

Yellowstone Presbytery 2026 Proposed Minimum Salaries

PMT recognizes that Yellowstone Presbytery continues to remain near the bottom for compensation for pastors serving in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Given that it is important to compensate pastors enough to live without financial stress, PMT asks that every congregation engage in meaningful discussion regarding compensation at the local level. On the next page we have provided five guiding questions to shape those conversations.

These figures represent a 3% increase in minimum effective salaries for 2026 and are based on fulltime of a 40-hour work week, which should be pro-rated for part-time positions. Please read below about CRE and part-time considerations, for optional ways you can financially assist your pastor without increasing BOP dues, and for the process to petition PMT for relief.

PMT again invites congregations who struggle to meet these minimums to petition to PMT for a reduction in the minimum effective salary you can pay a pastor. See next page for instructions for petition to PMT. In addition, PMT recommends at least a similar cost-of living adjustment for all clergy currently making above minimum.

Full-Time Pastor with 3 years or less (up to 36 months) of Ordained Ministry:

Effective Salary: \$58,095

The Board of Pensions requires that the manse amount be at least 30% of all other effective salary.

Board of Pension dues will vary from pastor to pastor based on need. Full medical benefits are required for a pastor and his/her dependents based on their needs. Please contact Christine Long, Board of Pensions Church Consultant for help in establishing the correct BOP amount for your pastor at CLong@pensions.org or (215) 587-7260.

Full-Time Pastor with more than 3 years (37 months or more) of Ordained Ministry:

Effective Salary: \$60,775

The Board of Pensions requires that the manse amount be at least 30% of all other effective salary item.

Board of Pension dues will vary from pastor to pastor based on need. Full medical benefits are required for a pastor and his/her dependents based on their needs. Please contact Christine Long, Board of Pensions Church Consultant for help in establishing the correct BOP amount for your pastor at CLong@pensions.org or (215) 587-7260.

Additional Benefits for All Pastors (regardless of years of experience)

Continuing Education \$600/year (which can be accrued for up to three years)

Travel - Vouchered at the current federal rate

Study Leave - 2 weeks (cumulative to 6 weeks) including 2 Sundays

Vacation - 4 weeks including 4 Sundays

Family Leave Policy in accordance with Yellowstone Presbytery's Policy

Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE)

The CRE salary is 75% of the Full-Time Pastor salary, pro-rated for part-time.

Part-Time Considerations

Part-time pastors and part-time CREs should also receive 4 weeks of vacation including 4 Sundays and 2 weeks of study leave including 2 Sundays. Part-time pastors and parttime CREs should receive \$600/year (which can be accrued for up to 3 years) for Continuing Education. The full vacation and study leave requirements apply for all Pastors/CREs who are working at least 20 hours per week.

Optional ways you can financially assist your pastor without increasing BOP dues:

1. A church can reimburse a pastor up to ½ of their FICA (Social Security and Medicare) directly to the minister who does not have to report the reimbursement to BOP (called the SECA effect). It does, however, get reported to the I.R.S. as taxable income.
2. If a minister contributes to a BOP 409(3)(b) pension, the church can match the pastor's contribution, and the church match is not included in the effective salary.
3. A church can reimburse a pastor for out-of-pocket expenses with no effect on effective salary.
4. Create an FSA (Flexible Spending Account) and/or DCAP (Dependent Care) through Hello Further for your pastor.

Petition Process

Churches finding themselves in a scenario where they are unable to meet these minimum salaries should research and document the actual numbers for a Master's Level teacher (including years of experience) and the police chief in your community. These numbers can be provided to PMT to petition for a lower minimum salary, but the exact numbers must be provided. All these requests will be taken seriously.

Questions for Congregations

Based on Jamie Dunlop's Budgeting for a Healthy Church

1. Church: What do other churches in the community pay their staff?
2. Non-Church: How much does a local schoolteacher with a Master's degree, school principal or police chief make?
3. Replacement Cost: If your pastor were to leave, would you need to increase the compensation package in order to attract an individual who would do the job equally well? (Dunlop, 80)
4. Personal Budget: What makes for a sustainable family budget at different stages of life in your community (including the cost of childcare)?
5. Housing: What is the median price to purchase a home in the same zip code as the church? Could your pastor afford to live in the zip code he/she is serving?

PMT is interested in knowing these numbers, so we would welcome your committees to share these numbers back to PMT, so that they can better inform our conversations for future minimum salary guidelines.