

Minimum Compensation Guidelines
For the Year 2011
Clergy, Diaconal Ministers, and
Associates in Ministry
East Central Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA

Presented by the Leadership Support Committee and
 Synod Council and Synod Assembly of the
 East Central Synod of Wisconsin - ELCA

I. RATIONALE..... 2

II. ANNUAL UPDATE..... 3

III. MINISTRY COST SUMMARY SHEET (Pastors, Diaconal Ministers, Associates in Ministry 3

Schedule I Base Compensation 4

Schedule II Housing..... 5

Schedule III Social Security Allowance for Pastors 6

Schedule IV Social Security for Diaconal Ministers/AIMs 6

Schedule V Health, Pension and other Benefits 7

Schedule VI Ministry and Professional Expenses 8, 9

IV. MINIMUM COMPENSATION TABLE 10

V. TABLES FOR BENEFITS AND BENEFITS SUMMARY 11, 12, 13

 Professional Expenses13

 Leave Time.....13

Appendixes

A. MINIMUM BASE (Basic Compensation)14

B. HOUSING EQUITY AND HOUSING ALLOWANCE DESIGNATION & FORMS 15-19

C. SABBATICAL LEAVE20

D. OTHER PASTORAL SERVICES (Supply, Visitation, etc.)21

Information about Church Musicians and Support Staff

E. PART-TIME CHURCH MUSICIANS..... 22-23

F. SUPPORT STAFF..... 24-25

I. RATIONALE

This report on compensation is an update of last year's *Minimum Salary Guidelines for Clergy, Diaconal Ministers, Associates in Ministry and Other Lay Professionals, East Central Synod of Wisconsin*. It is suggested that those who are responsible for the compensation of Pastors, Diaconal Ministers, Associates In Ministry, and church musicians use this report as an aid in determining what a fair and equitable compensation for church workers is. For convenience, Appendices E & F contain a starting point for discussion on church musicians and support staff. In addition to this report, congregations may wish to consult other publications on compensation for church workers.

Congregations believe and trust in their Pastors and church workers. Pastors and church workers love their ministries and congregations. Matters of compensation should never become adversarial and harm the good relationship that exists in most parishes.

As congregations and church workers prepare their budgets for the coming new year, these guidelines would offer a few suggestions or principles that have guided this report. They are:

1. **The Mutual Ministry Principle:** Lutheran theology affirms that ministry belongs to the whole body of Christ. It is strongly recommended that each congregation establish a Committee to review and appraise the congregation's ministry. As part of the review of the congregation's ministry, it is important that the congregation makes clear its expectations of its pastor(s), diaconal staff, associates in ministry (together referred to as rostered staff) and other staff. Rostered staff and other staff must make clear their expectations of the congregation.

Evaluation (by the Personnel Committee, Evaluation Task Force, and/or Church Council, etc.) is strongly recommended. Formal evaluation should be given at least annually. Healthy congregations provide a number of avenues for ongoing dialog and evaluation of the pastors and staff. Sample evaluation forms and suggestions for various methods of evaluation are available from the Resource Center.

Congregations are encouraged to establish a staff support committee (commonly called Pastor-Parish Relations committee or Mutual Ministry committee) to provide support to the pastor/other staff and to maintain an open and honest dialogue between them and members of the parish. (Guidelines are available from the Resource Center.) This committee's work is confidential and therefore should not be a part of the compensation setting process.

When it comes to compensation everyone worries about money! Pastors and church workers worry about their finances in the same way that church boards worry about funding their budgets. Should matters of compensation become irritants, it is important to seek qualified help. When problems arise, either for the congregation or the church worker, consult the Bishop's Office for help and guidance.

2. **The Information Principle:** Guidelines or recommendations can be useful only if they are understood. Those responsible for compensation in the parish need good, reliable information. Hopefully, this report can fill such a need. As congregations work through this report, they will learn more about what is expected and necessary for good compensation planning. It is also recommended that congregations stay current with the tax laws and recent changes in the tax laws. Sound tax strategies and planning can maximize the compensation of church workers.
3. **The Cost of Ministry Principle:** Like any other organization or business there are additional costs above and beyond compensation which have to be factored in. Often referred to as "overhead," these costs can include such things as professional expenses, worker compensation insurance, car reimbursement, medical and pension plans, etc. as the overhead that goes along with having people on staff. The cost of ministry is substantially higher than the compensation that church workers receive.

When preparing a budget, congregations are urged to separate these "overhead" costs of ministry from the compensation directly paid to church workers.

All guidelines have limitations. Every issue of compensation can not be determined or settled in this report. Congregations, Pastors, Diaconal Ministers, and Associates In Ministry are encouraged to talk and negotiate with each other as mature Christian brothers and sisters. It is hoped that these guidelines will serve as an aid for such dialogue.

II. ANNUAL UPDATE

There are no significant changes in policy contained in this year’s guidelines. Financially, the compensation amounts were adjusted for inflation, plus an additional amount to bring to almost complete the “catch-up” amount voted on at the synod assembly several years ago. Other financial components (books, housing, etc.) were also adjusted for inflation.

III. MINISTRY COST SUMMARY SHEET (In the left hand column is the schedule number on which more information may be found for that line item.)

PASTORS

Sched. I	Base Compensation	_____
Sched. II	Housing	_____
Sched. III	Social Security Allowance.....	_____
Sched. V	Health, Pension and Other Benefits.....	_____
Sched. VI	Ministry & Professional Expenses.....	_____

TOTAL.....		<u> </u>

DIACONAL MINISTERS AND ASSOCIATES IN MINISTRY

Sched. I	Base Compensation	_____
Sched. IV	Social Security (congregation’s portion).....	_____
Sched. V	Health, Pension and Other Benefits.....	_____
Sched. VI	Ministry & Professional Expenses	_____

TOTAL		<u> </u>

The schedules to help complete the calculation for this worksheet are on the pages that follow. Each of the schedules contains a brief explanation of the synod guidelines and related IRS or other regulations. As you complete each of the schedules, please bring your resulting numbers forward to this summary page.

Time Agreement

Page	<u>Number of Weeks:</u>	
8, 13	Continuing Education.....	_____
9, 13	Vacation (Including _____ Sundays).....	_____
9, 13	Paid Parental Leave	
	Maternal	_____
	Paternal	_____
8, 25	Sabbatical.....	_____
	<u>Number of Days:</u>	
9, 13	Sick Leave.....	_____
9	Designated Holidays.....	_____
9, 13	Personal Leave	_____
	<u>Each Week:</u>	
9	Weekly Time/Day Off.....	_____

See Page 9 for an explanation of the components of the Time Agreement.

