

# **ENGLISH DISTRICT**

## **THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD**

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## **2026 SALARY GUIDELINES**

For Establishing Congregational  
Policies Relating to the Compensation for Pastors

## **PURPOSE**

The primary purpose for these guidelines is to assist the lay leaders of English District congregations in determining policies regarding the compensation of pastors. The guidelines are presented with the hope that they be used for evaluating the present level of compensation and that they might provide standards for establishing and reviewing policies annually.

Resources available to you:

- *Congregational Treasurer's Manual* <http://www.lcms.org/ctm>.
- IRS Publication 517 [www.irs.gov/uac/about-publication-517](http://www.irs.gov/uac/about-publication-517).
- Concordia Plan Services online compensation decisions support tools. The Compensation Decision Support Tool was created to assist LCMS congregations in the process of determining salaries for certain staff positions.
- The **pastor and parish professional tool** found at <https://tc.cbiz.com/CompToolCPS/Login.aspx> provides compensation suggestions for Sole Pastor, Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, Director of Christian Education, Director of Christian Outreach, Deaconess, Director of Family Life Ministry, Director of Parish Music and Lay Minister. An app for the pastor, parish professional tool is currently only available in the Apple app store for Apple devices. Search "CPS Comp" to find the app. It functions in a very similar way to the actual online version.
- The **educator tool** at this link <https://tc.cbiz.com/CompToolCPSEd/Login.aspx> allows the user to create compensation estimates for positions including Teacher, Assistant Teacher, Head Principal/Administrator, Assistant Principal/Administrator and Early Childhood Director. Schools from preschools and child care centers all the way through high schools can use the tool.
- District Resources for the geographic district where your congregation is located.

## **INTRODUCTION**

We recognize the geographic dispersion of the English District, which precludes developing a salary scale and other forms of compensation that will be appropriate to all areas and to all congregational settings and situations. We assume that each of our District congregations will want to provide for their workers. We also assume that the worker, who is called to live in a specific community at a specific time, would like to live at the same general level as most of the families of the parish and at the level of most of the families in the community.

The compensation paid needs to appear reasonable to the lay leaders of the congregation and acceptable to the majority of the members and the church worker. No distinction in salary is to be made on the basis of marital status or family responsibilities.

## **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the compensation be determined in the following way:

1. A duly authorized group conducts a review of all salaries. The committee should include representatives of appropriate boards, the congregation's leadership and administrative staff.
2. A salary review is conducted annually by this committee before the congregation's budget is approved.
3. The committee begins its review with a realization of what Scriptures teach regarding providing for the care and wellbeing of those who are duly called to serve in specific roles according to the gifts God has given them and the needs of the congregation.
4. As the committee reviews the compensation of all workers of the parish, consideration should be given to education, experience and responsibility.
5. Recommendations are made and interpreted to the decision-making body of the congregation by the committee.

## **TWO-POINT PARISHES**

When a pastor serves more than one congregation, the committee should consist of members of each congregation being served. Recommendations from the committee should be made to the decision-making body of each congregation. It would seem prudent that all members of the committee be present for such meetings.

## **LEVELS OF RESPONSIBILITY**

The senior administrative pastor ordinarily has greater responsibility and therefore receives a larger salary than sole and associate or assistant pastors. However, the fringe benefits accorded the senior pastor should also be provided to other members of the pastoral staff.

The levels of responsibility vary from worker to worker. Compensation should also vary to reflect appropriately these responsibilities.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Total Compensation - the full cost to a congregation of compensating a worker. This includes salary plus other items that the congregation pays directly because they reflect the cost of performing a given ministry.

Salary - an annual wage paid to the worker on a regular basis exclusive of additional benefits such as Concordia Plan Services, health insurance, retirement benefits, travel allowances, utilities, car allowance, continuing education funds, etc.

## **A. ALLOWANCES**

### **1. Housing and Utilities**

The recommended salary scales include housing and are based on the assumption that congregations do not provide a residence for the worker.

If housing is provided and utilities are paid by the congregation, subtract the fair rental value of the parsonage including utilities from the salary. When a home is furnished the congregation should pay all utilities including gas or oil, electricity, internet service, water, sewage, trash removal, and telephone.

If a residence is not provided, a portion of the pastor's compensation may be designated as a housing allowance. To obtain all allowable tax exemptions for "Ministers of Religion" the congregation should have a recorded resolution that approves the housing allowance prior to the first pay that includes the housing allowance.

The eligible worker excludes from income only that part of these allowances which is actually used. The excess must be reported as income by the worker and is subject to taxation.

