



Church of the Brethren

July 10, 2026

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

Greetings, beloved fellow disciples of Jesus. I am encouraged by the 2027 Annual Conference moderator's theme of "*Growing Faith*" which offers the church the opportunity to celebrate the gifts and passions of children, youth, and young adults. Truly they are the church *now*! My prayer is that as ministers and congregations partner ever more closely, "our faith will grow abundantly and the love of every one of us for one another will be increasing!" (2 Thess. 1:3)

As we engage in ministries together, the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee, in cooperation with the Ministry Office and the Council of District Executives, provides materials related to ministerial compensation that have been approved by the Annual Conference. The *Integrated Annual Ministry Agreement* (IAMA) serves as one document for both the start-up and renewal needs for pastors. In addition, this Agreement contains a helpful document entitled "*Shared Ministry Priorities*," which can aid in developing a strong and transparent partnership between pastor and congregation. We urge congregations to utilize both documents and to renew them each year. The IAMA has been updated to reflect the recent transition from Eder Financial's retirement services to those now provided by Everence Financial. Information on obtaining ancillary insurance products is not included yet, however, pending Eder's efforts to continue offering them. The documents (in fillable form) are posted separately on the Office of Ministry compensation page.

The *Guidelines for Pastors' Salary and Benefits* contain basic background information and explanations regarding compensation and benefits. The *Minimum Cash Salary Table and Guidelines* seeks to encourage congregations to be fair and generous employers of pastoral leadership. For the time being, all these materials can be utilized in conjunction with the *Pastoral Compensation Calculator* developed with Eder Financial and found here:

<https://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/compensation/>

The plans for continuing the use of a compensation calculator are still undetermined but it appears likely that such a tool will continue to be offered, either by Eder or by Everence. Look for updates from the Ministry Office and the Pastoral Compensation & Benefits committee.

It is important to note that the any compensation calculation should begin with what the congregation can afford to pay, include the cost of housing, pension, and benefits, and then calculate how many hours (based on the Minimum Cash Salary Table) of average weekly pastoral time the congregation should expect to receive from their pastor. In summary, these calculations can clarify the congregation's ability to determine appropriate levels of compensation for pastors.

Please NOTE: THE NECESSARY FORMS ARE AVAILABLE IN FILLABLE FORMAT AT

<https://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/compensation/>

(This is the source to find all documents and resources related to pastoral compensation.)

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The following resources are provided for congregations and pastors as they work at these conversations:

1. **Integrated Annual Ministry Agreement (IAMA)** –
As mentioned above, the Integrated Annual Ministry Agreement (replacing start-up and renewal agreements) is available online (see link above). This agreement is to be completed each year. Please secure the appropriate signatures and place a copy in the ministerial file. A signed copy should be returned to the *district office* from each pastor and placed in the minister's file. ***Please highlight the critical importance of this document being signed and returned annually to the district office.***
2. **Minimum Cash Salary Table and Guidelines*** (the Table as posted reflects a cost-of-living adjustment of 4.2% approved by Annual Conference delegates and effective January 1, 2027.) Link: <https://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/compensation/>
3. **Compensation Calculator** available (for now) at this link:
<https://pccalc.azurewebsites.net/>
4. **Shared Ministry Priorities**, fillable – This document included in the IAMA is also posted separately for convenient access.
5. **Guidelines to Pastors' Salaries and Benefits** document serves as a resource for compensation conversations and can be found here:
<https://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2022/08/2023-Guidelines-for-Pastors-Salary-and-Benefits.pdf>

*The recommended cost-of-living increase approved by delegates at the 2026 Annual Conference constitutes a 4.2% increase across the salary table taking into consideration economic factors and careful projections of experts in the field. The committee encourages congregations to be equitable in seeking to be supportive to ministers in this midst of a climate of rising inflation and increased social challenges. While financial remuneration is not the only means of expressing support, it is a fitting way to communicate gratitude during these challenging days of ministry together.

The Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee is available as a resource during this process of resourcing pastors and congregations. The current chair is Harry Biddle of Oakton, MD. The recording of the original introductory workshop to the new compensation tools is still posted on the compensation website here:
<https://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/compensation/>

The Office of Ministry welcomes your input, and we desire to work closely with you in endeavoring to serve our ministers and congregations well. We recognize that the conversations you guide as leaders provide a prime opportunity for you to be in conversation with congregations about their vision for mission and ministry as a people of faith including a vision

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for leadership/staffing needs.

Under special, limited circumstances, licensed ministers are utilized as pastors. Two important notes/reminders about licensed ministers:

1. Please remember to use the **Approval for Employment** form in the Ministerial Leadership Manual (page OM340 and attached to this mailing in both PDF and Word format) for licensed ministers serving as pastors. Remember that a licensed minister is to serve as a pastor only when she/he is engaged in an approved ministerial training program and under the direct supervision of an ordained minister (MLP 2014).
2. Please remember to use the **Student Placement Guidelines** in the Ministerial Leadership Manual (page OM320 and attached to this mailing) for a licensed minister who is serving as a pastor in a district beyond where she/he is licensed while in seminary or academy level training programs.

Please be in touch with the Ministry Office if you have questions. Thank you for your ongoing assistance with interpreting items regarding pastoral salaries and benefits. May God bless you in your ministry and give us all wisdom and courage for the journey.

Yours in Christ,

Nancy S. Heishman

Nancy Sollenberger Heishman, Director, Ministry Office

- c: David Steele
Members of Pastoral Compensation & Benefits Advisory Committee: Harry Biddle, chair, Angela Finet, Lori Hurt, Chad Whitzel, and Andy Hamilton, representative from the Council of District Executives
- * While the title pastor is used, these materials are to be used with other types of ministerial leaders as well – Associate Pastors, Assistant Pastors, Youth Ministers/Pastors, Interim Pastors, etc. They are designed for most persons serving in “pastoral” roles.

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