

**SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOD  
2025 COMPENSATION GUIDELINES  
FOR ROSTERED MINISTERS**

*“...the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel  
should get their living by the gospel.” (1 Cor. 9:14)*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The South Carolina Synod compensation guidelines were studied, reviewed and updated by a Synod Council appointed Task Force at the request of the 2013 Synod Assembly. These compensation guidelines are designed to be a tool for fostering conversations between rostered ministers and congregations. This tool is intended to guide these conversations and to give insight into what is fair and reasonable for trained, approved and called ministers of our church. We recognize that for some congregations there will be a need to grow toward these compensation recommendations, and we pray that this document fosters ongoing and open communication between rostered ministers and their congregations for the purpose of fair compensation.

It may also be helpful to watch these two YouTube videos. The first gives an overview of the guidelines and the second walks through how to fill out the excel spreadsheet. Here are the links for your convenience:

SC Synod Compensation Guideline Youtube Video One – Guideline Overview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyLTWrymX6s>

SC Synod Compensation Guideline Youtube Video Two – Filling out an excel spreadsheet:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gzer4nVakS8>

The ELCA and South Carolina Synod recognize two categories for Rostered Ministers. Each rostered person has been fully approved by their Candidacy Committee and called to serve in their respective ministry fields.

1. Ministers of Word and Sacrament have received theological and practical training for the ministry of Word and Sacrament that is carried out in a variety of settings in congregations and institutions of the ELCA. They have a four year Masters of Divinity degree and are ordained by the ELCA. Ministers of Word and Sacrament may also be called Pastors, which will be how they are referenced within this document.
2. Ministers of Word and Service are men and women who go through the candidacy process of the ELCA before they are ordained for public ministry. They may be called by a congregation, a synod or the churchwide expression. They serve within congregations as well as outside of congregations in schools, agencies and institutions. They strive to be witnesses to this church and the world. They represent the church in settings and positions other than the traditional role of pastor. Ministers of Word and Service may also be referred to as Deacons, which will be how they are referenced within this document.

## COMPENSATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The South Carolina Synod recommends that in 2025 congregations follow the suggested salary guidelines for rostered ministers reflecting years of active service and education as indicated in the **Compensation Matrixes (Appendix A)**. Additional factors may be considered in determining the compensation for a rostered minister:

- special life or work experience, training, credentials, skills, the complexity of the ministry context;
- significant seminary education debt;
- the size of the congregation, effectiveness in meeting the challenges of ministry and in accomplishing goals jointly set by the rostered person(s);
- whether the pastor will be serving as a “solo” or “senior” pastor or as an associate pastor, and;
- the Congregational Council/Finance Committee/Mutual Ministry Team commitment to continuing education and growth in excellence in ministry, the cost of living in the area relative to other parts of the synod, provision of a parsonage for a pastor, etc.

Salaries for those being called to a new setting are set in partnership between the rostered minister, the congregation, and the synod. It is recommended that the Finance Committee, Mutual Ministry Team, and the Congregation Council work together to review salary annually and that the congregation annually make appropriate salary adjustments. After a compensation agreement is reached between the rostered minister and the congregation, the written agreement should be signed by all parties involved, filed at the church, and a copy sent to the SC Synod Office.

**South Carolina cost of living averages vary largely across the state. Churches should take this into account when setting salaries. The median cost of a home in South Carolina is \$301,659. Specific cost of living information for your county/town is available at <https://www.zillow.com/sc/home-values>.**

Confident that God calls rostered ministers to lead, challenge, and equip people for ministry in daily life, congregations and institutions are encouraged to utilize a Mutual Ministry Team, whose primary focus would be tending to the relationship among the people of God, including the rostered minister. In that regard, procedures may be set up to provide for an annual evaluation of mutual ministry within the congregation. **Appendix B** is provided as a suggested tool for the rostered minister(s) and the congregation to use in the evaluation process.

### Taxes

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has determined that pastors are both employees (Income tax purposes) and self-employed (for Social Security and Medicare purposes). A congregation withholds no taxes from a pastor’s salary. He or she can elect to have Federal Taxes withheld to help cover expected total tax liabilities. For Social Security and Medicare purposes (SECA tax), a pastor is considered self-employed and pays these taxes, as well as ordinary income tax when the Federal Form 1040, is filed (the church pays no matching contribution).

Deacons are employees of a congregation and are taxed the same as any other employee.

Since the pastors are employees, the church must issue a W-2 form to each pastor and file a copy with the Social Security Administration at year end. Furthermore, each church should file a form 941 and

form 1065 (SC) each Quarter showing quarterly wages and taxes withheld. These reports include wages for pastors and deacons. A1099-Miscellaneous is no longer acceptable for a church to file for a pastor. For more information on filing forms with the IRS, please see a certified public accountant or tax consultant.

For a pastor to take advantage of all the benefits afforded to him or her, the congregation must designate the pastor's salary into parts, such as cash compensation, housing, pension, and insurance.

### **Housing Allowance**

For Pastors, the housing allowance (at least 30% of minimum salary) is not subject to income taxes if the amount is actually spent on the cost of housing. The housing allowance is subject to SECA tax. It may be to the pastor's advantage to reduce her/his minimum salary and increase the housing allowance to cover all housing expenses, which is a legal option. The pastor is strongly urged to consult one or more tax planning guides or see a qualified Certified Public Accountant to take full advantage of this provision in the tax code. The housing allowance should be evaluated on an annual basis and the designated amount should be provided by the pastor. Setting the housing allowance to cover actual expenses incurs no additional cost to the congregation. To meet IRS requirements, the Congregation Council must specify the annual amount prior to the beginning of the calendar year in its recorded minutes.

When a parsonage is provided, it is recommended that congregations consider the following:

Furnishings Allowance. This is a negotiable allowance between the pastor and the congregation based upon the need to furnish a parsonage and to provide renter's insurance.

Equity allowance. When pastors live in a parsonage most of their career, it can be difficult to buy a house upon retirement. The equity allowance is to help a pastor accumulate a sum of money (equity) for future use in providing housing. The agreed upon dollar amount would be held for investment purposes at the pastor's discretion. Please note that money not properly sheltered is taxable income. A rate of 3% of minimum salary is suggested as a reasonable equity allowance.

### For Deacons

The South Carolina Synod follows the ELCA's conservative financial approach that the housing allowance for Deacons is not authorized. Each situation may be different and individual congregations and Deacons should consult with a certified public accountant for their best personal options and any other tax ramifications.

### **Social Security Allowance**

Pastors are required to compute and pay self-employment Social Security Tax. The SECA rate is 15.3% on salary and housing or, if a parsonage is provided, on salary plus the fair rental value of the parsonage. It is recommended that congregations include a Social Security Allowance. If a congregation includes a Social Security Allowance in the pastor's compensation, that must be declared as income and is taxable. Therefore, to defray the entire cost of Social Security, the allowance would be 16.459% of salary and housing.

## Deacons

Federal Tax Code requires congregations to pay the employer's portion of Social Security and Medicare (7.65%) for Deacons. A congregation may choose to pay the employee's and the employer's portions together for a total of 15.3%. If not, a congregation can include a Social Security Allowance for the employee's portion in the Deacon's compensation package, the allowance must be declared as income and is taxable. Therefore, to defray the employee's cost of Social Security and Medicare in this way, the allowance would be 8.23%.