These explanations are not all-inclusive. Workers are advised to check with tax consultants regarding annual changes. The *LCMS Congregational Treasurer's Manual* Chapter 2 should be reviewed for information regarding housing allowances: <http://www.lcms.org/ctm>.

### **2. Vacation**

The benefit to ministry, health and welfare of the family through scheduled vacation time is self-evident. Therefore, the following vacation time is recommended:

Years of Service	Number of Weeks
1 - 4	2
5 - 9	3
10 and more	4

**In addition to vacation time, it is important that workers be given a day off per week.**

### **3. Social Security** - (Not applicable in Canada, please check Canadian tax laws.)

By law, Synod-rostered workers must pay their own Social Security tax based on the "Self-Employed Rates". This costs considerably more than the F.I.C.A. tax for a corporately employed person. This amount may be added to the salary and is subject to income tax and additional S.E.C.A. tax. See *Congregational Treasurer's Manual* Chapter 1. <http://www.lcms.org/ctm>.

## **B. ADDITIONAL ALLOWANCES**

### **1. Automobile**

Automobile and travel expenses should be regarded as "business expenses" of the congregation. An annual replacement cost of actual automobile expenses or mileage reimbursement at the applicable government rate for business is suggested. (Most agencies and businesses allow the standard government rate which includes gas and oil, depreciation, maintenance, and insurance.) Congregations may also wish to purchase or lease a car for their workers.

There are tax ramifications for both unaccountable cash allowances and personal use of congregation-owned vehicles. Please refer to the *Congregational Treasurer's Manual* for additional information.

## 2. Library

A professional library is a necessity for an effective pastor, teacher, DCE or other professional church worker. Since access to current materials enhances effectiveness and both congregation and worker receive the benefit, it is recommended that the congregation include in the annual budget an amount for acquisitions to the worker's personal library. These funds should be disbursed as payment for specific materials rather than given in a lump sum.

## 3. Professional Growth

Workers are encouraged to continue to grow professionally. Professional growth is often most productive when it takes the form of continuing education. Continuing education may be formal course work at a university or seminary or less formal in workshops, seminars, and professional association conferences. Since professional growth benefits both worker and congregation through more effective ministry, it is recommended that worker and congregation share the cost of the education and travel expenses and the pastor should not be expected to use his vacation time for this purpose.

## 4. Sabbatical Leave

If a worker has been at your congregation for six or more years, a sabbatical for renewal and growth purposes may be considered. The congregation should develop a policy regarding sabbatical leaves. Contact the district office for a sample policy.

# **C. BENEFITS**

U.S. congregations should provide participation in Concordia Plan Services, (Canadian congregations should contact the English District office), which include Concordia Health Plan, Concordia Disability and Survivor Plan and Concordia Retirement Plan. The congregation is responsible for all payments to the Retirement and Disability Survivors Plan. It is recommended that they pay for health coverage for the entire family.

Information describing the Concordia Plan Services may be obtained from Concordia Plan Services, PO BOX 229007, 1333 South Kirkwood Road, Saint Louis, MO 63122, <http://www.concordiaplans.org/> or 1-888-927-7526.

## **Miscellaneous Compensation Items**

### 1. Required Meetings

Attendance at District conventions, conferences, circuit and regional conferences is required of all pastors, and therefore, should not be treated as vacation time. Pastors should attend these official events with all expenses (travel, meals, housing, and registration) paid by the congregation. It is a supportive gesture to also cover the cost for the pastor's wife to attend these events with him.

The District conference and convention expenses are covered by an assessment paid by the congregation to the District annually. Circuit and regional conference expenses are paid directly by the congregation.

## 2. Substitute Pastors

The congregation needs to provide for pastoral services during their pastor's vacation, attendance at required meetings, or in the event of his illness. It is recommended that a fee policy be established by the congregation for the amount to be paid. The policy should include a stipend based on the services provided plus expenses (travel, lodging, meals). If the guest speaker is a District staff person speaking in their area of responsibility an honorarium is left up to the congregation. However, reimbursement for travel is expected.

## 3. Discretionary Fund

It is recommended that a small sum be budgeted to provide the pastor with the ability to make a timely response to certain pressing situations of which he becomes aware such as immediate assistance to parishioners or others.

## **SALARY RANGE SCALE BY REGION**

Salary range scales are provided by region. Determine the pastor's years of experience taking into consideration years in another career if applicable. Determine the education of the pastor using the appropriate column for the amount of education (credits) above a M.Div. degree. The coordinating salary should be considered. Also consider the size of the congregation, cost of living for the congregation's area within the region and level of responsibility of the pastor.

