

# 2024 Compensation Guidelines for the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod



## 1. Foreword

“Within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America rostered ministers may serve as pastors or deacons. The process of calling rostered ministers within the life of the church is therefore primarily about discerning God’s will for and God’s call upon the congregation or ministry in which they will serve. *Prayerfully, the church calls forth those they believe God can best use to help them carry out their mission together.*

*Rostered leadership is not a self-called vocation but a unique calling from God through the church to serve and equip the whole people of God. This is so that the church can live together faithfully as the body of Christ, equip the baptized for their work, and fulfill its purpose to proclaim and embody the redemptive intentions of God in the world.”*

“A Theology of Call” - ELCA Website

A “calling” implies a *mutuality* between those rostered people being called and the agency or congregation issuing the call. This mutuality means that congregations and other ministry sites are to live for the well-being of the rostered ministers that they call, and rostered ministers are to live for the well-being of the communities into which they are called, so that together – with the whole church – they might live in Christ for the life of the world. ***“We do not live to ourselves...” (Romans 14:7)***

The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod embraces Biblical values with regard to the relationship between rostered ministry and congregational life and mission:

- The church is the body of Christ; called to live out the implications of the gospel for the sake of the world. As members of the body of Christ, all members of a congregation provide ministry in the name of Christ. ***Rostered ministers that equip the church for the work of mutual ministry are valued. (Ephesians 4:11)***
- In the Lutheran tradition, in order that the church may be equipped for ministry, high worth is placed on equipping rostered ministry. ***The personal, ethical, and educational standards required of leaders are valued. (1 Timothy 3:1ff)***
- Congregations are to be centers of "word and sacrament" as well as caring compassionate communities that are evangelical in seeking and welcoming the "homeless" and the "stranger."  
***Rostered ministers that equip the church to be so Christ-centered that it is outwardly focused are valued. (Matthew 25:31ff)***
- Congregations are to continually seek out Christ’s calling to mutual ministry in their context.  
***Rostered ministers that inspire an ongoing mutual discernment for ministry are valued. (Romans 12:1-3)***



## Compensation for Rostered Ministers should involve...

### **Years of Rostered Experience**

There are acquired skills, wisdom, and experiences that can only come from actual rostered service.

### **Years of Non-Rostered Experience**

Second career people bring to rostered service life experiences and skills from other fields that are helpful to mutual ministry.

### **Staffing and Programming**

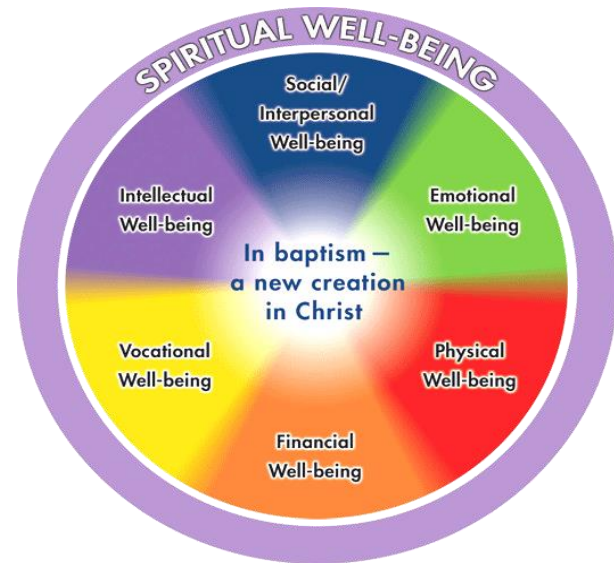
How complex is the system you're asking the rostered minister to enter? Consider additional compensation for multiple worship services, staff supervision, varied programming, specialized calls, and pre/school administration.

### **Advanced Training and Education**

Leaders that actively equip themselves for ministry are better able and more likely to create a spirit of life-long learning in a congregation.

### **Local Salaries and Cost of Living**

Fair compensation should reflect the realities of the congregation and community to which a leader is called.



