

Zion Lutheran Church, ELCM

Evangelical Lutheran Conference and Ministerium of North America (www.elcm.org)

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175th Anniversary Celebration of the Whig National Convention

Harrisburg – The Historical Society of Dauphin County and Zion Lutheran Church (ELCM) will hold a commemoration of the 175th anniversary of the Whig National Convention at Zion Lutheran Church, 15 S. 4th Street in Harrisburg, on Saturday, December 6, 2014, starting at 2:00 PM.

The Whigs were a political party of the mid-1800's and the chief rival of the Democratic Party. In anticipation of the Presidential Election of 1840, the Whigs determined to hold their nominating convention in Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania. The newly-rebuilt Zion Lutheran Church (the original building was destroyed by fire in 1837) was the largest building at the time in Harrisburg that could accommodate the convention. From December 4 through December 7, the delegates met to select their candidates. It was the first national party convention to have more than one candidate contending for the presidential nomination. After parliamentary maneuvers and back room wheeling and dealing the convention nominated William Henry Harrison of Ohio for President and John Tyler of Virginia for Vice President. Their slogan was "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too," referring to William Henry Harrison's victory over the Shawnee leader Tecumseh near the river Tippecanoe in Ohio in 1811. Harrison was again victorious in 1840, as he was elected to office over the Democratic incumbent Martin Van Buren. Harrison served only 32 days, becoming the first President to die in office.

The celebration of this historic event will begin with a presentation by local historian, Howard J. Parker, who is currently writing a book on the election of 1840 and the pivotal role central Pennsylvania played in that campaign. A tour of the second-floor sanctuary will follow, which will include both patriotic and seasonal music performed by Zion's Church Choir. The event will conclude around 4:00 PM with a reception and additional period music. Numerous displays of historic items specific to the Whig campaign, the Harrisburg Whig convention, and mid-19th century life will be available for viewing throughout the afternoon.

The event is free and open to the public. Parking validation is available for the Chestnut Street Garage.