

**Pastoral Transitions Commission  
Report to Presbytery  
August 15, 2024**

1. Since the last presbytery meeting, the commission met in 2024 on June 13th, July 11, and August 15th. Actions taken at meetings on May 9th and May 28th were not reported previously. Actions taken at the August 15th meeting will be reported at the next Presbytery meeting.
2. The commission has taken these actions:

**Reception of Teaching Elders**

7/11/24, Frank Pottorff was received from Philadelphia Presbytery.

**Dismissal of Teaching Elders**

7/11/24, David Crawford was dismissed to the Northwest Coast Presbytery.

**Calls/Covenants approved, reviewed, changed, ended**

5/9/24, the contract between Beth Stone and the First Presbyterian Church, Georgetown was approved.

5/28/24, the contract between Jerry L. Utt and Faith Presbyterian Church of Morehead was approved.

6/13/24, the contract between Phil Majors and the Corbin Presbyterian Church was approved.

7/11/24, the call of the First Presbyterian Church, Lexington, to Frank Pottorff was approved.

7/11/24, the contract between Sarah Wilson and the Eastminster Presbyterian Church was approved.

**Moderator appointed**

6/13/24, Keith Benze was appointed as moderator to the Troy Presbyterian Church

**Commission to Ordain and/or Install**

5/9/24, Sarah Smith was installed at Versailles Presbyterian Church at 11 AM on June 8, 2024. The Commission members were Moderator John Leggett, Keith Benze, Scot Robinson, Griffin Phillips Ryan, Cheryl Benze, and Ginny Shanda.

**Retired Status Granted**

none

**Validated Ministry approval**

**Member-at-Large status granted**

none

**Pastor Nominating Committee approved**

5/9/24, Presbyterian Church of Danville

**Ministry Discernment Profile approved**

2/3/24, approved, with a recommendation, MDF for First Presbyterian Church, Somerset.

**3. Recommendations for Presbytery Action:**

The PTC recommends approval of the 2025 Minimum Terms of Call.

## Changes to Minimum Terms of Call for 2025:

- 4.1% increase to minimum effective salary. Every year we increase the minimum effective salary based on the percentage in the median salary for all PCUSA pastors. We understand that this will be an issue for a few of our churches, but we must continue to keep pace with rising wages and cost of living. There is a provision, on a case-by-case basis, to gain an exemption. There are also options to share a pastor with another congregation to reduce costs but maintain sufficient pastoral services.
- Increase Continuing education minimum from \$750 to \$1000
- Board of Pension dues will change in 2025. Please make sure to familiarize yourself with these changes even if you or your church has not been in the system for a few years. The changes make it easier for “temporary” pastor to receive benefits. If you have any questions, please reach out to Philip or our BOP representative Keenan Rogers.
- Sabbatical: a sabbatical following 6 years of continuous service is now mandated. The sabbatical will be 3 months long unless some negotiated change is approved by the PTC on a case by case basis. There are many resources available to a Pastor to help cover the cost of a sabbatical.
- Family Leave/Sick Days/Disability (long or short term)- 12 weeks. This is now a mandate by the Book of Order.
- Under the dissolution section, a category of “Unethical Behavior” was added to other cause for the withholding of severance. A clause was also added to define when a severance agreement can be offset if a Pastor engages in *significant* ministerial activities while on severance. The goal is to balance fairness to both the Pastor and the church. As stated in the policy, pulpit supply, isn’t construed as an offsetting activity.

***Due to major changes in the Board of Pension requirements and offering in 2025, the following is a major change in our minimum terms of call. Please take time to read through so you understand the changes coming. If you have any questions, please email Philip.lotspeich@transyby.org.***

***Minimum Terms of Call for 2025***  
 Presbytery of Transylvania

These requirements are intended to provide congregations with assistance and guidance both in calling new pastors and in the annual review of the terms of call. The categories used in these terms are in use generally throughout the Presbyterian Church (USA). They are intended to provide a uniform set of items to be considered by ministers and congregations in their discussions and negotiations. They are also intended to assist Presbytery in taking seriously its responsibility to support and nourish pastors and congregations.

