



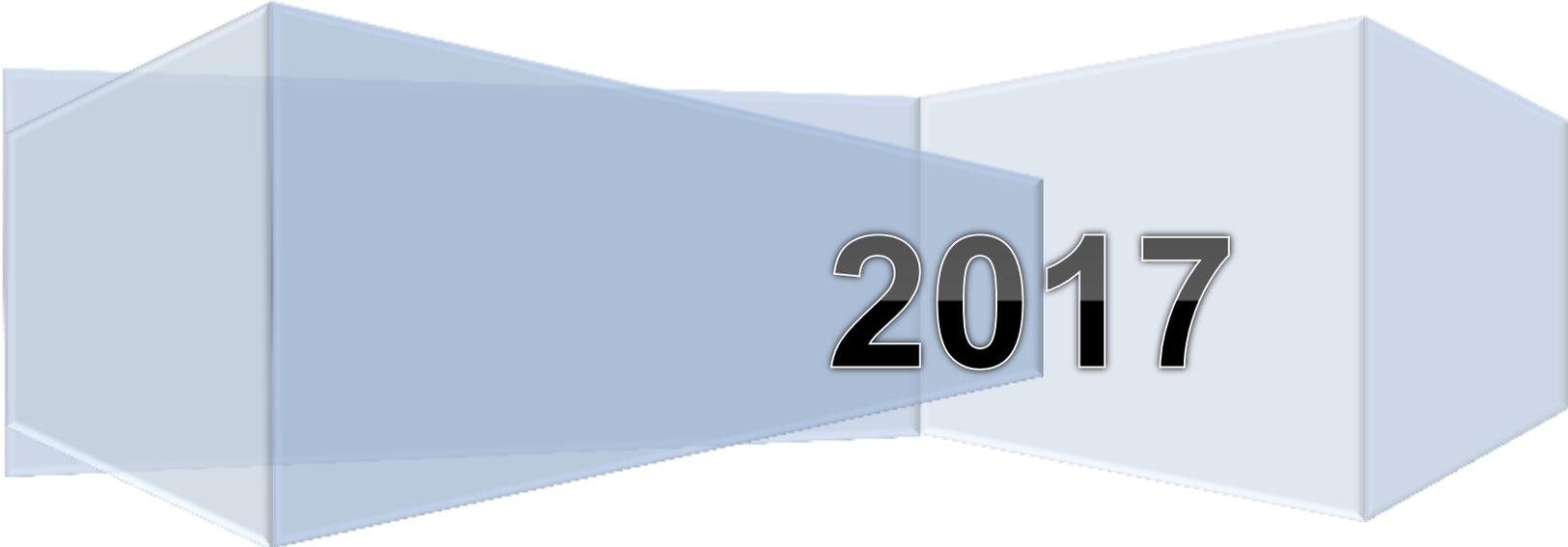
**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

# **Western Iowa Synod Compensation Guidelines**



**Tools for Discerning Appropriate Compensation for  
Rostered Leaders**



**2017**

# WESTERN IOWA SYNOD ELCA 2017 Compensation Guidelines

## Tools for Discerning Appropriate Compensation for Rostered Leaders

Every year our congregations engage in conversation about salaries and related matters. Each year our synod committee reviews our guidelines. This effort includes a study of what other synods are doing, economic climate, inflation etc. These guidelines are reviewed by our synod assembly and offered to congregations. We are all committed to meeting the needs of our leaders and our parishes in the ELCA. Our goal is that we are fair to all and that the mission of the church is furthered. It is in this hope that these various tools are offered. As a synod we are open to your ideas for improving these tools.

As we believe in the ministry of all the baptized, we also train and call persons to specific ministries such as pastors, associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, etc:

***“This church affirms the universal priesthood of all its baptized members. In its function and its structure this church commits itself to the equipping and supporting of all its members for their ministries in the world and in this church. It is within this context of ministry that this church calls or appoints some of its baptized members for specific ministries in this church.” (ELCA Constitution 7.11)***

We understand the term “rostered leader” to include pastors, diaconal ministers, and associates in ministry. Usually these leaders begin their work with a “call”. This call is usually pretty clear about specific expectations on the part of leader and congregation. Call committees and synod staff seem to be quite intentional about what is presented in this initial call. Experience seems to show that the process of discerning compensation is a bit different in the yearly reviews that follow. Therefore different tools may be needed. This year we are suggesting more flexibility in determining the benefit package. We continue to place value on seniority: years served. Another factor may be the yearly cost of living figures. We are also suggesting that raises be weighted a bit to help out those starting out with slightly larger increases in the early years. This is due to larger debt levels of many graduates and the costs of raising children. Raises based upon merit are also encouraged.

In general, there are two main areas of benefits: those that involve money and those that are a matter of time. We firmly believe that a fair salary is very important, as is medical coverage and adequate housing. Some leaders and congregations are also finding creative ways to adjust work schedules to meet the needs of both leader and parish. Each setting is unique. We want to encourage congregations and leaders to invest some time in the process of carefully working out a plan that is suitable to all. A third type of benefit might be called the “intangible factor of appreciating one another.” (“being content with what you have”) We invite parishes to find ways to say: “Thank you, we’re glad you are here.”