See Appendix D for calculation of additional dollars to be budgeted for the cost of the Time Agreement.

Schedule I Base Compensation

Base Compensation for ___ years experience	_____
Additional Factors (See below):	
Education.....	_____
Responsibilities and Conditions of Service	_____
Merit.....	_____
<u>Other</u>	_____

TOTAL (Bring to summary form)	_____

Base Compensation

The Base Compensation is based on the number of years of experience the pastor has. At a minimum, the base compensation must be at least an amount within the range shown in the table on page 10. Exceeding the range shown in the table is acceptable and common, based on the additional factors listed below.

Congregations are encouraged to make a one-time new clergy education loan re-payment for your pastor as outlined on page 10 of these guidelines.

Additional Factors

The basic, minimum compensation guidelines have made no allowance for additional factors which may need to be considered in providing fair compensation for your Pastor(s)/Diaconal Minister(s)/AIM(s). When constructing a compensation package you should consider the following additional factors which affect compensation. Such factors might include:

Education:

- a. Advanced Degree.
- b. Second career experience - Congregations are encouraged to recognize the previous work experience of second career church workers. Congregations may fully or partially recognize previous experience in determining the base compensation, but some credit should be given in computing compensation.

Responsibilities and Conditions of Service:

- a. Two (or more) point parish.
- b. Senior Pastor with staff.
- c. Size or work load - Some congregations have special situations which merit increased compensation. Some church workers carry heavy work loads which merit increased compensation. Normally, however, a congregation should increase the staff, rather than the compensation when the work load becomes too great for an individual.

Merit:

- a. Exceptional work.
- b. Outstanding Community Service / Involvement

Congregations are free to determine which of the above factors deserve increases in the base compensation. There may be other factors which have not been considered in this report. The range in each level allows for flexibility, within the parameters established by years of service in the ministry. The range scale is on page 10.

Schedule II Housing (Pastors only)

Complete appropriate section:

No Parsonage:

Appx B 1. Housing Allowance. Minimum \$11,000, with higher expectations (see a. below) in certain geographic areas in the Synod. (Bring to summary form)

OR

Parsonage Provided:

- a. Utilities & Maintenance (ONLY if paid directly to pastor).....
 - b. Furnishings allowance for parsonage (ONLY if paid directly to pastor).....
 - c. Housing Equity.....
- Housing Allowance (Bring to summary form)

Housing Provisions (Note: Diaconal Ministers and Associates in Ministry are not included in this component.)

It is our goal that the housing portion of the compensation package treat Pastors equally, no matter whether they have their own homes, or live in a parsonage. Appendix B has a worksheet to help you calculate the necessary figures, which are based on the housing portion of the compensation package being calculated to be 30% of the base compensation of the Pastor.

Four housing alternatives are considered below:

- a. **Housing Allowance** - Some congregations provide their Pastors with a housing allowance in place of a parsonage. This figure should reflect the realistic fair rental value of a home in the community, and would normally include such costs as insurance, utilities and taxes. A minimum cash payment of \$11,000 is required for a housing allowance when a parsonage is not provided. In settings where housing costs are higher, such as in the average urban area, the housing allowance should be at least \$12,000 per year, or higher. See Appendix B for the appropriate forms to set this up. (See Appendix E for information on the IRS and the housing allowance and what your congregation must do to properly designate a housing allowance for your Pastor.)
- b. **Parsonage** - When a parsonage is provided, the congregation should pay for utilities and maintenance. (For tax purposes it is usually to the pastor’s advantage if items like utilities, maintenance, etc. be paid for directly by the congregation rather than to the pastor and then the pastor paying these expenses.) In addition, the synod expects that congregations provide the Pastor with an “equity” allowance. See below.

The **Housing Equity** - An equity allowance is placed in a separate category in the ELCA pension plan for the Pastor who may use this money for a down payment on a house at a later time. This provision makes home ownership possible for Pastors who are retiring or moving to a new call where a parsonage is not provided. The equity allowance can also provide a down payment to the widow or widower of a Pastor who needs to vacate the parsonage, due to the arrival of the new Pastor.

The ELCA recommends that either 3% of the Pastor’s total compensation or 5% to 10% of the base compensation be designated and set aside as an equity allowance. Regardless of which figure is chosen the congregation and Pastor need to negotiate a figure that is mutually acceptable to both. This amount requires a minimum of \$2,025 per year for Pastors living in a parsonage.

- c. **Clergy Couple Housing Compensation** - Each person of a clergy couple is entitled to the same housing allowance ordinarily provided a pastor who is not married to a pastor. Both pastors in a clergy couple are to receive a housing allowance. Each pastor’s pension and benefit contributions are based on base compensation, plus self-employed Social Security offset, plus 30% when a parsonage is provided. When cash housing allowances are provided, the contributions for each pastor are based on the total of base compensation plus housing allowance(s).

This guidance relating to Clergy Couple Housing Compensation is offered to assist congregations and clergy couples at arriving at an equitable solution to compensation for both parties of a clergy couple and the congregation or congregations involved. It represents current ELCA policy and practice as expressed by the Division for Ministry, ELCA, and as endorsed by the Conference of Bishops and this Synod. Individual circumstances relating to Clergy Couple Housing Allowance will vary from time to time. It is important that congregations extending a call or calls to clergy couples develop a compensation package, including a housing allowance for each member of the clergy couple, in consultation with the Office of the Bishop, the clergy couple involved, and the appropriate representatives of the congregation or congregations involved. Congregations presently served by a clergy couple may wish to seek guidance and counsel in matters relating to housing allowance from the Office of the Bishop as part of its annual compensation review practice.

Schedule III Social Security Allowance- Pastors (See Schedule IV for Diaconal Ministers/AIMs, below)

Sched. I	Base Compensation from Schedule I.....	_____
Sched. II	<i>NO PARSONAGE:</i> Housing from Schedule II.....	_____
Sched. II	<i>PARSONAGE:</i> Housing from Schedule II	_____
	<i>PARSONAGE:</i> Fair rental value of parsonage (see below).....	_____

	Social Security Taxable Amount (Approximate)	_____
		x .0765

	Social Security Allowance (Bring to summary form).....	_____

Social Security Allowance (Note: Diaconal Ministers and Associates in Ministry are not included in this component.)

Your pastor is regarded by the IRS as self-employed in regard to social security taxes. This means that they pay the self-employment tax and in effect have to pay both the employers and the employee’s portion of what most of us know as the social security tax. Therefore, congregations should pay a Social Security Allowance. It is taxable income, yet it acknowledges the pastor’s special tax situation.

