Pastoral Call Form

Presbytery of East Tennessee Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The _____ Presbyterian Church of _____ (City, State), being well satisfied with your qualifications for ministry and confident that we have been led to you by the Holy Spirit as one whose service will be profitable to the spiritual interests of our church and fruitful for the Kingdom of our Lord, earnestly and solemnly calls you, _____ to undertake the office of _____ (Pastor, Associate Pastor) of this congregation, beginning _____, promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement, and allegiance in the Lord.

That you may be free to devote (full-time/part-time) to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament among us, we promise and obligate ourselves to provide you the following annually:

1. Annual Cash Salary ($37,256 minimum) $_____
2. Housing Allowance ($11,178 minimum) $_____
3. Other Applicable Income (please explain) $_____
4. **Effective Salary (ES) Minimum $48,434** $_____

5. SECA Tax Reimbursement (7.65% of ES) $_____
6. Board of Pension Dues
   a. Medical Coverage (17.5% of ES) $_____
   b. Covenant Package (10% of ES) $_____
   c. Other Family Medical $_____
   d. Dental and/or Vision $_____
7. Deferred Income (employer contribution to annuity, savings, etc.) $_____

The following expenses of ministry should be reimbursed through an accountable plan:

8. Mileage Allowance (at current IRS Rate) $_____
9. Continuing Education Allowance (minimum $2,000) $_____
10. Professional Expense Allowance $_____
11. Total Compensation Package (minimum $75,000) $_____

13. Moving expenses (*half of moving costs, reimbursed by church)* $_____
14. Weeks of Paid Vacation Leave (minimum – 4) _____
15. Weeks of Paid Continuing Education Leave (minimum – 2) _____
16. Weeks of Paid Family Leave (minimum – 12) _____

The Presbytery of East Tennessee recommends that the sessions of its churches grant paid sabbaticals of at least three (3) months to its Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Certified Christian Educators during every 7th consecutive year of service to the congregation, and that time spent on sabbatical not be counted against annual vacation leave.

We promise and obligate ourselves to review with you annually the adequacy of this compensation.

In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names this _____ day of _____, _____(Year)

(Signed) _____ Clerk of the Session

Having moderated the congregational meeting which extended this call for ministerial services, I do certify that the call has been made in all respect according to the rules laid down in the Form of Government, and that the persons who signed the foregoing call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.

(Signed) _____ Moderator of the Congregational Meeting

Certification of Call

A. Action by Presbytery of Call

1. This call has been reviewed by the Committee on Ministry and recommends the Presbytery of East Tennessee approve this call.

   Date of action_____ (Signed) _____
   COM Moderator

2. This call was approved by the Presbytery of East Tennessee.

   Date of action_____ (Signed) _____
   Stated Clerk

B. Acceptance of the Call

This is to certify that I have received and accepted the call.

Date of action_____ (Signed) _____
Minister

EXPLANATIONS ON 2026 MINIMUM SALARY & BENEFITS SCHEDULE FOR MINISTERS OF THE WORD & SACRAMENT

SALARY – The terms of call shall always meet or exceed any minimum requirement of the presbytery in effect when the call is made. The session shall review annually the minister's terms of call and shall propose for congregational action (G-1.0501) such changes as the session deems appropriate, provided that they meet the presbytery's minimum requirements. The call shall include provision for a minimum of twelve weeks paid family medical leave and participation in the benefits plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including both pension and medical coverage, or any successor plan approved by the General Assembly. (Book of Order G-2.0804)

HOUSING & UTILITY ALLOWANCE – The minimum combined housing/manse allowance and salary must total $48,434. The $11,178 housing allowance is a minimum, unless a lesser amount can be justified as adequate, in which case the PET may grant an exception. The housing allowance is excludable from gross income for income tax purposes but not for self-employment tax purposes. Housing allowance is defined by the IRS as the lesser of the following amounts:

- the amount officially designated (in advance of payment) as housing allowance;
- the amount actually used to provide or rent a home; or
- the fair market rental value of the home (including furnishings, utilities, garage, etc.).

PENSION & MEDICAL – There are three packages for 2026:

1. The Congregational Pastors Package is required for installed pastors and may be offered to any congregational pastoral leader scheduled to work 20 hours or more weekly, including PC(USA) ministers and commissioned pastors. This package provides member-only PPO medical coverage for the congregational pastoral leader, as well as all the benefits in the Covenant Package. The cost is 27.5% of effective salary (17.5% for medical coverage, 10% for pension and income protection).

