

2017 COMPENSATION GUIDELINES for DEACONS and LAY PROFESSIONALS of the GREATER MILWAUKEE SYNOD - ELCA

Approved by the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council on September 15, 2016

Section IV B Vacation Modified on January 19, 2017

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Introduction to Compensation Guidelines

The Greater Milwaukee Synod has provided compensation guidelines for clergy and lay professionals in order to assist congregations and staff persons in the process of providing fair and equitable compensation within our synod. The synod also recognizes the need for similar guidelines for other professional workers within the church. That task becomes more complex because of the variety of ministries that are engaged in by full and part-time lay professional workers.

For purposes of definition, Deacons are Associates In Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers who are on the Word and Service roster of the ELCA, which was created at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. These persons have a prescribed amount of education, supervised field experience, and/or other specified training. These individuals have also been examined and certified by a Candidacy Committee. Lay Professionals are church workers who are not rostered, but are engaged in full or part-time church service. They may or may not have a certain level of education or training that would relate to their area of ministry. Some of the areas that would be covered under these categories include Youth and Young Adult Ministry, Education, Music, Parish Administrator, Parish Nurse, Volunteer Coordination, Parish Visitation and Deaconess. It is our experience that these functional areas can be arranged in almost any combination to suit the particular gifts that an individual has for ministry.

For purposes of this set of guidelines, the focus will be on full-time lay professionals in the following areas: Youth, Education, Parish Worker, and Parish Nurse. This document will not deal with secretaries, janitors, and organists. Secretarial and janitorial compensation is usually determined by the market within a given community. Salaries for church organists are often guided by professional organist's societies. The committee encourages consideration of comparable worth and pay equity in those categories.

The full-time lay professional base salary guidelines are included in Appendix B. These figures are based on comparison with other synods. Other applicable areas of compensation, including benefits, are included for your consideration. Due to a wide range of experience and responsibility, some latitude must be exercised in defining base salary ranges.

It is also important to note that the implementation of key provisions of the Affordable Care Act have meant significant adjustment in health care coverage, including in the plans offered by Portico.

Please contact the Greater Milwaukee Synod with any questions.

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Rationale

The 2017 Salary Guidelines for Deacons and Lay Professionals in the Greater Milwaukee Synod are provided by the synod to assist in establishing appropriate salary packages. These guidelines are developed with awareness of both urban and suburban circumstances in our synod and of the other synods of Region 5. These synods are striving for uniformity in guidelines, although the dollar amounts may vary.

Decision by the ELCA Church-wide assembly – Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses and Diaconal Ministers would be joined into one roster under “Word and Service” (“Deacons”). Rostered Ordained Ministers (“Clergy”) would now be defined as “Word and Sacrament”.

Differences between Ordained Clergy (Word and Sacrament) and Deacons (Word and Service). Tax rules for Ordained Ministers tend to create the remaining difference in compensation between these two groups. Base Compensation, for Rostered Ordained Ministers, includes a housing allowance of 30% of base salary, while minimum guidelines here do not include that for lay professionals and Word and Service ministers.

Adjusting Salary Guidelines - The Synod continues to adjust its base salary index to more closely reflect the salary indexes of the East Central Wisconsin Synod, South Central Synod of Wisconsin and the Metropolitan Chicago Synod.

Cost of Living Adjustment - For 2017, we are recommending a 1.0% cost of living adjustment (COLA) for lay leaders and staff. This is based on forecasts that US Consumer Price Index for 2016 will be roughly 1.8%. Another Region 5 synod uses the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) approved by the Social Security Administration. For the 2016, the COLA for the Social Security Administration was 0.0%.

Salary Adjustment for Added Experience (Step Increase) - However, in addition to cost of living considerations, each year the lay leader or lay professional staff member has an additional year of experience. Our Synod’s goal over the next five years is to more closely follow the step increases used by other Region V synods, which range from \$600 to \$800.

Being Compensated Below Guidelines –If your congregation’s rostered lay leaders and staff members are paid below guidelines, a concerted effort should be made to increase their compensation to meet guidelines within three years or less, or come to an agreement in conversation with the individual about what is fair and appropriate compensation.

Note: Wherever the term “congregation” is used in this document it can also be assumed that this applies to all ELCA affiliated organizations.

Health Care Benefits:

In 2017, Portico continues to offer four different-priced ELCA-Primary health benefit options — platinum, gold, silver, or bronze — and sponsoring employers continue to pay different health contribution rates based on defined compensation, a member’s age, and employer’s geographical location.

