

## **Resolution B-185**

### **Church Pension Fund Benefits for Vocational Deacons**

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**WHEREAS**, vocational deacons historically have been serving in non-stipendiary (unpaid) roles and are not eligible to participate in the Church Pension Fund and receive its program benefits.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that this 185th Convention of the Diocese of Missouri declares it will be the policy of this diocese that all active vocational deacons shall be paid an amount sufficient to enable them to participate in programs offered by the Church Pension Fund from the congregation and/or diocese.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, eligible deacons may decline the compensation for a variety of reasons (e.g. a theological, situational, or financial - possible impact on other retirement benefits being received).

**RATIONALE:** Our diocese joins 20+ other Episcopal Dioceses that have approved similar resolutions and also fulfills Resolution A135 ( Compensation for Non-stipendiary Clergy) adopted at the 2024 General Convention. This proposed resolution requires congregations and/or the diocese to make a nominal payment of \$25 (or more) a month to their deacon(s), as well as a monthly assessment of 18% (\$4.50 for \$25) to the Church Pension Fund, to enable deacons to participate in the programs and benefits available through the Church Pension Fund. The total financial impact for congregations or the diocese per deacon in 2025, is \$354. However, per the rules of the Church Pension Group, retirement contributions cannot be made for clergy aged 72 years or older. While we recognize this resolution does not put diaconal compensation on par with the other orders of ministry (namely presbyters and the episcopate), it does give deacons access to beneficial Church Pension Fund resources.

Example of CPF Benefits: Outlined below are some of the benefits provided to eligible clergy. The example shown is based on a cleric having Total Assessable Compensation (TAC) of \$300 per year ( \$25 per month), with 10 years of earned Credited Service (CS) at the time of retirement. The assumed Highest Average Compensation (HAC) is \$300 (\$25 a month). The 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

Vocational Deacons in the Episcopal Church, including the Diocese of Missouri, serve at the behest of their Bishop Diocesan in parishes and diocesan positions usually without remuneration. As the Episcopal Church began to study the compensation between deacons and other clergy, it became clear that this was an issue of fairness and economic justice. In our diocese, we have deacons who give freely of their time - totaling hundreds of hours a month - while being unable to participate in any Clergy Pension Fund services/activities.

This continued sacrificial life, although commendable, does come at a cost when said deacons are without retirement resources, advice, and the means to live into a health ministry/life balance. The Church Pension Fund (CPF) provides resources for paid clergy and lay employees in Episcopal congregations who participate in the CPF pension plan. One of the resources the Church Pension Fund offers is the opportunity to participate in CREDO, a conference that helps active and retired clergy by presenting a holistic approach to wellness for mind, body, spirit, and heart. Participants examine and evaluate their health and wellness from spiritual, vocational, physical, emotional, and financial points of view. The Church Pension Fund also provides pension and retirement savings plans, health benefits, and educational services.

Submitted by: The Community of Deacons