## **Pension and Benefits**

It is the expectation of the South Carolina Synod that all congregations provide a Pension and Benefits program for their rostered ministers. If Portico Benefit Services is used as the provider, it is recommended that the congregation provide for their rostered minister(s) at the Gold level. The cost for the ELCA Pension, Survivor Benefits, Administrative cost, Medical, Dental, and Disability Insurance is calculated as a percentage of a rostered minister's compensation. Spouses and children should be included in coverage, and that the medical, dental, and insurance benefits be outlined in the Call documents. An employed or insured spouse may waive coverage if he or she has other employer-provided group coverage but the waiver cannot be retroactive. If the rostered minister is covered by their spouse's plan or a plan other than the ELCA Portico Benefit Services, then the congregation should pay the rostered minister the amount equal to the cost of that medical, dental, and insurance plan. Please note that these alternatives can serve to save the congregation some money, but will have tax implications for the rostered minister. Rostered ministers are strongly encouraged to consult one or more tax planning guides or see a qualified Certified Public Accountant.

The ELCA Portico Benefit Services Rate Schedule A for the year 2025 is sent by the Board to congregations and all rostered ministers or you may reference it at [www.porticobenefits.org](http://www.porticobenefits.org).

The South Carolina Synod supports the resolution of the 1991 ELCA Churchwide Assembly encouraging all congregations and agencies to contribute to the Pension Plan at the 12% rate.

## **403b and Your Retirement**

A 403b retirement savings plan is for employees of colleges, hospitals, school districts, and nonprofit organizations. The plan, which is similar to the 401k plan offered to many corporate employees, is funded by employees with contributions that are deducted from pretax pay.

The 403b offers three distinct advantages:

1. Your church treasurer remits the funds from your check before you receive it thus it is pre-tax. The advantage is you don't pay taxes up front and it lowers your current tax liability.
2. It builds interest tax free.
3. When you retire from service you receive your funds and pay taxes at your then current income level.

For more information on this please visit the IRS website at: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p571.pdf>.

## **Medical Expense Reimbursement**

A congregation may elect to reimburse medical deductible and co-payment expenses or dependent care expenses (often referred to as a Flexible Spending Account). This provision could be funded by a voluntary salary reduction or provided as a benefit in lieu of salary increase. The amount reimbursed

(for each type of expense, medical or dependent care) would not be subject to Income or SECA taxes up to a maximum of \$5,000 per year. The proper steps must be followed in establishing an accountable plan in keeping with the IRS codes. Consult one or more tax planning guides or see a qualified Certified Public Accountant. The ELCA Portico Benefit Services administers such a salary deferral plan. Visit website for information. <https://myportico.porticobenefits.org/>

### **Sick Leave**

Sick leave of up to two months with full salary, housing and benefits should be provided for the rostered minister. (The ELCA Disability Plan provides for 2/3 of defined compensation, including Social Security benefits, to be paid beginning in the third month.)

### **Family Leave**

Family Leave with full benefits of eight weeks is standard practice when a child is born or adopted, or to care for a sick family member such as a spouse, child, parent, or sibling, with an additional negotiable 4 weeks of unpaid leave or vacation time. The number of weeks of leave before and after the birth/adoption should be specified in advance and with mutual discussion with the rostered minister.

Additionally, Bereavement Leave should be given to Rostered Ministers to provide time to grieve and heal from the loss of a close family member. A conversation with your Rostered Minister and the Bishop would be appropriate in negotiating the appropriate leave time.

When calling a new Rostered Minister, the call paperwork should include specific benefit information about sick leave, paid family leave, paid bereavement leave, sabbatical policy and leave, etc.

### **Vacation**

The South Carolina Synod guideline regarding vacation for full-time and part-time rostered ministers is four full weeks, a total of 28 days including four Sundays.

Vacation shall normally be taken during the fiscal year in which that vacation is budgeted. With the prior approval of the congregation or congregation council, vacation time may be carried over into the following year thus allowing for an extended vacation time in that year. Without prior approval by the congregation or congregation council, unused vacation time of a previous year is lost.

Upon the ending of call or employment, compensation or provision for accrued vacation time for the present fiscal year is to be provided to the rostered minister.

### **Automobile Expense Reimbursement**

The congregation should reimburse miles traveled in carrying out duties as a rostered minister at the rate allowed by the IRS. Check IRS guidelines (<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-issues-standard-mileage-rates-for-2023-business-use-increases-3-cents-per-mile>). The rostered minister should submit a signed report each pay period or no less than monthly to the responsible financial officer of the congregation. Please note that Automobile Reimbursement may also occur through a reasonable auto allowance that is provided within the compensation package. No matter the case, you must have proper documentation.

### **Continuing Education**

It is the expectation of the ELCA and the South Carolina Synod that every rostered minister will engage in at least 50 hours of continuing education per year. This continuing education is intended to benefit both the rostered minister and the congregation through ongoing development of biblical/theological understanding and ministry skills.

To assist the rostered minister in meeting this expectation, \$1,100 is suggested (with expenditures verified by receipts), and two weeks (a total of 14 days including two Sundays) will be provided by the congregation for every rostered minister, accruable for up to three years.

### **Professional Expenses**

In addition to classes, retreats, and annual Convocation, congregations may include allowances for the purchase of books or subscriptions to media resources that enable the rostered minister to keep abreast of developments in the ministerial profession. This allowance may be lumped into the Continuing Education allowance or may be divided between Continuing Education and Professional Expenses.

### **First Call Theological Education**

Persons within their first three years in ministry are expected to commit their continuing education time and congregational continuing education allowance to, at a minimum, fulfilling the expectations of First Call Theological Education.

### **Day Off/Time Management**

It is recommended that a full-time rostered minister take at least one full day off per week. In managing time at work and time off it might be helpful to consider each day as having three segments: morning, afternoon, and evening. Each week contains twenty-one such segments. Working fourteen or fifteen of those segments, equaling approximately 45 hours, is suggested as the norm. During the Christmas and Easter seasons, more may be required. Correspondingly, some seasons of the church year may require less. It is recommended that rostered ministers take two consecutive days off at least once a month in order to compensate for on-call time and other special events.

### **Severance**

The SC Synod Bishop should be consulted whenever the termination of a call is being considered. In situations where a call is terminated by the rostered minister, Congregation Council, or appointing institution, without another call or other employment being in place, the congregation is encouraged to consider a severance package of three to six months. Unless covered by another employer, medical and pension benefits are to be included as well. Excluded would be any other allowances, e.g. auto, book, education.

Since the church understands itself as a Christ-centered community and not simply as a business, it is important for severance policy to reflect concern for the person.

### **Part-time Rostered Ministers**

A part-time Call for a rostered minister in the SC Synod is generally defined as someone serving for at least 20 hours per week. Part Time Calls need to be negotiated with the Office of the Bishop. If this part-time position is generated out of what used to be a full time call, then a new letter of call should be issued. Please contact the Bishop to work with you on this new call. A part-time call should be



described in writing so that within the letter of call there is clarity for the minister, the congregation, and the Bishop on how “part-time” is defined in that location. Congregations arranging for a part-time rostered minister call should understand that the minister has the right to find gainful employment elsewhere to reach full-time earning capacity. **Therefore, congregations calling ministers to part-time hours need to plan for flexibility and realistic expectations for the time their rostered minister can serve. We recommend and expect that rostered ministers and their congregations will have open and ongoing communication related to the best ways to navigate a part-time call.**

Part-time Called rostered ministers shall receive proportionate compensation based on the work week for full-time rostered ministers. We recommend that the congregation begin their calculations using the appropriate minimum salary indicated in the **Appendix A** and divide by the percentage of time that the called position is requiring. When you insert the part-time minimum salary into the compensation worksheet, all other benefits will be calculated accordingly. Note that rostered ministers who are called to serve part-time are still granted four weeks of vacation (a total of 28 days including 4 Sundays) and two weeks (a total of 14 days) of continuing education as indicated in prior sections. Additional vacation or continuing education weeks may be negotiated in lieu of cash benefits, but please be sure to put this in writing.