In April 2013, the ELCA Church Council recommended that sponsoring employers provide their plan members with the Gold+ option because it most closely resembled the ELCA-Primary

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health benefits being offered at that time and preserved the compensation packages (salary plus benefits) being offered. We concurred with this recommendation at that time and continue to recommend congregations choose the Gold+ option.

For 2017, the ELCA-Primary contribution rates for Portico are expected to increase by 6% for the Gold+ option, which includes 5% for inflation and the elimination of a 1% discount to congregations. All other plan options will see the same increase. This is the smallest increase in recent years. Annually, contributions are also adjusted due to changes in member age (about 2%) and changes in defined compensation. For 2016, the ELCA-Primary contribution rates of Portico increased by 7.0% for the Gold+ option. In 2015, ELCA-Primary contribution rates increased by 11.0% for each of the four health benefit options.

Portico will not be increasing the deductibles and out-of-pocket costs for members. These costs are the responsibility of the member, and provide a cost sharing mechanism between the member (rostered leader or staff) and the health plan. In general terms, the out-of-pocket and deductibles are intended to have a participating member pay up to 20% of their health care costs. Congregations, who wish to assist the member with these costs, can contribute to a Health Savings accounts for the member.

As stated earlier the contribution rates are sensitive to geographical area of the synods, age of member, and defined compensation. The majority of GMS health plan members are in the Gold+ option. Congregations should use the benefit cost calculators provided by Portico at their website to help your congregation determine the total cost of providing the full package of wages and benefits.

Disability contributions will decrease from 3.5% to 3.0% of defined compensation, while basic group life insurance contributions will stay at 0.3% of defined compensation.

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PART I. Determining Compensation

Compensation includes a salary and the consideration of additional funds designated for tax deferred annuities, etc. Benefits and professional expenses are covered in Parts II and III of this manual.

A. Base Salary

The number of variables involved that define the needs of the rostered employees and congregations makes it unreasonable to recommend one salary figure to apply to every employee. These guidelines present a process that will aid your annual deliberations to arrive at a budget recommendation that best serves all parties concerned. Hopefully, each parish has a Staff Support Committee [or equivalent] to assist in this process.

The synod's [Error! Reference source not found.7](#) include a cost of living increase for each category, though one which increases most for beginning and early career employees, and less for experienced employees. This is in recognition of external factors, including comparisons with nearby synods and the impact of a revised healthcare premium structure through Portico. Appendix B gives guidelines for base salary. Historical data on actual practice in synod congregations is not available at this time.

1. Factors to use in determining a proposed increase include:

a. Responsibilities

- Level of responsibility of the position
- Time demands of the position
- The size of the congregation

b. Proficiency

- Level of responsibility of the position
- Time demands of the position
- The size of the congregation
- Abilities of the employee as shepherd, teacher, counselor, administrator
- Years of experience as an AIM, Diaconal Minister or lay professional
- Administrative ability
- Continuing Education beyond ordination requirements

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c. Goals and objectives

- Local Congregation
- Professional Development
- Synod Participation
- Personal

d. Cost of Living adjustment for inflation

e. Increase Based on Additional Year of Service

B. Tax Sheltered Annuity

The use of a TSA allowance is a way that additional savings fund may be established on the initiative of the congregation as a supplement to the retirement benefits, or by redirecting monies from the Base Salary on the initiative of the employee. (This can also be done through the ELCA Portico Benefits Plan.)

PART II – Determining Cost of Benefits

A. ELCA Retirement and Other Benefit Plans

The employer/congregation contributes required contributions for each eligible employee whom the employer enrolls in the plans. An ELCA congregation may enroll any or all of its employees. The amount of the required contributions is determined as a percent of defined compensation.

Detailed information about calculating defined compensation and required contributions are available through the EmployerLink section of the Portico Benefit Services website (<https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/home>) or by calling 800-352-2876.

RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION RATES

Attained Age on 12/31/87, if enrolled prior to 1988.	Minimum Required Contribution Rate
55 or older	12%
45 through 54	11%
44 or under	10%
All enrolled since 1/1/1988	10%

Multiply the percentage above times the compensation to arrive at the retirement benefit.