All people - rostered ministers included - are complex creatures. We are all, in the words of the psalmist, "fearfully and wonderfully made." Our well-being and our being made well include:

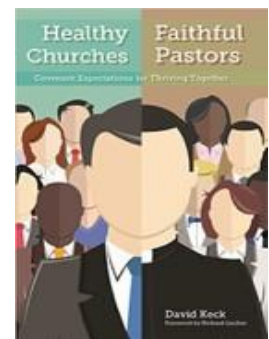
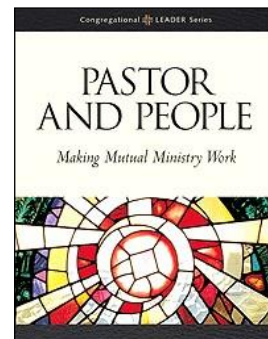
- ✓ Intellectual Well-being
- ✓ Social/Interpersonal Well-being
- ✓ Emotional Well-being
- ✓ Physical Well-being
- ✓ Financial Well-being
- ✓ Vocational Well-being

All of these are tied to our spiritual well-being. None of them can be separated out from the others. Compensation, goals, evaluations, work climate, continuing education, rest, and the like are vital to the well-being of leaders. For better or worse, the well-being of our leaders has a direct impact on the ministry sites they serve.

## **Mutual Ministry**

The mutual ministry inherent in a call requires both *mutual* responsibility and accountability. People often call synod offices and ask, "Do you have anything we can use to evaluate our pastor?" There are usually some questions in response to this query: "Have you set any mutually-defined goals or objectives?" "Are you evaluating the ministry, or just the minister?"

Two resources are suggested for congregational councils. The book, [Pastor and People](#), provides tools for beginning a mutual ministry committee and a personnel committee. Additionally, it includes planning and evaluation procedures for making mutual ministry work. The book, [Healthy Churches, Faithful Pastors](#), gives the perspective of what it is like to be a pastor and compares it to expectations congregations may have for their pastor. Discussion guides and questions are provided for leaders to study these perspectives with their pastor. This resource is especially recommended at the time when a congregation is in transition or when a rostered minister is new to a call.



## 2. Pastors

The compensation recommendations attempt to address three primary concerns:

1. To clarify language used about pastoral salaries.
2. To use school district compensation models as the best reflector of community values.
3. To reflect the difference in the cost of living between rural/small town and urban/suburban areas.



### Urban/Suburban

Years Exper.	Base Salary & Housing	Social Security Offset	Defined Compensation	Base Salary w/ Parsonage	Parsonage Base & SS Offset*
0	78,360	6,491	84,851	59,396	65,887
1	78,810	6,529	85,339	59,737	66,266
2	79,260	6,566	85,826	60,078	66,644
3	79,710	6,603	86,313	60,419	67,022
4	80,160	6,640	86,800	60,760	67,401
5	80,610	6,678	87,288	61,101	67,779
6	81,060	6,715	87,775	61,443	68,158
7	81,510	6,752	88,262	61,784	68,536
8	81,960	6,790	88,750	62,125	68,914
9	82,410	6,827	89,237	62,466	69,293
10	82,860	6,864	89,724	62,807	69,671
11	83,310	6,901	90,211	63,148	70,049
12	83,760	6,939	90,699	63,489	70,428
13	84,210	6,976	91,186	63,830	70,806
14	84,660	7,013	91,673	64,171	71,184
15	85,110	7,051	92,161	64,512	71,563
16	85,560	7,088	92,648	64,853	71,941
17	86,010	7,125	93,135	65,195	72,320
18	86,460	7,162	93,622	65,536	72,698
19	86,910	7,200	94,110	65,877	73,076
20	87,360	7,237	94,597	66,218	73,455
21	87,810	7,274	95,084	66,559	73,833
22	88,260	7,311	95,571	66,900	74,211
23	88,710	7,349	96,059	67,241	74,590
24	89,160	7,386	96,546	67,582	74,968
25	89,610	7,423	97,033	67,923	75,347
26	90,060	7,461	97,521	68,264	75,725
27	90,510	7,498	98,008	68,605	76,103
28	90,960	7,535	98,495	68,947	76,482
29	91,410	7,572	98,982	69,288	76,860
30	91,860	7,610	99,470	69,629	77,238

\*Rostered Ministers with more than 30-years experience should be compensated at a rate of \$450 for each additional year of experience.