Parsonage Fair Rental Value: In addition to any cash paid to the pastor for items listed in Schedule II, the fair rental value of a parsonage must be included by the pastor when figuring the amount of social security (self-employment) tax. The fair rental value is what the congregation would be willing to rent the dwelling in which the pastor lives to anyone else other than the pastor. There are many ways in which this may be determined, however, the method most commonly used is to approximate it at 30% of the pastor’s base compensation. (i.e.: Multiply the base compensation by 1.3.)

General Comments on Social Security (Self-Employment Tax/FICA/Medicare)

Because the Social Security contribution changes from year to year, adjustments may need to be made annually.

- a. Self-employment Tax (Pastors pay this entire amount)15.30%
- b. Employee part of Social Security Tax (What most people pay for Social Security)7.65%
- c. Difference that pastor’s pay over and above most people7.65%

Schedule IV Social Security -Diaconal Ministers and AIMs (Congregation’s portion)

Base Compensation from Schedule I.....	_____
Combined FICA and Medicare rate, subject to federal limitations.....	x .0765

Congregation’s portion of Social Security (Bring to summary form).....	_____

Diaconal Ministers/Associates in Ministry (AIMs) pay Social Security taxes in the same manner as the vast majority of the American public. They pay 1/2 of the cost of the tax and the congregation as their employer pays the other half. This schedule determines the cost of the half of the tax which the congregation must pay.

Social Security is a combined tax which includes a FICA and a Medicare portion.

Schedule V Health, Pension and other Benefits

Social Security Taxable amount from Schedule III or VI
 Tax Sheltered Annuity Payments (TSA), if any

 Base amount for ELCA Pension and other Benefits Table.....

Page 11 (NOTE: All percentages come from table in Section V on page 11. Limit to min. and max. amount shown)
 Medical and Dental: Base amount above _____ x _____%
 Disability/Survivor: Base amount above _____ x _____%
 Administration: Base amount above _____ x _____%
 Pension Plan: Base amount above _____ x _____%
 Additional Benefits
 Medical Reimbursement, Tax Sheltered Annuity, Additional Pension, etc.....

 Total Pension and other Benefits (Bring to summary form).....

The ELCA Pension and Benefits Plan

See the tables in Section V (page 11) for the Pension and Medical Insurance rates in effect for 2010 and how to calculate the expense. 2011 rates will not be available until late 2010. Please make sure that you use 2011 rates when calculating this expense. (These rates may be found by calling 800/352-2876 or visiting the ELCA Board of Pensions website at www.elcabop.org)

- a. Basic plan - The ELCA Basic Plan includes medical, dental, and pension coverage. The rates are determined annually by the ELCA Board of Pensions. It is expected that congregations will include coverage for both Pastors and their families. In some cases Pastors may elect to unbundle coverage for a working spouse who is covered by another medical plan.

Congregations are permitted to contribute extra monies to the pension portion of the ELCA Plans. These contributions are tax sheltered and can be used to enhance compensation without encumbering increased tax liability.

- b. Clergy Couple Medical - If both spouses are members of the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program, the premium is based on the higher of the two salaries. The Board of Pensions should be consulted and will calculate the amount of the premium each congregation should pay. Please see page 12 "Sponsoring Couples, Health Coverage."
- c. Medical Insurance Savings: Each congregation's and Pastor/Diaconal Minister/AIM's situation is unique. Full family medical coverage is the most common (and most expensive) form of insurance which congregations will be purchasing. However, from time to time congregations may have pastors which, for whatever reason, do not need this full family coverage. (Pastors may be single, may not have children, may have a spouse whose plan also covers them, etc.) In case medical insurance is unbundled, the Office of the Bishop is prepared to offer reasonable and fair alternative uses. To protect both pastor and congregation, all unbundled monies must be retained in the congregational budget so that it is accessible should the unbundling option need to be recalled. Because of IRS mandated limits, should such unbundled monies be invested in alternate pension, please see a financial consultant to determine that you have not over funded any tax deferred account.

Schedule VI Ministry and Professional Expenses

Automobile Allowance
a. Option 1 (Flat Fee Allowance)
Or b. Option 2 (Reimbursement per Mile)
Continuing Education
Books, Journals, etc.
Other
Total Ministry & Professional Expenses (Bring to summary form)

Automobile Allowance

Option 1. Flat Fee allowance.

Under this option, congregation should reimburse their professional leaders with a flat fee allowance based on:

- a. The setting of the parish. (Often rural parishes require more miles of their pastor than do urban parishes.)
b. The past year’s experience of miles driven for the congregation
c. Depreciation of the car and reasonable maintenance costs.
d. Under this method, the allowance is taxable income to the person, and the expenses they incurred are deductible on Schedule A only to the extent that they exceed 2% of adjustable gross income.

Option 2. Reimbursement per Mile

Under this option, the congregation should reimburse their professional leaders for auto expenses on a per mile basis. (See www.irs.gov or use a search engine like www.google.com and search for “Standard Mileage Rate.”)

- a. The 2010 IRS rate is 50¢/mile. Please use the 2011 rate, for 2011.
b. Reimbursements should be paid monthly.
c. Under this method, the reimbursement is not taxable income for the person.

Continuing Education

Two weeks, including Sundays, must be allowed at a minimum for continuing education. The Letter of Call includes provision for continuing education. \$900 per year is a minimum base. Due to costs for housing, transportation, etc., that accompany continuing education opportunities, a higher figure should be considered. The Letter of Call states that continuing education funds may be accumulated for up to three years. Continuing education funds not spent at the end of a pastor’s call are lost.

Books, Journals and other Published Resources.

An amount of \$400 per year is recommended. This amount is to be a reimbursement allowance, and is to be based only on actual expenditures. Books, etc., purchased become the pastor’s property. Please also note that many congregations add this to the amount for Continuing Education and permit the pastor to spend the total amount on continuing education, should that be the pastor’s wish.

Other Ministry and Professional Expenses.

- a. Congregations are also strongly encouraged to budget financial support and time for the rostered staff and spouses’ retreat, spouses’ retreat and Synod Theological Conference. This should be a minimum of \$425, available to the pastor only if used. Whether the time off is taken from “continuing education” or “additional time away” needs to be determined with the congregation’s other staff and council.
b. Malpractice-Liability Insurance. It is strongly recommended that each congregation review its overall insurance coverage annually, giving careful attention to this and other liability areas. Congregations are recommended to provide this coverage for all church workers. Please remember that this applies to volunteers as well as staff.
c. Sabbatical leave. Sabbatical leaves are encouraged to provide an opportunity for the pastor to have an extended period of time for personal enrichment, study, spiritual growth, travel, skill development and/or research. This is the adopted policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the East Central Synod of Wisconsin for all congregations. Congregations are asked to adopt a sabbatical leave policy at the earliest opportunity. A more complete explanation of the Sabbatical Leave is provided in Appendix C of these Compensation Guidelines.
d. Other Professional Expenses - Congregations should reimburse the Pastor and all church workers for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. Some examples would include the fees charged for the Professional

Leadership Conference, Synod Assembly, Official meetings, parking costs, professional association dues, telephone, etc.

