



ennsylvania Southeast Conference ~ United Church of Christ

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Psec.org

Search and Call Ministry in Southeastern Pennsylvania

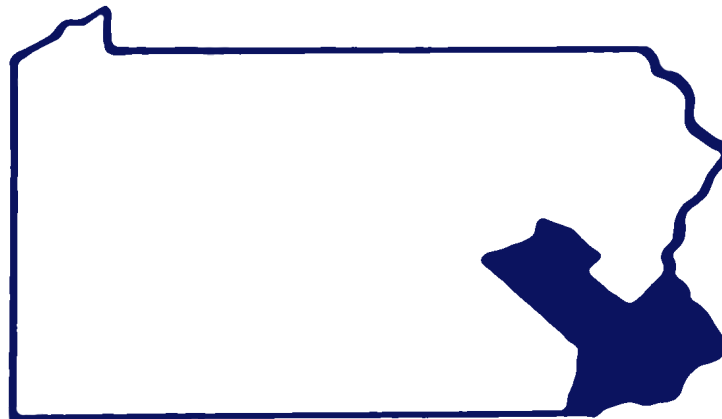


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Are you being called to...

create new ministries in a small city where the neighborhood has changed faster than the neighborhood church?

bring hope to a town that was built around a coal mine that will never reopen?

guide the adventure for a small church looking to weave together their ministry with a similar church nearby?

minister and mentor to a community that feels they have been abandoned by their denomination as they continue to process the United Church of Christ's more liberal views?

dream new dreams and provide comfort to a congregation after a beloved pastor's retirement following three decades in that pulpit?

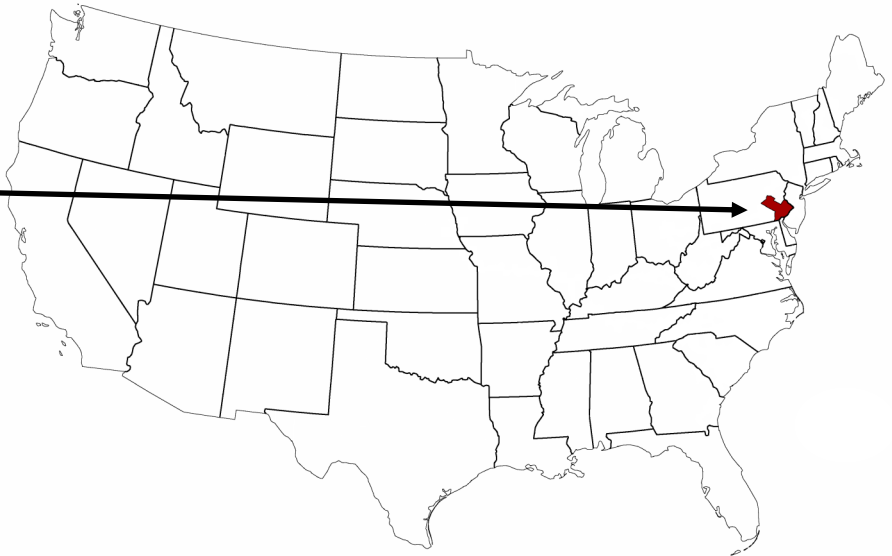
Pennsylvania Southeast Conference covers a diverse area: Philadelphia and its suburbs are in our southern region, but the conference also includes several small cities, and stretches into farming communities and the heart of anthracite coal region. Our churches are just as diverse, with memberships ranging from 1,500 to just a dozen. Despite our diversity, we are more alike than different and all of our worshipping communities are looking for excellence in their leadership.

This document serves to provide prospective clergy with information on the search and call process in our conference, the structure and culture of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, why **we want you** to consider ministry in southeastern Pennsylvania, and some of the ways in which this is an exciting place to be right now.

As you explore this document and learn more about PSEC, please visit our website, www.psec.org or contact Rev. Kevin McLemore (mclemore@psec.org, or 484-949-8774 ext. 302) to learn more about the exciting missions and ministries of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference.

PSEC: Who are we now?

Did you know, there are 151 United Church of Christ congregations in this tiny corner of Pennsylvania?



