



Minnesota Conference, United Church of Christ

Minimum Compensation Guidelines 2017

**Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ
Minimum Compensation Guidelines for 2017
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Introduction:

Compensation for ALL local church employees should be fair and just, taking into consideration the size of the church and the employee's experience, skills, and education. Other factors that churches typically consider are the church's income, special needs, supply and demand, and the geographical setting. This document is created to help congregations plan compensation for its ministers. It can, however, be a very useful guideline for ministers serving in a variety of other ministry settings.

This guideline is put forth in order to honor and value authorized ministers and create an environment of best practices for the ministers and ministry settings of the Minnesota Conference, United Church of Christ. However, in spite of best intentions, some churches, because of a smaller membership or financial constraints, may be unable to provide sufficient compensation for full-time pastoral service. Such churches are encouraged to meet with the Conference Staff to review their situation and to consider creative alternatives, such as the calling of a part-time bi-vocational minister and/or sharing a minister with another congregation. A congregation should not expect a minister to work full-time for part-time compensation. In the case of some staff a one-time or multi-faceted compensation adjustment might be considered to bring them into line with the Compensation Guidelines. Churches that are not able to approach these guidelines should consider options under Part-time Minister, pp. 11, of this packet that fit their budget while treating their ministers with fairness, justice and integrity.

The 2017 Minimum Compensation Guidelines

In preparing the Guidelines for 2017, we included previous consultation with other Conferences in the United Church of Christ (including Iowa and Wisconsin), other religious and professional organizations (including the ELCA, PC(USA), and Minnesota Council on Nonprofits), actual compensation offered to clergy by our churches in the Minnesota Conference UCC, and projected cost-of-living increases by national organizations.

How to decide ministerial compensation

A process needs to be in place for the regular, annual review of ministerial compensation. We suggest that in each church, a small sub-committee, perhaps a Personnel Committee responsible to the governing board, be given the task of this review. Compensation reviews and proposals should not be made by a budget committee or other budgeting body.

*Please be aware that because federal tax structures (IRS and Social Security codes) are unique for ministers, and because each minister's family

dynamics and needs differ, the ministerial compensation package should be allocated in consultation with the minister so as to best meet the minister's needs [see worksheet, p. 13]. Churches are encouraged to first calculate the total compensation to be allocated, and then in consultation with the minister to re-allocate the individual line items.

Compensation Guidelines for Ordained Ministers

Because the minister of a church is often expected to be a highly educated and trained professional, the salary and housing package for ministers should be congruent with the compensation of other similarly trained professionals in the community. The total compensation package for ordained ministers should be at least equal to that of professionals requiring three or more years of post graduate training, such as school superintendents, secondary and middle school principals, engineers and other professionals in administrative positions. Other considerations are appropriate for licensed and commissioned ministers (see Sections 9 & 10, below). But regardless of whether the authorized minister is ordained, commissioned, or licensed, each minister's total compensation package should take into consideration years of service, special skills and training, and natural aptitude.

Additionally, the work schedule and the compensation package of all authorized ministers should be healthy for the minister and for the ministry location. This requires a balance of time spent in the church's ministry and time spent with family and friends – a balance of work and recreation, a balance of exercising the body and the mind, a balance of care of others and care for self.

1. **Cash Salary** - The following chart provides guidance for determining the cash salary of full-time ordained ministers in a local church setting. The chart presents salary guidelines related to the membership of a church with various Steps within each membership category. The Steps refer to experience, special skills, and other factors deemed important for salary calculations. If the actual cash salary of a minister (before any re-allocation of funds to other line items) is below that of the appropriate membership size and Step, the position may be considered to be less than full time. The salaries listed in the chart are for ordained ministers.

Suggested Minimum Cash Salary for 2017

(does NOT include housing allowance, parsonage, or benefits)

Based on a % cost of living increase over 2016.