Time Agreement - Vacation and Leave Time

a. Vacation

Pastors are to receive a minimum of four weeks vacation each year. These weeks include Sundays. Legal holidays are not considered vacation days. Congregations should encourage their pastors to use their vacation. Consideration is encouraged to grant additional weeks of vacation with longer terms of ministry.

Diaconal Ministers & AIMS: It is recommended that vacation for Diaconal Ministers/AIMs be on the following basis:

1 Year	2 Weeks
2 Years	3 Weeks
3+ Years	3 Weeks or more

When a pastor's, Diaconal Minister's, or AIM's services are required on recognized holidays, time off with pay may be taken at another time which causes minimum disruption to the congregation.

Special circumstances may require that the professional leader and church council negotiate the carrying over of unused time into the following year. Time spent in outdoor ministries and retreats with congregation youth and family groups or work on synod or churchwide committees should not be considered vacation time or educational leave when it is part of the congregation's local program of ministry or ministry through synodical or churchwide structures. At least one full day free of church leadership responsibilities is to be granted each week. (See "b" below.) Parish emergencies may require a change in schedule from time to time.

Many congregations choose to grant one or more Sundays or weekends to their pastor as personal time beyond the vacation agreement.

At the time of a First Call, out of care for our pastors:

1. A model of weekly time off is expected to be worked out between the congregation, the candidate, and the Bishop; and
2. A First Call for a full-time pastor that offers less than one full day off per week, four weeks paid vacation, and two weeks continuing education leave will not be signed by the Bishop.

b. Weekly Time/Day Off

For the health and well being of both pastor and congregation, it is important for the pastor to have some uninterrupted time and space each week to devote to personal and family life. Certainly this calls for a full day off each week. In addition, other blocks of free time are necessary and desired.

To determine the work schedule for the remaining 6 days in the week, one possible model is to divide each day into 3 "time blocks" – morning, afternoon, and evening. Of those 18 "blocks," a reasonable expectation would be approximately 14 working blocks per week. To be sure, the nature of ministry is such that some flexibility of schedule will be needed in any given week. In addition, not all the blocks of time are equal in length. But over the course of the year, the work time should reflect this average.

Church work can involve a great deal of time on evenings and weekends. Pastors and congregations are encouraged to find creative ways to schedule ministries and meetings so that the evenings and weekends are not always filled. They will also need to work together to find ways to handle parish emergencies when the pastor is benefiting from time off. One resource that many in ministry have found valuable in these areas is the work of Roy Oswald and others at the Alban Institute. For more information, please visit or call the Synod Resource Center, or contact Alban at (800) 486-1318 or www.alban.org

c. Other Time Off

Concerning sickness or disability, congregations need to consult the Pastor's "Letter of Call" or the Diaconal Minister's/AIM's "Letter of Appointment". These letters will determine the conditions of compensation during illness or disability.

Regarding parental leave this report recommends that mothers be granted six weeks leave with full pay, and that fathers be granted two weeks leave with full pay. Parents who are adopting children should be granted the same amount of leave time. Parental leave may also be granted at other times, e.g. during times of severe illness, trauma, or death. Congregations are encouraged to establish a policy of emergency leave, before an emergency arises.

Full-time vs. Part-time

The components of compensation listed above (pages 4 through 10) assume full time work. In the case of less than full time work, it is encouraged that for those people who work 20 or more hours a week that the pension and medical benefits be extended to them. Vacation time would be adjusted proportionally based on the ratio of part-time hours to full time hours.

IV. MINIMUM COMPENSATION TABLE

Base Compensation Range.

Please note that while salaries may not fall below the low number in the range, they may be above the high. Currently in our synod there are clergy whose base compensation is above the high range shown for a given number of years of experience. Please remember to carefully consider the additional factors listed on page 4 of the guidelines when determining your Pastor’s base compensation.

Experience	Pastor**	AIM w/Masters	AIM	AIM w/Qual/Exp
Range in Years *		Diaconal Min.	w/Bachelors	Theologically Trained
Yr 0-5 years	\$33,700-48,523	\$32,679-45,928	\$30,959-43,511	\$27,519-38,676
Yr 6-10	\$37,975-53,599	\$35,804-49,771	\$33,920-47,152	\$30,151-41,913
Yr 11-15	\$41,135-58,556	\$38,115-53,665	\$36,109-50,841	\$32,097-45,193
Yr 16-20	\$43,855-62,712	\$40,103-56,865	\$37,992-53,871	\$33,771-47,886
Yr 21-25	\$46,185-66,955	\$41,807-60,207	\$39,607-57,039	\$35,206-50,701
Yr 26-30	\$48,235-70,823	\$43,305-63,196	\$41,026-59,870	\$36,468-53,217
Yr 31+	\$50,285-77,724	\$44,804-68,403	\$42,446-64,803	\$37,730-57,601

* See Appendix A for a year by year minimum guideline for salaries based on each year of experience. We encourage the use of the above table, instead of the year by year grid, in order to foster discussion of the additional factors shown on page 4 when determining the compensation portion of your pastor’s compensation.

** Congregations are asked to give serious consideration to making a gift of up to \$5,000 to help pay off any new Pastor’s educational loans. The money should be repaid directly to the loaning organization.

V. TABLES FOR BENEFITS & BENEFITS SUMMARY

ELCA PLANS

I. The rates for participation in the ELCA Plans change each year. Please use the current forms produced by the Board of Pensions. Any questions should be addressed to them directly at 800/352-2876. (Their website is www.elcabop.org) These rates are determined as a percentage of defined compensation, which includes the base compensation, housing, Social Security allowances and TSA (if applicable). For those who live in a parsonage housing is figured at 30% of the sum of base compensation plus Social Security allowance. You may arrive at the amount upon which these benefits are based by using the Compensation Guidelines Worksheet and working toward the line on Schedule V (on page 7) labeled Base amount for ELCA Pension and other Benefits Table.