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B. Medical and Dental Benefits Contribution

With the advent of the Affordable Care Act, changes were made to plan offerings by Portico Benefit Services. Information provided in versions of this document prior to 2014 has been updated, especially with regard to the creation of multiple plan options and age-based premiums, as Portico continues to prepare the ELCA health plan options for the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Congregations should keep in mind that there are four plan options from Portico, with differing levels of coverage and out-of-pocket expenditure requirements. The Portico website and representatives of Portico can provide you more detail about these plan options. The Gold+ Plan is recommended as the appropriate level for congregations to choose, in that it most closely approximates the plan offered prior to implementation of the ACA. Some may find that an alternative plan choice may better suit their individual situation. A conversation should be held with a Portico representative to explore the alternative that may best meet the needs of your individual members situation.

The decision to recommend the Gold+ Plan was endorsed both by the Church Council of the ELCA in April 2013 and by the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly in May 2013.

Congregations are **required** to cover their medical and dental premiums. It should be noted that in recent years, Portico has increased the contributions of member employees through co-payments and deductibles. Coverage for clergy and deacons participating in the plan is not optional, except that Portico Benefit Services provides for waiver of medical-dental coverage if proof is given of coverage under a spouse's plan. Calculate benefit costs by using Portico calculator found at <https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Resources/Calculators/BenefitsCostCalculator.aspx>.

For purposes of assisting congregations in their analysis, a sample schedule of compensation and benefits is provided in the attachments to this report. The schedules use the minimum salary guidelines, adding in a housing allowance and employer provided social security allowance to arrive at Defined Compensation. Health costs are then calculated based on estimates from Portico Benefit Services, using the Gold+ plan option. In all cases, congregations should contact Portico for the exact cost of premiums under different plan options. The health care costs show a minimum and maximum. Minimum is representative of a thirty year old member, and maximum is for a sixty-five year old member.

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When a waiver is granted it is strongly recommended that the congregation *not* simply absorb the saved dollars into the church budget. Doing so would cause difficulty when the congregation again needs to provide such coverage. Rather, it is recommended that the savings be used for their intended purposes (providing benefits to church staff leadership) either by providing an offset for any additional costs, particularly premium costs, incurred by the spouse to have family medical coverage or by implementing Supplemental Benefits of Medical and Dental Reimbursement.

Members may re-enter the plan at any time. Dependents who are covered under an employed spouse's plan are able to re-enter the ELCA plan without a waiting period or additional pre-existing condition limitation upon termination of other coverage.

It is hoped that congregations will provide family coverage for those families who do not have other coverage.

Congregational contributions toward medical and dental coverage are based on the level of dependent coverage required. Portico Benefit Services EmployerLink can provide detailed information on premiums and related calculations. Employees who are already covered should have received a letter detailing their 2017 premiums.

In order to participate in the above Benefits Program, an individual must be enrolled in all of the plans. The program is available to Deacons and lay professionals who are scheduled to work 20 hours or more per week for at least six months during the year.

C. Supplemental Benefits

1. Medical and Dental Expense

The ELCA Medical and Dental Benefit Plan does not cover all medical expenses, but incorporates deductibles and co-payments. The parish and employee should review the pastor's exposure to these out-of-pocket expenses and consider some allowance for reimbursement or insurance of these expenses.

One method of doing so is reimbursement, with the congregation identifying a sum to be used for medical and dental costs incurred by the employee that are not covered by insurance. To avoid this being considered as taxable income, these reimbursements should be paid directly to the medical provider upon presentation of a bill and "Explanation of Benefits" from ELCA insurance.

The employee may also wish to take advantage of a Tax-Advantaged Account (Health Savings Account) offered by Portico.

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2. Disability Insurance Supplement

As a benefit of participation in the ELCA Benefits Plan your employee has Disability Insurance. Plan details are available through Portico. The parish provides full compensation for the first two months of disability on a self-insured basis. The parish is also expected to pay the medical, dental and survivors insurance contributions during the first two months of disability. After the first 60 days of disability, the ELCA disability plan becomes effective and will pay 2/3 or 66.67% of the monthly defined compensation. Congregations should consider paying the remaining 1/3 or 33.33% of the monthly defined compensation. The parish should evaluate the need to provide additional disability coverage and the advisability of insuring its own self-insured obligation. This coverage would be obtained apart from the ELCA plan.