The success of this project seems to begin with strong congregational leadership e.g. the congregational president. Then the compensation for staff of the congregation is usually recommended by a budget committee and/or the congregational council and then approved by the congregation. In the process of determining compensation we ask you to think in terms of the level of responsibility that is given to the pastor, diaconal minister, or associate in ministry. We suggest that yearly evaluations for leaders be done in the context of the congregation’s ministry, and that there be a clear distinction between compensation and performance evaluation. All participants in the process are to keep in mind the compensation package as a whole.

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## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PORTICO SPONSORS (THE CONGREGATION)**

As you move toward the conclusion of your call process experience and formalize a letter of call with the accompanying Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities of the Pastor worksheet, there are important next steps to remember. A Change of Call report must be filed with Portico Benefit Services within 60 day of your new pastor's start date. Additionally, each year as compensation is reviewed a Change of Salary report must be filed within 60 days of the effective date of change in compensation. These forms are available at <https://porticobenefits.org/>.

These guidelines are a tool to help prepare a compensation proposal for salary and housing, likely with social security tax allowance, and a benefits package for your new pastor. Because your pastor is eligible for income tax advantages related to their clergy status, he or she might ask the congregational council to make additional designations of specific line items within the compensation proposal. [For example, if salary is proposed at \$40,000 the corresponding recommended housing allowance amount will be \$12,000. Your pastor may request that the housing allowance be designated at \$15,000 (for income tax purposes) with the balance of \$37,000 paid as salary. There is no change in total compensation or benefits calculation.]

Portico Benefit Services has contracted with Ernst and Young Employee Financial Services to provide financial planning for Portico Members. Consultation with Ernst and Young may provide insight to shape additional designations of specific line items within the compensation proposal.

More resources for Portico Sponsors are available at <https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/home> including on-line payment for retirement and benefits contributions.

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PORTICO MEMBERS (THE PASTOR OR STAFF)**

Ernst & Young: Chosen For Our Members As part of our mission to help you live and serve well, we team up with Ernst & Young to offer you personalized financial guidance through Ernst & Young Employee Financial Services. Ernst & Young (EY) has proven experience with understanding the unique attributes of church benefit programs, and more specifically detailed knowledge of Portico's Program. You can get personal, ongoing financial guidance — at no out-of-pocket cost to you.

Sometimes it's helpful to talk with a financial planner from the privacy of your own home. With the EY Financial Planner Line® you can do exactly that, as often as you want, with no out-of-pocket cost to you.

### How to Use This Benefit

- Call a financial planner Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. (Central): •Toll-free [888.566.8631](tel:888.566.8631)
- Hearing impaired [888.896.6708](tel:888.896.6708)
- Local and international [201.872.0952](tel:201.872.0952) (financial planner will call international callers back to avoid member incurring international calling charges)
- You will be asked for your Member ID as verification.

## **PART I COMPENSATION FOR ORDAINED ROSTERED LEADERS**

### **A. Minimum Salary for Ordained Rostered leaders**

The 1989 Western Iowa Synod Assembly passed a resolution about compensation for ordained rostered leaders. The resolution recognized that the establishment of the rostered leader's salary is a matter for rostered leaders and their calling congregation. At the same time, we affirm that there is a minimum expectation for the salary of ordained rostered leaders.

**The 2017 Chart for Salary Ranges for Rostered Leaders appears at the worksheets section of this document.**

### **B. Social Security Tax Allowance**

The purpose of the Social Security tax allowance is to compensate the pastor for the "employer's share" of the Social Security tax. Since pastors are treated as if they were self-employed for purposes of Social Security, they are required to pay both the employer share and the employee share of Social Security taxes. A rough estimate of the Social Security allowance would be 7.65 percent of the pastor's salary plus housing. However, adding a Social Security allowance affects the pastor's taxes as well as her or his defined compensation for benefits. Congregations are encouraged to compensate ordained rostered leaders at least the amount equal to the usual employer's share, which is presently 7.65%, adjusted by a decimal constant. The congregation cannot pay the ordained rostered leader's self-employment tax directly, but designates the amount as a social security tax allowance, which is additional taxable income. The calculation percentage determines a suggested Social Security allowance that will produce the same net compensation (defined as after-tax cash compensation plus pension contribution) as if the pastor had been considered an employee for Social Security purposes. The calculation takes into account the following:

- The Social Security Tax Allowance is includible as income for Social Security purposes but the SECA tax is calculated on only 92.35 percent of includible compensation.
- The Social Security Tax Allowance is taxable for income tax purposes, but one-half the SECA tax is deductible; a marginal tax rate of 10 percent has been assumed.
- The Social Security Tax Allowance increases the pastor's defined compensation and therefore her or his pension contribution (assumed to be 10 percent). The effect on other benefits has been ignored.