2010 Contribution Rates (Use 2011 for actual) Rate class 2 for sponsored members The following chart contains ELCA health plan rates for 2010.	Rate¹	Monthly Minimum	Monthly Maximum
HEALTH BENEFITS			
Member	12.60%	\$494	\$667
Member & Spouse	22.10%	\$864	\$1,168
Member & Children	22.10%	\$864	\$1,168
Member, Spouse & Children	31.50%	\$1,234	\$1,669
Retirement	10.0 to 12.0% ^{2,3,4}		
Disability	2.60%		
Survivor	0.00% ⁵		
Administration & Retiree Support	0.70% ⁶		

- 1 Rates are a percentage of defined compensation.
- 2 Contribution for employees of ELCA church institutions is 6% to 12% as determined by the institution.
- 3 Contribution for lay employees of ELCA congregations is 6% to 12% as determined by the congregation.
- 4 If a member participated in a predecessor plan on Dec. 31, 1987, was at least age 45 on that date, and has continuously been a sponsored member of an ELCA retirement plan since Jan. 1, 1988, the total employer retirement contribution must be at least 11%.
- 5 Survivor Benefits Plan contribution is suspended.
- 6 Retiree support contribution helps provide health coverage during retirement for members who served one of the ELCA predecessor church bodies.

Sponsoring couples

Benefits for couples in ELCA church service

When couples are sponsored in the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program (by the same or different congregation or organization), each employer will make contributions for their participation in the Health Benefits Plan; Regular Pension Plan; Survivor Benefits Plan; and Disability Benefits Plan.

Monthly billing for coverage Each employer(s) is billed monthly for coverage.

Pension, survivor and disability coverage — Pension, survivor and disability coverage is fairly straightforward. Each employer is billed a percentage of each spouse’s annual defined compensation for these benefits. By doing so, the appropriate amounts are set aside for future pensions for both spouses and in case of disability, or for the beneficiaries’ needs in case of death(s). In addition, each employer is billed a small fee for administrative expense and for retiree support.

Health coverage — Couples are considered as one family for the sake of fulfilling deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses

under the ELCA Health Benefits Plan. The compensation level of the spouse with the higher defined compensation determines the total cost of the family's health coverage. The total cost of the coverage is then prorated according to the defined compensation of each spouse. Each employer pays the appropriate pro-rated share of the total coverage cost.

The 2010 monthly coverage continuation rates will be as follows (2011 numbers, not available at time of printing):

Retired members and others continuing coverage

Retired members make their own contributions for ELCA health coverage (and for their eligible dependents). A portion of the contribution may be paid by the ELCA for members who participated in a predecessor health plan.

Coverage continuation members include pastors, rostered laypersons and lay employees (or their eligible dependents) who continue health, lump-sum survivor or disability benefits coverage under the program when on leave from call, upon separation from service, or other status causing loss of eligibility.

Health Benefits

Type of Coverage	Medicare-primary	ELCA primary
Members who are retired; on leave from call; spouses, surviving spouses; or continuing coverage after loss of eligibility	\$302 per person	Under age 60: \$578 per person Ages 60-64: \$740 per person
Children of an on leave; deceased; divorced; retired; or continuing coverage after loss of eligibility.	\$302 (rate for all children in the family if all children have Medicare-primary coverage)	\$405 (rate for all children in the family if at least one child has ELCA-primary coverage)
Children extending coverage after loss of eligibility	\$302 per child	\$405 per child

Survivor Benefits

Type of Coverage	Lump-Sum Survivor
Members who are on leave from call	\$6

Disability Benefits

Type of Coverage	Continuing disability for interim pastors
Members who are on leave from call after completing an interim or term call from a synod council; or under a term call from a synod council and between assignments	\$25 per \$1,000 of coverage*

* Coverage must be purchased for two-thirds of the defined compensation earned during the last 12 months of employment, rounded to the nearest \$500.

PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES

1. Automobile Expenses:
 - a. Monthly Allowance, as agreed upon by congregation/parish professional.
 - b. Cost per mile reimbursement at IRS rate. 2010 = 50¢/mile.
Please see www.irs.gov or use a search engine like www.google.com and search for “2011 Standard Mileage Rate.”
2. Continuing Education: \$900 per year. Continuing education time of two weeks per year, which may be accumulated up to six weeks over a three year period.

3. Professional Books and Journals: \$400 per year.
4. Insurance, et. al.: includes malpractice and worker comprehensive coverage.

LEAVE TIME

1. Continuing Education: Two weeks per year, which may be accumulated up to six weeks over a three year period.
2. Regular vacation: Minimum of four weeks with Sundays per year. Additional Sundays may be granted.
3. Sick leave: Full compensation until ELCA Disability Plan takes effect. See Letter of Call or Appointment for specific details.
4. Parental leave: Maternal = 6 weeks with full compensation.
Paternal = 2 weeks with full compensation.
5. Personal leave: As mutually agreed upon.

APPENDIX A

MINIMUM BASE (BASIC COMPENSATION)

The **Minimum** Compensation for Pastors, Diaconal Ministers, and Associates in Ministry for 2011 is as follows:

<u>Service Years</u>	<u>Pastor Base</u>	<u>AIM w/Masters Diaconal Ministers</u>	<u>AIM w/ Bachelors</u>	<u>*1 AIM w/Qual/Exp. Theologically Trained</u>
New Grad**	33700	32679	30959	27519
1	34425	33209	31461	27966
2	35150	33739	31963	28412
3	35875	34269	32465	28858
4	36600	34799	32968	29305
5	37325	35329	33470	29751
6	37975	35804	33920	30151
7	38625	36280	34370	30551
8	39275	36755	34820	30951
9	39925	37230	35271	31352
10	40575	37705	35721	31752
11	41135	38115	36109	32097
12	41695	38524	36496	32441
13	42255	38933	36884	32786
14	42815	39343	37272	33131
15	43375	39752	37660	33476
16	43855	40103	37992	33771
17	44335	40454	38325	34067
18	44815	40805	38657	34362
19	45295	41156	38990	34658
20	45775	41507	39322	34953
21	46185	41807	39607	35206
22	46595	42106	39890	35458
23	47005	42406	40174	35710
24	47415	42706	40458	35963
25	47825	43005	40742	36215
26	48235	43305	41026	36468
27	48645	43605	41310	36720
28	49055	43905	41594	36972
29	49465	44204	41878	37225
30	49875	44504	42162	37477
31	50285	44804	42446	37730
32	50695	45104	42730	37982
33	51105	45403	43014	38234
34	51515	45703	43298	38487
35	51925	46003	43582	38739
36	52335	46303	43866	38992
37	52745	46602	44150	39244
38	53155	46902	44434	39497
39	53565	47202	44718	39749
40	53975	47502	45002	40001

** See note on page 10 regarding educational loan repayments for new pastors.

*1 Persons in this category include Diaconal Ministers/Associates in Ministry (AIMs) who have the qualifications and/or experience for the position, but do not have a college degree. Theological training is one of the requirements for a Diaconal Minister/AIM.

