



# **CENTRAL ATLANTIC CONFERENCE**

## **2019-20 CLERGY MINIMUM COMPENSATION GUIDELINES**

**CENTRAL ATLANTIC  
CONFERENCE  
918 S. Rolling Road  
Catonsville, MD 21228**

## INTRODUCTION

The Commission on Ministry recommends the following guidelines to local churches of the Central Atlantic Conference UCC when calling a pastor and setting up the compensation package. We also recommend that these guidelines be used in updating the compensation package of a pastor who has been with you for a number of years.

These guidelines focus on the total cost of funding the position of pastor. They also include recommendations around specific parts of the package. Our recommendation is that you start with the minimum total needed to adequately fund the position, and then work with the best allocation of that total to meet the needs of your pastor.

### **Conversations on salary considerations need to be grounded in the following:**

**The Covenant Relationship:** When a church calls a person to assume responsibility as pastor and teacher, it covenants with that person, with God, and with the wider church to care, to support and to grow in love and fairness. An annual review of what the Church is doing, and how it compensates those who are its workers, is an important part of the covenantal relationship, and should be seen in that context.

**The Concept of Stewardship:** We are the stewards of God's resources as they are present in our lives and in the life of the church. In seeking to best use the resources entrusted to its care, a church should be sensitive to its own mission statement, and aware of the needs of its staff members. Being good stewards implies that we are trying to act, as God wants us to. Being good stewards means struggling with issues like how God is calling us to compensate our employees, to care for our volunteers, and to give to the wider mission and ministry of the denomination.

**The Concept of Justice:** The concept of justice calls us to provide fair and adequate support for those who labor in the local church. This means providing adequate salaries, uninterrupted times for rest and relaxation, and providing for the staff's continued growth. Pastors are entitled to be treated equitably for payment of services, and their working conditions should be reviewed annually.

These guidelines for minimum ministerial compensation are proposed for all authorized ministers serving as pastors in the Central Atlantic Conference.

The CAC recognizes the challenges faced by local congregations in meeting operational budgets while continuing to do God's work. Local churches are urged to prayerfully consider how they can meet the minimum compensation guidelines outlined in this document to the best of their abilities.

The conference intends that this handbook be made available to:

- Local church governing bodies
- The clergy of the conference
- Church and ministry committees
- Search committees
- Potential candidates

The guidelines are also available on the CAC website ([www.cacucc.org](http://www.cacucc.org)).

The Board of Directors envisions two major situations where these guidelines can be useful:

- When a pastor is first called to a church, the minimum compensation guidelines should assist both the pastor and the congregation by providing a CAC-wide frame of reference for salary, housing, and benefits; and

o During the development of a church's annual budget, the guidelines should continue to provide ongoing guidance for appropriate compensation packages for the church's pastoral staff.

The Conference recognizes the unique challenges faced by small churches and will be happy to continue to work with them to suggest ways in which they can make use of the guidelines in compensating pastoral staff.

The CAC ministry team and Association Church and Ministry bodies remain ready to help church leaders develop and understand appropriate compensation packages for both new and current pastors. Such consultation should enable all CAC churches to work together in implementing these guidelines.

As we move forward in ministry, our goal is to provide resources, including this updated document, to support you in your own ministries. Please continue to share your ideas on ways we can provide that support most effectively.

#### **Compensation Philosophy**

This handbook assumes that pastors, given their years of graduate education and the significant responsibilities of parish leadership, will be adequately compensated by CAC churches. Indeed, the philosophy of this handbook is that churches will aim to provide pastors with a standard of living relatively free of financial stress and a salary that is comparable to other professional occupations requiring post-graduate degrees. Several major factors have been used by the CAC (and many other UCC Conferences) to establish minimum guidelines for pastoral compensation. These factors include 1) the number of church members and 2) the number of years of relevant pastoral experience. The grid provides only cash salary payments and is separate from costs for housing and other benefits.

## **THE PASTOR'S COMPENSATION PACKAGE**

There are several models of Pastor Leadership including full-time pastoral leadership in one local setting, full-time pastoral leadership serving in more than one local setting and bi- vocational pastoral leadership serving in one local setting and in a secular setting. Our compensation guidelines should be employed to insure equitable compensation for each model.

The pastor's compensation package includes cash salary, housing (**either a parsonage or a housing allowance based on local market conditions**), benefits including pension, insurance, vacation, and other leave (including sabbatical), and Social Security offset.

### **CASH SALARY**

1. Cash salary is money provided for services rendered, exclusive of housing and other benefits. Clergy who rent or own their own home normally receive from the church a housing allowance equivalent to an additional 30% of their base salary.