The calculation is circular and quite complex. Portico Benefit Services offers calculators on its website for this and other calculations. Congregations are urged to use these calculators for a close approximation of a congregation's suggested share of a pastor's social security tax liability. This will ensure an accurate representation of defined compensation, the amount used to determine pension and other benefits. Synod staff will assist with this calculation as well.

### **C. Housing Provisions**

#### **When a parsonage is provided:**

##### Furnishings allowance

Congregations may provide a furnishings allowance for an ordained rostered leader when a parsonage is provided. Since total housing costs (including furnishings) are allowed by the IRS as exclusions from taxable income, an ordained rostered leader may desire to have some compensation designated this way. For example, if the ordained rostered leader's base salary is \$30,000 and \$2,000 of that is designated as furnishings allowance, the amount the ordained rostered leader uses for furnishing the parsonage up to \$2,000 may be excluded from taxable income. It is the ordained rostered leader's responsibility to document expenses paid out of this allowance so that the allowance can be justified to the IRS. An amount designated as

furnishings allowance is includible in defined compensation for Portico Benefit Services retirement and other benefits calculations.

#### Utilities allowance

Utility costs should be borne by the congregation either through direct payment or with an allowance for that purpose. If a utilities allowance is offered, the amount of the allowance is includible in defined compensation for Portico Benefit Services: retirements and other benefits calculations.

#### Housing equity contribution

When a parsonage is provided, it is appropriate and encouraged for the congregation to consider compensation for the loss of equity accruing associated with not owning a home. A housing equity allowance is money set aside for the future purchase of a home and must be placed in an account for that purpose, either with Portico Benefit Services or a financial institution as tax deferred. Upon withdrawal it is nontaxable to the extent it is justified as housing allowance under the provisions of Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code. Due to limits of the IRS, the full amount may not be tax-free. A housing equity contribution equal to 3% of base salary is suggested.

#### **When a parsonage is not provided:**

##### Cash housing allowance

When a congregation does not provide a parsonage, a cash housing allowance should be offered to cover costs of renting or buying a home. Such an allowance can be inclusive of utilities and furnishing costs as well as capital costs, and is paid as part of the regular compensation to the pastor. The congregation should offer a housing allowance computed on the basis of the average rental value of homes in the community with the minimum being 30% of base salary.

Federal income tax laws allow ordained rostered leaders to exclude from gross income a housing allowance that is designated by a congregation or church organization. This is not necessarily the same amount as the cash housing allowance. For IRS purposes, the nontaxable portion of a church-designated housing allowance for ordained rostered leaders who own their home cannot exceed the annual rental value of the home (furnished, including utilities). When a housing allowance is designated, the congregation or congregation council must officially designate the amount of allowance. This should be done on an annual basis before January 1st each year. It cannot be done retroactively. The ordained rostered leader may determine the amount designated. It is the ordained rostered leader's responsibility to justify all payments from the designated housing allowance so that it may be excluded from taxable income.

#### **D. Moving Expenses:**

Good beginnings are important. It is helpful that the relationship between rostered leader and congregation "get off on the right foot." Congregation and rostered leader are urged to give thoughtful consideration to the needs of the other when undertaking a move. Because moving can be an exciting and very stressful event in a person's life, it is important that the congregation and rostered leader reach a mutually satisfactory decision about the move as part of the compensation negotiations.

The congregation shall be responsible for moving all household, professional, and personal goods of the rostered leader and his/her family, and for congregation-required local moves. It is recommended that professional movers be utilized. If their services are not used, the means of transporting the rostered leader's belongings must be mutually agreed upon ahead of time. When the services of professional movers are not used, it is strongly recommended that a separate insurance policy covering the transported goods be purchased by the congregation or that an agreement be reached as to how the cost of damaged goods will be paid.

## **E. Workers' Compensation**

All congregations are required by law to provide Workers' Compensation coverage for all employees. For purposes of Workers' Compensation, clergy are employees and therefore must be covered under Workers' Compensation.

## **PART II RETIREMENT AND OTHER BENEFITS**

### **A. Portico Benefit Services Retirement Plan**

Portico Benefit Services Retirement Plan is designed to provide rostered leaders with replacement income to assist in maintaining the pre-retirement standard of living. Employing congregations and rostered leaders can make contributions to the plan. The minimum employer contribution rate is generally 10 percent of the rostered leader's total defined compensation (base cash salary, social security tax allowance, housing allowance/value of parsonage, utilities and/or furnishings allowance), however congregations are encouraged, especially at the time of a new call to consider an employer contribution rate of 11%. Rostered leaders may make salary-reduction contributions to their retirement accounts (formerly ELCA Optional Pension Plan).

### **B. Health and wellness benefits**

Portico Benefit Services Benefits Plan offers comprehensive, portable health coverage for rostered leaders and their families. Assurance of coverage is carried anywhere in the world. Portico Benefit Services contracts with companies that specialize in administering health benefits in order to provide affordable health care. The employer contribution rate is a percentage of total defined compensation based on the election of dependent medical benefits coverage. The expected assignment of contributions can be found in the worksheets section of this guide.

