

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR BUDGET SALARY CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL CHURCH WORKERS

When workers accept a call or appointment to service, they make a commitment to faithful and full service, with the help of God, to their Lord and the calling congregation. In like manner, congregations must commit themselves to provide for the needs of the worker.

At this time of year, many congregations are involved in preparing budgets for the 2010 fiscal year. A major consideration of every congregational budget is the salary of the professional church worker(s). The first step in salary administration in churches must be prayer. Ask the Lord's guidance that His will be done and He may be glorified as you begin planning salaries for your congregation's workers.

Some principles of salary administration that may be helpful to you as you begin your planning are as follows:

1. Church workers are professionals and deserve comparable pay to other professionals in the community;
2. The congregation should expect its workers to maintain a lifestyle comparable to their own in the community and should be paid accordingly (for instance, the federal cost of living adjustments since 2005 amount to 15.5% - failure to provide appropriate salary increases that reflect that COLA would have effectively significantly reduced a workers purchasing power); and
2. Ability to pay should not govern our salary planning. Rather, we should offer salaries commensurate with the position and the work expected.

The Eastern District Salary Guideline, <http://lcmsed.org/a/ministryResources.php> is intended to provide congregations with an objective approach to developing a salary plan for professional and lay workers who serve them. The guideline seeks to recognize worker longevity, training and skill while also recognizing congregational and regional differences.

While guidelines are never prescriptive, they can be suggestive of an approach that can be used to review the compensation you are providing your professional workers. We hope that these guidelines will assist congregations in providing the proper level of financial and personal support to all of the professional church workers in the Eastern District, so that:

- God will be glorified
- The ministries of the congregation will be empowered
- A sense of appreciation and fulfillment will be conveyed

A professional church worker is called by God to be a servant, leader, counselor, caregiver, proclaimer, teacher, listener, evangelist, and steward to the congregation and the total Church. Your congregation is called to respond to these benefits and blessings. The response in part is demonstrated as a congregation provides its workers with equitable salary, housing, supplemental benefits, vacation time, financial assistance for spiritual and professional growth. Truly these laborers are a special gift from God deserving of our love, support and care.

The approach taken by these guidelines is intended to provide adequate compensation to professional church workers. Adequate compensation is viewed as a level of compensation that provides for the physical and spiritual well being of the worker and the worker's family. It is intended that this level of compensation will release the worker from undue financial concern, thus allowing the worker to give full devotion and attention to the ministries assigned.

Another great gift to the church is a publication produced by the Commission on Ministerial Health and Support entitled, "Let's Talk it Over: Ten Conversations on Supporting Church Workers." The document can be downloaded at:

<http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=14791>

As you begin work on salary planning for 2010 we encourage you to reflect on 1 Tim. 5 and 1 Cor. 9 for instruction regarding caring for those who serve us in the Lord. You will note that in Timothy, the elders of the church are "worthy of double honor" and in Corinthians "the Lord commands that those who preach the Gospel should receive their living from the Gospel". May Our Lord guide you as you plan for your parish for 2010.