The Central Atlantic Conference gives minimum cash salary recommendations for clergy based on church size and the person's total years in ministry. Congregations may also review the compensation levels of other professionals in their community, such as those in the area of education, to determine equitable compensation for your community.

Salary Grid - It is recommended that all churches attempt to meet the minimum cash salary grid below. The 2019-20 salary grid is based on the number of members in the congregation and years of experience the pastor has in the ministry. The first column in the grid represents an entry-level salary, recommended for persons with no prior pastoral experience. Other columns show the recommended minimum salaries for different levels of experience, using a factor of 1% increase in salary for each year of experience. This grid contains information regarding the cash salary component of the compensation package only. Compensation for housing based on local market conditions (assuming a parsonage is not provided) and benefits will need to be added to these dollar figures.

Associate Pastor - The recommended salary for Associate Clergy is 85-90% of Senior Pastors for comparable experience and education. The special ministry of a clergy associate should be highly valued and compensated equitably. An Associate, Assistant, a Minister of Christian Education, or an ordained clergy employed to serve in any other role, is treated as a full member of the staff and entitled to fair and equitable compensation. Use the minimum guidelines to establish a salary range for additional professional staff.

On average associate pastors tend to receive 75% to 80% of the senior pastor's total compensation package. The church size, the person's education, total years in ministry, and the duties must also be taken into consideration.

2. Interim Pastors - Churches normally hire an interim minister for the time between the departure of a pastor and the calling of a new pastor or a “sabbatical interim pastor” when a pastor is granted sabbatical leave. Full-time, interim ministers are usually paid on the same scale as other full-time clergy. For part-time service, the percentage of time served dictates the percent of full-time salary in addition to benefits and expenses. These arrangements are negotiated with the aid of the Conference Ministry Team.
  
3. Supply Pastors - The local church should establish adequate salary compensation for supply and interim ministers. It is recommended that occasional pulpit supply pastors receive a minimum of \$150 plus mileage for conducting a worship service.

**CAC UCC Pastor’s Minimum Salary Grid 2019-20**

No. of Church		Base Salary					20+ yr. Exp.
Members	Entry Level	5 yr. Exp.	10 yr. Exp.	15 yr. Exp.	20 yr. Exp.		
<100	39,544	41,521	43,499	45,477	47,453		
100-199	44,674	47,382	49,637	51,894	54,151		
200-299	48,126	50,388	52,650	54,912	57,174		
300-399	48,460	50,884	53,306	55,730	58,153	Add	
400-499	51,704	54,289	56,874	59,459	62,044	1.00%	
500-599	54,415	57,684	60,441	63,188	65,935	for	
600-749	57,859	61,949	64,943	67,913	70,798	each	
750-949	63,434	67,577	70,433	74,013	77,232	additional	
>950	69,437	73,861	77,380	80,898	84,415	year	
						experience	

4. Part-time Compensation - Congregations who call pastors to less than full-time service should use the salary grid to determine the recommended minimum salary for full time service for their church and their pastor=s experience and then multiply that salary by the percentage of full-time service worked by the part-time pastor. [Example: A church with 200 members hires a part-time minister with 10 years experience for half-time. The recommended cash salary is \$52,650 (Salary Grid) x (50%) or \$26,325.

Alternatively, a part-time pastor may be compensated on an hourly rate if the number of hours varies from the normal quarter-time or half-time basis. Whether a church uses a part-time FTE or an hourly rate, the grid serves as a useful tool to assess how the cash salary being paid or proposed to be paid compares to Conference guidelines. Clergy employed 24 hours or more per week should receive housing and all benefits.

## HOUSING

1. Housing Allowance.- When the pastor owns or rents a home, the church should pay a housing allowance based on local market conditions. The Housing Allowance should be determined in keeping with IRS guidelines including, maintenance and utilities. The minimum recommended housing allowance is the fair rental value (furnished) of suitable properties in the local market plus utilities and maintenance, but not less than 30% of the pastor’s cash salary. Local housing can be the greatest variable in costs from region to region within the CAC. This is of particular concern in high housing cost areas, where special attention should be given to ensure that the housing allowance reflects market conditions.

### *Please Note:*

The congregation benefits from the equity built up in their parsonage. Ministers living in parsonages are unable to build home equity and may find it difficult to purchase a house at retirement. The church may consider contributing to a “Parsonage Equity Plan” for the minister to be used at the time of his/her retirement.