Coverage under Portico Benefit Services health plan may be waived if group coverage provided by an employer other than the ELCA (such as a spouse's plan) is available. If coverage is waived and other employer provided group coverage lapses, there will be a six-month waiting period for reenrollment coverage in Portico Benefit Services health benefits plan.

It is very important for the rostered leader, the congregation and the ELCA that leaders set a priority on self-care. In terms of physical well being this means maintaining a healthy weight and getting adequate exercise. This affects professional effectiveness as well as the financial health of our retirement/medical system. We would encourage congregations including a membership in a wellness center or YMCA where this is available.

### **C. Disability and survivor benefits**

Portico Benefit Services disability plan provides monthly income if a rostered leader becomes totally disabled. Recipients must apply for total disability benefits within six months of becoming disabled, and be actively engaged in medical treatment designed to restore or maintain health and functionality. While disabled, the plan also makes retirement plan contributions and pays for continued health, disability and survivor benefits coverage.

Portico Benefit Services survivor plan provides two types of benefits. A lump-sum survivor benefit is paid to beneficiaries to help meet immediate financial needs. Also, a surviving spouse may receive a lifetime, monthly survivor income. Surviving children under age 21 are also eligible for a monthly survivor income.

## **D. Flexible Spending Account**

A Flexible Spending Account (FSA) is a type of fringe benefit plan that enables employees to set aside payroll dollars on a pre-tax basis to pay for certain out-of-pocket health care expenses. A health care FSA and a dependent care FSA are included as part of Portico Benefit Services primary coverage package at no additional cost to sponsors. Health care and dependent care FSAs enable members to set aside payroll dollars on a pretax basis to pay for eligible health care and day care expenses throughout a calendar year.

## **PART III**

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH EXPENSES**

**A. Travel Expense** (We encourage this to be negotiated with the needs of the specific leader and the specific needs of the congregation for a given period of time. Travel patterns differ from leader to leader and for parishes over time. For long or frequent trips one might consider asking a local pastor or chaplain to do some of the visitation.)

#### **1. Automobile**

Automobile expenses for rostered leaders should be paid in one of these ways:

- a. Congregation pays for the number of business miles driven at an established IRS rate per mile. Under the present tax structure, this is the most equitable and fair way of reimbursement for congregational business travel. (This may need to be adjusted more often than once a year.)
- b. Congregation pays an annual "auto allowance." The rostered leader provides vehicle and pays all expenses for business travel. For IRS purposes, taxpayer adds "auto allowance" to his/her income, and deducts, as miscellaneous itemized deductions, all expenses for business travel.
- c. Congregation leases or owns the vehicle and directly pays all operating expenses. The vehicle is used for all church business travel. For any personal use of a church-owned or leased automobile, agreement must be reached with the congregation concerning reimbursement.

#### **2. Cell Phone**

Cell phones are in common use today. Agreement must be reached with the congregation concerning reimbursement.

#### **3. Internet Access**

Internet access is a vital means of communication today. Since each congregation is unique no specific arrangement could cover all possibilities. Agreement must be reached between the rostered leader and congregation concerning availability of service and reimbursement.

## **B. Professional Expenses**

It is recommended that congregations pay \$500 or more for the rostered leader's professional expenses such as books, robes, periodicals, professional dues, entertaining and hospitality. This is usually paid on a per item re-imbusement.

## **C. Required Events**

Through the letter of call, all rostered leaders are required to attend the Synod Assembly and Fall Convocation at congregational expense. In addition, spouses are encouraged to

participate in Fall Convocation, with the congregation providing funds for attendance. Through these events, rostered leaders experience the partnership in mission that we share together in the whole church.

#### **D. First Call Theological Education**

First Call Theological Education (FCTE) is about transitioning new leaders in ministry. The ELCA is committed to assisting new leaders in establishing a healthy spiritual life, rich colleague relationships, and good continuing education habits. First Call rostered leaders discuss transition topics and participate in a colleague group. In addition, First Call leaders attend a retreat each year for three years. Continuing education funds may be used to cover the costs of these events.

#### **E. Continuing Education**

The Western Iowa Synod, along with the ELCA, has high standards for its professional leaders. A fundamental requirement for these leaders is a thorough grounding in the Christian faith and Holy Scripture that is always in the process of being renewed. Coupled with our faith is the need for an understanding of the world in which ministry must take place. In addition to these fundamentals is the need to grow in competence and skills in order to be faithful in discipleship. As is true in many other occupations, continuing education is the way the professional leader in the church sharpens skills already employed, acquires new skills and experiences personal growth for a more effective ministry.

Continuing education plans should be reviewed at least annually with the Mutual Ministry committee and the rostered leader. An adequate program of continuing education may be short or long term, credit or non-credit. Whatever the format, it should be planned to fit the individual's goals for ministry and the objectives of the congregation that is served. Decisions about continuing education should be made with a sense of partnership between the rostered leader and the congregation. Congregations should provide a continuing education allowance of not less than \$750 annually. Rostered leaders are encouraged to contribute \$250 to continuing education. For continuing education opportunities with cost in excess of \$1,000, conversation between the rostered and the congregational council is encouraged. How mileage is paid is negotiable.