### **Interim Pastors**

The South Carolina Synod Bishop has the discretion to appoint an Interim whenever there is a pastoral vacancy and will often work with Congregation Councils to determine who would best serve in that position. An Interim Pastor should receive a signed copy of the Interim Covenant which is Resource H in the SC Synod Transition Packet of Resources. This Covenant indicates expectations and responsibilities which have been negotiated in advance of starting this position. They will also need to receive a copy of the Compensation Worksheet which is done using our Excel worksheet. Most often, Interim Pastors are contracted to serve part time. Determining Compensation for your Interim Pastor should follow the same steps as we suggest for Part Time Called Pastors (See above). In some situations, Interims are contracted to serve full time and compensation would be calculated as with any other full time pastoral position according to their years of experience and what was paid to your most recent pastor. Occasionally Interim pastors can be issued a term call, but this must be done in consultation with the SC Synod Bishop and SC Synod Council.

We ask that Compensation Guidelines be used and compensation be pro-rated for part time given the pastor or deacon’s years of experience. Either a parsonage or housing allowance is to be provided, as well as pension and medical benefits, if applicable, mileage reimbursement for performing congregational responsibilities at the current IRS rate (<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-issues-standard-mileage-rates-for-2023-business-use-increases-3-cents-per-mile>) and reimbursement for any other ministry related costs incurred (e.g. telephone, postage, meals, etc.).

An Interim pastor serving for less than full time shall receive:

- Compensation provided in proportion to the percentage of hours requested. For example: if you are asking your Interim Pastor to work  $\frac{1}{2}$  time use the Guidelines for their years of experience and divide the minimum salary in half. If  $\frac{3}{4}$  time is the arrangement divide the minimum salary into  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Guidelines.

- Mileage reimbursement for performing congregational responsibilities at the current IRS rate (<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-issues-standard-mileage-rates-for-2023-business-use-increases-3-cents-per-mile>),
- Housing allowance and social security allowance calculated on the part-time minimum salary,
- Health and Retirement benefits as needed for actual expense,
- Reimbursements for congregational expenses (e.g. continuing education, synod assembly, telephone, postage, meals, hotel, etc.), is expected as you would for any Pastoral position.
- Interim ministers who are called to serve part-time are granted four weeks of vacation (a total of 28 days including 4 Sundays) and two weeks (a total of 14 days) of continuing education the same as any other ministers under call. Additional vacation or continuing education weeks may be negotiated in lieu of cash benefits, but please be sure to put this in writing.

Note: Contracting for hourly work is for Supply Pastors, not for Interims.

### **Stated Supply Pastors**

A Stated Supply serves the same congregation under a covenant created between the Congregational Council, the Pastor, and the Office of the Bishop. The Stated Supply leads Sunday worship and perhaps 1-5 hours per week for visits or other pastoral responsibilities.

### **Supply Pastors**

A Supply Pastor is one who fills in one Sunday at a time (e.g. while the pastor is on vacation). The Supply Pastor should be compensated on the day of service.

A Supply Pastor shall receive:

1. Preaching:
  - One worship service (regardless of the day or type of service) -- \$200 minimum
  - Each additional service -- \$50
2. Mileage shall be reimbursed at the current IRS (<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-issues-standard-mileage-rates-for-2023-business-use-increases-3-cents-per-mile>) rate per mile
3. All reasonable hotel and meal costs shall be reimbursed.
4. Visitation or other responsibilities beyond the contracted/agreed time -- \$50 per hour

### **Sabbaticals**

#### **What is ‘Sabbatical’?**

“Sabbatical” is a significant amount of time away from ministry responsibilities and is to be used for both professional growth and personal renewal. The intent of sabbatical is to sharpen the recipient’s skills and to refresh both the spiritual life and a sense of calling. We recommend reviewing ELCA Portico Benefit Services and ELCA websites for more sabbatical resource information.

#### **Scriptural background:**

The word “sabbatical” is rooted in the word “Sabbath.” The Sabbath is about time. When the work of creation was finished, God rested and reserved the seventh day as time to rest and reflect on the goodness of creation. In the third commandment, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,” God protects the gift of time from insatiable demands of work. The Bible also speaks of a “Sabbath” for the land to lay fallow and replenish itself. The promised “Jubilee Year” was a Sabbath for debtors to occur every seventy years. The year of jubilee envisioned a time when all accumulated debts would be erased.

In the New Testament, Jesus insisted that “the Sabbath was made for humankind and not humankind for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27) As the Son of Man and Lord over the Sabbath, Jesus reclaimed the Sabbath to serve human physical and spiritual needs as God the Creator intended. In so doing, Jesus set the needs for renewal and restoration above the burdensome labor of religious obligations. In these brief examples from Scripture, a picture of the Sabbath emerges. The Sabbath recognizes the physical and spiritual strain of routine toil; it also hallows the time that will be given to God for renewal.

### **What’s done on Sabbatical?**

The time may be used for a) further academic study; b) enhancement of professional skills; c) purposeful creative expression relating to ministry; and d) purposeful travel in connection with an area of study.

### **Is there a need?**

The sabbatical is one of the most effective ways for a rostered person and congregation to develop and maintain a long-term relationship. In that sense, both the rostered person as well as the congregation benefit from the rostered person’s sabbatical. As a particular ministry unfolds over time, the cumulative weight of sharing crises, nurturing new programs and striving to meet ever-changing demands and expectations eventually affects the rostered person’s performance and attitudes, and may lead to burn out. Many rostered persons work six days a week and are on call all the time. Over the course of a year, that equates to an additional 52 days a year or 7 ½ weeks per year as opposed to someone with a 5-day work week. With these things in mind, an effective use of properly planned sabbaticals will refresh the rostered ministers’ mind and spirit, bring new ideas and enthusiasm, and will ultimately benefit the ministry with the congregation.

### **What a Sabbatical isn’t?**

A Sabbatical is not additional vacation. Sabbaticals, unlike vacations, assume that the congregational council and the synod play a significant role with the rostered minister in the planning, execution and evaluation in shaping the outcome. Before granting a Sabbatical, the congregational council should review and accept the rostered minister’s Sabbatical plan and a copy of the plan should be forwarded to the SC Synod Bishop. Following the Sabbatical, the rostered minister should give a written report to their Congregation Council and again a copy of this report should be forwarded to the SC Synod Bishop.

In addition, a Sabbatical is not an opportunity to do similar work (i.e. supply preaching) in a different setting, and it is not simply annual continuing education. Continuing education is taken annually and usually not for more than an accumulated one or two weeks of time. Sabbatical time is at least three months and is granted not more than once every seven years.

### **Eligibility and Length**

1. Rostered persons shall not be eligible for a sabbatical until they have served in their present call for at least five years.
2. Recipients of sabbatical opportunities are expected to return to their existing ministries for at least a year after the sabbatical. Exceptions to this policy because of unusual circumstances must be discussed by the rostered minister with the Congregation Council and the SC Synod Bishop.
3. A typical sabbatical will be three months, not including vacation and continuing education time. It is not recommended that pastors “save” annual continuing education time for their sabbatical, but rather use their continuing education time on an annual basis. Any exceptions are to be approved by both the Congregation Council and the SC Synod Bishop.

