

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

**GUIDELINES FOR
PASTORS' SALARIES AND BENEFITS**

The congregation asks a designated group (executive committee, ministry committee, or other group) to negotiate a fair and equitable compensation package with the pastor(s). Since that designated group varies in different settings, this document will simply refer to the congregation. The guidelines suggested here are recommendations for use for negotiation between the pastor(s) and the congregation with the assistance of a District Executive/Minister (or designee). These guidelines, while stated broadly with a full-time pastor in mind, are adaptable to local situations, including part-time service. As pastors move from one location to another, an attempt needs to be made to provide uniform procedures for determining their fair compensation. It is with that in mind that these guidelines should be used.

If congregations find it impossible to meet the scale or to provide benefits, there is an ethical obligation to discuss the reasons and their implications with the pastor(s) and to seek in good faith to take steps toward achieving the recommended scale and benefits as soon as possible. . (“Ethics for Congregations in the Church of the Brethren,” approved by 1996 Annual Conference)

Another option for congregations to consider if they find it impossible to meet the scale or to provide benefits is a congregational self-assessment process in order to determine pastoral leadership/staffing needs.

The cash salary exhibit, the renewal agreement, and a start-up agreement form will be mailed to District Executives/Ministers following Annual Conference each year.

District Executives/Ministers are always available as consultants in the pastor/congregation relationship and should participate at least once every three (3) years in the review of pastoral performance.

I. COMPENSATION

A. Cash Salary

There is one base factor as a beginning point in the Recommended Minimum Cash Salary for Pastors; this factor is adjusted annually. The adjusted figures and minimum salary table will be furnished after Annual Conference each year by the Director of Ministry and may be found at www.brethren.org/ministry.

1. Education

The recommended cash salary assumes the Master of Divinity degree as the standard educational level for full-time pastors. However, in recognition of the variety of educational levels for many who are approved for ministry, two additional columns are shown. It is assumed that individuals in these categories have had educational programs for ministry approved by their District Ministry Commission and/or District Board; approved programs include Training in Ministry Program (TRIM), Education for Shared Ministry (EFSM), and district-administered Academy Certified Training Systems (ACTS).

2. Experience

Experience differential is computed up to thirty (30) years of experience. Larger increases are given in the beginning years of a pastor's career than in the later years. After thirty (30) years, the congregation and pastor(s) need to negotiate a yearly increment that reflects cost of living and additional experience.

3. Social Security

Ministers, for Social Security purposes, are self-employed and are responsible for the total Social Security payment. The base salary figure is built on that assumption.

B. Housing

Congregations are encouraged to be sensitive to the housing needs of the pastoral family.

For congregations without parsonages, the fair rental value of a parsonage or a housing allowance is considered part of the pastor's total income. Total income is also used for computing pension, long-term disability, and Social Security. When the pastor(s) and the congregation agree to a housing allowance, the amount of that allowance should be the equivalent of fair rental housing for that community.

For tax purposes the congregation, via action by the church board (or an equivalent body), may declare a larger amount for housing than mentioned in the previous paragraph. The amount of this allowance should be recorded in the board minutes. This larger amount is allowed by the IRS to include the costs for utilities, furnishings, home improvements, etc. The pastor(s) will need to verify these expenses with the proper receipts.

Congregations with parsonages may declare a portion of the base salary for utilities, furnishings, etc., and this action should be recorded in the board minutes. The pastor(s) will need to verify these expenses with the proper receipts.

Congregations with parsonages are strongly encouraged to contribute annually 1 percent of the fair market value of the parsonage to the Church of the Brethren Housing Fund in the name of the pastor(s) to meet long-term housing and/or retirement needs. It is not a savings account. Information is available from the Director of Ministry, Church of the Brethren General Board, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120.

C. Pension Plan

Participation in a pension plan assures our pastors and families of the church's support in retirement years. Congregations in the Church of the Brethren are expected to contribute to a pension plan. The Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust operates the denomination's pension plan.

Brethren Benefit Trust pension figures are determined by adding to the cash salary one of the following:

1. Twenty (20) percent of cash salary, or
2. Fair annual rental value of the parsonage, or
3. Housing allowance for those who receive one.

Of that figure, congregations pay 12 percent (11 percent to the pastor's account, 1 percent to the Church Workers Assistance Plan), and pastors pay 4 percent at the beginning of the month or quarter (depending on the method elected) directly to the Brethren Benefit Trust.

Pastors may tax shelter their portion and may make additional contributions to the Pension Plan. Information about the Pension Plan and Tax Deferred Annuity option can be obtained directly from Brethren Benefit Trust, 1505 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120.

If a congregation and pastor select a pension plan other than the preferred plan of Brethren Benefit Trust, they are expected to use the same standards to calculate the pastor's pension benefit.

D. Medical Insurance Plan

Medical insurance coverage for the pastor and family are valued and important components of the pastoral benefits package. The pastor(s) and the congregation should participate in a medical insurance plan that provides just and equitable insurance coverage. The plan shall be mutually agreed upon by the pastor and congregation.