PART III – Professional Expenses

It is recommended that the congregation adopt the policy that all professional expenses incurred by the employee(s) be reimbursed in full. Adequate allowances, in addition to salaries, should be provided in the church budget to cover anticipated costs. The IRS insists that for these allowances to be non-taxable, they must be fully documented and appropriately paid. The congregation council should frequently review the allowances and their use to be certain that the professional staff are submitting reimbursement requests on a timely basis and are being fully reimbursed.

The primary areas for professional expenses are shown below. There may be additional professional expenses unique to your parish situation. This matter should be discussed with your professional staff.

A. Automobile Expenses

The largest single church-related expense for some employees is the cost of transportation, which includes fuel, repairs, insurance, tolls, etc. Transportation expenses throughout the business world are commonly covered by the employer. For 2016 Internal Revenue Service allows deductions of \$0.54 per mile for a car used for business purposes. This figure is usually adjusted annually. Surveys indicate that the cost of operating automobiles is greater than the mileage amount the IRS allows. The travel allowance should be adequate to cover all transportation costs to the pastor including automobile expenses. Parishes should pay the full cost of car expenses incurred in the fulfillment of duties required as part of this position.

There are three options available:

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1. Parish –Owned Vehicle

Where extensive driving is required, a parish owned or leased vehicle may be the most satisfactory approach. Any personal miles must be reimbursed to the congregation or claimed as taxable income.

2. Reimbursement

Reimbursement can be based on the actual number of miles driven. The reimbursement amount is the Standard Mileage Rate for business set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and announced annually. The 54.0 cents is the published 2016 rate. Anytime the IRS revises this rate (as was done midyear in 2008 & 2011) the revised rate will become the current rate to use for reimbursements. This information is available at www.irs.gov, search phrase – standard mileage rates.

3. Flat Rate

A flat rate, regardless of mileage driven, could be paid. However, the parish and employee must be careful how this is structured for income tax purposes. The employee must be able to demonstrate to the IRS that reimbursed mileage was driven for professional purposes. A daily log is normally kept for this option. This reimbursement is taxable as income.

B. Continuing Education

In order to update skills and thereby strengthen his/her ministry, each employee should be encouraged to enroll in courses of Continuing Education. Such activities improve ministry and are not vacations. The best way to encourage continuing growth is to provide the time and money that make Continuing Education activities possible. The recommended congregation's share is \$700 or more per year. The associate contributes \$300 on his/her own each year. Two-week study leave is also included. Congregations should consider allowing the pastor to accumulate continuing education dollars and time up to a maximum of 3 years may provide for a more structured study opportunity.

C. Synod Assembly Expenses

Attendance at the Synod Assembly may be mandated for some employees. If so, expenses for registration, lodging, meals, travel and other fees are the responsibility of the congregation.

D. Publications & Technology

Your congregation may choose to provide an allowance for the purchase of, or subscription to, books, periodicals and/or web services, enabling associates and lay

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professionals to keep abreast of developments in his/her profession and the rapidly evolving nature of the church.

Use of technology enhances the effectiveness of ministry by providing for better use of time and by making church staff more accessible. Legitimate expenses incurred by staff for church-related activities should be equitably reimbursed. Examples include cell phones, email/internet for prayer groups, and computers. Unless otherwise agreed to, it is the expectation that the equipment remain with the congregation or be purchased at current market value by the employee at the time the employee leaves the congregation.

E. Conference Expenses

The employee's attendance at conferences is a professional expense, and should be supported by the congregation or agency by payment of registration fees and other expenses. Discuss anticipated expenses in connection with conferences in the coming year with each professional staff member.

F. Fall Theological Conference

Fees and time for the Fall Theological Conference will be covered by the congregation separate from continuing education support.

PART IV – Other Benefits and Considerations

This section discusses the types of time off periods that are granted to the professional staff as a condition of employment. Time-off may be mandated by the call document, mandated or implied by law or by ELCA policy, or established by agreement between the pastor and the congregation. While this type of benefit does not involve additional compensation, it does require that monies be provided in the budget to provide for services required while he/she is absent.

A. Employer Social Security Contribution

Associates In Ministry and other Lay Professionals are regular salaried employees. Thus, the congregation is required to pay the required employer's portion of the Social Security Tax (7.65%). (This is in addition to the 7.65% that is withheld from the employee's check.)

