

Establish a Minimum Compensation for Deacons

BE IT RESOLVED,

Active Deacons in the Diocese of Milwaukee shall be compensated by stipend

Resolved, by the 175th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Milwaukee, that beginning January 1, 2023, the Diocese of Milwaukee shall compensate deacons at the rate of \$25 a month and pay the applicable assessment to Church Pension Group (CPG) and

Be it further resolved,

When a deacon is assigned to a parish or an organization by the Bishop, the diocese and vestry/bishop's committee, board, or governing body shall enter into a mutual agreement to determine if the stipend and CPG assessment will be assessed to the parish/organization, or paid by the diocese, and

Be it further resolved,

active deacons who were active on January 1, 2019 and have been in active service since that date may enter into a mutual agreement with the diocese to provide compensation and CPG assessment for the period from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2022 as allowed by the Clergy Pension Group (CPG),

Be it further resolved,

that deacons may decline the monthly compensation.

EXPLANATION:

Those called to the diaconate serve in congregations without compensation. Typically, deacons contribute time and talent of a minimum of 10-12 hours a week in ministry, in worship, and other activities. It is intended that deacons will serve without compensation from parishes.

The level of activities for deacons has seen a significant increase due to the COVID pandemic and other stresses on parish and community life. Some deacons have served one or more parishes as the only assigned clergy member, taking on additional responsibilities in those times.

The lack of compensation prevents deacons from access to benefits through the Church Pension Group (CPG), benefits such as Credo conferences that address spiritual, physical, and financial well-being, life insurance, and resettlement compensation. The need for providing some opportunity for deacons to address individual and family wellness by participating in

Credo became evident during the COVID pandemic due to the added stresses of both their ministries and secular life on them and their families. This measure would also allow deacons to attend CPG presentations on financial wellness when offered in the diocese.

The total amount paid per month per deacon per parish will be approximately \$30 a month, or \$360 a year (compensation plus pension assessment).

Deacons who were active on January 1, 2019 and remain active, may be allowed by CPG to receive catch-up payments for the years since 2019. These payments could represent a large expenditure for the diocese. Deacons who would like to participate in this opportunity, if available, should have a conversation with the diocese staff about the most appropriate mechanism by which to cover this payment. These negotiations may include a discussion with the Diocesan Financial Officer about the available financial resources for the payment of the three years of stipend and contributions to the fund.

The Dioceses of Vermont, New York, Virginia, and Connecticut passed similar resolutions in 2019, 2020, and 2021 respectively. Similar resolutions have been debated at other Annual Conventions. Additionally, the Association for Episcopal Deacons and the Church Pension Group have worked together to make enrollment into CPG possible.

Compensation will be provided to any deacon serving, unless declined by the deacon. Deacons may decline the compensation for a variety of reasons (e.g. a theological understanding that deacons serve without compensation or possible impact on other retirement benefits being received).

Per CPG rules, retirement contributions cannot be made for any clergy age 72 or older.

An example from CPG:

Outlined below are some of the benefits provided to eligible Active and Retired clergy. The example shown is based on a cleric having Total Assessable Compensation (TAC) of \$300 per year, or \$25 per month, with 10 years of earned Credited Service (CS) at the time of retirement.

The assumed Highest Average Compensation (HAC) is \$300. Total assessments paid over the cleric's career is \$540.

- While Active, life insurance benefit (6 x TAC): \$1,800
- When Retired, life insurance benefit (6 x HAC): \$1,800
- Annual pension benefit (2.75% x HAC x CS): \$82.50
- Annual Christmas benefit (\$25 x CS): \$250

- Resettlement benefit (one-time payment at the time of retirement equal to 12 times the monthly retirement benefit with a minimum of \$2,000): \$2,000
- Invitation to CREDO and Planning for Wellness Conferences are conducted for clergy and their families at a site away from the diocese to allow an opportunity for clergy to focus on individual and family spiritual, financial and physical wellness due to the unique nature of clergy life.

Submitted by:

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