Time for continuing education should be set aside at the rate of two weeks per year to include two Sundays with the provision that it may be accumulated up to three years for more extended study. The ELCA expects 50 contact hours annually in continuing education. (A contact hour is defined as a typical 50-minute classroom session or the equivalent.)

#### **F. Mutual Ministry Committee**

For purposes of support to the staff, each congregation is expected to have a Mutual Ministry Committee as specified in the Model Constitution for Congregations, C13.04. "A Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed jointly by the president and the pastor. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year." It is recommended that the pastor choose more than the number of people needed to serve; the president chooses committee members from this group. It is recommended that committee members hold no other office in the congregation during their term. While the committee itself is clearly specified in the constitution, some variations in its structure are allowed. Some congregations have chosen to have three-year terms with two appointed each year. There are congregations that have found it useful to have a council member serving as a liaison to the committee. Although the Mutual Ministry Committee can advocate for adequate financial compensation for rostered leaders, it is recommended that salary concerns be distinguished from performance and that compensation matters be addressed by the Budget Committee or Church council.

## **PART IV OTHER BENEFITS**

Rostered leaders serving part-time calls should receive salary and benefits (including a minimum of four weeks of vacation) corresponding to the percentage of a full time salary and benefits package.

### **A. Vacation**

In order to help rostered leaders maintain healthy and strong relationships with family and friends, a minimum annual vacation of four weeks is recommended (twenty-eight days, including four Sundays). Vacation time should be used within the calendar year and not accumulated, except by special agreement with the congregational council. Absence for continuing education should not be considered vacation. Neither is time given in service to churchwide or synodical committees or congregational retreats or camping programs to be considered vacation or time off. Sometimes it is difficult for a pastor to “vacation” at home, especially if they live in a parsonage. In any case it is important for the leader and the congregation that they use vacation time well.

### **B. Sick Leave/Disability**

Sick leave recommendation is that sick leave will accrue at the rate of 1 day per month. The congregation assumes responsibility for the rostered leader’s salary and benefits and pulpit supply during an illness. Sick leave may accrue up to a maximum of 45 working days to correlate with Portico Benefit Services Disability Benefits. Illness of anticipated duration longer than two months should be referred to Portico Benefit Services. Doctor’s certification of last date able to work is required to document the two-month period of congregation responsibility for the rostered leader’s salary and benefits.

### **C. Emergency Leave**

Absence of three days (up to five days, depending on distance) due to a death in the immediate family is normally permitted. (“Immediate family” is defined to include spouse, parents, siblings, children, in-laws, grandparents, and grandchildren.) Congregations are encouraged to provide additional paid leave after the death of a spouse or child, especially in cases where the rostered leader has no remaining vacation time for that year. Compassion and grace should be the guiding values.

### **D. Holidays**

Congregations should provide appropriate time off for general holidays. If the actual day cannot be taken, another day should be designated as a holiday.

### **E. Parenting Leave**

1. "The church places a high value on family and it is for this reason that these guidelines are offered. A six-weeks-leave is to be offered to each rostered leader with full pay and benefits (with the exception of auto allowance) at the time of the birth or adoption of a child. Additional leave is encouraged in the case of multiple births or simultaneous adoptions. The decision as to how much of this should be prenatal time and how much should be postnatal time will be decided on an individual basis at the discretion of the rostered leader(s), and the congregational council. If more than six weeks leave is needed, each parish and its rostered leader(s), should handle this time as the situation requires (additional paid leave, additional unpaid leave, accrued vacation). In the case of multiple births or simultaneous adoptions, additional paid leave is encouraged. During the leave period, the congregation will pay the cost of pulpit supply and other ministry needs such as visitation, teaching, etc."

## **F. Sabbatical**

A rostered leader is eligible for a sabbatical after 6 full years of service in the same congregation. The concept of sabbatical is grounded on the biblical idea of Sabbath rest. The example of Jesus, who frequently sought out a quiet place where he could meditate and pray, away from the constant demands of the crowds, is a strong model for a sabbatical. Unlike a vacation, a sabbatical is intended for purposeful reflection and restoration. A sabbatical also provides the opportunity for the congregation to experience the freshness of a break in the rhythm of parish life and leadership. Conversation about a sabbatical could begin with the Mutual Ministry Committee, the church council or a task force formed for this particular assignment. The following guidelines give some helpful information.