PSEC's church-dense atmosphere can be very beneficial to your future ministry:

- **There are sections of the conference where you can find 30 full-time churches within a 30 minute drive from a central location.** After serving a church for several years, you can look for a new call without having to move your family.
- **The furthest any of our churches is from another UCC congregation is seven miles.** Create friendships, partnerships, and peer-support groups in your community. Work with other pastors to do the work of Church in a new way.
- **The conference office is no more than two hours from any church.** Take advantage of conference resources, Pastoral Excellence Groups, continuing education opportunities, and events without a long drive.
- **There are an average of 21 UCC churches in each county in our conference.** Because all of our churches are ministering in the same communities, programming and special resources are designed to target the realities all of the congregations are facing in their neighborhoods.

For more information on Search and Call in Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, visit

psec.org/search

or contact Rev. Kevin McLemore, **mclemore@psec.org** or 484-949-8774 ext. 302

PSEC: Who are we now?



Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, United Church of Christ is made up of 151 churches with 33,500 members in Philadelphia and the surrounding six counties. The conference is a unique blend of congregations, some that stem from the colonial foundations of our nation, to new ethnic and multicultural congregations that have become part of the UCC in recent years.

We are blessed with a compact geography that makes us one of the smallest conferences of the United Church of Christ geographically, and yet numerically one of the larger ones. This provides opportunities for friendship and peer-support, but also chances to work together, sharing resources and skills.

Many of our churches (11 percent) have had the same pastor for more than 15 years. However, many more are in a time of transition. Recently, the number of churches at some point in the search process peaked at 52 churches. We expect the number of searches to remain high as many of our long-serving pastors approach retirement age. More than half of our churches are being served by a pastor who is currently eligible for retirement or will be in the next five years. Our churches will be looking for new ideas and renewed energy as they advance to new stages in their ministries.



PSEC: Who is God calling us to become?

Ministries of the Conference

Over the past decade, the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference has gone through some difficult times. The “Church House” and camp were sold. Financial and practical problems were overcome and the conference is moving forward with a clear purpose and renewed energy.

One of our resources which strongly influences who God is calling us to become is the PSEC New Ministries Fund. This grant program was created following the sale of the Church House, to fund mission work led by churches and pastors up to \$15,000 per request. Applications are accepted twice a year to detail our churches’ dreams for new ministries. Funds are awarded based on the mission, the community impact, and if the ministry supports the PSEC vision. Funds have been given for a variety of missions including: to expand food pantry services, teach life skills classes, create an online leadership training portal for PSEC churches, create new worship styles, and train church leaders and clergy to minister to veterans.

Keystone Project

In January 2022, the Conference Ministers of the four Pennsylvania Conferences gathered to discuss the urgency of issues confronting all settings of the UCC. They met with an eye toward confronting the divisions and hostilities of our world, and listening with a deep sense of our responsibility to answer Jesus’ prayer, ‘that they may all be one.’ They dreamed about new ways to serve Jesus and our churches by drawing on the strengths of our clergy, congregations, leaders, and Conference staff.

We recognize our duty to find and develop the leadership needs of our congregations. We own the very real financial challenges that impact the future of many ministries. The “Keystone Study Group,” a group of representatives from all four PA Conferences, was created to explore the possibilities of responding as one. The group meets regularly, providing updates to the Conferences following each meeting. It is not yet known what will come of this Keystone Project, but we are excited for the possibilities.



PSEC: Who is God calling us to become?

PSEC is the link that connects our church's various and diverse ministries both locally and globally. Together, we provide our local churches, pastors and congregations with the training and inspiration they need to carry out our church's wider mission. We are stronger together; therefore, we embrace diversity, and above all, we spread God's love!

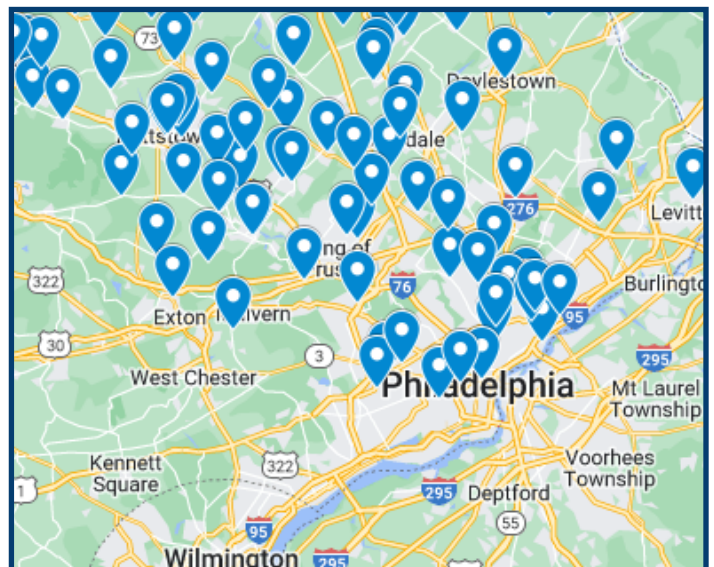
The Pennsylvania Southeast Conference nurtures an ethos of expectation, experimentation and transformation throughout the conference. We encourage lifelong learning, continued personal growth, and awareness of our changing world through continuing education, diversity workshops, and boundary training. We strive to bolster and build adaptive leaders through our pastoral leadership programs, lay and clergy trainings, conferences and webinars to support clergy and build relationships between and among ministry partners. Many of those programs are detailed on the next pages, but information on even more programs and resources is available at psec.org and new opportunities are presented each year.