Concordia Plan Services has created an online compensation tool for parish professionals that takes many of these factors into account and is available at <https://tc.cbiz.com/CompToolCPS/Login.aspx>. An online compensation tool for teachers has also been created and is available at <https://tc.cbiz.com/CompToolCPSEd/Login.aspx>.

Note: Canadian congregations are reminded that the dollar amounts are in U.S. currency. The amounts need to be restated in Canadian dollars.

1. The Base Cash Salary Range is suggested for congregations of up to 300 communicant members. An increment of 1% is suggested for each additional 100 members or fraction thereof.
2. Pastors who further their education should be considered for an additional 3% of the base upon receiving an advanced graduate degree.

A suggested SALARY/COMPENSATION WORKSHEET is appended.

## EASTERN

<u>Yrs. Exp.</u>		<u>w/ M.Div.</u>	<u>M.Div. + 15</u>	<u>2nd Masters</u>	<u>2nd Masters +15</u>	<u>D.Min or Ph.D.</u>
0	1	60,508	62,508	64,508	66,508	68,508
1	1.02	61,718	63,718	65,718	67,718	69,718
2	1.04	62,928	64,928	66,928	68,928	70,928
3	1.06	64,139	66,139	68,139	70,139	72,139
4	1.08	65,349	67,349	69,349	71,349	73,349
5	1.1	66,559	68,559	70,559	72,559	74,559
6	1.12	67,769	69,769	71,769	73,769	75,769
7	1.14	68,979	70,979	72,979	74,979	76,979
8	1.16	70,189	72,189	74,189	76,189	78,189
9	1.18	71,400	73,400	75,400	77,400	79,400
10	1.2	72,610	74,610	76,610	78,610	80,610
11	1.22	73,820	75,820	77,820	79,820	81,820
12	1.24	75,030	77,030	79,030	81,030	83,030
13	1.26	76,240	78,240	80,240	82,240	84,240
14	1.28	77,450	79,450	81,450	83,450	85,450
15	1.3	78,661	80,661	82,661	84,661	86,661
16	1.32	79,871	81,871	83,871	85,871	87,871
17	1.34	81,081	83,081	85,081	87,081	89,081
18	1.36	82,291	84,291	86,291	88,291	90,291
19	1.38	83,501	85,501	87,501	89,501	91,501
20	1.4	84,711	86,711	88,711	90,711	92,711
21	1.42	85,922	87,922	89,922	91,922	93,922
22	1.44	87,132	89,132	91,132	93,132	95,132
23	1.46	88,342	90,342	92,342	94,342	96,342
24	1.48	89,552	91,552	93,552	95,552	97,552
25	1.5	90,762	92,762	94,762	96,762	98,762
26	1.52	91,972	93,972	95,972	97,972	99,972
27	1.54	93,182	95,182	97,182	99,182	101,182
28	1.56	94,393	96,393	98,393	100,393	102,393
29	1.58	95,603	97,603	99,603	101,603	103,603
30	1.6	96,813	98,813	100,813	102,813	104,813
31	1.62	98,023	100,023	102,023	104,023	106,023
32	1.64	99,233	101,233	103,233	105,233	107,233
33	1.66	100,443	102,443	104,443	106,443	108,443
34	1.68	101,654	103,654	105,654	107,654	109,654
35	1.7	102,864	104,864	106,864	108,864	110,864
36	1.72	104,074	106,074	108,074	110,074	112,074
37	1.74	105,284	107,284	109,284	111,284	113,284
38	1.76	106,494	108,494	110,494	112,494	114,494
39	1.78	107,704	109,704	111,704	113,704	115,704
40	1.8	108,915	110,915	112,915	114,915	116,915