APPENDIX B

HOUSING ALLOWANCE

The housing allowance which you pay your Pastor in cash and the housing allowance the IRS allows your Pastor on an income tax return might not be the same number. The reason for this is that the IRS includes more expense items when calculating a housing allowance than the absolute minimum items these guidelines mention (insurance, utilities and taxes). The following information is extracted from an ELCA Board of Pensions information sheet. To get more complete information, please contact the Board of Pensions (800/352-2876 or www.elcabop.org). They also have available a free Minister's Guide for Income Tax which your Pastor can request.

Federal income tax laws allow Pastors to exclude from gross income a housing allowance that is designated by the congregation or church organization. This applies to Pastors living in a church provided parsonage or in a home owned or rented by the Pastor. It is important to note that a housing allowance can be excluded *only if it is officially designated* as such in a resolution, meeting minutes or budget before payment is made.

A housing allowance may be based on the value of a furnished home (parsonage) provided by the congregation or an amount paid to the Pastor within certain guidelines. The amount of housing allowance that can be excluded from taxable income is always the *smallest* of the following three amounts:

the amount, officially designated in advance, as "housing allowance," by the Pastor's congregation/church organization as housing allowance; **OR**

the amount spent for the Pastor's primary residence (down payment, mortgage principal and interest, utilities, taxes, insurance, furnishings, maintenance, etc.); **OR**

the fair rental value of the Pastor's home including furnishings and cost of utilities (owned or rented).

Some IRS allowed expenses typically incurred by Pastors owning or renting their own home:

- Down Payment
- Housing loan interest and principal
- Real Estate commissions, escrow fees
- Property Taxes
- Homeowner's insurance
- Personal property insurance on contents
- Umbrella liability insurance
- Structural maintenance and repair
- Landscaping, gardening and pest control
- Furnishings (purchase, repair, replacement)
- Decoration and redecoration
- Utilities (gas, electricity, water) and trash collection
- Local Telephone expense (base charge)
- Homeowner's association dues/condominium fees
- Monthly rent payments

Some IRS allowed expenses typically incurred by Pastors living in a parsonage

- Utilities (gas, electricity, water) and trash collection
- Local telephone expense (base charge)
- Decoration and redecoration
- Structural maintenance and repair
- Landscaping, gardening, and pest control
- Furnishings (purchase, repair, replacement)
- Personal property insurance on pastor-owned contents
- Umbrella liability insurance

HOUSING EQUITY AND HOUSING ALLOWANCE DESIGNATION

The housing portion of the compensation package is suggested to equal 30% of the Pastor’s base compensation, with a minimum requirement of \$11,000 (\$12,000 in urban settings where housing costs are higher). The forms below will help you calculate the amount for your Pastor. There are separate forms depending on whether your Pastor lives in a parsonage or his/her own home. Please bring the resulting number to schedule II, page 5.

No Parsonage:

It is suggested that you enter 30% of the Pastor’s base compensation into line 1 of Schedule II (page 5). It is required that you enter at least \$11,000.

Parsonage Provided:

The goal of this calculation is to determine the amount of the housing equity number for the Pastor staying in a parsonage.

To calculate the housing equity number for a Pastor staying in a parsonage you will first need to determine the fair rental value of the parsonage. The fair rental value of the parsonage is what the congregation could reasonably expect to rent the parsonage for to someone else. There are any number of ways that this can be determined. Two easy methods to approximate fair rental value include:

Ask a local realtor who is familiar with the rental value of homes in your community what he/she believes the parsonage could be rented for. **OR**

Determine the amount the parsonage could reasonably be expected to sell for, if it were for sale. (This is called Fair Market Value.) Next find out what the interest rate is on 10 year Treasury Bonds and add 4% to that figure (to approximate the return a landlord might expect to net). Multiply the property’s Fair Market Value by the Treasury Bonds+4% figure to approximate fair rental value for one year.

Housing Equity Calculation:

- 1. Enter the larger of \$11,000 (\$12,000 urban) or 30% of your Pastor’s base compensation _____
 - 2. Enter the Fair Rental Value figure (see above)..... _____
 - Subtract line 2 from line 1. _____
-

Compare the number above to the minimum housing equity number and enter the larger number here. This is your housing equity figure for Schedule II, (page 5)..... _____

The minimum housing equity required by the synod is \$2,025.

The following forms may be utilized in developing a Housing Allowance Program for the pastor.

- No. 1 Form for presentation of Minister's estimate of expenses qualifying under the Pastor's housing allowance.
- No.2 Draft language for action on a housing allowance by the church council.
- No.3 Draft notification to the minister by the congregation (church council) of approved housing allowance.

PASTOR'S ESTIMATE OF HOUSING EXPENSE

To: (Name of Congregation)

From: (Name of Pastor)

Date: _____

Re: Housing allowance for year extending from _____, 20__ to _____, 20__

The amounts set forth below are the amounts I expect to spend during the period _____ (as above) to rent or otherwise provide a home for my family and me.

Item

- 1. Rent on leased property or payments on purchase of a home (including down payment, acquisition costs, and mortgage payments of principal).....\$ _____
- 2. Garage rental (if not included above) _____
- 3. Utilities (gas, electricity, water, sewer, oil, telephone, refuse removal charges, firewood, TV Cable),..... _____
- 4. Insurance (homeowner's, fire, extended coverage, liability, contents, flood)..... _____
- 5. Repairs and maintenance _____
- 6. Furnishings and improvements _____
- 7. Interest and taxes (may want to itemize these separately) _____
- 8. Other housing expense (list in detail) _____

TOTAL..... **_____**

(Minister's Signature)

DRAFT LANGUAGE FOR CHURCH COUNCIL ACTION ON HOUSING ALLOWANCE

The _____ Committee advised the church council that under the tax laws an ordained minister of the Gospel is not subject to Federal Income Tax with respect “to the rental allowance paid as part of compensation to the extent used to rent or provide a home.” Where the pastor owns a home this amount of the allowance will be an amount equal to the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances such as a garage, plus cost of utilities.

The council, after considering the statement of the Rev. _____ setting forth estimates of the amount expected to be spent to rent or otherwise provide a home during the period _____ 20__ to _____, 20__, and in light of the Federal Income Tax law and of the established compensation level, on motion duly made and seconded, and adopted the following resolution:

Resolved that the Rev. _____ receive a compensation of \$_____ for the year ____, and a housing allowance of \$_____ for the year, the housing allowance to be so designated in the official records.