The following standards apply to medical insurance coverage:

- Standard inpatient facility services such as hospitalization and surgery.
- Standard outpatient facility services such as physician/specialist services, oncology treatment services, home health care, medical supplies & equipment, etc.
- Standard adult preventive care services such as routine physical exams, diagnostic screening, women's routine exams, immunizations, etc.
- Standard pediatric care services such as routine physical exams, pediatric immunizations, routine diagnostic screening, etc.
- Hospice services both inpatient and outpatient
- Mental health services both inpatient and outpatient including individual/family counseling.
- Major medical
- Prescription drug benefit

The following coverage and standards should also be included (available through BBT):

- Term life insurance – \$50,000
- Long Term Disability

The following minimum standards apply to medical insurance benefits:

- Premiums are divided on a 2:1 ratio between the congregation and the pastor(s).
- The congregation is responsible for paying 100% of the additional cost if a pastor/congregation elects to insure the pastor under the spouse's plan.
- Plan deductible rates – \$500 per person, \$1,000 per family, and a minimum coinsurance rate of 50% for in-network services.
- Congregations/pastor(s) who select a high deductible plan eligible for a Health Savings Account will include a contribution to the Health Savings Account from the congregation on behalf of the pastor. The minimum contribution is \$1,000 for family medical plans and \$500 for individual plans.

Dental, eye, long term care, and flex spending accounts are optional benefits.

D. Days Off, Vacation, and National Holidays

The pastor(s) should take off a day and a half per week, being free from parish responsibilities except for crisis ministries.

Vacation is based on total years of ministerial service. The pastor(s) should receive vacation time in the year it is earned:

- Three (3) weeks for the first three (3) years of service;
- Four (4) weeks for years four–twenty (4–20); and
- Five (5) weeks after twenty (20) years.

Vacation time shall be taken at a time mutually agreed upon by pastor(s) and the congregation.

Paid national holidays should be mutually agreed upon.

E. Special Circumstances

The pastor(s) shall be granted thirty (30) days for special circumstances (paternity/maternity, sickness, death in the family, other crises) beginning with the first year of career service and then ten (10) days for each succeeding year accumulating to no more than ninety (90) days. Upon request, the pastor(s) shall be granted this released time for special circumstances with the approval of the congregation. The congregation shall not be required to pay any accrued days for special circumstances after the pastor's service is terminated. Accurate records should be kept by the church. The accumulated days move with the pastor(s).

II. PASTOR-RELATED EXPENSES

A. Travel

The congregation should assume the cost of travel for parish responsibilities by reimbursing the pastor(s) for the use of a personal car. Mileage records should be kept and the pastor reimbursed for the actual miles at the accepted IRS rate. The congregation may choose to lease or purchase a vehicle.

B. Annual/District Conference

The congregation should expect both Annual and District Conference attendance by the pastor(s) and provide for the expenses and the time to do so.

C. Continuing Education

The "Guidelines for Continuing Education" adopted by the 2002 Annual Conference says, "Formal education does not complete one's learning and preparation for ministerial leadership. Education is a lifelong process." These guidelines encourage congregations to:

- Incorporate at least seven (7) days a year in the pastor's schedule for continuing education. This should be planned so that the pastor is not away for more than one Sunday during the seven days.
- Assist with appropriate financial support by creating a continuing education account in the annual budget or a special reserve fund, whereby both the congregation and the pastoral leader can save for the future.

(See Ministerial Leadership Manual AC140 for full guidelines)

D. Sabbath Rest

The "Guidelines for Sabbath Rest" adopted by the 2002 Annual Conference says, "The purpose of sabbath rest is for renewal of body, mind, and soul. It is an important component in long-term planning and implementation of new ministries for growing pastors and missional congregations. A sabbath rest requires careful planning, and the goal is for it to be beneficial to both pastor and congregation.

The pastor may be granted a sabbath rest following four, five, six, or seven years of continuous ministry in the same congregation. The pastor's salary and benefits will continue during the sabbath rest. The congregation will provide for the ministry of the congregation while the pastor is away.

The sabbath rest is for three (3) weeks after four years, five (5) weeks after five years, seven (7) weeks after six years, nine (9) weeks after seven years. In addition, the pastor is entitled to his or her normal vacation annually. In many cases, the pastor may want to combine sabbath rest and vacation into one total period of time away.

Bi-vocational leaders are also eligible for a sabbath rest. It may be more difficult for these pastors and their congregations to agree on a sabbath rest, but it is well worth the effort. Their sabbath rest will need to take into account the congregational/pastoral agreement, and be prorated to satisfy the agreement.

The pastor is expected to remain with the congregation for at least one year following a sabbath rest. *(See Ministerial Leadership Manual AC150 for entire guidelines.)*

E. Professional Expenses

Professional expenses that may be incurred should be negotiated.

III. MOVING EXPENSES

The congregation will pay for the expenses of moving the pastor/pastoral family into the congregation as mutually negotiated.

IV. WORKERS COMPENSATION

Congregations should participate in state workers compensation plans even where it is optional for churches.

V. OTHER MINISTRIES

While little direct expense is involved, it is important that both the pastor(s) and the congregation discuss and agree on the number and types of ministry involvements beyond the immediate parish. Such ministries should include leadership roles in Annual Conference, District and/or General Board activities, camping programs, ecumenical organizations, and community involvements.

VI. ANNUAL REVIEW AND EVALUATION

It is important for the pastor(s) and executive committee (or ministry committee) to negotiate a job description and to evaluate pastoral performance annually. This should be done as a shared review of the congregation's mission and ministry.

VII. AUTHORITY FOR MINISTRY

The authority for ordination granted by Annual Conference rests with the District Board. Therefore, all ordained ministers in the Church of the Brethren are granted their authority by their District Boards upon recommendation of their District Ministry Commissions. Persons who are not ordained in the Church of the Brethren need approval by the District Board to serve as pastors. All ordained ministers are accountable to their districts for their ministry.

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