<u>Membership</u>	<u>Step A</u>	<u>Step B</u>	<u>Step C</u>	<u>Step D</u>	<u>Step E</u>
Less than 150	\$33,369	\$35,954	\$38,308	\$41,524	---
151 to 300	\$37,276	\$40,433	\$43,301	\$48,015	\$52,266
301 to 450	\$40,893	\$43,764	\$48,818	\$54,047	\$59,158
451-600	---	\$47,782	\$51,161	\$60,417	\$66,739
601-850	---	\$52,034	\$59,732	\$65,188	\$60,527
More than 851	---	---	\$66,739	\$71,104	\$76,388

Guide to the Steps

Cash salary guidelines are based upon the membership of the congregation, and the skills, education, and experience of the pastor, co-pastor, associate pastor, team ministry pastor, or other authorized minister. Please note that:

- each Step denotes a minimum salary for that Step
- truly outstanding performance in ministry may merit a salary in the next larger category or Step.
- an adjustment should be considered for ministers who have received less than adequate increases in the past year(s).

Step A = entry-level. no ministerial or applicable life experience, other than field education in seminary.

Step B = entry-level to early mid-level. 2-5 years ministerial and/or applicable life experience.

Step C = mid-level. 5-15 years ministerial and/or applicable life experience and proficiency in special skills.

Step D = high mid-level to early senior-level. 15 to 25 years ministerial and/or applicable life experience, perhaps an advanced graduate degree, specialized experience gained

from continuing education or other work experience. A high level of proficiency in a wide range of skills typically needed by a senior minister, including staff supervision.

Step E = senior-level. 20 or more years ministerial and/or applicable life experience, highest level of skills proficiency needed by a senior minister, advanced graduate degree(s) and/or specialized skills.

2. **Housing** - For authorized ministers, the cost of housing will be a part of the minister's compensation package. After the total salary and housing compensation are agreed upon, the minister may choose to re-allocate that total compensation in a more beneficial way for any particular economic circumstances, in accordance with the codes of the IRS.

- a. If a **parsonage** is provided, full utilities, basic telephone service, and maintenance costs are to be paid by the church. Furthermore, it is recommended that the church consider an **equity development plan** for ministers living in a church-owned home. Toward this end, it is suggested that a church provide an amount equal to **3%-5%** of the minister's **salary basis** to be invested for the minister's benefit in one of the following ways:
- as an additional contribution to the UCC annuity fund.
 - in an IRA, or a TSA (through the Pension Boards UCC).
 - in another agreed upon investment vehicle.

A minister who is furnished a parsonage may exclude from income the fair rental value of the parsonage, including utilities. However, the amount excluded cannot be more than the reasonable pay for the minister's services. - IRS Publication 517

(In the case of a parsonage, the "**salary basis**" for Pension Boards UCC purposes = 130% of cash salary + any furnishings allowance received.)

- b. If a **housing allowance** is provided, the amount received should permit the minister to buy, furnish, and maintain a median-priced house in the church community. A **housing allowance** should be no less than **1% per month** of the value of the **median-priced standard 3-bedroom home** in the community. According to the IRS, the value of the annual housing allowance must be formally approved at the annual meeting of the church or by the appropriate church board each year prior to receipt of the allowance by the minister. The approval must be officially recorded in church minutes and be retained in the church files.

A minister who receives a housing allowance may exclude the allowance from gross income to the extent it is used to pay expenses in providing a home. Generally, those expenses include rent, mortgage interest, utilities, repairs, and other expenses directly relating to providing a home. – IRS Publication 517

Formula: Value of median-priced house x 1% x 12 = Housing Allowance

- If a median-priced house in the community is \$100,000, the church's minimum housing allowance would be \$100,000 times 1%, or \$1,000 per month. (\$12,000 per year).
- If a median-priced house in the community is \$200,000, the church's minimum housing allowance would be \$200,000 times 1%, or \$2,000 per month. (\$24,000 per year).
- If a median-priced house in the community is \$250,000, the church's minimum housing allowance would be \$250,000 times 1%, or \$2,500 per month. (\$30,000 per year).

(In the case of a housing allowance, the "*salary basis*" for Pension Boards UCC purposes = cash salary + housing allowance.)

- c. For churches that cannot provide either a parsonage or a sufficient housing allowance to purchase a home in the community, a home (house or condo) for the minister might be leased or rented. Full utilities, basic telephone service, and maintenance costs are to be paid by the church. An *equity development plan*, described above under "parsonage," should be included.