Classification	Median effective salaries		% Change
	for 2025	for 2024	2025 vs. 2024
Ministers*	\$70,000	\$67,100	4.1%

As seen from the above chart, the median effective salary for PUCSA Teaching Elders rose 4.1%. Per our policy adopted in 2018, our minimums increase by the same percentage as the Median effective salary.

Based on the above increase, for full-time (40 hours/week) positions, whether installed or temporary:

	If a manse is provided for the minister's residence	If no manse is provided
<b>*Cash Salary</b>	<b>\$34,927</b>	<b>\$49,379</b>
<b>Housing Allowance</b>	<b>Manse escrow of \$1,000 per year paid into a 403(b) account</b>	<b>Approval of declared housing allowance sufficient to cover rent or mortgage, insurance, tax, utilities and maintenance</b>
<b>Social Security</b>	<b>Actual cost paid by church or an allowance of 50% of Social Security=.0765 of Salary, Housing, Utilities, and other cash income from the church. (Ministers have to file as Self- employed persons and pay Social Security taxes themselves.)</b>	
<b>*Pension and Medical</b>	<b>Pension, medical coverage, and disability premiums shall be paid</b>	

to Board of Pensions as defined by the Board of Pensions. (See Further guidelines below)

<b>*Continuing Education</b>	<b>\$1000 (includes books, other resources and professional expenses)</b>
<b>Travel</b>	<b>Reimbursed at current IRS business mileage rate, or the church may elect to provide a travel allowance instead.</b>
<b>Vacation</b>	<b>4 weeks</b>
<b>Continuing Ed Leave</b>	<b>2 weeks</b>
<b>Moving Expenses</b>	<b>Reasonable moving expenses approved in advance.</b>
<b>Family Medical Leave</b>	<b>12 weeks paid (minimum) G-2.0804</b>
<b>Sabbatical</b>	<b>3 month sabbatical after 6 years of continuous service</b>

In the opinion of the Pastoral Transitions Commission (PTC), the minimum salary for a pastor should be comparable to the starting salary of a new master's level public school teacher. While we believe that the salary listed above is consistent with those teacher salaries, it is true that they vary from county to county. Should a church find that the new public school teacher salary is lower in their county, said church may petition the PTC for a lower minimum salary. Appropriate documentation should accompany such a request. The PTC will give such a request serious consideration.

## **Pension and Insurance**

### ***For Installed Pastors:***

*All Installed Pastors are required by the Book of Order G-2.0804 to be enrolled in the Board of Pensions option called the **Congregational Pastors Package**. The dues for 2025 will consist of 10% of effective salary for Pension, Death and Disability AND 16% medical dues for the Pastor alone. There are options for Spouse and/or family coverage at the rates provided by the BOP. Based on the circumstances of each Pastor, care should be taken to ensure that coverage is available for the Pastor's family, whether that be through the BOP or another provider. This can be fully covered by the church or a cost-sharing arrangement can be negotiated but only with the Congregational Pastors Package. Cost sharing is not available with the Transitional Pastors Participation.*

*Transitional Pastors Participation will be an available option for up to three years for existing installed pastors. The percentage rates will increase each year and churches can opt into the Congregational Pastors Package after 1 or 2 years. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, they will be placed in the Congregational Pastors Package. The key question is "What are the coverage needs of the pastor and their family, and is Congregational Pastors Package or Transitional Pastors Participation the better option?"*

### ***For Other Pastoral Leaders (Commissioned Pastors, Stated Supply, Interim, Non-Presbyterian Supply):***

*Pastoral leaders who are working more than 20 hours but not installed, are eligible to participate in **either the Congregational Pastors Package or The Covenant Package (10% of effective salary for Pension, Death and Disability)** They may also have outside coverage instead of the BOP medical coverage. It is permissible to participate in the Covenant Package but not the Congregational Pastors Package. Spouse and/or children coverage may be negotiated but are not required to be included in coverage. The key question is "What are the coverage needs of the pastor and their family."*