1. A sabbatical provides the professional leader a measured time to step aside from congregational responsibilities in order to pursue opportunities for a renewal of vision and perspective. It creates space for creativity, rest and renewal, and may include continuing education, travel, a concentrated time to study or read, reconnection with immediate or extended family, and time away for spiritual renewal. Rested and energized pastors may well result in longer and healthier calls in a congregation. Sabbaticals give congregations the opportunity to provide and experience new leadership opportunities. A sabbatical leave is a way for a congregation to express how much it values the rostered leader.
2. A sabbatical may be taken after six full years of service in a particular parish. Years cannot accumulate between calls (i.e., four years at Trinity and two years at St. Paul does not qualify) unless agreed upon at time of call. A sabbatical will normally be for 12 weeks and should not be less than 8 weeks. The full 12 week sabbatical may include up to two weeks of vacation, a 10 week sabbatical may include up to one week of vacation, and an 8 week sabbatical would normally not include vacation time. Regardless of the length, the sabbatical needs to be consecutive weeks of time away. Clergy are expected to continue ministry in that congregation for at least one year after the sabbatical.
3. The congregation will continue to pay full salary and benefits for the rostered leader who is on sabbatical. Auto expense may be negotiated. The congregation will need to cover the cost and find people to fulfill the ministry duties of the rostered leader. There are a variety of options for leadership including members of the congregation assume new leadership roles, a retired pastor, a neighboring ELCA or full communion partner pastor and your pastor take a sabbatical at different times and exchange pastoral coverage, the bishop authorizes a well qualified lay person of his choice for word and sacrament ministry for this specific time and place. The reimbursement rate for interim ministry can be found in Part VI of this document. Congregations are encouraged to begin putting money aside for a sabbatical when a newly called rostered leader begins. Grants are available through Wheat Ridge Ministries at [www.wheatridge.org](http://www.wheatridge.org) or the Lilly Foundation at [www.lillyendowment.org](http://www.lillyendowment.org).
4. The congregation is not under obligation to fund the cost of the sabbatical itself. Continuing education dollars, which can be accrued up to three years, can be used for the educational costs of the sabbatical. Planning for the sabbatical should begin the calendar year before in order to take advantage of grant opportunities (Wheat Ridge Ministries at [www.wheatridge.org](http://www.wheatridge.org) or the Lilly Foundation at [www.lillyendowment.org](http://www.lillyendowment.org)) and so that the congregational budget can allow for additional expenses.

Here are some resources that congregations and rostered leaders may find helpful:

1. “*Creating a Sabbatical Plan*”, a Lutheran Partners article by Pastor John R. Gugel, at [www.elca.org/lutheranpartners/archives/sabplan.html](http://www.elca.org/lutheranpartners/archives/sabplan.html).
2. “*Sabbaticals are a win-win*”, an article in the July 2007 issue of The Lutheran, [www.thelutheran.org](http://www.thelutheran.org).
3. “*Changing the Rhythm of Parish Ministry: Sabbatical Policy Insights*,” a 13 minute video that looks at sabbaticals through the experiences of three pastors and one congregational member. It comes with an 11-page study guide and is available at the Lutheran Resource Center at [www.lutheranresourcecenter.org](http://www.lutheranresourcecenter.org).
4. “*Clergy Renewal: The Alban Guide to Sabbatical Planning*” by A. Richard Bullock and Richard J. Bruesehoff.
5. “*Why Should You Give Your Pastor a Sabbatical?*” a video featuring Roy Oswald that is available from the Alban Institute.
6. Wheat Ridge Ministries ([www.wheatridge.org](http://www.wheatridge.org)) and the Lilly Endowment (<http://www.lillyendowment.org/religion.html>) both offer sabbatical grant opportunities to congregations.
7. For additional resources go to [www.elca.org/health/resources.html](http://www.elca.org/health/resources.html).

#### **G. Other Forms of Time Compensation**

Congregations and rostered leaders are encouraged to be open to consider new and creative ways to use time off from work as a possible means of compensation. If this is done, expectations need to be carefully spelled out. Then, leaders and congregations need to discipline themselves to stick to the guidelines. (This may be helpful to those leaders with many years of service-“maturity”.)

#### **H. Seminary Debt Reduction**

Many rostered leaders leave seminary with a substantial amount of debt incurred during their education, causing stress in their ministry and personal lives. Therefore, congregations and rostered leaders are encouraged to discuss any debt accumulated by the rostered leader during their seminary education, and to consider ways in which the congregation may assist the rostered leader reduce their debt.

### **PART V**

#### **COMPENSATION FOR DIACONAL MINISTERS, DEACONESSES, AND ASSOCIATES IN MINISTRY**

As a model of our Christian faith, the church should treat those whom the church employs at least as well as those persons would be treated in a secular job. While most people who work for the church do so out of a desire to serve, their service should never be taken for granted nor inadequately compensated. The Congregation Council or some other designated committee should review the wages and working conditions of the lay staff annually to make sure they are adequate. It is recommended that compensation be determined according to the person’s education, experience, background, abilities and responsibilities.

Professional lay staff serving congregations includes those with specialized skills and training who are certified by the ELCA as associates in ministry and diaconal ministers. Persons in these categories may not deduct housing costs from their income for income tax purposes, as do clergy. It should also be recognized that the congregation is responsible for paying social security tax for these persons. Non-ordained persons are considered employees and are subject to income tax and Social Security tax withholding.

### **A. Diaconal Ministers**

Salaries for diaconal ministers can be figured at base cash salary figures used for rostered leaders without housing being provided.

### **B. Deaconesses**

Salaries for deaconesses can be figured at base case salary figures used for rostered leaders without housing being provided.