2. Resources to Assist in Deriving Local Market Housing Information - Appendix 4 lists websites that provide information on median owner-occupied and rental housing costs by state or locality in the following areas:

- A. rental housing cost data by zip code, area and type of housing;
- B. rental housing market data;
- C. median single family home prices by metropolitan area;
- D. median home prices by state;
- E. U.S. Census Bureau: median rental housing cost data by state; and,
- F. U.S. Census Bureau: median housing costs for owner-occupied housing with a mortgage.

3. Procedures for Qualifying Housing-Related Income as Tax Free – For federal tax reporting purposes, clergy who rent or own their own homes can designate a portion of their cash salary as a “housing allowance.” The amount of this allowance is not limited by a

percentage of the base salary, but rather by the actual cost of housing related expenses such as utilities, repairs, interest, taxes and furnishings.

According to the IRS, the actual housing allowance for the pastor is the smallest of the following:

- a. The percentage designated before the beginning of the year (Make sure that this is higher than can possibly be used.).
- b. The actual amount spent on housing; or
- c. The fair market rental value of the house FURNISHED.

Before the beginning of the calendar year, the church and pastor designate a percentage of the pastor's cash salary as a housing allowance. Normally this is not more than 50% of the total compensation. To satisfy IRS requirements the salary and parsonage allowance is listed as a line item in the church's annual budget.

To protect against the loss of this tax benefit due to the inadvertent failure of the church to designate an allowance, churches can adopt a "safety net" allowance.

4. Parsonage - If a pastor chooses to live in the parsonage, the parsonage should be attractive, comfortable and well-maintained. It should be spacious enough for adequate sleeping quarters and a guest room. Appliances should be modern and in good working condition. All utilities (heat, light, water, garbage collection, yard maintenance and basic telephone service) should be provided by the church. Other expenses of maintaining a home may be excludable from income under IRS regulations. The parsonage should be regarded as the pastor's private home.

Clergy living in a parsonage are advised to designate a portion of their cash salary as a "furnishings allowance." To the extent that it is used to pay for parsonage related expenses this allowance is not subject to income taxes. This allowance is normally not more than 10% of their salary.

5. Home Equity Fund for Pastors Who Rent or Live in a Parsonage - To compensate for the loss of home equity by pastors who live in a parsonage and those who rent, the church should establish a home equity fund. It is recommended that \$2,000- 4,000 be placed in this fund each year, to be held in trust and given to the pastor at the time that he or she leaves the parish. The pastor may choose another means to receive the home equity funds.

#### **EXAMPLE OF A HOUSING ALLOWANCE RESOLUTION**

Resolved, that the designation of \_% or \$\_\_ as a Housing Allowance shall apply to calendar year 2019 and all future years unless otherwise provided.

## **BENEFITS**

1. Pension - The UCC Annuity Fund, a tax-sheltered annuity offering both fixed and variable annuities, is excellent and every church is strongly encouraged to participate. The recommended level of participation is 14% of the salary base. Salary base equals 130% of cash salary plus social security offset if the pastor lives in a parsonage. For a pastor who receives a housing allowance, salary base is the cash salary plus the housing allowance plus the social security offset. Pastors are allowed to make tax sheltered contributions to the same annuity plan within the restrictions of the applicable IRS guidelines. UCC pension contributions are not reported as current income for tax purposes.

2. Insurance - The comprehensive insurance program of the United Church of Christ for clergy includes health insurance, dental insurance, group term life insurance, short and long term disability insurance (family protection plan).

A. Health Insurance - The UCC Health Insurance Program provides medical and dental insurance for pastors and their families. It is recommended that churches pay 100% of the premiums for the most comprehensive medical and dental insurance offered by the UCC program.

B. Life Insurance and Disability Income Benefit Plan - This Plan provides disability income and decreasing term life insurance to aid families in case of disability or death. It is recommended that churches pay the premium for this Plan which is 1.5% of cash salary and housing allowance. In case of disability or death, it is recommended that a local church continue to pay the pastor's salary for three months until the Life Insurance and Disability Income Benefit Plan becomes effective.

C. Professional Malpractice Insurance - It is recommended that all churches purchase professional malpractice insurance to protect pastors in the event of a lawsuit due to pastoral counseling. Churches insured through the Conferences of the UCC Insurance Program already have this insurance as a component of the Program.

D. Tenant's Insurance - It is recommended that all churches provide tenant's insurance for all pastors who live in a parsonage.

3. Vacation and Other Leave

A. Vacation Pastors receive at least four weeks of annual paid vacation. In addition, eight days within each month should be granted as personal time for the purpose of rest and renewal.