3. Social Security Offset

Because the IRS considers ministers to be self-employed for purposes of Social Security (though not for purposes of federal income tax), these guidelines expect ministry settings to provide an additional cash benefit equal to 7.65% of the minister's *salary basis* to ministers who contribute to Social Security. [For an **explanation of *salary basis***, see Section 2a-b, p. 4, above, depending upon whether a parsonage or housing allowance is provided.] For tax reporting purposes, the Social Security Offset is included as taxable wages on the minister's W-2 form.

4. General Benefits

Benefits are provided for authorized ministers as an expense of the ministry setting. **To be in keeping with Conference Guidelines, a church must provide at minimum the following benefits as described in 4a-c (or cash equivalent), 4d-f, 4h, 5a-c, and 6e-f, below:** retirement annuity, life & disability insurance, health & dental insurance, worker's compensation, paid vacation & days off, business travel reimbursement, financial & leave provisions for civic service and continuing education events, professional expense reimbursement, and

Criminal Background Check reimbursement. [Participation in The Pension Boards, UCC plans requires employment on at least a ½ time basis.]

a. Retirement Annuity

Quarterly payments to the Annuity Fund, an IRS 403(b) tax-sheltered annuity administered by The Pension Boards, United Church of Christ, are a standard part of the UCC ministerial benefits package. Ministry settings provide contributions directly to The Pension Boards of 14% of the minister's *salary basis*. (1) For ministers paid a housing allowance, the *salary basis* is the total of *cash salary* + housing allowance. (2) For ministers provided a parsonage, the *salary basis* is the total of *cash salary* + 30% of *cash salary* + any furnishings allowance. All such payments and subsequent accumulations are tax deferred until retirement.

b. Life & Disability Insurance

The UCC Life & Disability Insurance plan is a standard part of the UCC ministerial benefits package that provides both short- and long-term disability benefits [of 60% of the minister's base salary], and term life insurance. The cost of the plan is 1.5% of the minister's *salary basis* [see Section 4a, above] paid directly to The Pension Boards UCC on a quarterly basis. For complete information, see the Pension Boards UCC website www.pbucc.org. If a minister is unable to enroll in the UCC LDI plan, comparable coverage should be sought elsewhere and 1.5% of the salary basis applied to the cost of that coverage.

i. Short-Term Disability Benefits

Begin after 30 days of disablement (at the discretion of the insurer), and may continue for 22 weeks if the disability continues.

ii. Long-Term Disability Benefits

May begin (at the discretion of the insurer) when short-term benefits end, and may continue until age 65 if the disability continues.

c. Health & Dental Insurance

Plan A Health Insurance & Dental Insurance for ministers and their dependents through The Pension Boards, UCC is a standard part of the UCC ministerial benefits package. If health & dental insurance is desired by the minister, the ministry setting shall make: (1) quarterly payments for the full cost of the annual premium directly to The Pension Boards, UCC; or (2) payments not to exceed the UCC annual premium applied to the cost of a comparable plan of another insurer. Note: Those persons entering authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ for the first time have a 90 day

window during which they may enroll in The Pension Boards, UCC health insurance plan without need of a medical examination.

d. Worker's Compensation

Worker's Compensation is a standard part of the UCC ministerial benefits package. Ministry Settings are required by law to provide worker's compensation insurance coverage for all employees, including ministers.

e. Vacation

Ministers shall receive at least 4 weeks paid vacation per year (including 4 Sundays). Such paid vacation is a standard part of the UCC ministerial benefits package.

f. Holidays and Days Off

It is expected that ministers will be afforded the usual paid holidays afforded other employed persons (including the provision that they will take compensatory time when a holiday falls on a day requiring pastoral work). It is also expected that ministers will take the equivalent of two days off per week, as do employees of most other organizations and businesses. These provisions are a standard part of the UCC ministerial benefits package.

g. Malpractice Insurance

Each ministry setting is encouraged to purchase malpractice insurance if this is not already included in the church's current insurance policy, so as to protect the church and its employees in the event of a lawsuit. This insurance is standard in the policies underwritten by the United Church of Christ Insurance Board (UCCIB).

h. Criminal Background Check

All UCC clergy must submit a Criminal Background Check in order to circulate their profile. It is incumbent on the local ministry setting to reimburse a newly called minister for this expense. [\$160 as of 2012]

5. Business Expense

Business expenses are incurred by ministers as they carry out the work of the church. The setting and the minister should collaborate in clearly defining such expenses and establishing detailed accounting procedures and appropriate budgetary lines for their reimbursement. Examples below:

a. Business Travel

The Internal Revenue Service, annually and as otherwise needed, establishes a mileage rate to be used in calculating the business

mileage reimbursement rate for the use of a personal vehicle. As of 1/1/2016 that rate is \$0.54 per mile. Ministry settings are obligated to reimburse ministers for all business travel expenses, including the cost of parking & tolls incurred in carrying out their ministry. There are two ways to do this.