### **C. Associates in Ministry**

Salaries for associates in ministry can be figured at base cash salary figures used for rostered leaders without housing being provided.

## **PART VI**

### **INTERIM MINISTRY AND OTHER TEMPORARY MINISTRIES**

Temporary staff compensation and benefits should be based on the responsibilities and the amount of time invested. The congregation, in consultation with the synod office, is to assume responsibility for pulpit supply during the interim. The interim clergy serving a congregation between permanent pastorates should be compensated as agreed upon by the pastor and all congregational councils involved, taking into account the following:

#### **A. Full-time Interim**

1. Compensation for the interim pastor will be negotiated considering salary guidelines, which includes total dollars committed to the previous pastor (salary, housing equity, medical reimbursement and the like). Occasionally there will be an interim who, because of experience, is unable to serve for this amount and the congregation will need to pay more.
2. Parish supplies housing for the pastor and family. Additional housing allowance may be requested by pastor if permanent residence is kept.
3. Furthermore, if the parish situation requires concentrated effort above the normal routine, serious consideration should be given to meet the guidelines for a pastor of the experience and skills which the interim brings to bear on the problems of the parish. It must be remembered that restorative and creative ministry on the part of the interim pastor may be much more difficult and exhausting than regular parish ministry.

#### **B. Part-time Interim**

Compensation should include preparation time, travel time and mileage for confirmation and worship and other responsibilities at an agreed upon proportion of full-time ministry. If a neighboring pastor serves as interim, the compensation paid for interim service should be divided, half to the pastor and half to the congregation the pastor regularly serves. If the interim service requires more than 1.5 days per week, the pastor and the congregations should reevaluate the congregations' expectations of the pastor.

#### **C. Worship Supply for rostered and non-rostered leaders**

1. Single Sunday service and church year celebrations (Christmas Eve, Good Friday, etc.) - \$175 plus mileage at the IRS rate  
Additional Sunday service - \$50  
Saturday or weekday evening service - \$50 plus motel, if needed
2. Advent or Lenten mid-week worship series - \$80 - \$120 per week (dependant upon preparation required) plus mileage at the IRS rate
3. Weddings and funerals - \$175 plus mileage at the IRS rate per service, paid by the congregation, in addition to any honorarium offered by the family

#### **D. Education Supply for rostered and non-rostered leaders**

1. Sunday class - \$35 plus mileage if separate from other services
2. Bible study - \$40 plus mileage if separate from other services
3. Confirmation - \$40 plus mileage per class taught

The minimum recommended hourly rate for any other services to the congregation is \$20. Reimbursement for mileage should always be considered.

### **PART VII APPENDIX**

#### **A. Ministry Review**

Each year the synod office receives phone calls from congregational leaders asking for a process to use for doing a congregational ministry review. A good resource is the book Pastor and People, available from Augsburg Fortress Publishing, [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) or 1-800-328-4648. In addition to chapters on Mutual Ministry and Personnel Committees, Pastor and People lays out a process for doing a ministry review and performance evaluation of the congregation's ministry.

#### **B. Synod Parsonage Guidelines**

A parsonage is the home provided by the congregation for its rostered leader. It is to be an aid in the carrying out of ministry. The congregation will want to provide a good home.

These guidelines are a way to help both the rostered leader and the congregation. Following them will help the congregation become aware of needed improvements. The congregation will also become aware of abuses of the parsonage property by following these guidelines.

Since the parsonage is the rostered leader's home, privacy should be respected. Congregation members are expected to follow the same standards of politeness for such things as entering the parsonage as they would for any other home in the community.

Because it is the home of the pastor, the desires of the pastor should be consulted as changes are necessary. Further details about this are in the following guidelines.

The quality of the parsonage should meet a standard set by the homes of the majority of the congregation's members. The size should be adequate to accommodate families.

The tenant/landlord model may apply on occasion, but its application is quite limited. Contrary to renters, the pastor normally has little choice of residence. The relationship between the pastor and congregation is not based on a lease or rental agreement, but upon a common bond in the service of Christ Jesus.

These are the suggested guidelines for congregations with parsonages. These are guidelines that congregations and rostered leaders may use to discuss the maintenance, repair and responsibilities relative to a church owned home.

1. It is recommended that the following appliances be provided in the parsonage:
  - stove
  - refrigerator
  - washer and dryer
  - dishwasher
  - air conditioning