The PSEC New Church Start Fund

In Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, together, we are now shifting the narrative of Mainline decline to a story of hope for a generative future. We are the model for those seeking transformation in their denominational settings across this nation. We believe in the God of resurrection, and in God we place our faith and hope.

Through generous legacy gifts from closing congregations and gifts from existing churches and individuals within the Conference, the PSEC New Church Start Fund was established in early 2017. The Fund is available for communities of people and their leaders who are seeking to begin new churches within southeastern Pennsylvania. In the 2022, some of these funds were used to support a new church in Pottstown. Open Table UCC is theologically progressive, and Pottstown-focused with Jesus at the center.

More funds are available. We dream of a new church in the suburbs west of Philadelphia, where a UCC presence is currently missing. No one has yet expressed a call to begin this new ministry.

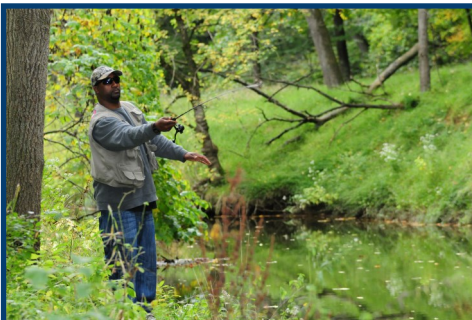


PSEC: Who is our neighbor?

Our communities, though diverse in many ways, are plagued by the same problems: poverty, hunger, access to affordable health care, violence, and substance abuse. However, the counties in Pennsylvania Southeast Conference consistently average better than the state average. According to the 2016 Pennsylvania Health Report, our region has fewer adults in fair or poor health, a higher per capita personal income, lower unemployment, more diversity, and lower poverty than the state average.



Photo by R. Kennedy, courtesy of Visit Philly



Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board



Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board

Southeastern Pennsylvania has a large variety of **attractions**. Hike the Appalachian Trail. Cheer on a professional sports team. Visit any number of amusement parks. There's something for everybody. This region has skiing, fishing, biking, historical sites, cultural attractions, and a large variety of shopping options from markets to malls. For even more attractions, drive for just two to three hours and find yourself in New York City, Washington DC, Baltimore, or a variety of Atlantic Ocean beaches.

There are dozens of opportunities for **higher education** in the seven counties that make up this conference. With nearly 100 colleges, universities, and institutions of higher education, there are opportunities to further one's education in every region of our conference. Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and Palmer Theological Seminary are within PSEC's boundaries. And nearby are Moravian Theological Seminary and Lancaster Theological Seminary, a UCC-affiliated seminary that offers a three-year doctor of ministry program that uses online coursework and just five days of on-campus work per semester.

Southeastern PA is also home to many award-winning and nationally-recognized **hospitals**.

PSEC: Who is our neighbor?

History and Culture

The area encompassed by the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference is the heartland of the German Reformed Church. Settled by German and Swiss Reformed as well as Lutherans, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Quakers in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, this part of William Penn's Holy Experiment witnessed the first German Reformed Holy Communion in 1725.

The Conference continues to welcome new congregations to the United Church of Christ, enriching our history and broadening our knowledge of God's works in our combined history. While our conference has identified itself primarily with the Reformed traditions, with some churches claiming a Congregational tradition, the growth in our Conference has been through the addition of African-American, Indian, and Hispanic congregations. The addition of these congregations deepens and broadens our historic roots while also enriching our community life and worship.