(Secretary’s Signature)

NOTIFICATION OF HOUSING ALLOWANCE BY CONGREGATION (EMPLOYER)

Date _____

Dear Rev. _____:

This is to advise you that at a meeting of the church council held on _____, your housing allowance for the year _____ was officially designated and fixed in the amount of \$_____. Accordingly, \$_____ of the total compensation payable to you during the year _____ will constitute housing allowance and the balance will constitute “compensation” (as interpreted by the Income Tax Law).

(Secretary’s Signature)

APPENDIX C

SABBATICAL LEAVE

Purpose: Sabbatical leave is recommended for clergy and associates in ministry as a time for renewal of one's professional and personal life. A sabbatical leave is a significant time away from congregational responsibilities; a time to receive, to be nurtured, to dig deeper into one's self, and to reflect on the call to ministry and relationship to God. Sabbatical leave should be holistic, including time for prayer, reflection, relaxation, and refreshment of body and spirit, as well as further developing gifts for continuing ministry. Sabbatical leaves may vary and invite different considerations in each congregation and in each ministry. Congregations and clergy both benefit from study, growth, and renewal and long-term mutual ministry is revitalized and stimulated.

Sabbatical Times and Duration

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has strongly recommended (but cannot require) that a Sabbatical Leave policy be adopted for all pastors serving parishes. In the East Central Synod of Wisconsin, this is also the recommended policy and is one that is increasingly being adopted by many congregations. Adoption by all congregations is strongly recommended. At the time of a Call process, a Sabbatical Leave policy should be discussed. If a pastor is already serving a congregation without such a policy, implementation of a Sabbatical Leave policy should be discussed and/or adopted at the earliest opportunity.

It is the intention of this Synod that after every 5 years in a full time parish call, or having served 6-8 years total time in ministry, a sabbatical shall be offered to any rostered staff person in the East Central Synod of Wisconsin. A sabbatical may be granted at an earlier point if deemed appropriate. The Synod Bishop will assist in determining the benefits of a sabbatical outside the normal guidelines. The duration of a sabbatical is 3 months or more. The sabbatical may be divided into two sections of time. The sabbatical must be completed within a year of the first day of the initial sabbatical.

Time and length of sabbaticals are to be negotiated between the rostered staff, the appropriate congregational committee and the council. It is recommended that the Bishop be notified while a sabbatical is being negotiated. This is particularly important when synodical support is being requested as part of the sabbatical. A sabbatical leave should imply (to both the congregation and the pastor) that there will be a return to the same position of ministry held prior to the sabbatical.

Coverage and Costs during the Sabbatical

The congregation will continue to fund full compensation and benefits for the rostered staff on sabbatical. The congregation, with Synod and conference support, is responsible for providing interim ministry during the sabbatical. Coverage should be provided by congregational members, trained synodical lay ministers, and the clergy of neighboring congregations. The congregation(s) may assist with costs of the sabbatical activity. Creative long term mutual funding between rostered staff and the congregation for sabbatical activities is encouraged. Special or outside funding may be available depending on the goals and purposes of the sabbatical. Sabbaticals for part time rostered staff or those in shared ministries may require special considerations.

Sabbatical Application

Name _____ Congregation _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Include the responses to these questions in your plan:

- What are your learning and personal goals?
- Why are they important to your ministry?
- How will your time be spent?
- How will your congregation benefit from these sabbatical goals?
- How will you share your sabbatical experience with your congregation?
- What financial concerns need to be addressed?

Brief Description of Plan:

Applicant _____

Date _____

Congregation President

Date

cc: Bishop

APPENDIX D

OTHER PASTORAL SERVICES

From time to time your pastor(s) will not be available to lead worship services (including occasional services, weddings, funerals, etc.), teach classes, etc., due either to their obligations to the church at large (attending conferences, continuing education, assisting the Bishop, helping sister congregations, etc.) or vacation or to other time off. As such the congregation will need to make alternate provisions for many of the duties which are usually performed by a pastor. Most often congregations will request the services of another pastor on a “supply” basis to fill these needs. The two most commonly required services include the leading of worship services and the teaching of confirmation or other classes. In most cases actual travel expenses will be approximated by reimbursing at the IRS mileage rate. However, there may be additional travel expenses (meals, lodging, compensation for time, etc.) that may need to be reimbursed when greater distances are traveled. The following provides minimum guidelines for compensation of Supply Pastors.

Minimum compensation for Supply Pastors:

Reminder:
IRS mileage for 2010 is 50¢/mile.
(Use 2011 rate for 2011.)

Worship Services:

(Worship services include weekly services, occasional services, weddings, funerals, etc.)

Congregations: Please remember to pay your supply pastor(s) within two weeks of services provided.

Pastors: Please remember that the congregation’s treasurer needs a listing of your travel expenses and services provided.

- One Worship Service: \$150 + Actual Travel Expenses
- Two Worship Services: \$200 + Actual Travel Expenses
- More than Two Worship Services: As Agreed + Actual Travel Expenses

Confirmation or other Pastoral Teaching:

Each Class: \$75 + Actual Travel Expenses

Additional Dollars needed to be Budgeted by Congregation for Time Agreement

To aid the congregation in the preparation of their budgets, the following schedule is provided to estimate the cost of the time agreement which you have made with your pastors.

Number of Days a Supply Pastor is needed to lead worship: _____

Multiply by \$150 if one worship service per day, \$200 if two. (rate) x _____

Cost for supply pastor..... _____

Add \$25 per day to approximate the cost of travel expenses..... _____

Cost for Worship Supply..... _____

Number of Confirmation or other classes _____

Multiply by \$75 for each class..... (rate) x _____

Cost for instructions..... _____

Add \$25 per day to approximate the cost of travel expenses..... _____

Cost for Confirmation and other classes _____

Other Pastoral Services (Visitation, counseling, etc.)

There are times when a congregation may call or contract with a pastor to do other ministry on a part-time basis (visitation, counseling, etc.) Congregations should be aware that the cost of these services is often up to 30% higher than

the “hourly rate” of a full time pastor.

Please note, your congregation may incur other expenses. However, the above are the most common expenses.

APPENDIX E

PART-TIME CHURCH MUSICIANS (less than 20 hours per week)

An approach to determining compensation of part-time church musicians follows. We urge you to use the fairest method to determine a just compensation.