- tv antennae unless cable is provided
  - optional garbage disposal
  - humidifier/de-humidifier (if needed)
2. It is recommended that the following utilities be paid directly by the congregation or a utilities allowance be provided:
    - electricity
    - gas
    - water/sewer/garbage
    - telephone (except personal long distance)
    - soft water service (if needed)
  3. Items that would normally be supplied by the congregation include:
    - paint
    - wall coverings
    - floor coverings
    - ceiling fans
    - window coverings
    - light fixtures
  4. Before a rostered leader moves into a parsonage, the congregation should see that it is thoroughly clean and should usually plan to redecorate.
  5. The colors, fabric, design, etc., selected in the redecoration would normally be selected by those who will be living in the house in consultation with the appropriate committee. The congregation, of course, would determine the price ranges for these items.
  6. Parsonage maintenance and repair should be listed as a separate line item in the annual budget, with a clear understanding of who has the authority to spend these budgeted funds.
  7. There should be an annual inspection of the parsonage that is conducted with the pastor.
  8. The rostered leader and congregation should develop and annually update a list of necessary and desired repairs, maintenance, modernization, redecorating and remodeling projects and together prioritize these projects.
  9. There should be clear understanding about how regular maintenance and emergency repairs are to be handled. It is suggested that the pastor be authorized to spend a specified dollar amount at his/her own discretion. Any repairs in excess of this amount would require approval of the property committee or the congregation council.
  10. When a rostered leader moves out of a parsonage, and before all financial obligations are completed, there should be an inspection of the property to see that it is left clean and in good repair. The pastor should be held responsible for any excess wear or damage caused to the parsonage while he or she was living there. This would include any damage caused by children or pets.
  11. The grounds around the parsonage are primarily the responsibility of the congregation. The congregation should see that the lawn, shrubbery and flowerbeds are in good condition when a pastor moves into the parsonage. The rostered leader may be expected to care for these grounds (mow, rake, remove snow, apply fertilizer, insecticides, herbicides) or the congregation may share these responsibilities. (The pastor and the council should negotiate the division of labor immediately after the rostered leader's arrival.)
  12. Congregations should consider taking care of the grounds around the parsonage while the rostered leader is on vacation or study leave if it has been decided this is the rostered leader's responsibility.

13. The congregation should provide suitable garage space for the rostered leader's automobile(s). Normally, this would be space for two vehicles.

## **PART VIII CHARTS AND WORKSHEETS**

### **A. Compensation Guidelines for 2017**

The following guideline chart simplifies the existing chart by reducing it to ranges instead of setting forth numbers year-by-year. The minimum and maximum numbers for each range are the same as the numbers passed at the 2015 Assembly. For example, the minimum and maximum numbers in the 0-5 range are based on the minimum for year 0 and the maximum for year 5 under the prior guideline chart. This simplification of the chart, combined with the freeze of the minimum and maximum numbers in each range, is due to the sense that many congregations are not currently offering compensation packages in compliance with the guidelines. So, under this new chart, it is hoped that more congregations can come into compliance. Furthermore, in past years, recommended increases were based on the COLA increase for that year announced by the Social Security Administration, and there was no COLA increase for 2016.

<u># Years</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Max</u>
0-5	36,375	43,676
6-10	40,724	48,563
11-15	43,255	53,702
16-20	45,786	59,096
21-25	48,318	64,518
26-30	50,633	70,130
31+	52,956	75,974

During each range of years, congregations are strongly encouraged to increase their rostered leader's salary by at least one percent each year. For example, in the 16-20 year range, the increases would be as follows for a congregation that pays the minimum guidelines at year 16:

Year 17	46,243
Year 18	46,936
Year 19	47,405
Year 20	47,879

Congregations that are not currently paying rostered leaders the minimum amount under the guidelines should contact the Synod office to develop a strategy for meeting the guidelines in future years. If congregations continue to be unable to meet the guidelines, then the congregation and the rostered leader should work together with the Synod office to formulate a call which takes this fact into account. Possible alternatives would include, but are not limited to, providing the rostered leader with additional Sundays off beyond the minimum vacation guidelines, adjusting the nature of the call (for example, from full time to 2/3 time, and allowing the rostered leader to seek additional employment), or entering into a shared ministry partnership with another ELCA or ecumenical partner congregation.

**B. Rostered Leader’s Salary, Expenses and Benefits Worksheet (Note: “defined compensation” is a bit tricky to figure. Also, a key issue is parsonage: a housing allowance is not a “housing equity allowance”.)**

**Salary**

1. Enter base salary 1. \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(From compensation chart based on years of experience)
2. Calculate housing provisions
- If a parsonage is provided
- a. Furnishings allowance (additional compensation) a. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Utilities allowance (additional compensation) b. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Housing equity allowance (additional compensation) c. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- If a parsonage is not provided enter 30% of line 1 2. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
3. Calculate social security tax allowance 3. \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(See Portico Benefit Services website calculators at <https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Home/Resources/Calculators.aspx> (select “defined compensation” calculator) or contact synod staff.)
4. Add amounts from steps 1, 2 and 3. **This is the compensation amount you will pay directly to or on behalf of your pastor each year.** 4. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Expenses** (See Part III beginning at page 6)

5. Automobile and travel expense 5. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
6. Professional expenses 6. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
7. Required events 7. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
8. Continuing education 8. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
9. Total – add lines 5, 6, 7 and 8. **This is the church expense you will reimburse to or pay on behalf of your pastor.** 9. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Benefits**

10. Calculate defined compensation as base for benefits and retirement. 10. \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(See Portico Benefit Services website calculators at <https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Home/Resources/Calculators.aspx> (select “defined compensation” calculator first, then choose “contribution amounts calculator”) or contact synod staff.)