

## [Updated Clergy Compensation Guidelines](#)

*By Rob MacDougall*

The Wisconsin Conference Commission on Church and Ministry finished updating the Wisconsin Conference clergy compensation guidelines in August. These guidelines are updated every two years; they will be adjusted again the summer of 2021.

The guidelines are a resource for churches and clergy when considering fair and just compensation for pastors. The figures used to create the tables for salary and housing in the guidelines are based on actual figures reported by churches in Wisconsin to the national offices of the United Church of Christ. Guidelines for other elements of compensation packages such as pension, health insurance, continuing education, etc. were established by consulting previous Wisconsin guidelines and the guidelines of neighboring conferences. While the compensation figures in the guidelines are not mandatory, they are strongly recommended for pastors serving churches in Wisconsin.

At the request of several churches and clergy an additional table has been added to the guidelines regarding salary and housing. One table listing the steps for pastors includes a combined figure for housing and salary, the other lists salary only for churches that offer a parsonage. We hope the addition of the second table is clarifying. Along with the size of the church it is helpful for churches to consider the many other factors listed under Steps A-E such as the pastor's years of experience, training and education, the location of the church, etc.

Because of changes in ministry settings the new guidelines offer options for various levels of part-time ministries and for shared ministry settings. While the guidelines do not offer Steps for part-time settings, they do offer ranges of compensation packages. In part-time settings it is helpful for churches to work with their pastor to determine how the package will be allocated that best addresses the needs of the pastor and their family. The guidelines also offer suggested hourly compensation for part-time positions, and the recommended

stipend for pulpit supply was raised from \$125 to \$150 plus mileage (the pulpit supply figure had not been changed for more than 25 years).

Finally, a paragraph regarding health insurance was added recognizing the end of the Wisconsin Conference Shared Cost System. Because of the changes in the size of our churches and other factors the shared cost system is no longer viable. It is deeply important for clergy and churches to make a fair transition from “shared cost” to each church working directly with the Pension Board to establish premiums for their pastor. We know that this transition may be stressful for churches and clergy; please be in communication with Conference staff for assistance in making this transition.

The faithful support of pastors serving congregations is a vital part of ministry in local churches. Just as churches care for members, friends and others in their community, we must also care for our pastors and their families. Church finances are frequently stretched in many directions and staff compensation is typically the largest item in a church’s budget. Prayer and good communication will facilitate the sharing of vital ministry between pastors and congregation. Conference staff is always available for consultation regarding fair and just compensation for pastors and churches of the Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ.

[View the Guidelines](#)