## **Goal Setting Guidelines**

1. The SC Synod recommends that the sabbatical option should be included in the Letter of Call or appointment for Pastors and Deacons.
2. At least six months before the sabbatical is to begin, the applicant shall submit a written plan to the Congregation Council for study (and renewal) including its proposed dates. The proposal must be approved by both the rostered person and the Congregational Council. The proposal is then submitted to the SC Synod Bishop for comment, clarification and endorsement. Such a plan needs to include:
  - a. Filling out sabbatical forms available from the SC Synod. (see appendix B)
  - b. Providing the congregational council and SC Synod Bishop a statement of expected educational and spiritual benefits.
  - c. Written plans about how the parish duties and existing programs will be covered. Major decisions should be made prior to the sabbatical, or, if they cannot be made, they should be delayed until the rostered person has had time to become reoriented into the ministry.
  - d. A plan for re-entry into the ministry once the sabbatical is complete, since both the congregation and rostered person will have undergone changes and a loss of immediacy. A re-entry plan might include:
    1. selecting a person to keep a diary of parish happenings to share at the return;
    2. staggering committee meetings to facilitate a gradual re-entry into the ministry;
    3. renewing ties by visiting;
    4. publicly affirming the ministry done during the absence; and
    5. determining a date to give the congregation a sabbatical report.
3. Rostered ministers on sabbatical are not expected to return to their calling body for pastoral or other responsibilities that others can assume (i.e. baptisms, weddings, funerals, youth retreats, council or board meetings, etc).
4. An excellent resource for sabbatical planning is *Pastor Renewal: The Alban Guide to Sabbatical Planning*, by A. Richard Bullock and Richard J. Bruesehoff.

## **Costs During Sabbatical**

1. During the sabbatical, the rostered minister shall remain at full salary and benefits, excluding automobile allowance.
2. The rostered minister will bear the cost of sabbatical activity. However, congregations may choose to assist in these costs by designating the current year's continuing education stipend to the sabbatical. Rostered Ministers and congregations need to check current tax laws and pension rules about pre-designating a portion of the rostered person's salary as an "education offset" during the sabbatical year.
3. Other expenses to the congregation might include the salary and related ministry expense to secure a supply that can assist with regular rostered minister responsibilities during a sabbatical leave. After mobilizing lay ministers and faithful volunteers most congregations discover that their needs require only part time coverage during a sabbatical leave. For part-time pastoral coverage refer to the Interim and Supply section of these compensation guidelines for a determination of costs. Full-time pastoral coverage will often include salary, housing and a full benefit package. In the case of sabbatical leave for deacon positions, Congregation Council/Institution should confer with the SC Bishop's office.
4. Independent Grants to support a sabbatical leave may be available and it is recommended that rostered ministers do research online to discover options.
5. If you have any questions or need clarification you are invited to contact the SC Synod Bishop or one of the Bishop's Assistants.

**Evangelical Mission**

The South Carolina Synod recommends that the Director of Evangelical Mission follow these guidelines as he/she establishes compensation for pastor-developer.

## APPENDIX A

### Suggested Minimum Salary Guidelines for Rostered Pastors of SC Synod

(Excel Compensation Worksheets are online at <https://scsynod.com/call-process/> and instructions are found on pg. 22.)

\*Beyond 30 years of service a minimum 1.5% increase or negotiated cost of living increase for each additional year of service is recommended.

\*\*Housing Allowance is at least 30% of the minimum salary. **Some locations may necessitate more housing based upon market values in that area. See bold paragraph on pg. 4 for more information.**

\*\*\*Social Security Allowance is 16.459% of Minimum Salary & Housing (if paid directly to the pastor).

\*\*\*\*These suggested guidelines may not properly address multiple rostered minister staff situations. We encourage conversations about what would be fair and just compensation for each minister.

Years of Service	Defined Compensation	=	Minimum Salary	+	Housing	+	SS Allowance	Total Cash Outlay = Defined Compensation + Health Coverage + Pension + Other Benefits + Mileage + Continuing Education + various other expense as laid out in the excel spreadsheet.
Entry	\$57,531	=	\$38,000	+	\$11,400	+	\$8,131	
1	\$59,544	=	\$39,330	+	\$11,799	+	\$8,415	
2	\$61,569	=	\$40,667	+	\$12,200	+	\$8,701	
3	\$63,601	=	\$42,009	+	\$12,603	+	\$8,989	
4	\$65,636	=	\$43,354	+	\$13,006	+	\$9,276	
5	\$67,671	=	\$44,697	+	\$13,409	+	\$9,564	
6	\$69,701	=	\$46,038	+	\$13,812	+	\$9,851	
7	\$71,722	=	\$47,374	+	\$14,212	+	\$10,136	
8	\$73,730	=	\$48,700	+	\$14,610	+	\$10,420	
9	\$75,721	=	\$50,015	+	\$15,004	+	\$10,702	
<b>10</b>	\$77,690	=	\$51,315	+	\$15,395	+	\$10,980	
11	\$79,632	=	\$52,598	+	\$15,779	+	\$11,254	
12	\$81,543	=	\$53,861	+	\$16,158	+	\$11,524	
13	\$83,419	=	\$55,099	+	\$16,530	+	\$11,789	
14	\$85,254	=	\$56,311	+	\$16,893	+	\$12,049	
15	\$87,044	=	\$57,494	+	\$17,248	+	\$12,302	
16	\$88,785	=	\$58,644	+	\$17,593	+	\$12,548	
17	\$90,472	=	\$59,758	+	\$17,927	+	\$12,786	
18	\$92,100	=	\$60,834	+	\$18,250	+	\$13,016	
19	\$93,666	=	\$61,868	+	\$18,560	+	\$13,238	
<b>20</b>	\$95,165	=	\$62,858	+	\$18,857	+	\$13,450	
21	\$96,592	=	\$63,801	+	\$19,140	+	\$13,651	
22	\$98,041	=	\$64,758	+	\$19,427	+	\$13,856	
23	\$99,512	=	\$65,729	+	\$19,719	+	\$14,064	
24	\$101,004	=	\$66,715	+	\$20,015	+	\$14,275	
25	\$102,519	=	\$67,716	+	\$20,315	+	\$14,489	
26	\$104,057	=	\$68,732	+	\$20,619	+	\$14,706	
27	\$105,618	=	\$69,762	+	\$20,929	+	\$14,927	
28	\$107,202	=	\$70,809	+	\$21,243	+	\$15,151	
29	\$108,810	=	\$71,871	+	\$21,561	+	\$15,378	
<b>30</b>	\$110,443	=	\$72,949	+	\$21,885	+	\$15,609	

## Suggested Minimum Salary Guidelines for Rostered Deacons of SC Synod Masters Degree

(Excel Compensation Worksheets are online at <https://scsynod.com/call-process/> and instructions are found on pg. 24.)

\*Beyond 30 years of service a minimum 1.5% increase or negotiated cost of living increase for each additional year of service is recommended.

\*\*The South Carolina Synod follows the ELCA's conservative financial approach that the housing allowance for deacons is not authorized. Each situation may be different and individual congregations and deacons should consult with a certified public accountant.

Years of Service	Defined Compensation	=	Minimum Salary	+	SS Allowance
Entry	\$46,539	=	\$43,000	+	\$3,539
1	\$48,168	=	\$44,505	+	\$3,663
2	\$49,805	=	\$46,018	+	\$3,787
3	\$51,449	=	\$47,537	+	\$3,912
4	\$53,095	=	\$49,058	+	\$4,037
5	\$54,741	=	\$50,579	+	\$4,162
6	\$56,383	=	\$52,096	+	\$4,287
7	\$58,018	=	\$53,607	+	\$4,412
8	\$59,643	=	\$55,108	+	\$4,535
9	\$61,253	=	\$56,596	+	\$4,658
<b>10</b>	\$62,846	=	\$58,067	+	\$4,779
11	\$64,417	=	\$59,519	+	\$4,898
12	\$65,963	=	\$60,947	+	\$5,016
13	\$67,480	=	\$62,349	+	\$5,131
14	\$68,965	=	\$63,721	+	\$5,244
15	\$70,413	=	\$65,059	+	\$5,354
16	\$71,821	=	\$66,360	+	\$5,461
17	\$73,186	=	\$67,621	+	\$5,565
18	\$74,503	=	\$68,838	+	\$5,665
19	\$75,770	=	\$70,008	+	\$5,761
<b>20</b>	\$76,982	=	\$71,129	+	\$5,854
21	\$78,137	=	\$72,196	+	\$5,941
22	\$79,309	=	\$73,278	+	\$6,030
23	\$80,499	=	\$74,378	+	\$6,121
24	\$81,706	=	\$75,493	+	\$6,213
25	\$82,932	=	\$76,626	+	\$6,306
26	\$84,176	=	\$77,775	+	\$6,401
27	\$85,438	=	\$78,942	+	\$6,497
28	\$86,720	=	\$80,126	+	\$6,594
29	\$88,021	=	\$81,328	+	\$6,693
<b>30</b>	\$89,341	=	\$82,548	+	\$6,793

Total Cash Outlay
=
Defined Compensation
+
Health Coverage
+
Pension
+
Other Benefits
+
Mileage
+
Continuing Education
+
various other expense as laid out in the excel spreadsheet.