B. Weekly Time Off (as part of defined work week)

Church work requires a great deal of evening and weekend involvement. In order to reasonably set expectations, it may be useful to think in terms of blocks of time. Each day can be considered to have 3 blocks of time; morning, afternoon and evening. A

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seven day week consists of 21 time blocks. A reasonable expectation of full-time service might be 14-15 time blocks. Weekly time off to provide a normal opportunity for renewal, refreshment, and personal business would usually involve 6-7 time blocks per week. Arrangements should be flexible for both the staff member and the congregation, but should also provide for emergency conditions. Clearly defined expectations of time off are important for all parties.

C. Vacation

Deacons and Lay Professionals, with work schedules similar to Clergy Positions

The congregation is to provide a minimum of four (4) weeks of vacation (encompassing four Sundays) per year with full pay. Vacation should be proportional to the contracted work week of these certain positions. For example, a full-time deacon would work 48 full-time weeks and have four full-time weeks of vacation in a year; a half-time deacon would work 48 half-time weeks and receive four half-time weeks of vacation in a year. **The congregation should consider granting additional vacation time based on the length of service in the ministry.** The length of vacation, the number of Sundays, and when vacation is to be taken are all matters which need to be discussed openly with your Deacon and/or Lay Professional, and should be considered an important part of compensation. (A word of rationale: In addition to four weeks of vacation for entry level pastors being the national standard in the ELCA, the nature of pastoral work should be considered in granting vacation. Deacons and Lay Professionals are also encouraged to take vacation in increments of at least a week. Certain Deacons and Lay Professionals do not work a five-day workweek as most laypersons do. These certain positions work six days plus evenings. They are on call 24 hours a day and do not have the same sense of a "break" for a weekend. The busiest times of the year are often those most lay people consider holidays - namely, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.)

Lay Professionals with work schedules similar to a standard work week:

The congregation is to provide a minimum of two (2) weeks of vacation per year with full pay, for new starts in positions. The congregation should consider granting additional vacation time for new starts in positions, based on their professional work years, and as alternative form of compensation. Additional years of service to a congregations should entitle the lay professional to additional vacation time. (For example, after five years of service the professional would be entitled to annual vacation of three weeks. After ten years of service the professional would be entitled to four weeks of vacation. Vacation should be proportional to the contracted work week of these certain positions. For example, a full-time professional would work 50 full-time weeks and have two full-time

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weeks of vacation; a half-time professional would work 50 half-time weeks and receive two half-time weeks of vacation.

D. Disability Leave

When there is a disability, full salary and benefits are to be paid by the congregation until the ELCA Disability Benefit Plan takes effect. See Part II of these guidelines and the Portico website.

E. Sick Leave

According to the ELCA call document, sick leave is up to eight (8) weeks per year with full salary and benefits. This is not a cumulative benefit. Sick leave is thus coordinated with the ELCA disability plan. When there is extended illness contact should be made with the synod office to coordinate benefits.

F. Other Leave Considerations

1. Family Leave

Family leave is paid time off to care for a seriously ill child, spouse or parent, or time off for the funeral of a family member. Congregations should carefully consider developing a family leave policy.

2. Parental Leave

Congregations are expected to provide for a paid parental leave of up to six weeks for the birth, adoption or pre-adoption placement of a child with full salary and benefits.

3. Sabbatical Leave

Sabbatical leaves are granted to provide an opportunity for the employee to take an extended period of time for personal enrichment, study, spiritual growth, travel, skill development, research, and/or experimentation. A leave should be approved based upon a specific proposal that indicates how the planned activities will benefit the employee, the congregation, and/or the wider church. All provisions should be negotiated well in advance of the sabbatical and clearly stated in writing. The proposal/agreement should define how the congregational ministry is to be handled during the absence. The Synod Council has adopted a policy of "Sabbatical Guidelines" for use by congregations in considering such sabbatical leaves. It appears in this document as Appendix C.

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G. Loans

Caution is urged in the practice of congregations making loans for down payments on homes or other purposes to staff members. It is suggested that prior to entering into any such agreement it be discussed with appropriate members of the synod staff.

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Appendix A – Compensation Worksheet for Deacons and Lay Professionals

This worksheet is designed to help build a compensation package for Deacons and Lay Professionals using the synod's guidelines. See item descriptions in this document. Use only the items which apply.

Double-click on the table to access fillable spreadsheet: return to document by clicking on text, your work will be saved. Be sure to save this document to save your work.

