lutheran Church is a modest Gothic Revival edifice completed in 1904. Rising from a stone masonry foundation, the wood frame walls are clad with clapboard siding. The building is capped by a steep gable roof covered with wood shingles. A square bell tower with a flared conical steeple rises from the center of the west (front) gable end. The open belfry is surrounded by round-arched openings and a low balustrade. Providing light for a small interior balcony, a round window pierces the front wall of the bell tower. Projecting off the front of the bell tower is an asymmetrical gable-roofed narthex/basement entry, which was constructed in 1949. An original six-sided combination apse and sacristy projects from the east (rear) gable end. A brick chimney rises from the northeast corner of the building.

Fenestration includes three lancet arch windows with two-over-two clear glass lights along each axial facade. The apse/sacristy is lighted by smaller windows of similar configuration. The main entry door, located in the center of the west wall of the narthex, is capped by a lancet-arched overlight.

Although the pews, altar, and baptismal font have been removed, a number of original interior features survive in good condition. These items include hardwood floors, woodwork, a communion rail, circa-1946 lighting fixtures, plain plaster walls, and an exquisite pressed metal vaulted ceiling. The ghost silhouette of the altar is visible on the carpeted floor of the chancel. Poured concrete basement walls were constructed in 1949.

Located just southeast of the church is a wood frame privy capped by a asphalt-shingled gable roof. A sparse cemetery with graves dating back to 1895 surrounds the church. The church yard is punctuated by several evergreen trees. The privy and cemetery are not included within the boundaries of the nominated property.

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Under Criterion A of the National Register Criteria, Zoar Norwegian Lutheran Church is significant in the area of Ethnic Heritage/European, because it is associated with a small but distinctive enclave of Norwegian-Americans who homesteaded in northeastern Day County alongside a larger, dominant group of Polish-Americans. It is one of the few remaining country churches in the immediate surrounding region. Under the South Dakota State Historical Preservation Plan, the property relates to the following historic contexts: IV. Permanent Rural and Urban Pioneer Settlement, B. 7. Ethnic Enclaves/Norwegians; and IV. H. Religion.

Day County in the far northeastern corner of South Dakota was organized in 1880. However, like other counties in this glacial lakes region, its size was reduced by a wedge of land set aside as part of the Sisseton Indian Reservation, which had been established in 1867 and stretched in a triangle from Lake Kampeska, in Codington County, north to the present-day border between North and South Dakota. Not until 1892, after the Great Dakota Boom had ended, was this reservation opened up for settlement by non-Indians. Still once settlement was legalized, homesteaders poured onto the former tribal lands, many of them paying ten dollars an acre for prime parcels. At this time, Kosciusko Township at the western edge of the reservation was the site of a pronounced migration of Polish homesteaders. Although in general very few Poles came to the plains of southern Dakota, they made up a vast majority of the population of this township, which bears the name of a Polish nobleman and hero who fought with General Washington during the American Revolution. In the midst of this Polish Catholic enclave, a group of Free Lutheran Norwegian-Americans established their own small community near the shores of Pickerel Lake. Norwegians were the largest single European ethnic group to migrate to South Dakota and have settlements scattered throughout the state, but in Kosciusko Township they were a definite minority.

The chief social focus of this Norwegian community was Zoar Lutheran Church, which was organized on July 2, 1893. It was affiliated at first with the small splinter group in Minnesota called the Lutheran Free Church, but by the mid-20th Century was a parish of the American Lutheran Church. In the early years, members worshiped in private homes and schoolhouses. The cemetery was established in 1895, and by 1902, the congregation had secured enough resources to build a church.

Completed in 1904, the new edifice was a typical Lutheran country church. No doubt based on at least one of several widely available store bought plans, it was and is a simple wood frame nave plan church with Gothic-influenced lancet arch windows and a tall steeple atop a modest bell tower. The interior is generally plain except for a fine pressed metal vaulted ceiling, of which it is one of best examples in the state.