## Suggested Minimum Salary Guidelines for Rostered Deacons of SC Synod B.A. Degree or Equivalent

(Excel Compensation Worksheets are online at <https://scsynod.com/call-process/> and instructions are found on pg. 24.)

\*Beyond 30 years of service a minimum 1.5% increase or negotiated cost of living increase for each additional year of service is recommended.

\*\*The South Carolina Synod follows the ELCA's conservative financial approach that the housing allowance for deacons is not authorized. Each situation may be different and individual congregations and deacons should consult with a certified public accountant.

Years of Service	Defined Compensation	=	Minimum Salary	+	SS Allowance	Total Cash Outlay
Entry	\$41,127	=	\$38,000	+	\$3,127	=
1	\$42,567	=	\$39,330	+	\$3,237	Defined Compensation
2	\$44,014	=	\$40,667	+	\$3,347	+
3	\$45,466	=	\$42,009	+	\$3,457	Health Coverage
4	\$46,921	=	\$43,354	+	\$3,568	+
5	\$48,376	=	\$44,697	+	\$3,678	Pension
6	\$49,827	=	\$46,038	+	\$3,789	+
7	\$51,272	=	\$47,374	+	\$3,899	Other Benefits
8	\$52,708	=	\$48,700	+	\$4,008	+
9	\$54,131	=	\$50,015	+	\$4,116	Mileage
10	\$55,538	=	\$51,315	+	\$4,223	+
11	\$56,927	=	\$52,598	+	\$4,329	Continuing Education
12	\$58,293	=	\$53,861	+	\$4,432	+
13	\$59,634	=	\$55,099	+	\$4,534	various other expenses as laid out in the excel spreadsheet.
14	\$60,946	=	\$56,311	+	\$4,634	
15	\$62,226	=	\$57,494	+	\$4,731	
16	\$63,470	=	\$58,644	+	\$4,826	
17	\$64,676	=	\$59,758	+	\$4,918	
18	\$65,840	=	\$60,834	+	\$5,006	
19	\$66,959	=	\$61,868	+	\$5,091	
20	\$68,031	=	\$62,858	+	\$5,173	
21	\$69,051	=	\$63,801	+	\$5,250	
22	\$70,087	=	\$64,758	+	\$5,329	
23	\$71,138	=	\$65,729	+	\$5,409	
24	\$72,205	=	\$66,715	+	\$5,490	
25	\$73,288	=	\$67,716	+	\$5,573	
26	\$74,388	=	\$68,732	+	\$5,656	
27	\$75,504	=	\$69,762	+	\$5,741	
28	\$76,636	=	\$70,809	+	\$5,827	
29	\$77,786	=	\$71,871	+	\$5,915	
30	\$78,952	=	\$72,949	+	\$6,003	



## APPENDIX B

### MUTUAL MINISTRY EVALUATION PROCESS

We recognize that effective ministry is the result of an interaction between the rostered minister and the congregation, and that it's always important to stay in touch with shared goals and expectations.

The following document is provided as a means to review the mutual ministry of the rostered minister(s) and the congregation.

The goals of the review are:

- a. To identify and affirm the accomplishments, faithfulness and competencies of the rostered minister and the congregation;
- b. To help rostered ministers sharpen personal goals and to define areas of needed or desired professional, spiritual, and personal growth; and,
- c. To help rostered ministers and laity clarify expectations of one another and to improve the effectiveness of their shared ministries.

The model constitution for congregations says: A Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed jointly by the President (or Vice President) and the pastor. It is recommended that this committee consist of six persons. The term of office shall be for two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year. The Mutual Ministry Committee shall oversee the evaluation process of the rostered minister(s). The Mutual Ministry Committee may be asked by the Finance Committee for guidance on compensation.

The Mutual Ministry Committee members should complete the appropriate Congregational Review form for their rostered minister(s). It is suggested that additional members of the congregation be asked to provide evaluative feedback to supplement the committee's evaluation process. A combined summary report should be formulated and shared between the Mutual Ministry Committee members and the rostered minister(s). This gathering should start and end in prayer. For example:

- Thanking God for our rostered minister(s) spiritual leadership, teaching of God's Gospel, and interfacing with our human needs,
- Stating how the congregation is "grateful for his/her \_\_\_\_\_ (giving appropriate examples such as Sunday morning sermons, leading Bible Classes, and conducting baptisms, confirmations, weddings, counseling, funerals, etc.), and
- Asking for God's guidance and direction as we reverently review this congregation's ministry of the recent past, and as we set goals for coming months/years.

After discussion and consensus is reached on the content of the summary report, it should be shared with the Congregation Council. A review process should never be conducted during the budgeting process of a congregation/ministry, nor should it be part of the process used to set church staff salaries. Reviews should be conducted at a different time of the year from budgeting processes, and then the reports may be considered as part of the material gathered to form goals and budgets for a ministry.

A helpful resource is Pastor and People: Making Mutual Ministry Work, Congregational Leader Service, Augsburg Fortress.

## CONGREGATIONAL REVIEW OF PASTORAL MINISTRY

The Mutual Ministry Committee is asked to assist in the review process of our rostered minister(s). Please indicate your rating and make written comments where you have knowledge. Leave blank any categories where you don't feel you have knowledge to make a meaningful review. This information will be shared with our rostered minister(s) to help guide personal growth in ministry and continuing education.

In each category the rating system will be a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being low and 5 being high.

### PREACHING –

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- What is the pastor doing well in this area?
- What does the pastor need to improve?

### TEACHING –

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- What is the pastor doing well in this area?
- What does the pastor need to improve?

### LEADING WORSHIP –

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- What is the pastor doing well in this area?
- What does the pastor need to improve?

### PASTORAL CARE –

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- What is the pastor doing well in this area?
- What does the pastor need to improve?

### LEADERSHIP & PLANNING (ADMINISTRATION) –

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- What is the pastor doing well in this area?
- What does the pastor need to improve?

### COMMUNITY MINISTRY & LARGER CHURCH LEADERSHIP –

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- What is the pastor doing well in this area?
- What does the pastor need to improve?

### PROPHETIC MINISTRY –

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- What is the pastor doing well in this area?
- What does the pastor need to improve?

### PEOPLE SKILLS –

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- What is the pastor doing well in this area?
- What does the pastor need to improve?

### CONTINUING EDUCATION –

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- What is the pastor doing well in this area?
- What does the pastor need to improve?

### PERSONAL LIFE –

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- What is the pastor doing well in this area?
- What does the pastor need to improve?

### YOUTH MINISTRY –

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- What is the pastor doing well in this area?
- What does the pastor need to improve?

### WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS –

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- What is the pastor doing well in this area?
- What does the pastor need to improve?