\* Pastors living in a parsonage must pay Social Security based on value of housing plus base salary

## Rural/Small Town

Years of Exper.	Base Salary & Housing	Social Security Offset	Defined Compensation		Base Salary w/ Parsonage	Parsonage Base & SS Offset*
0	70,945	5,877	<b>76,822</b>		53,775	59,653
1	71,395	5,914	<b>77,309</b>		54,117	60,031
2	71,845	5,952	<b>77,797</b>		54,458	60,409
3	72,295	5,989	<b>78,284</b>		54,799	60,788
4	72,745	6,026	<b>78,771</b>		55,140	61,166
5	73,195	6,063	<b>79,258</b>		55,481	61,544
6	73,645	6,101	<b>79,746</b>		55,822	61,923
7	74,095	6,138	<b>80,233</b>		56,163	62,301
8	74,545	6,175	<b>80,720</b>		56,504	62,680
9	74,995	6,213	<b>81,208</b>		56,845	63,058
10	75,445	6,250	<b>81,695</b>		57,186	63,436
11	75,895	6,287	<b>82,182</b>		57,527	63,815
12	76,345	6,324	<b>82,669</b>		57,869	64,193
13	76,795	6,362	<b>83,157</b>		58,210	64,571
14	77,245	6,399	<b>83,644</b>		58,551	64,950
15	77,695	6,436	<b>84,131</b>		58,892	65,328
16	78,145	6,474	<b>84,619</b>		59,233	65,707
17	78,595	6,511	<b>85,106</b>		59,574	66,085
18	79,045	6,548	<b>85,593</b>		59,915	66,463
19	79,495	6,585	<b>86,080</b>		60,256	66,842
20	79,945	6,623	<b>86,568</b>		60,597	67,220
21	80,395	6,660	<b>87,055</b>		60,938	67,598
22	80,845	6,697	<b>87,542</b>		61,280	67,977
23	81,295	6,734	<b>88,029</b>		61,621	68,355
24	81,745	6,772	<b>88,517</b>		61,962	68,733
25	82,195	6,809	<b>89,004</b>		62,303	69,112
26	82,645	6,846	<b>89,491</b>		62,644	69,490
27	83,095	6,884	<b>89,979</b>		62,985	69,869
28	83,545	6,921	<b>90,466</b>		63,326	70,247
29	83,995	6,958	<b>90,953</b>		63,667	70,625
30	84,445	6,995	<b>91,440</b>		64,008	71,004

*\*Rostered Ministers with more than 30-years experience should be compensated at a rate of \$450 for each additional year of experience.*

\* Pastors living in a parsonage must pay Social Security based on value of housing plus base salary

### Language

For the sake of clarity, “salary” refers to the sum of “base salary,” housing allowance, and social security offset. The total of these three are what Portico Benefit Services terms “defined compensation” on which the congregation pays retirement/health benefits and the rostered minister pays taxes. The “salary” does not include retirement/health benefits, continuing education, or travel/auto reimbursement, all of which are organizational administrative costs.

## Compensation Guidelines Using School District Compensation Models

1. Cost of living and compensation standards vary widely across the Gulf Coast Synod. In an effort to contextualize compensation recommendations, the local school teacher's salary schedule is used as a benchmark that reflects compensation in a particular community.
2. The educational requirement for a teacher is a bachelor's degree, while for a pastor it is a bachelor's degree and a four-year master's. Of the school districts researched, a teacher with a master's degree earned an additional \$1,000 - \$2,000; therefore, \$2,000 has been added to the base teacher's salary.
3. Because nearly all school districts offer contracts based on a 187-day school year, we have annualized the recommended base salary for clergy.
4. Compensation for school teachers was researched for school districts in both Texas and Louisiana, representative of the synod. Salary schedules were averaged in two categories: rural/small town (pop. 50,000 or less) and urban/suburban (pop. more than 50,000). The compensation grids represent an average of ten (10) rural/small town school districts and fifteen (15) urban/suburban communities.
5. For Social Security purposes, the Internal Revenue Service always considers a pastor "*self-employed*." That means the congregation typically does not **pay FICA** [7.65%], although some ministers will ask for this withdrawal. It also means that the pastor **must pay self-employment SECA** [15.3%]. It is recommended that the congregation provide the pastor with an 8.284% allowance in lieu of paying Social Security. 8.284% is used rather than 7.65% because the allowance is considered *taxable* income. The minister uses this money to pay a portion of the 15.3% self-employment tax. Salary, housing (allowance *or* parsonage value) and this Social Security offset are used in determining SECA tax.
6. A note regarding clergy living in a parsonage (or church-provided housing): In the case of a parsonage, the fair housing value of the parsonage is part of the salary. For its purposes, Portico establishes it as 30% of the cash salary. Thus, when a parsonage is provided, the cash compensation paid to the pastor is reduced by 30% of the total (See far right sections of grids).
7. The average experience adjustment for school teachers is \$450 per year, which has been factored into the compensation grid. Thus, a pastor with 10 years' experience should be compensated an additional \$4,500 annually. School districts vary in the number of steps awarded to experienced teachers. Some top out at 20 years; others allow as much as 35. For a second-career pastor, consideration should be given to prior work experience that will enhance a pastor's ministry.
8. The salaries in the compensation grids are generally considered to include housing allowance. However, since it is important for a pastor to live in the community that a congregation serves, for congregations in areas of high housing costs, the "housing allowance" portion of the salary may be adjusted upward accordingly.
9. For ministers serving and living in coastal communities, where the cost of home insurance tends to be higher than average, congregations should adjust compensation upward to reflect this reality.