### ***For Others:***

*Other validated Pastors and employees working more than 20 hours may participate in the Covenant Package which costs 10% of effective salary. These validated Pastors and employees are not eligible for the Congregational Pastors Package. If medical coverage is desired, the employee/validated pastor may chose the Benefits Plan options provided by the Board of Pensions. For medical coverage in this situation, employers are required to contribute a minimum of 50% of the cost of Member-Only coverage for the lowest cost plan offered (three BOP plans available). The rest may be cost shared.*

### **Commissioned Pastors and Non-Presbyterian Supply**

*Commissioned Pastors and Non-Presbyterian Supply may negotiate with their respective congregations concerning compensation. The Pastoral Transitions Commission will take into account the hours worked, duties assigned and financial health of the congregation when determining if compensation is adequate. The Commission will use the minimums stated above as the guide for compensation. Only in cases where there is compelling documentation of need, will compensation at less than our minimums (prorated for part-time work) be approved.*

### **Sabbatical**

*Taking a sabbatical is more than just a break from the routine; it's a strategic investment in personal and professional growth. In today's fast-paced world, where burnout and stress are pervasive, the significance of sabbaticals cannot be overstated. They offer a precious opportunity to recharge, reflect, and pursue passions outside the constraints of daily obligations. Whether it's to travel to new places, learn new skills, or simply disconnect from work, sabbaticals allow individuals to gain fresh perspectives, rejuvenate creativity, and foster resilience. By embracing sabbaticals, Pastors and congregations can cultivate a healthier work-life balance, enhance their overall well-being, and ultimately, contribute more effectively to their mission and communities. To that end, the Presbytery of Transylvania requires congregations to provide a sabbatical after 6 continuous years of service. The length of sabbatical will be 3 months. Any variance to this length needs approval by the Pastor Transitions Commission. This applies to full or part time Pastors as well as Commissioned Pastors, certified educators and Non-Presbyterian Supply. There are multiple grants and funding opportunities available to help defray the cost of a sabbatical. The sabbatical will not affect vacation days, and compensation will continue through the sabbatical. The Session will be responsible for planning for coverage during the Pastors absence.*

### **Family Leave/Sick Days/Disability (long or short term)**

*When it comes to Family Leave/Sick Days/Disability (long or short term) depending on the situation and severity, the church and pastor have options as to which benefit might be more beneficial to all involved.*

### **SICK DAYS**

*Pastors should be afforded the ability to take sick days as needed through the year without any reduction in salary. Sick leave/personal leave shall normally be calculated at one (1) day per month of service or employment. This leave may accumulate up to sixty (60) days. If the illness or injury is severe enough to warrant a longer time away, the Board of Pension has resources for long term and short-term disability.*

### **FAMILY LEAVE**

G-2.09 states that a call “shall include **provision for a minimum of twelve weeks paid family medical leave**” Family medical leave is often necessary for various reasons, including but not limited to:

**Serious Illness or Injury:** Family members may require care and support during times of illness or injury, necessitating leave to provide assistance and comfort.

**Childbirth and Parental Responsibilities:** Maternity and paternity leave allow parents to bond with a new child, adjust to parenthood, and manage the demands of childcare.

**Adoption or Foster Care:** Families welcoming a new child through adoption or foster care may need time off to complete the necessary arrangements and provide stability for the new addition.

**Serious Health Conditions:** Family medical leave can be essential for managing and supporting loved ones with chronic or debilitating health conditions, ensuring they receive the care and attention they need.

**End-of-Life Care:** During times of terminal illness or hospice care, family members may require leave to be with their loved ones, provide comfort, and make necessary arrangements.

**Medical Emergencies:** Unexpected medical emergencies involving family members may require immediate attention and care, necessitating time off to handle the situation effectively.

**Mental Health Support:** Family medical leave can also be crucial for supporting family members dealing with mental health challenges, allowing them to seek treatment, therapy, or simply providing emotional support.

**Work-Life Balance:** Taking family medical leave promotes work-life balance by allowing individuals to prioritize their family's health and well-being without sacrificing their job security.

