

Report on the Findings from the Analysis of VAUMC Clergy Compensation Data

Just Compensation Task Force of Virginia UMC

March 25, 2025

1. Is there any salary gap by (a) gender, (b) race/ethnicity, (c) years of service, and (d) district of appointment?

(a) By gender

As the table below shows, the female pastors were paid, on average, \$5,250 less than their male peers when other factors were not adjusted. The gender gap in median salary was \$4,500.

Gender	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mean Differ.	Median Differ.
Female	131	31.7	\$ 67,674	\$ 35,000	\$ 65,500	\$ 127,000	\$ (5,250)	\$ (4,500)
Male	282	68.3	\$ 72,924	\$ 33,000	\$ 70,000	\$ 151,101	Reference	Reference

However, when other factors were taken into account or adjusted, the apparent large gender gap was substantially reduced. In other words, as Table 4 shows, other things being equal, the female pastors received, on average, \$1,774 less than their male peers.

(b) By Race/Ethnicity

As there were too few Hispanic and multi-racial pastors represented in the VAUMC dataset, it was necessary to create a new categorical variable by combining these two minority groups for data analysis purposes, resulting in 4 race/ethnicity groups.

As the table below shows, compared to the white pastors (a reference group for analysis), African American/Black pastors received \$1,071 less, and Asian pastors received \$3,586 less, and Hispanic and multi-racial pastors received \$14,885 less respectively for their total compensation in 2024.

Race/Ethnicity in 4 groups	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mean Differ.	Median Differ.
African American/Black	30	7.3	\$ 71,145	\$ 39,000	\$ 70,375	\$ 132,600	\$ (1,071)	\$ 1,838
Asian	68	16.5	\$ 68,630	\$ 40,000	\$ 68,020	\$ 126,945	\$ (3,586)	\$ (517)
Hispanic_Multi	8	1.9	\$ 57,331	\$ 39,000	\$ 50,228	\$ 83,346	\$ (14,885)	\$ (18,309)
White	307	74.3	\$ 72,216	\$ 33,000	\$ 68,537	\$ 151,101	Reference	Reference

However, as Table 4 shows, when other factors were taken into consideration, the wage disparities among the race/ethnic groups changed substantially. For example, African American pastors received \$797 more than their white peers, while Asian pastors received \$2,024 less and Hispanic and multi-racial pastors received \$4,637 less than their white counterparts, respectively.

(c) By length of service

Using the original variable called years under appointment, a new variable was created to divide pastors into three groups with different lengths of service: 1-10, 11-20, and 21+ years of service. The unadjusted mean difference shows that the pastors who worked for 11 to 20 years were paid \$10,412 more than those who worked for 1 to 10 years.

Years of Service (Years under Appoint	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mean Differ.	Median Differ.
1 - 10 years	138	33.4	\$ 60,593	\$ 35,000	\$ 60,263	\$ 117,439	Reference	Reference
11 - 20 years	146	35.4	\$ 71,005	\$ 33,000	\$ 69,244	\$ 127,000	\$ 10,412	\$ 8,981
21 or more years	129	31.2	\$ 82,956	\$ 41,900	\$ 81,897	\$ 151,101	\$ 22,363	\$ 21,635

However, as Table 4 shows, statistical analysis adjusting for other factors shows that with the addition of one year of service, a pastor received, on average, \$217 extra. For example, a pastor with 11 years of service received, on average, \$2,170 more than those with just one year of service.

(d) By district

Among the eight districts of VAUMC appointment, the Northern Virginia (NoVA) district outpaced all other districts in its salaries. For example, the pastors appointed to NoVA were paid on average \$27,417 more than their peers in Living Waters district (\$85,542 vs. \$58,115).

District of appointment	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mean Differ.	Median Differ.
Coastal Virginia	51	12.3	\$ 69,366	\$ 39,000	\$ 63,500	\$ 129,357	\$ (16,177)	\$ (16,500)
Living Waters	33	8.0	\$ 58,115	\$ 39,000	\$ 53,233	\$ 87,284	\$ (27,427)	\$ (26,767)
Mission Rivers	59	14.3	\$ 65,328	\$ 39,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 117,020	\$ (20,215)	\$ (15,000)
Mountain View	22	5.3	\$ 64,613	\$ 35,000	\$ 61,750	\$ 113,181	\$ (20,929)	\$ (18,250)
Northern Virginia	98	23.7	\$ 85,542	\$ 40,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 151,101	Reference	Reference
Shenandoah River	46	11.1	\$ 65,051	\$ 39,000	\$ 60,979	\$ 126,945	\$ (20,492)	\$ (19,021)
Three Notch'd	64	15.5	\$ 73,958	\$ 40,518	\$ 68,769	\$ 133,000	\$ (11,585)	\$ (11,232)
Valley Ridge	40	9.7	\$ 64,750	\$ 33,000	\$ 64,420	\$ 97,775	\$ (20,792)	\$ (15,580)

For further data analysis, we created a new variable called NoVa_Others to compare the pay gap between NoVA and the rest of the seven districts that are presumed to have relatively lower costs of living. The unadjusted mean salary difference between NoVa and other districts was \$18,727.