## Housing Allowance

The housing component of compensation is a complicated matter because of variations in the cost of housing, IRS rules, and the reality that some congregations own a parsonage while most do not. For a pastor, the cost of housing is compensation exempt of income tax according to IRS rules. Deacons do not qualify for this tax benefit; neither do lay employees.

For the minister *in a parsonage*, utilities, repairs, insurance, lawn care, maintenance, and remodeling are paid



by the congregation, done in a timely manner, and, of course, not taxed. The congregation can designate an additional “furnishings allowance” for non-taxable income to be used for housing expenses by the minister. Some congregations with a parsonage also give an “equity allowance” so the pastor can build a modest housing equity for a future down payment on a house for retirement. Five percent (5%) of cash salary per year is suggested.

For the pastor who *owns or rents a home*, the limit of tax exemption is based on actual *housing expenses* recorded for the year by the minister – up to a maximum of the amount that was designated as “housing allowance” by the congregation council. The minister tracks and claims all justifiable expenses and then pays tax on the remaining “allowance” that is not actually used for housing.

Every December, the pastor should notify the congregation council that a specific amount of their compensation for the coming year be designated as housing allowance. The council acknowledges this request by a motion and vote that is entered into the meeting minutes. It needs to be understood that dividing housing allowance and salary is for income tax purposes, and the division can appear unusual.

*A motion was duly made, seconded, and approved that the ministry compensation paid to Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ during the year 20\_\_\_\_\_ include a designated housing allowance in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_. This amount shall remain in effect annually until amended or rescinded. (Source: Clergy Financial Services, Inc.)*

### 3. Deacons

The nature of a deacon’s call varies widely. Deacons serve in calls such as Director of Music, Youth Minister, Hospital Chaplain, Director of a School, Food Pantry or Homeless Shelter, or a Parish Administrator. For this reason, there is not a single salary grid provided for deacons. Instead, salary guidelines for deacons are based on local and/or national salaries for similar leadership positions. Context and cost of living should be taken into consideration. Ideally, the grids on pages 3 & 4 should be used for compensating deacons as well as pastors.

## 4. Health & Retirement Benefits for Rostered Ministers

### Retirement and Medical Program

Full participation in the ELCA retirement and health benefit plans is expected for pastors and deacons and their families and is the responsibility of the congregation (or calling body). The retirement contribution is a minimum of 10-12% of Defined Compensation. The premium for the medical plan (medical and dental insurance, disability insurance, and death benefits) varies according to a schedule. Contact [Portico](#) directly for questions and costs at 800-352-2876.

Given the exponential increase in the cost of healthcare over the last decade, it is understandable that your congregation may struggle to provide healthcare and benefits beyond the Employee. Give careful consideration to what can be offered, and talk with your minister about what is negotiable and what is not.

In 2014, Portico entirely overhauled their health care plan to meet the changing shape of health care coverage in the United States. There are four (4) levels of coverage (i.e. Platinum+, Gold+, Silver+, and Bronze+) that correspond to the levels of health care available in the Affordable Health Care Plan. We recommend all rostered ministers be covered at the Gold+ level.