B. Sick Leave During periods of temporary illness, salary and benefits will be paid. After one month and six months respectively, the Pension Boards Short and Long Term Disability Plans will provide coverage as indicated in the Life and Disability Plan documents provided by the Pension Boards.

C. Family Medical Leave Churches should make every effort to comply with the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 in instances of need such as childbirth, adoption, elder care or other crises covered under this Act.

D. Parental Leave - Parental leave with pay up to eight weeks may be taken by arrangement with the church. An ordained minister who is the parent of a newborn and/or newly adopted child or who is pregnant, or a single parent may take, in addition to the paid leave, up to three months total leave, the last month of which is either accrued vacation time or leave without pay.

E. Continuing Education B Annual leave of at least two weeks and an annual allowance of \$1,200 for continuing education should be given to every pastor. Pastors should report the results of such studies to the Pastoral Relations Committee. Whatever the dollar amount the church provides, it should accrue from year to year.

Sabbaticals BIt is recommended that every church have in its written contract with the pastor the provision of a three to four-month sabbatical leave every five years with full pay and benefits. The sabbatical should be a time of study, travel or experience of personal renewal for the pastor. Pastors should plan on continuing to serve the same church for at least one year after taking such sabbatical leave. Churches should plan ahead for the resources necessary to provide continued ministerial coverage during a pastoral sabbatical.

4. Social Security Offset - For Social Security purposes, pastors are classified as Aself-employed.@ In contrast to other workers, pastors must pay all of their own social security tax. The rate for 2015-16 is 15.3%. Congregations are urged to share this burden by providing an allowance equal to approximately one-half the pastor=s social security tax (7.65%). Pastors must report this income for tax purposes.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES

A pastor's professional expenses are not included in the base salary. Expenses such as the use of the pastor's automobile, books and periodicals, etc. are costs to the church of providing pastoral services and should be reimbursed. Professional expenses are a part of the operating costs of the church and should not be considered as additional tax-free salary. Churches have many business/professional expenses which ministers incur as they carry out the work of the church.

Tax law allows the deduction of business expenses only after the minister has spent more than 2% of adjusted gross family income on such expenses. THEREFORE, it is important that churches reimburse or pay directly all costs which the pastor incurs for "doing business" for the church, so that the pastor is not paying income tax on reimbursement for church expenses. These should include at least the following:

1. Automobile. Churches may want to consider leasing an automobile for the pastor's professional use. Even in this situation, insurance, gasoline and maintenance expenses should be reimbursed. If the church does not provide an automobile, an automobile allowance should be provided that it at least equal to the annual IRS per mile deduction (*effective 1/1/2019: 58¢ per mile.*) Pastors need to submit detailed expense records to the church.
2. Books and Periodicals. In order to encourage the continuing education of pastors and to provide literary resources for preaching and teaching, all churches should provide a minimum allowance of at least \$300 annually for the purchase of books and literature. Pastors need to submit detailed expense records to the church.
3. Conference/Association Expenses. All non-reimbursed expenses for attending Conference and Association meetings should be paid by the church. The time involved for attending these meetings and also for serving on Conference or Association committees is considered part of the local church's participation in the church's wider ministry and not as vacation time or personal leave.
4. Background Check Reimbursement. When a Pastor is called to a church or other setting, the cost of the required criminal background check shall be reimbursed to the Pastor by the calling body
5. Other Professional Expenses. Churches should pay all other expenses including stationery, telephone, computer or word processor maintenance, postage and dues for professional organization membership. Pastoral expenses for official entertainment of parishioners or prospective members should be paid by the church.
6. Reimbursement Plans. Reimbursement plans have a distinct advantage for ministers in that the money is not taxable as income. Many churches use a reimbursement plan to pay for the pastor's professional expenses described above. Alternatively, a Flexible Spending Account may be set up. Using a written plan that meets the requirements of the income tax regulations, the church may set aside money for additional expenses not covered by health and dental plans, or the pastor may elect to set aside part of his/her salary for this purpose. It may cover eye, dental, drug and any non-covered health expenses for minister or the minister's family.

Reimbursement plans must abide by the following rules:

- A. A specific amount of money is set at the beginning of the year
- B. The money is paid according to submission of expenses
- C. Unused money must remain in the church account

If the money is being set aside from the minister's salary, it is advisable that the estimate at the beginning of the year be low to minimize the risk of having money left unused at the end of the year.

## **CONSIDERATIONS FOR SMALLER CHURCHES**

While the salary grid should be appropriate for a majority of the CAC churches, there are at least three situations that require additional comment.