NoVa_Others	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mean Differ.	Median Differ.
NoVa	98	23.7	\$ 85,542	\$ 40,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 151,101	\$ 18,727	\$ 16,000
Others	315	76.3	\$ 66,816	\$ 33,000	\$ 64,000	\$ 133,000	Reference	Reference

However, as Table 4 shows, the adjusted mean difference between NoVA and other districts shrank to \$4,913.

2) What is the difference in salary between those who live in a parsonage and those who have a housing allowance?

In 2024, as the table below on the raw mean salary difference shows, pastors who collected a housing allowance (not residing in a parsonage) were paid, on average, \$17,455 more than those who lived in a parsonage.

Reside in Parsonage	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mean Differ.	Mean Differ.
No	215	52.1	\$ 79,627	\$ 35,000	\$ 76,600	\$ 138,000	Reference	Reference
Yes	198	47.9	\$ 62,173	\$ 33,000	\$ 57,263	\$ 151,101	\$ (17,455)	\$ (19,338)

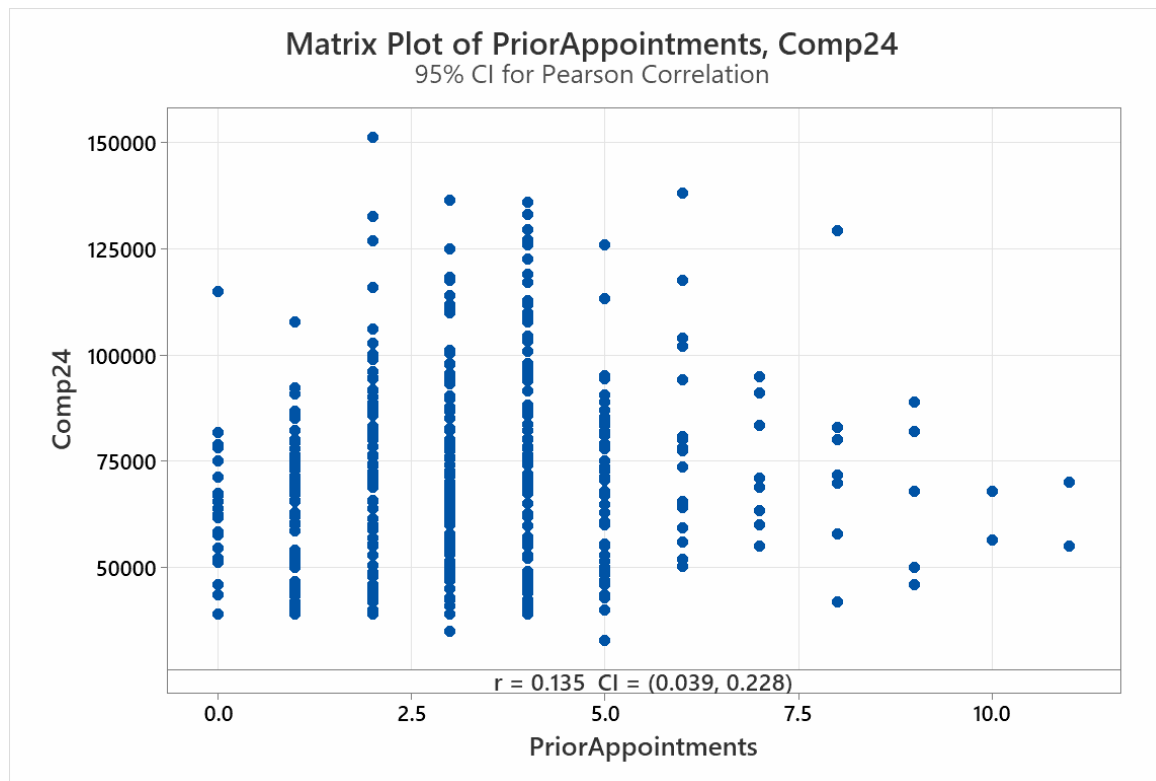
3) Is there *injustice* between those with a parsonage and those with housing allowances?

As the table shows above, pastors who collected housing allowances were paid on average \$14,754 more than those who lived in a parsonage. Other things being equal, however, the adjusted salary gap shrank to \$7,563..

4) Is there any benefit to knowing how many appointments someone has served?

No of Prior Appointment	N	Percent		Mean	Median
0	26	6.3	\$	59,891	\$ 60,079
1	55	13.3	\$	62,053	\$ 60,525
2	77	18.6	\$	72,820	\$ 72,000
3	94	22.8	\$	72,187	\$ 67,993
4	79	19.1	\$	78,060	\$ 75,000
5	40	9.7	\$	68,353	\$ 67,550
6	18	4.4	\$	81,119	\$ 77,849
7	8	1.9	\$	73,489	\$ 69,900
8	7	1.7	\$	76,223	\$ 71,663
9	5	1.2	\$	67,012	\$ 68,000
10	2	0.5	\$	62,282	\$ 62,282
11	2	0.5	\$	62,575	\$ 62,575

It is instructive to see a correlation matrix between the number of prior appointments and the total compensation in 2024. As the graphic below shows, the relationship between these two variables seems to be weak (0.135) and not linear. In other words, as the number of prior appointments increases, the salary grows up to a point (at about 6 prior appointments); then as the number of prior appointments increases further, the salary goes down. This pattern may indicate a possibility of a turnover penalty in salary.