After research and comparison of open market options, it has been determined that Portico’s coverage is competitive and often less expensive than other providers. Congregations are free to search the market for other insurance plans for their minister, seeking a more affordable option, but coverage offered must be the same or better than Portico offers, and these efforts should be made in conversation and partnership with the rostered minister.



### **Sick Leave**

The congregation should have a sick leave policy for all its rostered ministers and other personnel. The policy should include:

- ✓ The number of paid sick leave days available each year. This annual number should be at least 7. (Most school districts allow for the accrual of sick days, at the rate of one per month of employment, resulting in 12 annually.)
- ✓ Policies laying out procedures if more sick days are needed by an individual.
- ✓ Policies as to whether sick days may be accrued.

(Note: Sick leave days are important for modeling physical stewardship. For the sake of individuals and the community, people should be able to take the necessary time to heal. Conversely, “sick days” are for illness, healing, and recuperation or may be used for care of family members who are ill. They are not “personal leave days.” Congregations and personnel should model gracious and compassionate mutual trust and respect in creating, implementing, and using such policies.)

### **Mental Health Leave**

The congregation should have a policy for personal, paid time off for rostered ministers seeking mental health leave. Giving time and space for your leaders to seek therapy, prescribed medications and/or to stave off burnout will not only help them but also their ministry site. Our calling as the church is to restore our leaders to health, helping them to live life abundantly.

### **Disability Leave**

Disability leave provisions are coordinated with Portico Benefit Services and with Social Security.

- ✓ Congregations are to provide up to two months of continued salary, housing, and contributions to the pension program in a 12-month period. (ELCA disability benefits begin with the third month of disability.)
- ✓ Provision may be made for further unpaid time for disability recovery as agreed by the congregation, but with the stipulation that unused accumulated sick leave will not be compensated at the end of the call.

### **Parental Leave**

Because the church so values families, whether parental leave is maternal, paternal, or adoptive, the synod recommends at least eight weeks paid leave at full salary, housing, and benefits. Bonding as a new family, supporting one another, creating a balance in schedules, and nurturing physical and mental health are just some of the many benefits of parental leave. Additional time may be negotiated by the rostered minister and the council, whether for special concerns or needs, or with the goal toward meeting Family and Medical Leave Act (1993) standards of twelve weeks parental leave.

### **Family Medical Leave**

Paid leave of up to twelve weeks is recommended to care for a family member with a serious health condition.

## Pulpit Supply

For a list of pastors and seminarians available for supply, contact the [synod office](#), or contact the [Bishop's Associate for Leadership](#). Supply rates are as follows: \$200 for one service; \$260 for two services; \$310 for three services. Education or presentations should be counted as a "service." Unless another agreement exists between the guest minister and the congregation, mileage should be paid the minister in accordance with IRS rates.

## Interim Ministers

Every effort should be made to compensate interim ministers based on their years of experience. If this puts the congregation too far off their adopted budget, the interim should have the option of reducing their hours and responsibilities in alignment with the compensation offered them.

## Vacation and Days Off

Because of the intense, ongoing, and emotional nature of the work done by a minister, it is important and recommended that the leader be granted four full weeks vacation (including Sundays) per year in order to tend to family responsibilities and emotional and spiritual refreshment. Vacation is not a reward but recognition that a person needs time for renewal to be most effective in ministry. It is not necessary that vacation time be taken all at one time.

The congregation should also understand that the equivalent of two days off each week for family time and renewal is important. Of necessity, it is recognized that the minister is still "on call" during these days. The congregation needs to be trained not to encroach on days off except in an emergency. Create a policy stating whether vacation can be accrued.

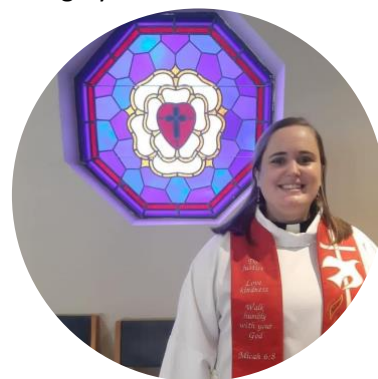
## Continuing Education

Continuing education is essential for rostered ministers and other staff to bring fresh insights and resources to the congregation and for professional growth. Continuing education is a means by which the rostered ministers build upon and extend knowledge, acquire new skills, and grow into more effective ministers. Indeed, failure to maintain a regular discipline of continuing education should be regarded negatively in the annual performance and compensation review.