- i. The ministry setting may reimburse the minister monthly for the actual miles driven in the performance of the ministry, at the IRS business mileage rate, as well as the actual cost of tolls and parking incurred, based on a logged accountable plan. An itemized record of the miles driven and the purposes of the travel would need to be submitted to the church setting for reimbursement.
- ii. The ministry setting may reimburse the minister monthly for the cost of maintaining the vehicle used in the performance of the ministry (car maintenance, insurance, depreciation, gasoline, etc), based on the ratio of business miles driven in the performance of the ministry to total miles driven, as well as the actual cost of parking and tolls, based on an accountable plan. Itemized bills incurred in the maintenance of the vehicle, and an itemized daily record, including the purposes of the travel, would need to be submitted to the church for reimbursement.

In either instance, funds received in excess of the actual costs incurred are to be included by the minister in their income for the year. It is not recommended that a monthly flat rate travel allowance be paid.

b. Continuing Education

Financial support for continuing education events are a standard part of the UCC ministerial benefits package. The amount that is budgeted should cover a significant portion of the expenses for tuition, travel, housing, books and meals. A minimum of \$500.00/year is recommended.

(Leave Allocation for Continuing Education: see Section 6f, p. 10)

c. Professional Expenses

Provisions in the church budget (and explicitly referenced in the minister's call agreement or letter of offer) for the reimbursement of other business expenses that the minister might incur in the performance of the ministry is a standard part of the UCC ministerial benefits package. These might include: professional organization dues; the cost of professional books, journals & magazines; the cost of ministry-specific attire; professional entertainment costs; and the cost of registration, housing, meals

and travel for Minnesota Conference UCC, national United Church of Christ, and ecumenical meetings.

6. Leaves of Absence, Sabbaticals and Other Leave Benefits

a. Sick Leave

A Sick Leave policy is encouraged. Sick Leave typically accrues at the rate of one day per month, and may be accumulated from year to year up to a maximum of 45 working days. Sick Leave may be used for personal illness or accident, or for the care of a person in the minister's immediate family (i.e., spouse, partner, child, or parent). Sick Leave may also be used for medical and dental appointments.

b. Disability Leave

In the case of a Leave of up to 30 days due to illness or accident, the ministry setting is expected to continue the minister's base salary and all benefits without interruption. When a Leave extends beyond 30 days, the minister or ministry setting should alert the Conference Office and The Pension Boards, United Church of Christ to apply for disability benefits under the UCC *Life & Disability Policy* [see Section 4b, p. 6]. Typically, any accrued Vacation or Sick Leave may be used to supplement The Pension Boards, UCC disability benefits (@60% of base salary), up to the minister's full base salary.

c. Parental Leave

For the period prior to and/or immediately following the birth or adoption of a child, a Parental Leave of up to 2 months at full compensation is encouraged. Any accrued Vacation or Sick Leave may be used to extend the Leave period. Another option for extending the Leave would be for the minister to work part-time, engaging some of their responsibilities while making provisional arrangements for others. In each of these instances, prior to the Leave, arrangements for the continuation of the ministry setting's pastoral responsibilities during the Leave should be negotiated.

Ministers taking Parental Leave are encouraged to submit their need at least 90 days in advance of the Leave to allow sufficient time for the obtaining of pastoral coverage.

d. Compassionate Leave

A Compassionate Leave policy is encouraged. Compassionate Leave is typically provided in the case of an illness, death, wedding, graduation, or personal emergency within the minister's immediate family (i.e., spouse, partner, child, parent, in-laws, grandparents, grandchildren, and siblings). Five days of Compassionate Leave

per year is suggested, except in circumstances in which additional Leave time is negotiated.

e. Civic Service Leaves

Civic Service Leaves are a standard part of the UCC ministerial benefits package. Regular full-time and part-time ministers who are members of a US Military Reserve or National Guard unit will be excused from work when called for military duty and training. Ministry settings shall adhere to all federal and state laws affecting Military Leave.

