



Upper New York Conference

The United Methodist Church

To live the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to be God's love with our neighbors in all places.

August 2025

TO: Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee Chairpersons, Treasurers, Pastors Serving Local Churches
FROM: Julie Valeski, Conference Benefits Officer
RE: Pastor Compensation Information 2026

Greetings to our colleagues in the local churches of the Upper New York Conference!

Information has been prepared related to pastor compensation in our Conference for 2026. The documents contain important financial information related to clergy benefits that will be helpful in preparing for Charge Conferences this Fall. Pastors, Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee Chairpersons and local church Treasurers will receive the documents via email. This information, as well as an abundance of other helpful resources, can also be viewed and/or downloaded from the UNY Conference website <https://www.unyumc.org/about/benefits-administrative-services> on the right side of the screen, select **2026 Pastor's Compensation**. **It is IMPERATIVE that the pastor or S/PPRC Chair provide an approved copy of the compensation form to the church Treasurer following charge conference.**

Salary Computation:

1. See **Setting the Pastor's Compensation document**. **PLEASE** read the document before completing the salary sheet.
2. ***There is a separate compensation sheet for Retired clergy appointed to churches and lay supply pastors. Please make sure you use the correct form.***
3. Please use the EXCEL spreadsheet versions of the attached worksheets and report form (available on the UNY's *Charge Conference Forms Platform* ([https://umcdata.net/Church Reporting](https://umcdata.net/Church%20Reporting)) *and on the conference website:* <https://www.unyumc.org/resources/forms>
4. **Salary Forms are due in your District Office by October 1st and must be uploaded to the Charge Conference Forms Platform (see above).**
5. Salary support grant application process (Equitable Compensation) will be published on the conference website in **September 2025 for 2026 grants**. Applications are due to the District offices **early October 2025**.

Clergy Benefits:

1. Benefit premiums have been developed and approved by the Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits with the expectation that 100% of the benefit premiums will be paid in a timely manner each month.
2. 2026 health insurance rates, retirement plan costs, and disability/death benefit premiums are provided in the accompanying document, **Setting the Pastor's Compensation**, and on the Clergy Compensation Form. Note: Workers Comp and short-term disability, which is covered and billed through the multi-peril church insurance program, are not included in this information.
3. As in 2025, full-time health benefit eligible clergy will receive a premium credit which is a set amount of money the participant can use to "shop" for their coverage. If the participant chooses a plan(s) that costs more than their premium credit, they will be billed for the difference. If the participant has premium credit money left over, it will be available to use in a health spending account (the account corresponds to the type of plan they choose). The CBOPHB has voted to set premium credits to 85% of the default plan (C2000) for 2026 and forward. Accordingly, the CBOPHB will set church blended rate premiums each year to share the other increased costs.
4. Dental and Vision Coverage will continue to be offered as part of the HealthFlex Exchange platform during annual election in late October/early November. The dental carrier remains CIGNA. The vision carrier remains VSP. Dental and vision will be billed as part of the HealthFlex personal premiums (PERS).



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Clergy Considerations:

When considering your compensation package, it is a good time to review your financial goals and options.

1. Review the health plan deductibles and co-payments you have experienced. There are NO Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRAs) for the PPO plan.
2. The Pastor's Personal Contribution (PERS) for any HealthFlex Exchange plan elections will be equivalent to any elections over the premium credit amount. Consider enrolling in the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) available through HealthFlex to help manage your deductible and co-payment costs while also reducing your taxable income. FSAs can only be elected during Open Enrollment. (Limited use rules apply if enrolled in a high deductible plan.)
3. Are you saving enough for retirement? Consider starting or increasing your personal contribution to Compass or the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP). Review the **Compass Information** document regarding the 4% match for Compass; use the appropriate **Compass or UMPIP Contribution Election Form** to make changes. Take advantage of the FREE EY financial planning offered through Ernst & Young.
4. Do you have household expenses that could qualify as a housing exclusion? Use of this exclusion is not an additional expense to your church. It can reduce your taxable income by excluding eligible housing expenses from your federal income taxes. The housing exclusion form is included on the Charge Conference Forms Platform and the conference webpage (see below). Housing exclusions must be signed and in place before the start of a new appointment or before the start of a new calendar year.
5. The Annual Conference approved the designation of a separate amount for continuing education within the clergy Accountable Reimbursement Plan (ARP). (See Clergy Support Policies) The total MINIMUM ARP will increase in 2026 to \$5,000 for full-time clergy serving one church and \$6,000 for full-time clergy serving more than one church. Within that amount you need to identify how much will be designated for continuing education and professional expenses.

Charge Conference Forms:

Other forms that are needed for your church/charge conference are available on the UNY website's Charge Conference Forms Platform along with their deadlines (see above).

Clergy Appointment Moves:

If a clergy appointment move (of any distance) is paid for by the Conference, a 1099-MISC reflecting the actual cost of the move will be sent to you at year end. Under federal tax law, the cost of a move paid on your behalf is taxable income which must be reported. The expense is non-deductible.

****NOTE:** Effective 1/1/2024, this cost is no longer considered pension or retirement eligible income. Accordingly, your church(es) will no longer see a one month, one time, increase in the Pastor's CPP, Compass or UMPIP on their billing statement.

Important Dates:

See Deadlines on the Annual Report Form Check List

Late October/Early November – dates to be announced -- Open Enrollment and FSA Election Period

• This is important for anyone who:

- 1). Waived HealthFlex coverage in 2025 and wishes to enroll for 2026;
- 2). Wants to elect an FSA or HSA for 2026;
- 3). Wants to make changes to their 2025 elections (for 2026; i.e., Add/drop dependents, add/drop coverages);

Have you checked out our NEW Church Chat Video Library on the conference website? It is a place where we chat about all things Finance, Human Resources and Benefits. A new Church Chat about 2026 clergy compensation forms is coming very soon! <https://bit.ly/unychurchchat>

If you need any assistance, please contact Julie Valeski (ext. 2001 or JulieValeski@unyumc.org).

cc: District, Superintendents, Local Church, Treasurers