Item	Current Year	2016 Guidelines	Proposed 2016
Part I - Compensation			
Base Salary * (Appendix B)			
Tax Sheltered Annuity Contribution			
Total Compensation	0.00	0.00	0.00
Part II - Cost of Benefits			
Health*			
Employer HAS*			
Retirement*			
Disability*			
Basic Group Life*			
Retiree Support*			
Medical/Dental Reimbursement			
Disability Insurance Supplement			
Total Benefits	0.00	0.00	0.00
Part III - Professional Expenses			
Automobile Allowance *			
Continuing Education *			
Synod Assembly Expenses *			
Fall Theological Conference*			
Publications & Technology			
Conference Expenses			
Total Professional Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
Part IV - Other Expenses			
Employer Social Security Contr. *			
Leave-Related Expenses			
Total Other Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Expense for Congregation	0.00	0.00	0.00

All items in **bold-face** with an asterisk (*) are required; all other items are by mutual agreement.

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Appendix B – Minimum Compensation Guidelines for 2017

Years Experience	2017 Base Min Salary
0	\$ 37,662
1	\$ 38,832
2	\$ 39,849
3	\$ 40,855
4	\$ 41,855
5	\$ 42,842
6	\$ 43,822
7	\$ 44,795
8	\$ 45,758
9	\$ 46,715
10	\$ 47,665
11	\$ 48,600
12	\$ 49,528
13	\$ 50,448
14	\$ 51,360
15	\$ 52,267
16	\$ 53,160
17	\$ 54,047
18	\$ 54,929
19	\$ 55,801
20	\$ 56,664
21	\$ 57,506
22	\$ 58,305
23	\$ 59,171
24	\$ 59,989
25	\$ 60,803
26	\$ 61,606
27	\$ 62,405
28	\$ 63,197
29	\$ 63,977
30	\$ 64,752
31	\$ 65,252
32	\$ 65,752
33	\$ 66,252
34	\$ 66,752
35	\$ 67,252

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Appendix C – Sabbatical Guidelines

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
Approved as a Guideline at Synod Council Meeting January 15, 1998

Introduction

It is important for both rostered ministers¹ and the congregation² to realize the importance of the minister's life-long continuing education through workshops, seminary courses and personal study. Congregations of the ELCA have long been encouraged to provide time and financial assistance to enable ministers to maintain and improve their skills. From time to time, however, ministers need and require an extended period of time for study, personal growth, reflection and renewal without the demands of one's regular employment -- a sabbatical leave. Experience has shown that the congregation's ministry directly benefits from such study, growth, and renewal. Long-term ministry is revitalized and stimulated. All parties benefit.³

These guidelines are provided to assist ministers and congregations in the contemplation and implementation of such sabbatical leaves.

Purpose

Sabbatical leaves are granted to provide an opportunity for the minister to take an extended period of time for renewal, enrichment, study, spiritual growth, travel, skill development, research, and/or experimentation.

Eligibility

- a. Full time pastors, Associates in Ministry, and Diaconal Ministers.
- b. A sabbatical may be taken after every sixth full year of service in a given parish. Years cannot accumulate between calls (unless agreed at the time of call).
- c. Planning should begin the calendar year before the sabbatical so the congregation and minister can plan for financial and ministry adjustments involved.

Duration

A sabbatical will normally be for 12 weeks (including the two continuing education weeks normally granted). Vacation should not be included as sabbatical time. The sabbatical leave may be split into two blocks of time, which do not have to be consecutive, but shall be taken within a twelve month period from the beginning of the first block of time.

¹ The terms "rostered ministers" or "ministers", for the purpose of these guidelines, refer to those persons on the ELCA's roster of ordained pastors, Associates in Ministry, or Diaconal Ministers.

² These guidelines are written for congregations, recognizing that a rostered minister serving in another setting is guided by the policies of that employing body. These other agencies and institutions are also encouraged to consider sabbatical policies.

³ For comments about such benefits from both ministers and congregational leaders, see the sabbatical resource packet available from the synod office.

