

Recommendations from the Task Force on Synod Minimum Compensations

The task force met two different times and looked at the issues presented by the resolution from the South York Conference, which the 2010 Synod Assembly referred to the Synod Council. We reviewed the compensation guidelines from all the synods in Region 8. We researched whether other synods allow calls outside the guidelines and found that the majority do not. We looked at the information that within the synod, from those reporting on their report to the bishop, 68% said they were paid within the guidelines; however, not all reported. We heard anecdotally that there are pastors who have many years of experience in ministry that desire to serve smaller churches as their calling. The current salary guidelines of the Lower Susquehanna Synod increase in a linear fashion making experienced pastors financially unattractive to smaller congregations. The bishop, enforcing the synod-in-assembly's decisions, will not certify them for call to these congregations because of salary limitations.

The task force felt that the resolution from the South York Conference did address the problem of experienced pastors who could not be called to smaller congregations with more limited resources, but there were problems with this solution. The compensation guidelines were adopted by the assembly; and, if this is the will of the assembly, then the bishop would be overriding the will of the assembly without any guidelines from the assembly. The assembly established the guidelines to encourage faithful stewardship and care of leaders. Setting the guidelines aside might encourage congregations not to live up to their responsibilities as stewards. The task force does not see the adoption of the resolution from the South York Conference as a reasonable solution.

The task force felt that the guidelines themselves might contribute to the problem presented by the South York Conference. The straight linear progression of the growth based on years of experience for both the top and bottom of the guidelines does not necessarily reflect the experience and skills in a developing pastor. Often the development of pastor is steeper in the early part of their career and less so in the later years. We feel that the guidelines should be modified so that experienced pastors are not penalized when they are willing to accept calls to congregations with more modest needs. We do not want to diminish the value of experience but do not see that straight progression is completely accurate. The task force does not want to limit the mobility of experienced pastors to work with congregations that might best benefit from their experience.

We make the following two recommendations:

The task force recommends that the Compensation and Benefits Committee revise the compensation minimums so that, if possible, experienced pastors are not limited in their mobility.

The Synod Council not adopt the resolution from the South York conference so the synod minimums continue to be required in all calls.

The Reverend James Dunlop
Chair

Synod Council Action on The Task Force's Recommendations

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Council, meeting on April 9, 2011, discussed the report of the Task Force on Synod Minimum Compensation. The Synod Council took the following action on the task force's two recommendations.

LOST: **That the Compensation and Benefits Committee revise the compensation**
SC11.04.36. **minimums so that, if possible, experienced pastors are not limited in their**
 mobility.

LOST: **That Synod Council not adopt the resolution from the South York**
SC11.04.37. **Conference so that synod minimums continue to be required in all calls.**

The Lower Susquehanna Synod Council then adopted the Resolution Regarding Minimum Salaries, originally proposed by the South York Conference, referred to the Synod Council by the 2010 Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly, and appropriately amended to indicate Synod Council action.

Thomas McKee
synod secretary
April 9, 2011

**RESOLUTION TO
THE LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD COUNCIL
REGARDING
SYNOD MINIMUM SALARIES
REFERRED FROM THE 2010 LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

WHEREAS, the Lower Susquehanna Synod in Assembly has approved synod minimum salaries for rostered leaders of this synod: and

WHEREAS, there are congregations in transition that need experienced rostered leadership; and

WHEREAS, the rostered leaders with the greatest years of ordination, consecration, and commissioning receive the highest compensation per synod minimum salaries; and

WHEREAS, difficult situations, that require experienced rostered leadership to resolve, often leave a congregation in poor financial health and unable to afford such leadership; and

WHEREAS, congregations seeking a rostered leader are required to place a salary range in their congregational profiles; and

WHEREAS, the synodical practice is that these synod minimum salaries are in fact mandatory base salary minimums for a new call; and

WHEREAS, this practice prevents the synodical bishop from submitting to congregations the Rostered Leader Profiles of candidates whose synod minimum salaries place them above the salary range given in their congregational profiles; and

WHEREAS, this practice discourages a rostered leader from requesting to be placed at a salary lower than the synod minimum salaries;

WHEREAS, this severely limits the ability of the synodical bishop to find the best match of candidate and congregation; and

WHEREAS, this is preventing some rostered leaders in this synod the ability to interview with some congregations; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod Council, meeting April 9, 2011, recognizing the necessity and purpose of synod minimum salaries, encourages the Lower Susquehanna Synod bishop to consider attesting calls below synod minimum salaries in cases when the rostered leader candidate is found to be above the salary range in a congregation's profile and a rostered leader candidate desires such a call.

**Adopted by the Lower Susquehanna Synod Council
United Church Center, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
April 9, 2011
SC11.04.38.**

Thomas E. McKee
synod secretary