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For years, services were held and records were kept in Norwegian. All of the pastors who served the parish were also of Norwegian descent. Like so many of the small rural congregations across the state, Zoar prospered until the 1930s and 1940s, when the farm economic slump caused many members to move to other locales in search of work. Many of the families of charter members left the area for good.

In 1940, the Free Lutheran Churches of South Dakota organized a youth camp on Pickerel Lake. Despite its shrinking size, the Zoar congregation was a leader in the administration of the nearby camp. It is still in operation.

In 1953, the congregation merged with others in Sisseton and the surrounding area. By 1960, the Zoar Church was used only occasionally. Currently it stands vacant alongside the cemetery, both of which are owned and controlled by Zoar Cemetery Corporation, a nonprofit perpetual care organization. Most of the rural churches in the area have been demolished. Except for Saron Free Lutheran Church, several miles north of Roslyn, the Zoar Church is a lone survivor of the historic Norwegian Lutheran community in northeastern Day County.

The period of significance of the nominated property extends from its date of construction in 1904 to 1940, the established 50-year cut-off date for the National Register. The church derives its significance from its historical association with Norwegian settlement in Day County and therefore qualifies for listing in the Register under Criteria Consideration A. The cemetery contains a few fine handmade grave markers of small polished rocks set in concrete; however, it does not meet Criteria Consideration D and is not included within the boundaries of the nominated property.

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Anders, J. Olson. "The Making of a Typical Prairie County: Day County, South Dakota, 1881-1906." South Dakota Historical Collections. XXXVI (1972): pp. 525-565.

Day County History. [Webster, SD]: Day County Historical Research Committee. 1981. pp. 256-259.

Historical Summary: Zoar Lutheran Church, 1893-1958. N.p. 1958.

Ochsenreiter, L. G. History of Day County from 1873-1926. Mitchell, SD: Educator Supply Co. 1926.

Secretary's Minutes. Zoar Lutheran Church.

Sneen, Donald J., ed. Prairie Faith, Pioneering People: A History of the Lutheran Church in South Dakota. [Sioux Falls, SD]: South Dakota Synod, American Lutheran Church. 1981.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nominated property is bounded by a set of imaginary lines that intersect to form a rectangle around the rectangular church building. The western boundary line lies 5 feet west of the west wall of the narthex/entry and runs parallel to that wall. The northern boundary line lies 5 feet north of the north axial wall of the church nave and runs parallel to that wall. The eastern boundary line lies 5 feet east of the easternmost point of the apse/sacristy and runs parallel to the western boundary line. The southern boundary line lies 5 feet south of the south axial wall of the church nave and runs parallel to that wall. The property is located in the Northwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 12, Township 124 North, Range 53 East (5th Principal Meridian), in Day County, South Dakota.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundaries of the nominated property are set to include only the church edifice and to exclude the privy and cemetery, which do not meet the criteria or criteria considerations for listing in the National Register.

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1.
Zoar Norwegian Lutheran Church
Grenville Vicinity, Day County, South Dakota
by John Rau
September 1988
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center
West and north facades, camera facing east-southeast
Photo No. 1

2.
Zoar Norwegian Lutheran Church
Grenville Vicinity, Day County, South Dakota
by John Rau
September 1988
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center
South facade, camera facing north
Photo No. 2

3.
Zoar Norwegian Lutheran Church
Grenville Vicinity, Day County, South Dakota
by John Rau
September 1988
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center
East and north facades, camera facing southwest
Photo No. 3

4.
Zoar Norwegian Lutheran Church
Grenville Vicinity, Day County, South Dakota
by John Rau
September 1988
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center
Interior, chancel, camera facing northeast
Photo No. 4

5.
Zoar Norwegian Lutheran Church
Grenville Vicinity, Day County, South Dakota
by John Rau
September 1988
Neg.: South Dakota Historical Preservation Center
Interior, from balcony, camera facing east
Photo No. 5