In summary, family medical leave is essential for ensuring the welfare of both individuals and their families during times of need, and fostering stronger family bonds.

### **~~Provisions relating to pastors whose contracts provide for between than 20 hours per week and 40 hours per week.~~**

~~For those pastors who enter into a contract to work an amount of time that is between full time and half time, there should be an attempt to estimate the number of hours that will be required to perform the duties specified in the contract. The minimum to be paid should be equal to the percentage of 40 hours that the contract requires. For example, someone working 30 hours per week should be paid at least (3/4) 75% of the full time minimum. However, be advised that BOP benefits are required and the BOP currently requires a minimum amount of \$10,800 per year for full medical coverage (25% of \$44,000) and 12% of the salary for pension, death and disability benefits. Also note that the standard levels of vacation (4 weeks) and study leave (2 weeks) apply. In the case of a 30 hour per week contract one week of vacation or study leave is one 30 hour week. Travel should be reimbursed at the prevailing IRS rate.~~

### **~~Provisions relating to pastors whose contracts provide for less than 20 hours per week.~~**

Many smaller churches will want to secure pastoral leadership on a very part time basis. It is also possible that larger churches would need part time pastoral services to augment their other staff. When the time commitment for such a position is less than 20 hours per week, no pension or medical dues are required. Pension contributions would be available on a minimum participation basis. Such a person would not be eligible for medical coverage.

There will, of course, be a wide variety of tasks that a church might ask a part time person to perform. The required tasks and time commitment should be negotiated between the church and the teaching or ruling elder, then put in writing. Compensation should be at least \$25 per hour plus mileage at the prevailing IRS rate plus a modest sum for continuing education.

It is hoped that these "slightly less than 20 per week" jobs are just that and not 2/3 or 3/4 time jobs masquerading at less than half time in order to avoid Board of Pension dues.

***Presbytery of Transylvania***  
***Terms of Call Requirement for Pastoral Positions in the Presbytery***

1. The minimum for cash salary, housing equity, and continuing education must be proposed by the Commission on Pastoral Transitions and set by Presbytery each year by the last meeting before the next calendar year.
2. Ministers who live in church-provided manses receive a utilities/housing allowance to the extent necessary to cover these expenses, thus allowing them to take advantage of current IRS rulings.
3. Churches with a manse for their ministers pay at least the minimum set by Presbytery into a housing equity account to accrue for the benefit of the minister at the time of the termination of the call. These monies should be deposited in a 403-b Retirement Savings Plan (i.e. the Board of Pensions 403-b).
4. Churches without a manse provide a housing allowance sufficient to cover rent or mortgage payments, insurance, taxes, utilities, furnishings, and maintenance.
5. Churches reimburse their ministers for one-half of their IRS Schedule SE self-employed social security with this amount to be paid monthly, quarterly, or annually, as the minister and church decide.
6. Churches pay the entire pension and medical payment for their pastor. Any coverage of family (coverage of spouse and/or children) is negotiable, and should be based on the principles described above. ~~(the pastor and eligible family members are covered under the medical plan).~~
7. Churches reimburse pastors for the actual expense incurred in their professional work, including mileage, food and lodging; books and magazines and computer applications.
8. Churches pay at least the minimum set by Presbytery for continuing education. This amount may accumulate over a period of three years. The content of this continuing education will be negotiated with the session. (SEE the policy on Continuing Education.)
9. Ministers receive 4 weeks of paid vacation annually.
10. Ministers receive 2 weeks of continuing education leave annually. This time may accumulate up to six weeks over a three-year period.
11. *The Presbytery considers G-2.0804 Terms of Call and its provisions for a 12-week paid family leave to be the minimum required for this Presbytery*
12. *After 6 or more years of continuous service to a particular church, the Minister and certified educators shall be eligible for a sabbatical of sufficient length and at a time*

*approved by the congregation and Minister.*

## ***Continuing Education Requirements for Ministers in Transylvania Presbytery***

The purpose of providing ministers with time and money for continuing education is to allow them to improve their effectiveness as ministers. Study leave gives them the resources to study particular topics in depth, learn new skills, and grow as ministers.