Congregations are asked to make at least two weeks (including Sundays) per year available to their minister(s) for the purpose of continuing education. This allotted time may be used to attend conferences, classes, or workshops and/or to do theological or ministry-based reading. The rostered minister, in consultation with the mutual ministry committee and the congregation council, should determine the scheduling of continuing education. Upon completion of a continuing education course or reading, the minister might offer a report of their learning to the mutual ministry committee and the congregational council. They could then brainstorm together how the continuing education might be integrated with the congregation's ministry. **The minimum recommended level for continuing education allowance is \$2,000 per year from the congregation and \$400 per year by the rostered minister.**

If there is some special focus in mind, it is suggested rostered ministers may accrue unused continuing education time and monies, but only for a period of three years. This should be done only in consultation with the congregational council.

Ministers seeking advanced degrees or certifications will not be the sole beneficiaries of continuing formal education. Because congregations will, by default, learn with their minister, it is highly recommended the





congregation make some payment toward tuition for the duration of the minister's educational program. Transparency and trust are key, and congregations are invited to request tuition bills before making payments.

Other professional expenses such as books, subscriptions to magazines and journals, vestments, and media resources may be handled by establishing a set amount in the budget and paying the expenses as they occur. All rostered ministers are required, by constitution, to attend the synod assembly and are expected by the bishop to attend theological conferences. *Neither rostered ministers nor congregations are to consider these times as "continuing education."*

### **Pay Raises**

On an annual basis, congregation councils should return to the grids on pages 3 & 4 to make adjustments in pay based on years of service. In preparation for the congregation's annual meeting and budget decisions, an annual review of the rostered minister and the congregation's ministry should be conducted. The synod offers this [Rostered Minister Review](#) as a starting place for these conversations about mutual ministry.

If, in lean years, the congregation is unable to give pay raises based on the grids, an increase consistent with the cost of living should be considered. Additionally, the council should discuss with the minister what non-monetary compensation might look like. Some examples are: increased vacation time, increased opportunities for guest preachers (and Sundays off), additional budget for continuing education and/or study leave, increased retirement benefits. *Every year a rostered minister goes without an increase in pay, the congregation falls behind in meeting synod guidelines. This can result in "sticker shock" when it comes time to call a new pastor or deacon as the expectation will be that they are paid at guidelines.*

### **Sabbatical Study Leave**

A sabbatical leave is recommended for rostered persons after the first seven years of service in a congregation/agency, and every five years thereafter in conjunction with congregational/agency mission planning. The recommended length of time for sabbatical leave is three months. For further information, see the synod's [Policy and Guidelines for Sabbatical Leave for Rostered Persons](#).

### **Professional Expenses**

Rostered ministers receive reimbursement for professional expenses (including automobile use), but this is a matter of reimbursement, not compensation. Professional expenses therefore belong under "administrative" or "operating" expenses in the budget and not under "staff salaries."

The IRS recommends that ministers be placed on an expense reimbursement plan in which business-related expenses are paid to the rostered minister upon submission of an invoice or signed and itemized business expense form. This is in contrast to a system in which the minister is given a flat monthly allowance for

### **Debt Retirement**

Increasingly, rostered ministers are graduating from seminary with significant educational debt. Congregations should seek to help relieve the educational debt of their minister as a part of the compensation package.

### **Synod and Churchwide Ministry**

Part of a rostered person's work is beyond the congregation in the synod and churchwide organization. The congregation council and the rostered minister should agree upon the scope of this work. expenses (which is reported as income) and then deducts business-related expenses.



## Automobile Expenses

As already indicated, use of the rostered minister's automobile for business activity is a congregational expense and should properly be listed under congregational administrative expenses in the budget rather than under compensation. Reimbursement to the rostered minister on a per-mile basis using an expense reimbursement plan is recommended. The IRS rate for business use of an automobile is the standard rate for reimbursement. Alternately, the congregation could consider providing the rostered minister with a church-owned or leased vehicle.