Another part of our growth as a conference is through our union churches (UCC and Lutheran congregations with separate pastors sharing the same building), shared ministry churches (UCC and Lutheran congregations sharing one pastor in the same building), and congregations of UCC/Presbyterian, UCC/Disciples of Christ, UCC/Baptist, UCC/Schwenkfelder, and UCC/United Methodist constituencies.

There are congregations who have declared themselves to be Open and Affirming, while others welcome all but do not bear the designation.

Our Conference comprises five associations in seven counties. The Administrative Center, headquarters for the Conference, is located in Pottstown and no congregation is more than 2 hours away. This proximity makes it possible for both clergy and lay people alike to attend worship services, seminars, and workshops; and to participate in the Ministry and Mission Teams of the Conference.



Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board



Chester County Conference and Visitors Bureau

Our Conference enjoys several international partnerships, having frequent exchanges with our partner churches of the Evangelische Landeskirche Anhalts in the former East Germany, the Federation of Baptist Churches in Cuba, and the Medak and Karnataka Dioceses of the Church of South India. A few churches still have an occasional worship service in Hoch Deutsch or in the Pennsylvanisch Deutsch dialect. In addition, we have churches with services in both Spanish and English.

Resources

Retreats for clergy

Throughout the year, there are many opportunities for clergy to gather for times of renewal, collegiality, and education. Annual three-day events include:

- **Clergy Convocation**—held in May for clergy in the four Pennsylvania UCC conferences
- **Women’s Clergy Retreat**—held each January for female authorized ministers
- **Men’s Clergy Retreat**—held each October for male authorized ministers
- **Ventures Retreat**—a spiritual retreat in September for lay people and authorized ministers to enjoy faith and fellowship in a relaxed and peaceful setting
- **Walking with God**—held in November for lay people and clergy, usually includes a keynote speaker and workshops
- **MID Academy**—held annually for Members in Discernment in order to teach essential practices of ministry excellence



Men's Clergy Retreat

Pennsylvania Southeast Conference staff resources

The staff of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference strive to provide our churches and pastors with training and inspiration. Our staff provides quarterly support and training for church secretaries and administrators, annual bookkeeper/treasurer training, and workshops for consistory presidents. Our finance manager sends monthly tips and info emails to bookkeepers and treasurers.

Staff hold workshops and training events on everything from inspirational preaching to social media training to how to negotiate a Call Agreement. More than 100 written resources are available in the resource library on our website and more are added regularly.

Pastoral Excellence Program

The Pastoral Excellence Program is designed to bring together people of shared interests in peer learning groups called Communities of Practice. Across the conference nearly a dozen groups bring together clergy, interims, lay ministers, Christian Educators, and others for support and learning.



Trained facilitators help each Community of Practice develop a group covenant describing their focus. In this challenging time in ministry, these groups help to strengthen our clergy and lay members, and in doing so, strengthen our congregations and their ministry.

There is a fee of \$250 per year for participants that covers the cost of the facilitator and any other expenses. We ask our congregations to pay this fee for their clergy. We have limited scholarship funds if needed.

Congregational Development

Like any other living organism, the church operates at its best when all its systems are healthy. Also, like a living organism, the health of a church does not happen by chance, but when those who share in its ministry are proactive about monitoring and maintaining that health. This leads to healthy, energetic churches, full of hope and vitality. The Associate Conference Minister of Congregational Development and the Congregational Development Team assist churches in the diagnostic work of understanding their level of health, the proactive work of moving towards healthier behavior, and the redemptive work of reenergizing struggling systems.

MissionInsite

PSEC provides its churches with 24/7 access to a wealth of local demographic information at no charge through the online resource MissionInsite, providing:

- a system connecting church members to their communities, enabling them to discover underserved ministry opportunities;
- assistance for congregations in transition;
- detailed racial, ethnic, and community information;
- comprehensive community profiles for shaping mission; and
- strategic resources for church planters, enabling them to understand a planting area.

Search and Call Procedures

The Search and Call Ministry helps both PSEC congregations seeking pastors and those authorized ministers who are interested in serving within the conference. The Search and Call Ministry, under the direction of Associate Conference Minister Rev. Kevin McLemore, offers prayerful guidance and support to any church from the time its pastor resigns to the election and installation of a new pastor, including: recruiting interims, training the search committee, developing the Local Church Profile, circulating Ministerial Profiles, verifying candidate standing, and assisting with interviews, elections, and installations.