**CONGREGATIONAL REVIEW OF DEACON MINISTRY**  
(These are suggested questions and are not all applicable to everyone.)

1. Do you feel your job is an important part of the overall ministry of the church?
2. What are some of the specific joys/successes for you in this past year?
3. Are you given enough lead time to get your work done without being hurried or stressed?
4. What has caused you frustration or great concern?
5. Do you feel you are given proper equipment and materials to do the job required of you?
6. What do you wish would improve? (Please offer specific actions that you think could bring about improvement.)
7. How do you feel the Pastoral ministry staff supplements and supports your work?
8. How do you feel congregation members supplement and support your work?
9. How do you feel the youth supplement and support your work?
10. Do you feel you are fairly and adequately compensated for the work you do? (Include salary, mileage, pension, health/dental insurance, continuing education.)
11. Are you a part of regular weekly planning (staff meetings)? Do you feel enough time is given for staff reporting and sharing with each other?
12. When deadlines are necessary, do you feel others respect and comply to enable you to get the job done?

## ROSTERED MINISTER(S) MINISTRY REVIEW OF THE CONGREGATION

In each category the rating system will be a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being low and 5 being high.

### **Are members willing to participate?**

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- a. What is the congregation doing well in this area?
- b. What does the congregation need to improve?

### **Is there positive interaction between members?**

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- a. What is the congregation doing well in this area?
- b. What does the congregation need to improve?

### **Is there a feeling of Christian community?**

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- a. What is the congregation doing well in this area?
- b. What does the congregation need to improve?

### **Do the members of the congregation support the work of the church in a financially responsible manner?**

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- a. What is the congregation doing well in this area?
- b. What does the congregation need to improve?

### **Does the congregation serve the needs of the community?**

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- a. What is the congregation doing well in this area?
- b. What does the congregation need to improve?

### **Is there willingness for outreach on the local level?**

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- a. What is the congregation doing well in this area?
- b. What does the congregation need to improve?

### **Is there willingness to support our ministry through the synod and the ELCA?**

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- a. What is the congregation doing well in this area?
- b. What does the congregation need to improve?

### **Is there willingness for outreach to the world?**

Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5

- a. What is the congregation doing well in this area?
- b. What does the congregation need to improve?

## APPENDIX C

### APPLICATION FOR SABBATICAL

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Office Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

In existing ministry since:

Proposed period of sabbatical from: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

Congregation approved sabbatical

By Call  By Resolution.

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief preliminary explanation of proposal:

Preliminary statement of Intended Benefits:

Site of Study/Experience:

Approximate costs to the Rostered Minister:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Tuition & housing \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Food and incidentals

Available Continuing Education funds are: \_\_\_\_\_

I am working with a local committee or council and have set the following goals:

- a. Responsibility for existing ministry (date) \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Approval of final proposal (date) \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Approval of "re-entry" plan (date) \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Date to report on sabbatical (date) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor/Deacon

\_\_\_\_\_  
Council President

## APPENDIX D

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR ONLINE EXCEL COMPENSATION WORKSHEETS

(Excel Compensation Worksheets available online at <https://scsynod.com/call-process/>)

#### Compensation Worksheet Instructions for Rostered Pastors – Housing Allowance

The excel compensation worksheet that has been created contains equations in some of the dollar amount boxes, therefore you don't have to fill in every box. These instructions will guide you through the process and hopefully make it much easier as you try to calculate your Pastor's compensation package.

1. For the minimum salary number you should review the Rostered Pastors compensation matrix (**Appendix A**) and find the appropriate amount that reflects your Pastor's years of active service. When this amount is found you should manually input this number into the excel spreadsheet in box C4.
2. If your Pastor has additional education merits, skills, etc. it is appropriate to add an additional amount to the Pastors minimum salary in box C5.
3. The housing allowance should be equal to at least 30% of the minimum salary (the sum of boxes C4 & C5). When this number is determined please input it into box C6.
4. You should see additional boxes making calculations at this point. Your Social Security Allowance (composed at the rate of 16.459%), Cash Salary, and Defined Compensation have all been calculated for you, therefore you may proceed to letter K on your worksheet.
5. Letter K calculates Health and Pension plan benefits. You will see that most of the calculations have already been made, with two exceptions in boxes C 24 and C 25. Box C 25 asks for the cost value of your Pastor's healthcare benefits. To calculate this cost value you must use the Portico Benefit Services Cost Benefit Calculator found here:

<https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Home/Resources/Calculators.aspx>

When you click on this link (or enter it into your web browser) you will be taken to the calculators page of the Portico Benefit Services website. Choose the 2025 Cost Benefit Calculator tab. When you do this you will be taken to the next page where you must enter your Pastor's desired benefit option and your synod. After completing these questions click continue. On the next page you must first enter your Pastor's total defined compensation. The next box asks you to choose whether your Pastor is covered under ELCA Health Coverage, Medicare Coverage, or wishes to waive coverage. Next you must enter your Pastor's birthdate. You will then select whether your Pastor has a spouse and children and if so, whether or not they will be covered as well. The special circumstances tab should only be considered if you are employing a Pastor that is married to another Pastor also sponsored under ELCA Coverage and/or if you are a part of a two-point parish where each congregation pays the Pastor separately. Next everyone must enter the Retirement Contribution percentage that they will provide to their Pastor. Remember that the Synod Recommended percentage for Retirement Contributions is 12%. There is also a last box for those who choose to be provided with a House Equity Retirement Contribution. When you have completed all the appropriate boxes please hit continue. The page that opens will give you the cost breakdown of your Pastor's benefits. From this page you must take the number for Health and place it into box C 25. When you do this you will see that box C 24 has now calculated itself.

6. Any additional benefits (i.e. tax sheltered annuity, life insurance, etc.) included in your Pastor's pay package should be entered into box C 31.
7. Under the section "Expenses" you will need to enter the appropriate number values for mileage reimbursement, continuing education/professional expenses, and official meetings into the boxes to the right in the C column.
8. This should complete your calculations of the Pastor's compensation package. You may continue to the next section entitled "Other Benefits".

### **Compensation Worksheet Instructions for Rostered Pastors – Parsonage**

The excel compensation worksheet that has been created contains equations in some of the dollar amount boxes, therefore you don't have to fill in every box. These instructions will guide you through the process and hopefully make it much easier as you try to calculate your Pastor's compensation package.

1. For the minimum salary number you should review the Rostered Pastors compensation matrix (**Appendix A**) and find the appropriate amount that reflects your Pastor's years of active service. When this amount is found you should manually input this number into the excel spreadsheet in box C4.
2. If your Pastor has additional education merits, skills, etc. it is appropriate to add an additional amount to the Pastors minimum salary in box C5.
3. The Fair Rental Value of the Parsonage is calculated in this worksheet at 30% of the minimum salary (Box C 6). If the FRV of the parsonage is different than the number calculated then please input the appropriate number into box C 7.
4. If your Pastor is going to receive a utilities allowance and/or a furnishings allowance, you should input the appropriate figure into its respective C column box to the right. Remember that utilities allowances and furnishings allowances paid directly to the pastor are taxable. For tax recommendations please confer with a tax guide or a qualified CPA.
5. If your Pastor will receive a Housing Equity Allowance directly then input this number into box C 14. If the Housing Equity Allowance will be received through a tax sheltered account with the ELCA or otherwise, then input this number into box C 43. Remember that if the Pastor receives this allowance directly then this is also a taxable amount.
6. You should see additional boxes making calculations at this point. Your Social Security Allowance (composed at the rate of 16.459%), Cash Salary, and Defined Compensation have all been calculated for you, therefore you may proceed to letter R on your worksheet.
7. Letter R calculates Health and Pension plan benefits. You will see that most of the calculations have already been made, with two exceptions in boxes C 35 and C 36. Box C 36 asks for the cost value of your Pastor's healthcare benefits. To calculate this cost value you must use the Portico Benefit Services Cost Benefit Calculator found here: <https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Home/Resources/Calculators.aspx>  
When you click on this link (or enter it into your web browser) you will be taken to the calculators page of the Portico Benefit Services website. Choose the 2025 Cost Benefit Calculator tab. When you do this you will be taken to the next page where you must enter your Pastor's desired benefit option and your synod. After completing these questions click continue. On the next page you must first enter your Pastor's total defined compensation. The next box asks you to choose whether your Pastor is covered under ELCA Health Coverage, Medicare Coverage, or wishes to waive coverage. Next you must enter your Pastor's birthdate. You will