## LAKE ERIE

<u>Yrs. Exp.</u>		<u>w/ M.Div.</u>	<u>M.Div. + 15</u>	<u>2nd Masters</u>	<u>2nd Masters +15</u>	<u>D.Min or Ph.D.</u>
0	1	62,873	64,873	66,873	68,873	70,873
1	1.02	64,130	66,130	68,130	70,130	72,130
2	1.04	65,388	67,388	69,388	71,388	73,388
3	1.06	66,645	68,645	70,645	72,645	74,645
4	1.08	67,903	69,903	71,903	73,903	75,903
5	1.1	69,160	71,160	73,160	75,160	77,160
6	1.12	70,418	72,418	74,418	76,418	78,418
7	1.14	71,675	73,675	75,675	77,675	79,675
8	1.16	72,932	74,932	76,932	78,932	80,932
9	1.18	74,190	76,190	78,190	80,190	82,190
10	1.2	75,447	77,447	79,447	81,447	83,447
11	1.22	76,705	78,705	80,705	82,705	84,705
12	1.24	77,962	79,962	81,962	83,962	85,962
13	1.26	79,220	81,220	83,220	85,220	87,220
14	1.28	80,477	82,477	84,477	86,477	88,477
15	1.3	81,735	83,735	85,735	87,735	89,735
16	1.32	82,992	84,992	86,992	88,992	90,992
17	1.34	84,250	86,250	88,250	90,250	92,250
18	1.36	85,507	87,507	89,507	91,507	93,507
19	1.38	86,764	88,764	90,764	92,764	94,764
20	1.4	88,022	90,022	92,022	94,022	96,022
21	1.42	89,279	91,279	93,279	95,279	97,279
22	1.44	90,537	92,537	94,537	96,537	98,537
23	1.46	91,794	93,794	95,794	97,794	99,794
24	1.48	93,052	95,052	97,052	99,052	101,052
25	1.5	94,309	96,309	98,309	100,309	102,309
26	1.52	95,567	97,567	99,567	101,567	103,567
27	1.54	96,824	98,824	100,824	102,824	104,824
28	1.56	98,082	100,082	102,082	104,082	106,082
29	1.58	99,339	101,339	103,339	105,339	107,339
30	1.6	100,596	102,596	104,596	106,596	108,596
31	1.62	101,854	103,854	105,854	107,854	109,854
32	1.64	103,111	105,111	107,111	109,111	111,111
33	1.66	104,369	106,369	108,369	110,369	112,369
34	1.68	105,626	107,626	109,626	111,626	113,626
35	1.7	106,884	108,884	110,884	112,884	114,884
36	1.72	108,141	110,141	112,141	114,141	116,141
37	1.74	109,399	111,399	113,399	115,399	117,399
38	1.76	110,656	112,656	114,656	116,656	118,656
39	1.78	111,914	113,914	115,914	117,914	119,914
40	1.8	113,171	115,171	117,171	119,171	121,171



MIDWEST

<u>Yrs. Exp.</u>		<u>w/ M.Div.</u>	<u>M.Div. + 15</u>	<u>2nd Masters</u>	<u>2nd Masters +15</u>	<u>D.Min or Ph.D.</u>
0	1	62,001	64,001	66,001	68,001	70,001
1	1.02	63,241	65,241	67,241	69,241	71,241
2	1.04	64,481	66,481	68,481	70,481	72,481
3	1.06	65,721	67,721	69,721	71,721	73,721
4	1.08	66,961	68,961	70,961	72,961	74,961
5	1.1	68,201	70,201	72,201	74,201	76,201
6	1.12	69,441	71,441	73,441	75,441	77,441
7	1.14	70,681	72,681	74,681	76,681	78,681
8	1.16	71,921	73,921	75,921	77,921	79,921
9	1.18	73,161	75,161	77,161	79,161	81,161
10	1.2	74,401	76,401	78,401	80,401	82,401
11	1.22	75,641	77,641	79,641	81,641	83,641
12	1.24	76,881	78,881	80,881	82,881	84,881
13	1.26	78,121	80,121	82,121	84,121	86,121
14	1.28	79,361	81,361	83,361	85,361	87,361
15	1.3	80,601	82,601	84,601	86,601	88,601
16	1.32	81,841	83,841	85,841	87,841	89,841
17	1.34	83,081	85,081	87,081	89,081	91,081
18	1.36	84,321	86,321	88,321	90,321	92,321
19	1.38	85,561	87,561	89,561	91,561	93,561
20	1.4	86,801	88,801	90,801	92,801	94,801
21	1.42	88,041	90,041	92,041	94,041	96,041
22	1.44	89,281	91,281	93,281	95,281	97,281
23	1.46	90,521	92,521	94,521	96,521	98,521
24	1.48	91,761	93,761	95,761	97,761	99,761
25	1.5	93,001	95,001	97,001	99,001	101,001
26	1.52	94,241	96,241	98,241	100,241	102,241
27	1.54	95,481	97,481	99,481	101,481	103,481
28	1.56	96,721	98,721	100,721	102,721	104,721
29	1.58	97,961	99,961	101,961	103,961	105,961
30	1.6	99,201	101,201	103,201	105,201	107,201
31	1.62	100,441	102,441	104,441	106,441	108,441
32	1.64	101,682	103,682	105,682	107,682	109,682
33	1.66	102,922	104,922	106,922	108,922	110,922
34	1.68	104,162	106,162	108,162	110,162	112,162
35	1.7	105,402	107,402	109,402	111,402	113,402
36	1.72	106,642	108,642	110,642	112,642	114,642
37	1.74	107,882	109,882	111,882	113,882	115,882
38	1.76	109,122	111,122	113,122	115,122	117,122
39	1.78	110,362	112,362	114,362	116,362	118,362
40	1.8	111,602	113,602	115,602	117,602	119,602