Churches in Transylvania Presbytery shall provide their ministers with funds for continuing education and a minimum of two weeks annual study leave. Upon negotiation with the Session, continuing education time and money can accumulate for up to three years to provide for an extended study period.

Both the topic and the schedule for continuing education should be negotiated with and approved by the Session. The minister should report back to the Session about the continuing education experience upon its completion.

## ***~~Sick Leave Policy for Transylvania Presbytery~~***

### ~~Sick Leave/Personal Leave~~

~~The purpose of this leave is to allow the church staff members (ordained and lay) to take time off with pay for sickness and other needs. Such need might include childbirth, illness, injury, or death in one's immediate family, and jury duty or other responsibilities. Sick leave/personal leave shall normally be calculated at one (1) day per month of service or employment. This leave may accumulate up to sixty (60) days.~~

### ~~Extended Sick Leave/Personal Leave~~

~~In cases where more extended leave of absence is indicated, negotiations shall be made between the staff member (or his/her surrogate in case of incapacity) and the Session, with the advice and approval of the Pastoral Transitions Commission, to determine appropriate and humane terms of leave extension. Such extended leave may be with or without pay, as negotiated and approved. It includes, but is not limited to maternity/paternity leave, major illnesses, surgeries, accidental injuries, or critical family situation. For those participating in the Board of Pension~~

## ***Involuntary Dissolution Policy***

Although the *Book of Order* clearly outlines the basic process for the dissolution of pastoral relationships (G-2.09), it does not fully address the implications of a situation in which the pastor does not concur with that action (G-2.0903), a situation commonly described as an “involuntary dissolution.”

The dissolution of a pastoral relationship is quite often a time of great turmoil and distress for both the congregation and the departing pastor, and this is especially true in the case of an involuntary dissolution.

It is the responsibility of all parties involved (the pastor, the congregation, and the presbytery's Commissions on Pastoral Transitions and Congregational Issues) to work together in the case of an involuntary dissolution to address the sometimes conflicting needs and competing concerns of the congregation and the departing pastor.

Pastors do not receive unemployment benefits from the state, and our denomination cannot guarantee that a departing pastor will receive a new call within any specified period of time. Therefore, in the case of an involuntary dissolution, fair and adequate terms of severance are necessary to protect the departing pastor during the search for a new call.

While such provisions may present a degree of financial hardship for the congregation, the lack of such provisions would almost certainly present an even greater degree of financial hardship for the departing pastor and his or her family.

~~In order to address the concerns outlined above, the Commission on Ministry recommends that, effective January 1, 2006, the following provisions be added to Transylvania Presbytery's standard form for terms of call (See *Book of Order* G-14.0507e).~~

In the event of an involuntary dissolution of your pastoral relationship with this congregation, for any cause other than *unethical behavior*, criminal activity, sexual misconduct, financial malfeasance, or a finding of guilt in a disciplinary case resulting in either temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordained office or removal from ordained office, you shall be afforded as severance benefits a continuation of your then current salary and benefits being provided for a negotiated period of time which shall take into account your tenure...among us—but not less than three months. Such compensation will cease when full-time employment is secured. *If part time ministry is found while receiving severance, the amount of severance being paid may be reduced by a commiserate amount to what is being received at the part-time ministry job (Pulpit Supply is not included in offsetting severance). This will not apply to jobs taken outside a ministry context. The terms of the severance will be detailed in an agreement approved by the congregation of the church, Pastor and the Pastoral Transitions Commission.* Such payments shall be made monthly, not as a lump sum settlement. During the severance period, it shall remain the congregation's responsibility to continue all benefit payments to the Board of Pensions.

In the case of criminal activity, sexual misconduct, financial malfeasance, or a finding of guilt in a disciplinary case resulting in either temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordained office or removal from ordained office, in an effort to be redemptive and in consideration of your family and with respect for your past ministry to this congregation, you shall be afforded as severance benefits a continuation of your then current salary and benefits being provided for a period of one month.