then select whether your Pastor has a spouse and children and if so, whether or not they will be covered as well. The special circumstances tab should only be considered if you are employing a Pastor that is married to another Pastor also sponsored under ELCA Coverage and/or if you are a part of a two-point parish where each congregation pays the Pastor separately. Next everyone must enter the Retirement Contribution percentage that they will provide to their Pastor. Remember that the Synod Recommended percentage for Retirement Contributions is 12%. There is also a last box for those who choose to be provided with a House Equity Retirement Contribution. When you have completed all the appropriate boxes please hit continue. The page that opens will give you the cost breakdown of your Pastor's benefits. From this page you must take the number for Health and place it into box C 36. When you do this you will see that box C 35 has now calculated itself.

8. Any additional benefits (i.e. tax sheltered annuity, life insurance, etc.) included in your Pastor's pay package should be entered into box C 42.
9. Again, for those receiving their Housing Equity Allowance through a tax sheltered account with the ELCA or otherwise, this number should be input into box C 43.
10. Under the section "Expenses" you will need to enter the appropriate number values for mileage reimbursement, continuing education/professional expenses, and official meetings into the boxes to the right in the C column.
11. This should complete your calculations of the Pastor's compensation package. You may continue to the next section entitled "Other Benefits".

### **Compensation Worksheet Instructions for Rostered Deacons**

The excel compensation worksheet that has been created contains equations in some of the dollar amount boxes, therefore you don't have to fill in every box. These instructions will guide you through the process and hopefully make it much easier as you try to calculate your rostered minister's compensation package.

1. For the minimum salary number you should review the Rostered Deacons compensation matrix (**Appendix A**) for either Bachelor's Degree and Equivalents or for Masters Degree candidates and find the appropriate amount that reflects your Deacon's years of active service. When this amount is found you should manually input this number into the excel spreadsheet in box C4. Remember that housing is reflected in the amounts found in the compensation matrix for Rostered Deacons.
2. If your Deacon has additional education merits, skills, etc. it is appropriate to add an additional amount to the Deacons minimum salary in box C6.
3. You should see additional boxes making calculations at this point. Your Social Security Allowance (composed at the rate of 8.23%), Cash Salary, and Defined Compensation have all been calculated for you, therefore you may proceed to letter I on your worksheet.
4. Letter I calculates Health and Pension plan benefits. You will see that most of the calculations have already been made, with two exceptions in boxes C 19 and C 20. Box C 20 asks for the cost value of your Deacon's healthcare benefits. To calculate this cost value you must use the Portico Benefit Services Cost Benefit Calculator found here:  
<https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Home/Resources/Calculators.aspx>  
When you click on this link (or enter it into your web browser) you will be taken to the calculators page of the Portico Benefit Services website. Choose the 2025 Cost Benefit Calculator tab. When you do this you will be taken to the next page where you must enter your



Deacon's desired benefit option and your synod. After completing these questions click continue. On the next page you must first enter your Deacon's total defined compensation. The next box asks you to choose whether your Deacon is covered under ELCA Health Coverage, Medicare Coverage, or wishes to waive coverage. Next you must enter your Deacon's birthdate. You will then select whether your Deacon has a spouse and children and if so, whether or not they will be covered as well. The special circumstances tab should only be considered if you are employing a Deacon that is married to another Deacon also sponsored under ELCA Coverage and/or if you are a part of a two-point parish where each congregation pays the Deacon separately. Next everyone must enter the Retirement Contribution percentage that they will provide to their Deacon. Remember that the Synod Recommended percentage for Retirement Contributions is 12%. There is also a last box for those who choose to be provided with a House Equity Retirement Contribution. When you have completed all the appropriate boxes please hit continue. The page that opens will give you the cost breakdown of your Deacon's benefits. From this page you must take the number for Health and place it in box C 20. When you do this you will see that box C 19 has now calculated itself.

5. Any additional benefits (i.e. tax sheltered annuity, life insurance, etc.) included in your Deacon's pay package should be entered into box C 26.
6. Under the section "Expenses" you will need to enter the appropriate number values for mileage reimbursement, continuing education/professional expenses, and official meetings into the boxes to the right in the C column.
7. This should complete your calculations of the Deacon's compensation package. You may continue to the next section entitled "Other Benefits".

## APPENDIX E

### COMPENSATION WORKSHEETS IN MICROSOFT WORD

(\*For the easiest means of calculating compensation, we highly recommend that congregations use the Excel Compensation Worksheet available online at <https://scsynod.com/call-process/>. However, we are providing compensation worksheets in a Word document format for those who cannot use Excel.)

#### 2025 COMPENSATION WORKSHEET Rostered Pastor with Housing Allowance

#### I. COMPENSATION

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| A. Minimum Salary (Number from Appendix A reflecting years of active service)  | \$ _____     |
| B. Additional Compensation for merit, skills, higher cost of living expenses, and/or experience  | \$ _____     |
| C. Housing Allowance (including furnishings, utility, etc., if paid directly to pastor; Synod Recommends at least 30% of minimum salary for housing)   | \$ _____*    |
| D. Total of A, B and C   | \$ _____     |
| E. Social Security Allowance (Line D x .16459)<br>Because Pastors are considered self-employed by the IRS for Social Security computations only, the Synod Council recommends that congregations contribute total self-employed social security tax. | \$ _____     |
| F. Cash Salary (Total of lines D & E)  | \$ _____ (1) |

#### II. RETIREMENT & OTHER BENEFITS (For Retirement only, the Synod Council strongly recommends 12%)

<b>PORTICO BENEFIT SERVICES CALCULATION – Defined Compensation</b>	
G. Annual minimum salary (before reductions for tax-sheltered annuities or reimbursement accounts) – Lines A & B above	\$ _____
H. Pastor’s Social Security tax allowance (if paid directly to pastor) Line E above	\$ _____
I. Housing Allowance (including any household furnishings and utilities allowances if paid directly to pastor)	\$ _____
J. Total <b>Defined Compensation</b> (Total of Lines G, H, & I)	\$ _____

K. ELCA Health & Pension Plan (Total of Lines K-1, K-2, K-3, K-4, and K-5) Percentages and rates vary. See current rate schedule online at <a href="http://www.porticobenefits.org">www.porticobenefits.org</a>	\$ _____**
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K-1. Health Benefit***	\$ _____
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K-2. Retirement (applicable rate**** x Line J)	\$ _____
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K-3. Disability (applicable rate**** x Line J)	\$ _____
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K-4. Basic Group Life (applicable rate\*\*\*\* x Line J) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

K-5. Retiree Support (applicable rate\*\*\*\* x Line J) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

L. Additional Benefits (i.e., tax sheltered annuity, life insurance, etc.) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

M. Total of lines K & L \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (2)

**III. EXPENSES**

N. Transportation Mileage reimbursement (Check the IRS rate.) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

O. Continuing Education/Professional Expenses (Synod recommended is \$1,100) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

P. Official Meetings (includes synod assembly, etc.) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Q. Total of lines N, O, & P \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (3)

**TOTAL CONGREGATIONAL CASH OUTLAY (1) + (2) + (3) \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**IV. OTHER BENEFITS**

Vacation \_\_\_\_\_ weeks, including \_\_\_\_\_ Sundays

Sick/Parental Leave \_\_\_\_\_ weeks

Continuing Education \_\_\_\_\_ weeks and sabbatical \_\_\_\_\_ weeks.

