

UNYAC2026:10 REPORTING AND STUDY OF CLERGY COMPENSATION DATA

Book of Discipline (¶): N/A

Book of Resolutions (¶): N/A

Conference Committee/Agency that would be affected by/responsible for implementation if passed: Assistant to the Bishop (or designee), Conference Statistician, Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits, Conference Commission on Equitable Compensation, Conference Committee on Finance and Administration, Conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women, Conference Commission on Religion and Race, Conference Leadership Team, and Conference Staff and Cabinet (support)

Financial Implications: No direct impact on the Annual Conference Ministry Share Budget. Any costs associated with the Task Force's work would be discretionary and subject to approval by the appropriate Conference entities.

Brief Rationale:

This resolution increases transparency around clergy compensation so the Upper New York Annual Conference can faithfully study pay patterns, address inequities, and uphold our commitment to just and equitable compensation. Public reporting supports accountability, informed discernment, and holy conferencing as we seek to grow in holiness and love of neighbor.

Whereas the local churches of the Upper New York Annual Conference do submit annual church statistics data that is analyzed and interpreted by a variety of connectional entities within and beyond the annual conference on a yearly basis;

Whereas yearly publications of the *Upper New York Annual Conference Journal* do include therein a statistical table compiling selected lines from the Annual church statistics information supplied by our local churches each year;

Whereas these annual statistical tables have not included data pertaining to pastoral compensation contained within lines 39–45 of the annual church statistics reports;

Whereas some other annual conferences within the Northeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church (UMC) include data pertaining to pastoral compensation in the statistical tables of their respective annual conference journals; as did some of the predecessor annual conferences of the Upper New York Annual Conference prior to unification;

Whereas the people of The United Methodist Church “endorse the establishment and enforcement of policies that guarantee workers fair and equitable compensation, sometimes referred to as a living wage.” as outlined in our Social Principles (Economic Justice, C. The Dignity of Work);

Whereas the establishment and enforcement of policies within the Upper New York Annual Conference that guarantee its own workers fair and equitable compensation when compensation data is withheld from the public and not fully transparent is significantly hindered;

Whereas the 2024 General Conference (GC) of The UMC resolved that Wespath would undertake a pay equity study of pastors serving within United Methodist churches in the United States, with the intent of issuing a report to the 2028 session of the UMC GC on the nationwide trends in pay when analyzed by linear regression normalized for gender, race and other similar variables;

Whereas this study is currently utilizing Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) data and limited to full time appointments which are heavily skewed towards elders in full connection and thus potentially missing inequities for part-time appointments which are often held by licensed local pastors, deacons, and others who are paid less than elders serving full-time;

Whereas Wespath does not routinely collect other demographic information (e.g. race and ethnicity) of retirement plan enrollees which are contained in our local church statistics and therefore must rely on the willingness of all annual conferences to provide these data on a granular level to them for use in this modeling;

Whereas Wespath does not collect other local charge specific data, such as community type (rural vs suburb vs urban, etc.), racial makeup of the congregation, and single vs multi-point charge appointments;

Whereas Wespath intends to publish most statistics on a national level and very few at below a jurisdictional level and will only be analyzing data from 2024 and forward;

Whereas the Upper New York Annual Conference has all relevant data going back from the time of union, including both clergy and congregational demographics for all pastoral appointments, as well as charge specific data;

Whereas these additional data will allow for deeper study and additional context that could inform how to interpret these data, prevent conditions and trends within Upper New York from

being diluted and obfuscated by potentially different national data, and serve as a complementary piece to Wespeth's work;

Whereas this deeper study will require greater transparency surrounding the compensation given to pastors as contained in the annual church statistics reports;

Whereas though no individual's inherent worth and dignity is defined by their compensation or material wealth, it cannot be denied that the powers of this world, governed by the logic of markets and not the logic of the Gospel, do place higher values on persons with greater incomes and material possessions in such a manner as to limit access to the full dignity of life to those;

Whereas given that numbers without context can be misinterpreted or weaponized, many factors shape clergy compensation, and while our polity sets minimums, it does not set caps, all reasonable caution must be taken to avoid unintended harm that publicizing identifiable compensation data could cause in the absence of safeguards or explanatory notes to ensure responsible interpretation.

Therefore be it resolved that the Upper New York Annual Conference hereby lift any and all restrictions, written or implicit, on the totality of the annual church statistical data—including Line 39, Line 40, Line 41a, Line 41b, Line 41c, Line 42a, Line 42b, Line 42c, Line 43, Line 44, Line 45a, Line 45b, Line 45, Line 45c, and Line 45d—dating back to the unification of the Upper New York Annual Conference that has been deemed to be confidential contained within the conference archives or any other electronic or physical information storage systems maintained by the annual conference or its personnel for the purposes of reporting, analysis, and publication in conference journals and reports;

Be it further resolved that the Upper New York Annual Conference authorize the formation of a task force consisting of one voting representative from each of the following conference teams:

1. The Commission on Equitable Compensation
2. The Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits
3. The Conference Leadership Team
4. The Conference Appointive Cabinet
5. The Conference Commission on Religion and Race
6. The Conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women
7. The Conference Commission on Archives and History;