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Cost to the congregation

- a. The congregation will continue to pay full salary and benefits (base salary, housing allowance, retirement and insurance coverage). Car allowance, a ministry expense, is normally not paid during sabbatical time.
- b. Accrued continuing education dollars can be used for the educational costs of the sabbatical. Continuing education dollars can only be accrued for three years.
- c. The congregation will need to provide for their ministry needs to be covered during the sabbatical time. Specific examples can be found in the Sabbatical Resource Packet available from the Synod office. In most cases, these needs are met in ways other than finding full-time replacement during the sabbatical. Considerations involve:
 - (1) Sunday worship/preaching. Normally done by a pastor engaged at the normal supply preaching rate of reimbursement (see page 10 of the Guidebook).
 - (2) Teaching, visitation, occasional services (funerals, weddings, etc.). The minister, congregational leadership, and the synod office can work together to arrange for these needs to be met during the sabbatical time. Another minister can be contracted for certain responsibilities, other staff may adjust responsibilities, and/or neighboring ministers may agree to cover certain responsibilities.
- d. The congregation is not responsible to fund the sabbatical in any other way. However, it may choose to provide additional financial assistance.

Planning

- a. Planning should begin at least a year before the sabbatical is to take place.
- b. A congregational sabbatical policy should be in place before any other planning begins. This policy may be this synod guideline or a locally adapted version.
- c. Normally the minister provides an outline of the planned use of time to the Council or responsible committee before the sabbatical is approved.

Commitments following the sabbatical

- a. The minister will submit a report of the sabbatical time, and find occasion to share with congregational members reactions, learnings, insights, etc.
- b. The minister is expected to remain at least one year in the parish following a sabbatical.

An illustrative checklist/timeline (to be used along with the synod's Sabbatical Resource Packet)

- _____ Mutual Ministry Committee or its equivalent encourages staff to consider a sabbatical.
- _____ Staff determines interest and what he/she might like to do with the three months.
- _____ Council receives request/proposal, approves sabbatical leave.
- _____ Council or committee adjusts budget to allow for additional staff coverage.⁴
- _____ Staff or Council consults with the synod office regarding pastoral assistance.
- _____ All arrangements with persons involved should be in place three months in advance.
- _____ Staff makes all necessary arrangements for his/her course of study, travel, etc.

Please call the synod office if you have questions.

⁴ How much time will the interim need to work? Full time? Part time? Will regular office hours need to be kept? Who will be responsible for pastoral needs that arise - crisis counseling, weddings, funerals, etc.?

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Appendix D – Addendum to the Letter of Call

For FIRST CALL Pastors, Diaconal Ministers and Associates in Ministry of the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Following the 1995 resolution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in its Churchwide Assembly, and working in partnership with the respective synod, all congregations, institutions and agencies which are calling a First Call candidate, defined as being in the first year of ordained, consecrated or commissioned ministry, will provide continuing education opportunities for all First Call rostered staff.

Under the guidelines of First Call Theological Education (FCTE), provisions will be made for all First Call persons to complete fifty (50) continuing education contact hours (50 minute periods of educational activity to meet program goals) annually for the first three years of call. Other expected components during these first three years include the Mentor Program and First Call Gatherings, which are administered by the synod.

Participation in these programs will be achieved through the working partnership of the First Call person, the congregation, institution or agency, and the synod office. The Greater Milwaukee Synod will provide annual events, totaling 25 continuing education contact hours. The remaining 25 contact hours and continuing education days for each year will be fulfilled with electives, chosen by the rostered person in consultation with the leaders of the congregation, institution or agency.

The below listed congregation, institution or agency of

_____ agrees to provide _____ days (7 minimum) annually for First Call Theological Education, in addition to _____ days (synod guidelines minimum 14 days) for electives in continuing education.

We also have budgeted \$_____ (\$300 minimum) annually to assist with FCTE expenses, in addition to \$_____ (\$700 minimum) for electives in continuing education

This congregation/institution/agency recognizes that during the first three years of First Call staff member will also participate in the mentoring program and attend the bi-annual gatherings with peers, usually scheduled to coincide with other synod events.

These provisions will be available for the next three years.

President/Chair _____ Date _____

First call person _____ Date _____

Synod representative _____ Date _____

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Appendix E - Health Benefits

Calculate cost by using Portico calculator found at <https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Resources/>

Rate Class	Age Group for Health Ins.	Premium as a percentage of Defined Comp between \$49,000 and \$66,000	Premium for Defined Comp of \$49,000 and below	Premium for Defined Comp of \$66,000 and above
Member	65	22%	\$890.00	\$ 1,205.00
Member	60	21%	\$838.00	\$ 1,152.00
Member	55	19%	\$773.00	\$ 1,064.00
Member	50	17%	\$707.00	\$ 974.00
Member	45	16%	\$642.00	\$ 886.00
Member	40	14%	\$576.00	\$ 798.00
Member	35	13%	\$510.00	\$ 709.00
Member	30	11%	\$445.00	\$ 621.00