If you are seeking a call in the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, please indicate your willingness to serve in Pennsylvania Southeast on the UCC Profiles Portal. Our churches are instructed to accept profiles or equivalent resumes only through our Conference office.

You are eligible to fill out a UCC Ministerial Profile if you are:

- A pastor holding ministerial standing in an Association of the United Church of Christ
- A Member in Discernment who has been approved for ordination pending a call
- A Disciples of Christ pastor who holds Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing
- A pastor of another denomination who has been granted Privilege of Call by a UCC Association Committee on Ministry



If you are actively seeking and interested in churches in our conference, your profile will only be sent to individual churches at your request. Occasionally, the Associate Conference Minister may reach out to candidates who appear to be a good fit for a church's specific circumstances — such as a “union church” that is UCC and another denomination or a church that requires a pastor with a very specific skillset or experience. However, profiles will never be sent to a church without the permission of a candidate.

In either of these cases, you will receive notification that your profile has been sent to a search committee. If, upon reading your profile, a local church Search Committee feels that you might be a possible match and wishes to be in conversation with you, the chair of the committee will be in touch with you and send you the church's profile. At this point, we will contact your authorizing judicatory (Association/Conference/Denomination) to confirm your authorization for ministry.

To learn more, please visit the Search and Call section of our website, psec.org, or contact us:

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Registrar and Assistant for Search and Call
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Conference Guidelines

Pennsylvania Southeast Conference Compensation Guidelines

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In the call to ministry, a pastor and a congregation enter into a covenantal relationship. In this relationship, the pastor pledges to care for the spiritual needs of the community and the congregation in turn pledges to care for both the spiritual and temporal needs of the pastor. An important part of these temporal needs is a just wage consistent with the community in which the congregation resides, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

Mindful of this covenantal relationship, the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference provides the following guidelines for clergy compensation. The recommended salary structure takes into consideration both size of congregation and length of experience in ministry. These figures assume an ordained pastor and a full-time position (see special section for licensed or part-time ministers). In using these guidelines as a starting point for conversation, congregations are also asked to take into consideration additional factors unique to each setting, including annual performance reviews, additional advanced degrees, specialized training, and other measures of faithful and effective ministry (see for example the UCC Marks for Faithful and Effective Ministry). Also to be considered is the cost of living, particularly housing, in the particular vicinity of the church.

The 2024 figures shown below include a 3.0% increase.

CASH SALARY recommendations for full-time pastors when no parsonage is provided (includes housing allowance*; years of pastoral service are cumulative, not limited to current setting)

Members	0 – 3 Years	4 – 10 Years	11 – 15 Years	Over 15 Years
0-50	70,143 – 73,666	71,738 – 76,648	73,332 – 77,781	74,927 – 79,325
51-100	73,398 – 78,115	74,993 – 80,170	76,587 – 81,303	78,182 – 82,897
101-200	76,653 – 82,100	81,503 – 83,692	79,842 – 85,289	81,437 – 86,883
201-400	79,908 – 91,947	81,503 – 93,649	83,097 – 95,355	84,692 – 97,057
401-800	86,155 – 105,742	88,115 – 107,695	90,075 – 109,655	92,034 – 111,614
Over 800	97,395 – 119,533	99,609 – 121,744	101,952 – 123,958	104,036 – 126,173

* **Housing Allowance:** The percentage to be considered as housing allowance in the above grid is to be determined annually by the pastor and the church governing body.

Conference Guidelines

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CASH SALARY recommendations for full-time pastors when parsonage IS provided:

Members	0 – 3 Years	4 – 10 Years	11 – 15 Years	Over 15 Years
0-50	53,953 – 60,165	54,765 – 61,473	55,183 – 62,781	57,636 – 64,094
51-100	57,208 – 63,687	58,020 – 64,995	58,438 – 66,303	60,891 – 67,616
101-200	60,463 – 67,209	61,275 – 68,517	61,693 – 69,825	64,146 – 71,138
201-400	63,718 – 70,731	64,530 – 72,039	64,948 – 73,347	67,401 – 74,660
401-800	66,275 – 81,339	67,782 – 82,845	69,288 – 84,350	70,793 – 85,857
Over 800	74,919 – 91,947	76,626 – 93,650	78,326 – 95,354	80,028 – 97,057

In addition to salary and housing, congregations are expected to provide the following benefits:

- Full participation for pastor and eligible immediate family members in the Health (Plan A) and Dental (2000) and Vision Insurance Plan of the United Church of Christ or equivalent plan. (see the Pension Board website at www.pbucc.org for details)
- Participation in the Pension Plan of the United Church of Christ in the amount of 14% of the salary basis (cash salary plus housing [if parsonage is provided, at least 30% of cash salary]) and 1½ % for the Life and Disability Plan.
- Social Security allowance paid on the basis of at least 50% of the applicable self-employment rate. (Pastors are considered self-employed for Social Security purposes and do not have funds automatically withheld.) This amounts to 7.65% of the pastor's salary plus housing allowance (or 7.65% of 130% of base salary if parsonage is provided).
- Reimbursement of the cost of the Ministerial Criminal Background Check (\$160).
- Four weeks of vacation time during each 12 months of service, including four Sundays. A vacation of one month per year (30 days).
- A Sabbatical Leave of three months after each six years of service in the current position in accordance with Conference/ Association guidelines and coordinated with the church consistory/council.
- Parental leave is extended if you and your family experience the birth or adoption of a child. You will receive twelve weeks of paid parental leave so that you can care for self and family. Unused parental leave is forfeited.
- Sick Leave: 12 days of sick leave per 12 months of service; sick leave can accumulate up to 120 days across the years of your ministry with us, though accumulated sick leave is not payable upon termination.

ASSOCIATE/ASSISTANT PASTORS

Guidelines for Associate/Assistant Pastors are recommended at least 85% of guideline figures or of Sr. Pastor Salary plus benefits.

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INTERIM PASTORS

Pastors that are serving a congregation during a pastoral transition time are expected to be compensated in salary/housing and benefits at the same level as the settled pastor that is leaving.

LICENSED AND LAY MINISTERS

It is recommended that a licensed minister, who is working comparable hours to an ordained minister, be compensated at 75% of the salary of an ordained person with similar years of experience serving the same size congregation.

PART-TIME PASTORS

If half-time or more use appropriate percentage of the above guidelines; if less than half-time, use rate of \$32 per hour. This rate will increase \$2. per year over the next five years.

Part-time pastors should also receive benefits. For pastors serving $\frac{3}{4}$ time: Using the percentage of cash salary (including housing) as a base, Pension (14%), Life and Disability (1.5%), and Social Security allowance (7.65%); full health and dental insurance.

For pastors serving half-time: Using the percentage of cash salary (including housing) as a base, Pension (14%), Life and Disability (1.5%), and Social Security allowance (7.65%); reimbursement for $\frac{1}{2}$ the cost of health, dental and vision insurance, or church may consult with pastor to cover all of the insurance, in exchange for a reduction in cash salary.

Also expected, but not part of the pastor's compensation, are the following:

- Reimbursement for travel for church work according to the rate allowable by the Internal Revenue Service is to be paid in a timely fashion.
- Reimbursement for continuing education (amount negotiated in the call and renegotiated annually, we recommend \$1,000) and allotted time for continuing education (amount negotiated in the Call, we recommend two weeks paid time including two Sundays)

It is appropriate for congregations providing a parsonage also to consider providing an Equity Allowance (\$2,000-4,000 per year) so that pastors may be able to provide housing for themselves in retirement.

This process is designed to enhance continued dialogue between pastor(s) and congregational leaders around compensation and benefits issues. It is made possible through your Basic Support of **Our Church's Wider Mission**.

SUNDAY SUPPLY

The suggested compensation for a Sunday Supply pastor is \$200 for one service, travel expenses included, and additional compensation for additional services.

Salary Team

Rev. Melissa Burkhart, Mr. Robert Ames, Rev. Susan Hanson, Rev. Sara Hertzog,
Ms. Dian Taylor-Pringle, Ms. Susan Wargo and Rev. Craig Zimmerman

Mission Statement

We, the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ, trusting in God's saving grace; proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, ministering in covenant with our local churches and associations; and reaching out in mission to the wider church and to the world; embody God's love by:

Encouraging our local churches toward new and renewed ministries; nurturing strong pastoral leadership while celebrating and developing the God-given talents of all members.

Strengthening the mission of our Conference; providing new opportunities for worship, Christian education, stewardship, evangelism and Christian witness while affirming our partnership with the whole United Church of Christ.

Preparing the way for God's reign; affirming the ecumenical unity and inclusiveness of Christ's Church; committing to the struggle for justice, mercy and peace while praying for the healing of all that separates us from God's love.



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