Be it further resolved that each of the aforementioned teams shall designate their representative to this Task Force in a manner it deems appropriate no later than July 1, 2026;

Be it further resolved that this task force be convened and called to order by the Bishop or his designee no later than July 31, 2026 for the purpose of organizing itself in the manner the task force deems appropriate;

Be it further resolved that the scope of this task force's work shall be to study the annual church statistical data pertaining to compensation paid to appointed or assigned clergy and personnel to local churches dating back to the unification of the Upper New York Annual Conference and report to the 2027 Session of the Upper New York Annual Conference during a plenary session on notable findings and patterns from the data studied, including, but not limited to, answers to the following questions:

1. What safeguards or explanatory notes should accompany published compensation data to ensure responsible interpretation?
2. What pay discrepancies exist, if any, or have existed across district, gender, age, and race across the Upper New York Annual Conference?
3. To what extent do compensation patterns correlate with congregation size, worship attendance, or operating budget, and where do disparities persist even after controlling for those variables?
4. What longitudinal patterns exist, if any, indicating that certain groups experience slower salary growth over time within comparable appointments?
5. How does compensation change across appointment transitions for clergy of different characteristics, or credential levels?
6. What identifiable differences exist, if any, in compensation outcomes between first-time appointments, reappointments, and mid-career moves?
7. What consistent district-level or regional differences exist, if any, in clergy compensation that cannot be explained by cost of living or church size?
8. How do multi-point charges compare to single-charge appointments in total compensation and effective workload?
9. How does the lack or presence of publicly available compensation data affect clergy morale, congregational trust, and perceptions of fairness within the Conference?
10. What best practices from other annual conferences could inform UNY's approach to reporting and contextualizing compensation data?
11. What changes, if any, should be considered to minimum salary standards, appointment practices, or reporting mechanisms in light of the data?

Be it further resolved that if this task force is unable to complete this work prior to the 2027 Session of the Upper New York Annual Conference, it shall provide the 2027 Session of the

Upper New York Annual Conference with a progress report of its work and an estimation of further time needed to complete its work;

Be it further resolved that this task force be authorized to include in its report recommendations or actions for the Upper New York Annual Conference to consider and enact in the course of holy conferencing;

Be it further resolved that the Upper New York Annual Conference direct its statistician to provide Lines 39–45 from each local church’s annual church statistics report dating back to the unification of the Upper New York Annual Conference as a separate statistical table to be included at the task forces discretion as an appendix to their final report;

Be it further resolved that the work of this task force shall be supported by the staff and cabinet of the Upper New York Annual Conference at the task force’s request through the Assistant to the Bishop within the constraints of existing personnel limitations of time and job functions;

Be it further resolved that this task force be authorized to request necessary funding to complete its work from sources outside of the Annual Conference Ministry Share Budget, including, but not limited to, the Unrestricted Reserve Funds of the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits, and that these requests shall be considered in a timely fashion by the entities that steward these funds;

Be it further resolved that this task force shall be dissolved upon the completion and reporting of its work to the annual conference;

Be it further resolved that the Upper New York Annual Conference direct its statistician to include data from Lines 39–45 supplied by local churches for 2026 in the statistical tables section of the *2027 Upper New York Annual Conference Journal* with appropriate explanatory notes as established by that task force and that these data provided by local churches for subsequent years be included in the appropriate subsequent journals until otherwise directed by the members of the Upper New York Annual Conference;

Be it further resolved that nothing in this resolution shall be construed as requiring the publication of personally identifying compensation information beyond what is already reported at the charge or local church level.

SUBMITTED BY:

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Schenectady: First UMC

OTHER SIGNEES: Pastor Rebekah Solar, University United Methodist Church; Home Missioner Kevin Nelson, esq., Schenectady: First UMC; Carmen FS Vianese, Nunda UMC; Rev. Sara Baron, Schenectady: First UMC; Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Quick, Drew Theological School; Rev. Teresa M. Sivers, Endicott: Central UMC; Mike Mullin, Rochester: Asbury First UMC; Rev. Robert F. Long, Schenectady: First UMC; Rev. Dr. Michelle Bogue-Trost, Rochester: Asbury First UMC; Pastor Joel Holcomb, Center Brunswick UMC/ Nassau: Grace UMC; Janet Huston, Schenectady: First UMC; Rev. Carmen L. Perry, Bowmansville UMC; Rev. Brett Johnson, Canton and Massena: Grace UMC; Michele Cole, Schenectady: First UMC; Pastor Ian Carlos Urriola-Schonewolf, Burnt Hills UMC; Rev. Heidi Chamberlain, Potsdam UMC; Rev. Alicia M Wood, Ithaca: St. Paul's UMC; Deaconess Tara Barnes, Binghamton: Tabernacle UMC; Pastor Samuel Smith, Fairport UMC; Rev. Kim Krause, Ravena: Grace UMC; Pastor Rebecca Richards, Whiteface Community UMC; Rev. Rebekah Sweet, Greene: First UMC