Rate Class	Age Group for Health Ins.	Premium as a percentage of Defined Comp between \$49,000 and \$66,000	Premium for Defined Comp of \$49,000 and below	Premium for Defined Comp of \$66,000 and above
Member and Spouse	65	38%	\$1,559.00	\$2,108.00
Member and Spouse	60	36%	\$1,468.00	\$1,985.00
Member and Spouse	55	33%	\$1,353.00	\$1,829.00
Member and Spouse	50	30%	\$1,239.00	\$1,675.00
Member and Spouse	45	27%	\$1,124.00	\$1,519.00
Member and Spouse	40	25%	\$1,009.00	\$1,364.00
Member and Spouse	35	22%	\$895.00	\$1,210.00
Member and Spouse	30	19%	\$780.00	\$1,054.00

Rate Class	Age Group for Health Ins.	Premium as a percentage of Defined Comp between \$49,000 and \$66,000	Premium for Defined Comp of \$49,000 and below	Premium for Defined Comp of \$66,000 and above
Member Spouse and Children	65	54%	\$2,227.00	\$3,014.00
Member Spouse and Children	60	51%	\$2,097.00	\$2,836.00
Member Spouse and Children	55	47%	\$1,933.00	\$2,615.00
Member Spouse and Children	50	43%	\$1,769.00	\$2,393.00
Member Spouse and Children	45	39%	\$1,605.00	\$2,171.00
Member Spouse and Children	40	35%	\$1,442.00	\$1,950.00
Member Spouse and Children	35	31%	\$1,278.00	\$1,728.00
Member Spouse and Children	30	27%	\$1,114.00	\$1,507.00

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Rate Class	Age Group for Health Ins.	Premium as a percentage of Defined Comp between \$49,000 and \$66,000	Premium for Defined Comp of \$49,000 and below	Premium for Defined Comp of \$66,000 and above
Member and Child(ren)	65	38%	\$1,559.00	\$2,108.00
Member and Child(ren)	60	36%	\$1,468.00	\$1,985.00
Member and Child(ren)	55	33%	\$1,353.00	\$1,829.00
Member and Child(ren)	50	30%	\$1,239.00	\$1,675.00
Member and Child(ren)	45	27%	\$1,124.00	\$1,519.00
Member and Child(ren)	40	25%	\$1,009.00	\$1,364.00
Member and Child(ren)	35	22%	\$895.00	\$1,210.00
Member and Child(ren)	30	19%	\$780.00	\$1,054.00

The tables above are approximate. Members or sponsoring congregations should use the Portico Website EmployerLink to get a better estimate of Health Care Premiums

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APPENDIX F – Salary Guidelines

Adjusting Salary Guidelines - The Synod continues to adjust its base salary index to more closely reflect the salary indexes of the East Central Wisconsin Synod, South Central Synod of Wisconsin and the Metropolitan Chicago Synod. In comparing our salary guidelines to these three synods in 2014, we found four things regarding the GMS salary guidelines:

- The first year starting base salary was lower than the other three synods.
- Minimum Base Salary for the first ten years were comparable to the Metropolitan Chicago Synod
- GMS Synod minimum base salary exceeded other three synods in later years.

As a result, the Synod continues to adjust its salary index to increase the starting base salary and hold level on the higher year's salaries. For the past two years the Synod has used this methodology to be more comparable to other synods in region 5 of the ELCA. As noted below, we continue to exceed other synods in later years because our year over year change for experience (step increase) exceeds other synods. Our guidelines reflect a slow adjustment to the step increase to get us into alignment with other synods.

Salary Adjustment for Added Experience (Step Increase) - However, in addition to cost of living considerations, each year the lay leader or lay professional staff member has an additional year of experience. This added experience adds value to the shared ministry and needs to be considered in providing fair compensation for employees. The 2017 guidelines suggest an experience step increase of approximately \$1,000. One of the reasons our salary guidelines are above comparable synods, is that our step increases exceed these synods. Our Synod's goal over the next ten years is to more closely follow the step increases used by other Region V synods, which range from \$600 to \$800. You will see our guidelines slowly adjust these step increases, so that compensation guidelines stay in line with other synods.

Note: Wherever the term "congregation" is used in this document it can also be assumed that this applies to all ELCA affiliated organizations.