**NOTES:**

\* Housing allowance shall be approved by and recorded in congregational council minutes prior to effective date in order to be considered tax exempt by IRS.

\*\* At least equal full family, dental, and insurance coverage should be provided even if the pastor utilized plans other than the ELCA (formerly Board of Pensions) Plan.

\*\*\* Cost Value for this category can be found by using the Portico Benefit Services Benefits Costs Calculator at: <https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Home/Resources/Calculators.aspx>

\*\*\*\* Furnished by ELCA Portico Benefit Services annually online at [www.porticobenefits.org](http://www.porticobenefits.org) .

**2025 Compensation Worksheet  
Rostered Pastor Living in Parsonage**

**I. COMPENSATION**

- A. Minimum Salary (Number from Appendix A reflecting years of active service) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Additional Compensation for merit, skills, higher cost of living expenses, etc. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Total of A and B \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Fair rental value of parsonage or Line C x 30% \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- If pastor receives a utilities and/or furnishing allowance:**
- E. Utilities Allowance (Include only if the Pastor pays the utilities with a cash allowance provided by the congregation. If the congregational treasurer pays the parsonage utilities directly to utility company, no figure should be included here.) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \*
- F. Furnishings Allowance (Part of compensation for Social Security but if expended not taxable for state or federal) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- G. Housing Equity Allowance (If paid directly to rostered person) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*
- H. Total of C, D, E, F and G \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I. Social Security Allowance (line H x .16459)  
(Because Pastors are considered self-employed by the IRS for Social Security computations only, the Synod Council recommends that congregations contribute total self-employed social security tax.) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- J. CASH SALARY (Total of lines H & I) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (1)

**II. RETIREMENT & OTHER BENEFITS** (For Pension only, the Synod Council strongly recommends 12%)

<b>PORTICO BENEFIT SERVICES CALCULATION – Defined Compensation</b>		
K.	Annual minimum salary (before reductions for tax-sheltered annuities or reimbursement accounts) – Lines A & B above	\$ _____
L.	Pastor’s Social Security tax allowance (if paid directly to pastor) Line I above	\$ _____
M.	Total of K & L	\$ _____
<b>For Parsonage</b>		
N.	30% of Line M (used to determine housing when living in parsonage)	\$ _____
O.	Household furnishings and utilities allowances (if paid directly to the pastor)	\$ _____
P.	Housing Equity Allowance (if paid directly to pastor)	\$ _____
Q.	Total <b>Defined</b> Compensation (Total of Lines M, N, O, & P)	\$ _____

R. ELCA Health & Retirement Plan (Total of Lines R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, & R-5) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*\*  
 Percentages and rates vary. See current rate schedule online at [www.porticobenefits.org](http://www.porticobenefits.org)

R-1. Health\*\*\*\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

R-2. Retirement (Line Q x applicable rate)\*\*\*\*\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

R-3. Disability (Line Q x applicable rate)\*\*\*\*\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

R-4. Basic Group Life (Line Q x applicable rate)\*\*\*\*\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

R-5. Retiree Support (Line Q x applicable rate)\*\*\*\*\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

S. Additional Benefits (i.e., tax sheltered annuity, life insurance, etc.) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

T. Housing Equity Allowance (If tax sheltered) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \*\*

U. Total of lines R, S, & T \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (2)

**III. EXPENSES**

V. Transportation mileage reimbursement (Check with the IRS for rate.) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

W. Continuing Education/Professional Expenses (Synod recommended is \$1,100/year) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

X. Official Meetings (includes Synod Assembly, etc.) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Y. Total of lines V, W, & X \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (3)

**TOTAL CONGREGATIONAL CASH OUTLAY (1) + (2) + (3) – (D) \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**IV. OTHER BENEFITS**

Vacation \_\_\_\_\_ weeks, including \_\_\_\_\_ Sundays

Sick/Parental Leave \_\_\_\_\_ weeks

Continuing Education \_\_\_\_\_ weeks and sabbatical \_\_\_\_\_ weeks

**NOTES:**

\* It is preferable for the congregation to directly pay the utilities' costs. If money is given to the pastor for covering the cost of parsonage/utilities, this amount becomes a tax liability for the pastor.

\*\* Housing equity allowance (as a benefit) requires prior approval by and entered in congregational council minutes to be considered tax exempt by IRS. If paid directly to the rostered minister, the housing equity allowance is considered part of defined compensation and is taxable. (Housing equity allowance can be tax deferred by contribution made directly to ELCA Portico Benefit Services Optional Pension Plan or other qualified plan.)

\*\*\* At least equal full family, dental, and insurance coverage should be provided even if the pastor utilizes plans other than the ELCA Portico Benefit Services Plans.

\*\*\*\* Cost Value for this category can be found by using the Portico Benefit Services Benefits Costs Calculator at:

<https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Home/Resources/Calculators.aspx>

\*\*\*\*\* Furnished by ELCA Portico Benefit Services annually online at [www.porticobenefits.org](http://www.porticobenefits.org).

**2025 COMPENSATION WORKSHEET**  
**Rostered Deacon**

**I. COMPENSATION**

- A. Minimum Salary (Number from Appendix A reflecting years of active service) (includes housing) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Additional compensation for merit, skills, higher cost of living expenses, etc. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Total of Lines A & B \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (1)
- D. Social Security Tax Allowance (line C x .0823) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Synod Council recommends that the congregation contribute total social security tax.)
- E. Total of Lines C & D \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**II. RETIREMENT AND OTHER BENEFITS** (For pension only, the Synod Council strongly recommends 12%)

<b>PORTICO BENEFIT SERVICES CALCULATION – Defined Compensation</b>	
F.	Annual minimum salary (before reductions for tax-sheltered annuities or reimbursement accounts) – Lines A & B above \$ _____
G.	Deacon’s Social Security tax allowance (if paid directly to the Deacon) (Line D above) \$ _____
H.	<b>Total Defined Compensation</b> (Lines F & G) \$ _____

- I. ELCA Health & Retirement Plan (Total of Lines I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, & I-5) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \*
- Percentages and rates vary. See current rate schedule online at [www.porticobenefits.org](http://www.porticobenefits.org)
- I-1. Health\*\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I-2. Retirement (Line H x applicable rate)\*\*\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I-3. Disability (Line H x applicable rate)\*\*\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I-4. Basic Group Life (Line H x applicable rate)\*\*\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I-5. Retiree Support (Line H x applicable rate)\*\*\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- J. Additional Benefits (i.e., tax sheltered annuity, life insurance, etc.) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- K. Total of lines I & J \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (2)

**III. EXPENSES**

- L. Transportation mileage reimbursement (Check the IRS rate.) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- M. Continuing Education/Professional Expenses (Synod recommended is \$1,100/year) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- N. Official meetings (includes Synod Assembly, etc.) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- O. Total of lines L, M, & N \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (3)

**TOTAL CONGREGATIONAL CASH OUTLAY (1) + (2) + (3)**

**\$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**IV. OTHER BENEFITS**

L. Vacation \_\_\_\_\_ weeks, including \_\_\_\_\_ Sundays

M. Sick/Parental Leave \_\_\_\_\_ weeks

N. Continuing Education \_\_\_\_\_ weeks and sabbatical \_\_\_\_\_ weeks

**NOTE:**

\*At least equal full family dental and insurance coverage should be provided even if the deacon utilizes plans other than the ELCA Portico Benefit Services Plan.

\*\* Cost Value for this category can be found by using the Portico Benefit Services Benefits Costs Calculator at:

<https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Home/Resources/Calculators.aspx>

\*\*\* Furnished by ELCA Portico Benefit Services annually online at [www.porticobenefits.org](http://www.porticobenefits.org) .