Ministers are to be granted Leave for Jury Duty. They shall receive compensation from the ministry setting for up to 2 weeks. Compensation for ministers serving Jury Duty is the difference between their regular compensation and the Jury Duty per diem pay. Ministers are expected to resume pastoral duties once released from Jury Duty service for the day.

f. Continuing Education/Study Leave

Ministry settings should expect their minister to be committed to a continuing program of professional growth and development, and are urged to provide ministers with 2 weeks of Study Leave per year, including weekends. Both the ministry setting and the minister will benefit from it. (Financial Support for Continuing Education: see Section 5b, p. 8)

g. Sabbatical Leave

Ministry settings are encouraged to establish a Sabbatical Leave policy for their ministers. The concept of Sabbatical, rooted in Scripture, offers a time of sustained study, travel, and personal and professional renewal, typically enabling ministers to be of greater service within their ministry setting over time. Sabbatical Leaves are typically offered for 3 months duration with full compensation and benefits to the minister, or up to 6 months duration with partial compensation and benefits. Sabbaticals are typically granted every 4 to 6 years.

Following a Sabbatical Leave, it is expected that ministers will remain in service at their ministry setting for at least one full year, or repay the ministry setting in full for the cost of salary and benefits afforded the minister during the Leave.

Ministry settings are encouraged to set aside, in their annual budget, funds that when taken together are sufficient to meet the total cost of providing pastoral services during the Sabbatical Leave.

h. Wider Church Involvement

Authorized ministers are expected to participate in the life of the Minnesota Conference and the wider United Church of Christ, by serving on Conference committees and teams, at Pilgrim Point Camp, and within the national settings of the United Church of Christ. Local ministry settings are encouraged to not consider such service as time off or Vacation, but as part of the minister's and ministry setting's greater ministry.

i. Evaluations

The Minnesota Conference encourages all ministry settings and ministers to participate in an annual evaluation. Such evaluations should consider the shared ministry goals of both the minister and the ministry setting as they, together, seek to clarify or better discern the future of the church. Those desiring assistance in this process are encouraged to contact an Associate Conference Minister.

j. Minister's Death

In the event of a minister's death, the ministry setting is encouraged to provide the minister's spouse or partner and/or dependents, at minimum, the minister's full salary for the current month of service, any accrued vacation time, and three additional months of full salary. The ministry setting is also encouraged to provide to the minister's family housing in the parsonage free of charge (including the cost of utilities and local phone service), or be provided a housing allowance, for up to 90 days. Further provisions, such as health and dental insurance, may be made upon mutual agreement between the setting, the spouse or partner and/or the dependents of the deceased, the Associate Conference/Conference Minister and/or the Committee on Ministry.

[IRS guidelines state that the parsonage and/or housing allowance becomes taxable to the family of the deceased.]

7. Part-time Minister

Churches that cannot afford the recommended full-time salary package may wish to consider offering their minister a part-time salary package, which is based on the minister's time commitments in terms of UNITS. "Transparency" is the key to this package, because without it a church might easily develop unrealistic time expectations of its part-time minister.

One approach to negotiating a transparent part-time church/minister compensation package is to look at each morning, afternoon, or evening as constituting one unit of work (e.g. 3-4 hours). For example, a minister who spent a morning on worship preparation, an afternoon

on hospital visitation and administrative work and an evening at a church meeting would have worked 3 units that day.

- a full-time pastoral position would average 12-13 units/week over the course of a year.
- a three-quarter time position would average 9 units/week over the course of a year.
- a half-time position would average 6 units/week over the course of a year.

This approach permits a church to set priorities while also providing considerable flexibility. Lay people might prepare the newsletter, teach an adult Bible Study or make routine visits to shut-ins, freeing up the part-time minister to concentrate on worship preparation, a limited number of meetings, and counseling of and visitation to those in need. In this way, a church may provide a professional-level ministry with a part-time minister.