1. Annual Church Budget of more than \$195,000 per year and fewer than 200 members - For churches with annual budgets of more than \$195,000 per year with fewer than 200 church members, it may not be equitable to pay the pastor strictly according to the Salary Grid. In such unusual situations, it is recommended that the pastor's salary reflect the complexity of the pastor's workload (e.g. people other than members served by the church, large physical plant), the church's total financial resources (including endowments and other special funds) and the size of the church's annual budget. Churches in this situation are encouraged to consult with their Associate Conference Minister.

2. Annual Church Budget less than \$120,000 per year - Churches in this situation are encouraged to consult with their Associate Conference Minister.

The CAC recognizes that churches with small congregations and annual budgets less than \$120,000 per year face challenges in meeting the minimum salary and benefit recommendations in these guidelines. Churches in this situation are encouraged to explore ways to allow for clergy coverage of the congregation while still providing salary and benefits at or above the minimum levels in these guidelines.

One option is to have a part-time pastor, allowing the clergy person to supplement his or her income by way of another job. It is important that health insurance coverage be provided through at least one of the positions. Another option for churches to consider is a yoked parish. Yoked parishes pool their financial resources to provide salary and benefits for a pastor whose duties are shared with another congregation

3. Very Small Churches with Part-time Pastor - For churches with part-time ministers, the salary grid can be useful both in determining the compensation of the minister and comparing what they can pay with the cash salary grid in these guidelines. Moreover, as the example (see Appendix No. xx) of a church with 60 members and a total budget of \$41,000 shows, the grid can be used to determine how closely the compensation meets the conference guideline. An hourly rate, while not very exact, can be one way of projecting out the pastor's salary to what he or she would be paid if employed on a full-time basis.

## **PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

In dealing with compensation and other ministry concerns, it is recommended that each church have a Pastoral Relations Committee. This Committee should meet periodically with the pastor, advise the pastor of the concerns of the congregation, and act as an advocacy group for the pastor's leadership in the church. Constructive evaluation of a pastor's performance and concern for the pastor's compensation might begin with this committee.

## **SEARCH COMMITTEE**

Congregations are encouraged to contact their Associate Conference Minister to explore options for meeting church needs while providing equitable pay for their clergy. The CAC understands and appreciates the difficulties that local churches face in meeting their spiritual, mission, and evangelical calls. Their prayerful deliberation on this matter is acknowledged and joined by all within the Conference.

## COMPENSATION PACKAGE WORKSHEET

Cash Salary	
Furnishings Allowance (if parsonage is provided is 10% of cash salary	
Housing Allowance (if no Parsonage)	
Social Security Off-set (7.65% of total of Cash Salary and either Furnishings or Housing Allowance)	
Pension (14% of cash salary plus Furnishings Allowance or Housing Allowance)	
<b>Total Compensation &amp; Benefits **</b>	
<i>** This total should be at or above the Conference Minimum Guideline</i>	
<b>Insurances:</b>	
Medical & Dental	
Family Protection Plan	
Disability + Life Insurance (1.5%)	
Worker's Compensation	
<b>Professional Costs:</b>	
Continuing Education & Sabbatical	
Mileage Reimbursement	
Professional Expenses	
Conference/Association Expense	

# **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX No. 1

### Estimate of Minimum Recommended Salary and Benefits Package for the year 2019-20

**Part-time Pastor**  
**Very Small Church, years of Pastoral Experience – with Housing Allowance**  
**(with fewer than 60 members)**

<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b>Cash Salary</b>		<b><u>Annual Cost</u></b>
Cash Salary	\$12,456	(a)	(12 hours/week)
Housing Allowance	\$3,737	(b)	
<b>MINIMUM BENEFITS</b>			
Health Insurance	\$4,048		(25% of Pastor's total)
Pension (14%)	\$2,267	(c)	
<b>EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT</b>			
Professional Expenses (est.)	\$975		
<b>ESTIMATED TOTAL COST</b>			<b>\$23,483</b>
Est. Minimum Church Budget	\$38,002	(d)	

(a) Assuming this pastor has five year's experience, the full-time equivalency (FTE) for this size church, salary for 2019-20 would be \$41,521, at 12 hours per week (calculated as 30% time, the grid calls for a 30% cash salary of \$12,456. This means that this pastor is paid at 78% of the guideline. This can provide a goal or target for the church for the future.

(b) See Housing section (p. 6) for ideas for setting housing costs – This estimate is based on annual costs of mortgage and utilities of \$3,737.

(c) For pension, based on 14% of total of cash salary and housing allowance = \$2,267

(d) For this church, the pastor's package is 62% of the total church budget.

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**Federal Income Tax Information**

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**State Income Tax Information**

<https://www.tax.virginia.gov/>