2. The Covenant Package offers a defined pension benefit plan, income protection (death and disability, temporary disability), and assistance and education programs for any employee working 20 hours or more per week, regardless of ordination. The cost is 10% of effective salary.

3. Transitional Pastor's Participation is available to employers who have a minister in Pastor's Participation as of Dec. 31, 2024. This package continues the offerings and structure of the current plan: full family medical coverage, pension, and income protection. The cost for 2026 is 47% of effective salary.

Dependent Coverage: Medical coverage for spouses and children may be offered, and congregations may choose to pay all, some, or none of the cost. The cost of coverage for dependents is a flat rate and not based on effective salary.
For 2026 those costs are:

- Child(ren) $9,950 (regardless of number of children)
- Spouse $12,250
- Family $22,200

PROFESSIONAL EXPENSE ACCOUNTS – The PET requires that congregations establish Professional Expense Reimbursement Accounts for automobile, continuing education, and other professional expenses for a pastor. All payments from these accounts should be made by receipt or statement for the approved expenses. Monies should not be paid in monthly or quarterly installments without vouchers or receipts.

NOTE 1: Expenses paid without such a reimbursable account are not fully deductible for Federal Income Tax purposes.

NOTE 2: The IRS auto reimbursement rate for 2026 is announced prior to January 1st.

DEFERRED HOME EQUITY ACCOUNT – It is recommended that congregations providing a manse also provide, as part of their pastor's compensation package, a Tax Deferred Home Equity Account of not less than $500 annually, and that the amount of contribution to this account be reviewed annually. It is recommended that treasurers send the annual dollar amount to a local financial institution or the Board of Pensions' Retirement Savings Plan as authorized by the session, to be held in trust until such time in the future the minister decides to request withdrawal to be applied toward a down payment on the purchase of a house.

BALANCE TO BE NEGOTIATED: Recognizing **1.** that pastors and congregations need to begin conversations about medical coverage for family members given the new BOP structure, **2.** that new calls must enroll in BOP under CPP and thus potentially need additional monies for medical coverage, **3.** that we want to establish a parity among calls so that PNCs are not unduly influenced by the cost of BOP medical dues when evaluating candidates, the COM is moving from minimum effective salary to a minimum total compensation. The balance to be negotiated represents the amount between the required costs and the required minimum compensation. This balance may be used to pay for family medical coverage or a retirement savings plan, or whatever makes sense for that pastor and congregation. Medical coverage may be purchased through a spouse's plan, on the marketplace, or through the BOP. Congregations may certainly contribute more as needed; these numbers reflect a minimum.

PET Values that continue to undergird setting terms of call for pastors:

Family Coverage: Although the Board of Pensions now allows congregations to share or pass on the cost of medical coverage for a minister's family, the Presbytery of East Tennessee believes that full family coverage at no extra cost to ministers should be a shared value and expects congregations to work towards this end. For those congregations for whom this is a burden under the new plan, the PET is exploring ways and opportunities to come alongside ministers and congregations to help them achieve goals that fulfill this value. Enrolling in the Transitional Plan for 2026 may still be the best option for congregations as they work toward this end for 2027.

Therefore:

1. Congregational decision-makers regarding ministers' Terms of Call are encouraged to have a conversation with representatives of the COM before recommending 2026 Terms of Call to congregations.
2. Congregations shall not elect to cover fewer family members in 2026 than were covered in 2025 without COM approval. (Will be explained further within the context of the conversation required in #1.)
3. Any savings to a congregation that comes about from the new Board of Pensions plan may not come at the expense of the minister. (Will be explained further within the context of the conversation required in #1.)

Pension and Income Protection: The Board of Pensions now allows access to the defined pension plan, income protection tools, and employee assistance and educational plans to any church employee working 20 hours or more per week, regardless of ordination status. This package of benefits, known as the Covenant Package, is required for all installed ministers and offers income protection at an exceptional value, 10% of effective salary. The Presbytery of East Tennessee believes that access to this plan for all who work full-time in our congregations should be a shared value, but especially so for those working in congregational pastoral roles.

It is our hope that congregations will provide the Covenant Package for anyone working in a congregational pastoral role, even if they are not installed, at no cost to the employee. We also hope congregations will consider how to best provide access to the Covenant Package for other full-time employees in the congregation.