

## **Establish a Minimum Compensation for Deacons**

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**BE IT RESOLVED**, that Active Deacons in the Diocese of Wisconsin shall be compensated by stipend;

Resolved, by the 177th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Wisconsin, that beginning January 1, 2025, the Diocese of Wisconsin shall compensate deacons at a monthly rate that totals a minimum of \$324.45 a year 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 in the historic Diocese of Milwaukee and previously compensated shall continue to be compensated,

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 accessing 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).

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. The 81<sup>st</sup> General Convention of the Episcopal Church passed a resolution (A135) encouraging dioceses to compensate active currently non-stipendiary clergy of any order at minimum of \$25/month to enable access to applicable benefits from the CPG, beginning January 1, 2025. 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.

Deacon Compensation Resolution Potential Budgetary Implications Diocese Convention 2024						
2025 Budget Impact - Compensation and CPG assessment						
Stipend	CPG Assessment	Interest	Total Per Deacon	Number of Deacons	Net Potential Impact	
\$ 300.00	\$ 54.00	\$ -	\$ 354.00	33	\$ 11,682.00	
<b>Assumptions</b> 1. This analysis is based 33 active deacons. The number was obtained from the diocese office. 2. This analysis may consider active deacons over the age of 72 who would not be eligible for retirement benefits so it is a worse case scenario. 3. This analysis used the CPG assessment of 18% 4. This assumes all active deacons will choose to accept a stipend and participate in the clergy pension fund.						

*Submitted by:*

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