**Just Compensation Task Force Report for Annual Conference 2025**

 Last year, the VAUMC Annual Conference voted for the Just Compensation Task Force to continue its work, focusing on "studying salary statistics, including documented inequities regarding clergy status, district, gender, race, ethnicity, and years of service.” Rev. Mike Nelson made a motion to also include parsonage standards. The motion was seconded and added to the task force's work.

 This year, we enlisted the help of Dr. Kwang Yoon, a statistician, to review the Virginia Conference United Methodists’ 2024 salary data starting on July 1, 2024, for full-time clergy statistics relating to:
1) Gender
2) Race/Ethnicity
3) District
4) Status (FL, PE, PD, AM, FE, FD)
5) Years of Service

We did not include deacons in this study, which we assumed would have skewed the results.

 Dr. Yoon studied these statistics using multiple regression analysis. This statistical evaluation tool measures how “two or more external variables affect the value of the dependent variable” (*Multiple Regression Analysis: Definition, Formula and Uses* from <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/multiple-regression-analysis-definition>). Through studying these statistics, Dr. Yoon identified 16 variables that influence clergy compensation, in addition to commonly considered factors such as gender, race/ethnicity, clergy status, and years of service. The analysis also ranks the relative significance of these variables and presents key findings.

 The most important findings made by Dr. Yoon included the following:

1) Gender Gap: On average, female pastors received $1,774 less annually than their male peers.

2) Race/Ethnicity Gap: Too few Hispanic and multi-racial pastors were represented in the VAUMC dataset, so a new categorical variable was created by combining these two minority groups for data analysis purposes, resulting in four race/ethnicity groups.

African American pastors received, on average, $797 more than their white peers, while Hispanic and multi-racial pastors received $4,637 less than their white counterparts.

3) Years of Service: Accounting for other factors, on average, pastors were paid $217 more for each year of service.

4) By District: Among the eight districts of VAUMC appointments, the Northern Virginia (NoVA) district outpaced all other districts in its salaries. The unadjusted mean salary difference between NoVa and other districts was $18,727. However, considering all variables, the adjusted mean difference shrank to $4,193.

5) Limited Itineracy: Those pastors who chose the limited itinerary option were paid $1,088 less than their counterparts.

6) Average Worship Attendance: The results of multiple regression analysis show that average worship attendance strongly affects pastor salaries; that is, for each worship attendee, the salary increases by $28. For example, if the average worship attendance increases from 100 to 200 members, the pastor’s salary would increase by $2,800.

 To review a more in-depth breakdown of this information and see supporting material, go to: <https://vaumc.org/jctfreport2024/>

 After reviewing the VAUMC 2024 statistics, our committee found that:

a) According to statistics provided by Wespath in 2025, the Virginia Conference has the second-lowest compensation for clergy in the Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ), following the Central Appalachian Missionary Conference.

b) We found that age is not a good predictor of clergy salary, but the length of service is.

**Implications:**
 This study used regression modeling and statistical analysis to examine clergy compensation. Its findings offer valuable insights into how various factors collectively impact pay across churches. While it reveals certain disparities, the complexity and number of influencing variables highlight the importance of ongoing monitoring. A multi-year comparative analysis will be necessary to understand trends and to assess whether these gaps reflect deeper concerns related to equity or fairness in clergy compensation. At this stage, it is too early to draw definitive conclusions.

**Celebrations**:

1) Based on the task force’s findings, the Equitable Compensation Commission will add new categories to their recommendation for minimum salaries, including the differentiation of Licensed Local Pastors based on their education and the new category of associate members placed above provisional members due to their lifetime status.

2) Following discussions in the Just Compensation Task Force spearheaded by the Parsonage Sub-Committee, the Cabinet is updating its policy on “Minimum Standards for a Parsonage.” Updates in this policy include required measures to be taken to be proactive about safety and health hazards, technology needs, heating and air conditioning, and maintenance. See the updated policy here: <https://vaumc.org/cabinetpolicies/>

Read the report on the Parsonage Sub-Committee in the Book of Reports for more information.

See the list of what has been added and changed here: <https://vaumc.org/jctfreport2024/>

3) The task force celebrates the statistical services of Dr. Kwang Yoon, a lay member of Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington (within the Virginia Conference UMC). He graciously donated his time and expertise for this important work.

**Recommendations**:

1) We recommend retaining Dr. Kwang Yoon's statistical services for the next four years so that the Annual Conference can do a comparative statistical analysis annually. We estimate this service would cost up to $5,000.

2) We recommend dissolving the Just Compensation Task Force and entrusting this work to the Director of Belonging and Advocacy of the Virginia Conference UMC, who will work alongside the Virginia Conference's boards and agencies as related to this work. These groups would continue to study the statistics of the Virginia Conference clergy annually, focusing on clergy status, district, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, and years of service. We ask that they present any recommendations to the 2026 Annual Conference.

3) We recommend that the Director of Belonging and Advocacy (as a member of the Cabinet), in consultation with the Order of Deacons, study and establish a just salary policy for deacons serving full-time within the local church. This statistical study would include years of service, housing allowance, and salaries based on deacons’ education and clergy status.

4) We recommend that the Committee on Finance and Administration, in consultation with the Office of Pensions and Benefits, study the possibility of creating a system in which the Virginia Conference UMC would administer payroll processing and tax-related reporting for all clergy appointed to local churches within the VAUMC. We ask that they present any recommendations to the 2026 Annual Conference.

5) We recommend that the Equitable Compensation Commission research models of minimum base compensation based on status, education, years of service, and economic variables, including cost of living (i.e., the Western North Carolina Conference UMC; you can find a copy here: [https://vaumc.org/jctfreport2024/).](https://vaumc.org/jctfreport2024/%29.%20) We ask that they present any recommendations to the 2026 Annual Conference.

6) We recommend that the Cabinet use findings from this report to inform their conversations about setting clergy salaries with Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committees.

We thank you for entrusting us with this hard and holy work.

The Just Compensation Task Force
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