## Other

Congregations often adopt policies or procedures that are intended to benefit the rostered minister as they grow and "stay fresh" amid their duties and tasks. Such items might include:

- ✓ A policy about unused vacation time
- ✓ A policy to reimburse certain dues and memberships deemed essential to that ministry context
- ✓ A membership in a health or fitness club
- ✓ Participation in Portico's Flexible Spending Account
- ✓ Life insurance coverage
- ✓ Supplemental retirement or tax-sheltered annuity contributions

## 5. Non-Rostered Employees

People who are not rostered in the ELCA are often employed by congregations for ministry. The work of non-rostered staff may include youth and family ministry, music, parish education, administration, maintenance, etc. These staff persons are employed either full or part time. The following compensation guidelines may be helpful for congregations to use when determining annual benefits. Please make appropriate and fair adjustments for part-time staff, whether salaried or hourly. **As the church, we are called to provide, at least, a living wage.** A review of staff salaries or hourly wages should be done annually with the goal of providing just compensation.

For ALL non-rostered persons, the following guidelines are recommended.

- ✓ FICA paid by the congregation
- ✓ Vacation
  - 1-4 years of service: 2 weeks
  - 5-10 years of service: 3 weeks
  - More than 10 years: 4 weeks
- ✓ Two days off each week
- ✓ (Especially for hourly employees) Flexibility in scheduling work hours
- ✓ Minimum annual continuing education allowance: \$1,000
- ✓ Theological Conference and Synod Assembly paid by the congregation
- ✓ Minimum annual professional expenses: \$500
- ✓ Workers' Compensation

## Other Considerations

- **Cell Phone:** Many church staff persons, such as those in youth and family ministry, find that it is essential to have the use of a cell phone to do their work. Congregations and non-rostered staff should negotiate a monthly stipend for a cell phone for church-related work.
- **Travel reimbursement:** Many church staff persons use their personal vehicle for church-related work. They should be reimbursed according to current IRS standards. An estimation of this annual expense should be in the congregation's annual budget.
- **Benefits:** It is fair and reasonable that congregations provide Portico Pension and Health Benefits for non-rostered staff persons, who work more than 30 hours a week. See the Portico website for special non-rostered rates.

- **Work Week:** Schedules and time commitments for persons who work with the church vary from week to week and season to season. Congregations should be sensitive to this rhythm. Congregations should encourage non-clergy persons to work an average of 40 hours a week. If more time is needed, comp time is appropriate when the schedule allows and is consistent with federal, state, and local laws governing overtime and comp time.

## 6. Severance

There are times when, for a variety of reasons, personnel are released from an organization; unfortunately, the same happens sometimes in congregations and other ministry sites. (An active Mutual Ministry Committee and the procedures outlined in *Pastor and People* can greatly lessen the chance of such severance coming about as a result of conflict.)

1. Since rostered ministers are under call from the congregation, decisions about termination and severance should be made according to the congregation's constitution and in consultation with the bishop. See C9.05 for termination of the mutual relationship between pastor and congregation or C9.25 for termination of the mutual relationship between deacon and congregation.
2. In the case of non-rostered ministers, the personnel committee and congregational council should exercise due diligence in trying to mediate any conflict, misunderstanding, or unmet expectations. The goal must always be to steward the ministry of the congregation while also being caring and compassionate.

In either case, if people are released from service to a congregation, there should be as graceful and generous a severance as is possible and warranted; three to six months. Ministry leaders often function in highly specialized ways, and it may take them some time to find another ministry site in which to serve. The Office of the Bishop can be helpful to congregations, rostered ministers, and other employees in these instances.



## 7. Afterword

- A “Mutual Ministry Committee” is encouraged several times in this document; along with many references to “mutuality.” As described in Pastor and People, a mutual ministry committee is NOT a support group or sounding board for the pastor. It is NOT a pastoral care committee. It IS a committee that, along with the pastor, continually discerns the ongoing mission of the congregation in its context and imagines how pastor and people might *together* best carry out that mission. Support/care groups for rostered ministers should be found outside of the congregation among colleagues and conferences.
- As indicated by the title of this document “2024 Compensation Guidelines,” these are guidelines, or guiding principles. It is the *annual* responsibility of the congregational/ministry site leadership and rostered minister to mutually discuss and discern just and fair compensation in their specific context. The bishop will be reluctant to sign any call under the minimum guidelines. If a congregation/ministry site cannot provide these amounts, they should meet with the bishop to arrive at a plan for reaching these basic compensation benchmarks.