WESTERN

<u>Yrs. Exp.</u>		<u>w/ M.Div.</u>	<u>M.Div. + 15</u>	<u>2nd Masters</u>	<u>2nd Masters +15</u>	<u>D.Min or Ph.D.</u>
0	1	71,441	73,441	75,441	77,441	79,441
1	1.02	72,870	74,870	76,870	78,870	80,870
2	1.04	74,299	76,299	78,299	80,299	82,299
3	1.06	75,728	77,728	79,728	81,728	83,728
4	1.08	77,156	79,156	81,156	83,156	85,156
5	1.1	78,585	80,585	82,585	84,585	86,585
6	1.12	80,014	82,014	84,014	86,014	88,014
7	1.14	81,443	83,443	85,443	87,443	89,443
8	1.16	82,872	84,872	86,872	88,872	90,872
9	1.18	84,301	86,301	88,301	90,301	92,301
10	1.2	85,729	87,729	89,729	91,729	93,729
11	1.22	87,158	89,158	91,158	93,158	95,158
12	1.24	88,587	90,587	92,587	94,587	96,587
13	1.26	90,016	92,016	94,016	96,016	98,016
14	1.28	91,445	93,445	95,445	97,445	99,445
15	1.3	92,873	94,873	96,873	98,873	100,873
16	1.32	94,302	96,302	98,302	100,302	102,302
17	1.34	95,731	97,731	99,731	101,731	103,731
18	1.36	97,160	99,160	101,160	103,160	105,160
19	1.38	98,589	100,589	102,589	104,589	106,589
20	1.4	100,018	102,018	104,018	106,018	108,018
21	1.42	101,446	103,446	105,446	107,446	109,446
22	1.44	102,875	104,875	106,875	108,875	110,875
23	1.46	104,304	106,304	108,304	110,304	112,304
24	1.48	105,733	107,733	109,733	111,733	113,733
25	1.5	107,162	109,162	111,162	113,162	115,162
26	1.52	108,591	110,591	112,591	114,591	116,591
27	1.54	110,019	112,019	114,019	116,019	118,019
28	1.56	111,448	113,448	115,448	117,448	119,448
29	1.58	112,877	114,877	116,877	118,877	120,877
30	1.6	114,306	116,306	118,306	120,306	122,306
31	1.62	115,735	117,735	119,735	121,735	123,735
32	1.64	117,163	119,163	121,163	123,163	125,163
33	1.66	118,592	120,592	122,592	124,592	126,592
34	1.68	120,021	122,021	124,021	126,021	128,021
35	1.7	121,450	123,450	125,450	127,450	129,450
36	1.72	122,879	124,879	126,879	128,879	130,879
37	1.74	124,308	126,308	128,308	130,308	132,308
38	1.76	125,736	127,736	129,736	131,736	133,736
39	1.78	127,165	129,165	131,165	133,165	135,165
40	1.8	128,594	130,594	132,594	134,594	136,594

SALARY/COMPENSATION WORKSHEET		
	Current Year, 20 __	Proposed for 20 __
A. ALLOWANCES		
1. Housing		
2. Utilities		
3. Equity		
4. Vacation		
5. Social Security (Taxable Income)		
B. ADDITIONAL ALLOWANCES		
1. Automobile		
2. Library		
3. Professional Growth		
4. _____		
C. BENEFITS (U.S. Plan--Canadian Plan should be substituted here for congregations in Canada)		
1. Concordia Health Plan		
2. Concordia Disability/Survivor Plan		
3. Concordia Retirement Plan		
4. _____		
D. OTHER RELATED EXPENSES		
1. Required meetings		
2. Substitute Pastors		
3. Discretionary Fund		
E. SALARY		
1. Base Salary		
2. Adjustment for _____		
3. Adjustment for _____		
4. Total adjustments		
Total Salary		
Total Compensation		