A possible, but not exhaustive, list of church activities and responsibilities that might be included in a minister's total units of time are:

Worship preparation;
 Sunday worship and Sunday programs;
 Visitation at hospitals, nursing homes, personal homes;
 Administration, phone calls, emails;
 Church, community, and denominational meetings;
 Counseling, weddings, funerals, and other pastoral concerns;
 Teaching, Bible study/adult education;
 Communication venues: bulletins, newsletters, website, other;
 Community-based chaplaincy at nursing homes, jails, hospitals,
 etc.

Another means for determining part-time compensation would be to consider the cost of leading worship at \$150-200/day + mileage, and that of all other pastoral responsibilities at \$25-\$30 per hour + mileage, based on experience.

8. Interim Minister

Interim Ministry Specialists have unique training to help congregations with the transition from settled minister to settled minister. They rely on churches to support them during their ministry in the local setting, but also need to maintain some stability between interims. Churches should take this into account when negotiating the terms to be applied at the end of an interim contract. It is suggested that each church provide an additional 30 - 45 days of full compensation following the end date of an interim minister's time in serving a church setting for more than 6 months, and 15 days of full compensation for less than 6 months of service.

Contracts for interim ministers, whether part-time or full-time, may be drawn up according to the cash salary guidelines found on pages 2-3, or by using the Unit system illustrated in Section 7, p 11. Since Units offer a combined compensation of salary and housing, a minimum of \$90 per Unit would be a starting point for clergy with less than 5 years experience in interim ministry. The minimum for experienced interim ministers would be \$105 per Unit. Clergy who have a special expertise in crisis and/or after-pastor ministry would start at a minimum of \$120 per Unit.

In the majority of circumstances, the interim minister's total compensation, including benefits, will be at least equal to that of the previous settled minister.

9. Licensed Minister

Licensed Ministers serve a vital role in the life of the Minnesota Conference. This guideline may be used for full- and part-time licensed ministers. Full-time licensed ministers should be compensated according to the cash salary guidelines on pages 2-3 of this document in the range of 85%-100% of the listed salary. Part-time licensed clergy should be compensated minimally at the lower end of the salary range for part-time ministers, found in Section 7, p. 11.

10. Commissioned Minister

Commissioned Ministers conduct vital ministry in the Minnesota Conference, but given their varied ministry contexts, training, and responsibilities, it is difficult to generalize about compensation except to say it should be commensurate with their training and experience.

11. Reporting a Minister's Compensation

Ministers may responsibly re-apportion their salary and housing in a way that is more beneficial for tax purposes, and to better meet their personal financial needs, while still being in accordance with the IRS Codes. Also, given the natural tendency to compare a minister's compensation with one's own, we suggest that church settings report Minister Compensation (salary + housing) in the church budget separate from that of Employer Expenses. For example:

Minister's Compensation	
Salary	\$ _____
Housing	\$ _____
Total Compensation	\$ _____
Employer Expenses	
Annuity, Disability, & Health Benefits	\$ _____
FICA (7.65% social security offset)	\$ _____
Business Auto Reimbursement	\$ _____
Continuing Ed. & Professional Expenses	\$ _____

Clergy Compensation Worksheet

	Current Year	Next Year
Salary Basis		
1. Cash Salary (pp. 2-3, p. 14)	_____	_____
2. Housing Allowance or Fair Market Rental Value of Parsonage (pp. 4-5)	_____	_____
3. Salary Basis Subtotal (add lines 1 and 2)	_____	_____
4. Social Security Offset (p. 5) (7.65% of line 3)	_____	_____
General Benefits (pp. 6-7)		
5. Retirement Annuity (14% of line 3 or 14% of line 1 x 130%)	_____	_____
6. Life and Disability Insurance (1.5% of line 3 or line 1 x 130%)	_____	_____
7. Health and Dental Insurance	_____	_____
8. Criminal Background Check Reimbursement	_____	_____
Business Expense (pp. 7-9)		
9. Business Travel (\$.54 per mile for 2016)	_____	_____
10. Continuing Education	_____	_____
11. Professional Expenses	_____	_____
12. Benefits Sub-total (lines 5-11)	_____	_____
Total Compensation (lines 3 + 12)	_____	_____

(Reminder: Thou shalt NOT wait to budget for Sabbatical Leave. p. 10.)