1. Number of Hours/Week

The church musician's work covers a broad spectrum of activities, some of which is "visibly" observed by the congregation (worship services, rehearsals) but much of which goes "unseen" (music selection, practice time, rehearsal preparation, etc.). In order to determine the number of working hours/week for a church musician it is advisable that the following worksheet be filled out together by the personnel committee, pastor and musician:

HOURS/WEEK MUSICIAN'S DUTIES

- _____ a) Worship Service
- _____ b) Choir Rehearsals
- _____ c) Practice time (maintenance of technique and repertoire)
- _____ d) Preparation for rehearsals (reviewing and selection of music, marking scores, ordering materials needed, etc.)
- _____ e) Service planning, consultation with clergy
- _____ f) Meetings: staff and worship/music committee; organist and choir director; congregational
- _____ g) Administrative tasks: maintenance of the music library, copyright procedures, developing and administering the annual budget as approved by the Church Board.
- _____ h) Program building and recruiting; liturgical and musical training and enrichment for the congregation.
- _____ i) Auditioning and engaging soloists or small "special music" groups for worship services.
- _____ j) Special music programs; planning and scheduling hymn-sings, special services, concerts, performance productions.
- _____ k) Composition and arrangement of music for particular needs of the service; or for voicing of the choirs, etc.
- _____ l) Looking for and review of new compositions and editions, reading of musical and liturgical materials.
- _____ m) Continuing education: teaching or attending church music workshops professional meetings, lessons.
- _____ n) Instrument maintenance and care (organ, piano, handbells, etc.) and demonstrations.
- _____ o) Custodial work (furniture and instrument moving); setting up and clearing rehearsal and performance areas.
- _____ p) Writing articles for church publications; developing publicity material for newspapers, radios, etc.
- _____ q) Other
- _____ Total

OR (see next page)

Another appropriate formula to determine pay is that 3 hours of preparation are needed for each worship service.

$$\begin{array}{r}
 3 \text{ Allow 3 hours for preparation} \\
 + \quad \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ (fill in 1 hour for each service to be played)} \\
 \hline
 \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ Total hours for which payment is to be made} \\
 \times \quad \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ hourly rate of pay} \\
 \hline
 \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ Fee before additional to compensate lack of benefits.} \\
 + \quad \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ 10\% since those working less than 20 hours per week receive no benefits other than FICA} \\
 \hline
 \$ \quad \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \text{ (compensation)}
 \end{array}$$

2. Level of Competency

The level of competency is determined by using the categories of AIM or Lay Minister (page 14 of these guidelines) that most closely matches the experience and training of the musician. Simply apply the dollar per hour from the appropriate level of competence and multiply by the number of hours worked per week to determine compensation.

Additional Minimum Recommended Fees for Part-time Organists:

Weddings	\$125
Funerals	\$125 (church should notify funeral home of fee)
Rehearsals	\$ 50 each

COMPENSATION GUIDELINES FOR SECRETARIAL AND CUSTODIAL STAFF:

Please check local community levels of pay and reimbursement.

APPENDIX F

SUPPORT STAFF

Most congregations are well-served not only by their Called and Professional staff but also by those whose ongoing ministry would be classified under the heading “Support Staff”. This category covers the dedicated servants of God who function as Administrative Assistants, Secretaries, Custodians, and others who serve in full and part-time positions in support of the congregational ministry. . Sometimes, despite the best intentions of congregations, these employees are inadvertently overlooked because they usually labor “behind the scenes” and often on days and in ways when the worshipping congregation is not present. These employees should always be given consideration and care when issues of remuneration and employee benefits are considered.

The Compensation Guidelines manual cannot presume to share compensation minimums and ranges for Support Staff due to wide variations in local situations and individual responsibilities. This Synod does, however, wish to give some guidance and advice as congregations seek to responsibly care for all those who are employed in support of their programs and buildings and offices. We offer the following as a guideline for review:

1. **Have job descriptions and expected hours of work been put in writing for Support Staff?**

The presence of job descriptions and time expectations can often help identify areas of additional need or situations where adjustments of expectations should be discussed.

2. **Has the “line of supervision” been adequately explained so that both the Support Staff and those responsible for supervision have come to agreement?**

Clear supervisory lines assist the support staff and the congregation in knowing when and whom to contact if special needs for the employee’s time or special concerns about the employee arise. The “oh, we’ll let the Secretary do that” syndrome can be avoided.

3. **Have the levels of compensation been compared within the local community with other like positions? Has this been done at least once every two years?**

Often dedicated support staff who have been long-term employees have “fallen behind” others who labor in a similar category in the community. A fair comparison through the local Chamber of Commerce or local companies can usually be made without compromising the confidentiality issues of an individual’s pay. Fair compensation levels let congregations feel good and help congregational employees know they are cared for.

4. **Have issues of vacation, flex time, paid time off in case of illness, and paid holidays been reviewed regularly?**

Congregational employees need the same kinds of “time off” policies that local businesses offer for their employees. Comparisons through local Chambers of Commerce can again be easily secured.

5. **Has a fair policy for full and part time support staff been adopted which explores, and possibly implements, retirement benefits, disability coverage, life insurance, and medical benefits?**

The ELCA offers many of these through the Board of Pensions and allows support staff to be fully covered in many of the same ways as pastors. Sometimes such benefits allow a dedicated employee to serve his or her Lord as a full time employee of a congregation rather than leaving for private industry. Many of these benefits can also be worked out through private insurers in a local community. Often these plans can result in significant help to the employee in ways which do not result in a greatly increased tax burden to the employee.

6. **Has a policy of “continuing education” been reviewed for support staff and congregational monetary and time support made available so that such continuing education might be taken?**

Often we forget that new machinery or computers or programs come out every year. Who better to learn about new ways to increase a congregation’s efficiency and proficiency than the support staff? Sometimes support staff need intentional reminders and expectations because they are so dedicated to getting the job done that they won’t spend time away without encouragement. Almost always, time spent in continuing education brings more

benefit back home than the continuing education event cost.

7. Has the congregation given visibility and credibility to the Support Staff?

Are their names known to the members?

Has anyone said a public “thank you” lately?

Are support staff recognized in such a way that shows the congregation is proud of its employees and their work?

Has someone sat down and asked if all the equipment works, if it is efficient, if it needs repair or replacement?

Is a system of feedback in place so that the support staff feel appreciated and not isolated?

A committee or an individual needs to show care, concern, and promote justice for the support staff just as most congregations do for their pastors and rostered staff. Support staff are often “unsung heroes” in a congregation. They do the work that is usually unnoticed when it is done correctly and they often become the ones who correct a mix-up or problem before it becomes unsolvable. Support staff are those who have chosen a church vocation because they care. Let us always care for them.