5) Do people who move a lot have lower salaries?

As Table 4 shows, other things being equal, the clergy salary significantly decreases by \$915 for each additional number of prior appointments (i.e., move). This reduction represents another evidence of a “turnover penalty” effect on salary mentioned above.

6) What percentage of pastors have received a salary increase?

Overall, sixty-six percent of pastors received a salary increase in 2024 from 2023.

Salary Change 2023 to 2024	N	Percent
Decrease	37	9.1
No change	100	24.7
Increase	268	66.2

What is the percentage of pastors who received a salary increase in 2024, by (a) gender, (b) race/ethnicity, and (c) years of service

6a) By Gender

In 2024, 68 percent of male pastors received a salary increase, as did 63 percent of female pastors.

Gender	Change in Salary from 2023 to 2024			
	Decrease	No change	Increase	All
Female	12	35	81	128
Percent (%)	9	27	63	100
Male	25	65	187	277
Percent (%)	9	23	68	100
All	37	100	268	405
Percent (%)	9	25	66	100

6b) By Race/ethnicity

The percentage of pastors who received a salary increase varied by race/ethnicity: 83% of African-American pastors, 68% of Asian pastors, 50% of Hispanic/multi-racial pastors, and 65% of White pastors.

Race/ethnicity	Change in Salary from 2023 to 2024			
	Decrease	No change	Increase	All
African American/Black	2	3	24	29
Percent (%)	7	10	83	100
Asian	4	17	45	66
Percent (%)	6	26	68	100
Hispanic_Multi	1	3	4	8
Percent (%)	13	38	50	100
White	30	77	195	302
Percent (%)	10	26	65	100
All	37	100	268	405
Percent (%)	9	25	66	100

6c) By Years of service

The percentage of pastors who received a salary increase also varied slightly by the length of service: 66% of pastors with 1-10 years of appointment, 69% of pastors with 11-20 years, and 63% of pastors with 21 years or more years of service.

Years of Service	Change in Salary from 2023 to 2024			
	Decrease	No change	Increase	All
Low (1 to 10 years)	13	32	87	132
Percent (%)	10	24	66	100
Medium (11 to 20 years)	11	34	100	145
Percent (%)	8	23	69	100
High (21 or more years)	13	34	81	128
Percent (%)	10	27	63	100
All	37	100	268	405
Percent (%)	9	25	66	100

7) Moving

For the sake of analysis, “moving” was defined to have one year of present appointment, excluding those who are new to the Virginia Conference in 2024 (no salary data in 2023). The unadjusted mean salary difference indicates that those pastors who moved received on average \$6,320 **less** than those who did not move. However, as Table 4 shows, when other factors were controlled for, those who moved actually received \$5,577 **more** than those who stayed.

Moved 2023 to 2024	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mean Differ.	Median Differ.
No	344	83.3	\$ 72,315	\$ 33,000	\$ 69,694	\$ 151,101	Reference	Reference
Yes	69	16.7	\$ 65,995	\$ 35,000	\$ 65,500	\$ 129,200	\$ (6,320)	\$ (4,194)

7a) Who got raises without moving?

Of all 336 pastors who did not move, 220 (or 65%) got a salary raise.

Moved	Change in Salary from 2023 to 2024			
	Decrease	No change	Increase	All
Not moved	19	97	220	336
Percent (%)	6	29	65	100
Moved	18	3	48	69
Percent (%)	26	4	70	100
All	37	100	268	405
Percent (%)	9	25	66	100

7b) Who got raises by moving?

Of all 69 pastors who moved in 2024, 48 (or 70%) got a salary raise.

7c) Who got a decrease by moving?

Of all 69 pastors who moved in 2024, 18 (or 26%) got a salary decrease while 6% of pastors who did not move experienced a salary cut. While 29% of pastors who did not move were paid the same in 2023 and 2024, only 4% of those who moved experienced a salary freeze.

Overall, there is a significant statistical association between the move status and the salary change (or lack thereof).

8) The effect of limited itineracy on salary?

Opting for the limited itinerary had an adverse effect on the total compensation. Those pastors who chose the limited itinerary option were paid \$5,314 **more** than their peers who opted out (unadjusted mean difference). However, the adjusted mean difference in Table 4 shows that those pastors who took the limited itinerary option were paid \$1,088 **less** than their counterparts.

Limited Itineracy	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mean Differ.	Median Differ.
No	381	92.3	\$ 70,847	\$ 33,000	\$ 68,000	\$ 151,101	Reference	Reference
Yes	32	7.7	\$ 76,161	\$ 39,000	\$ 78,152	\$ 125,841	\$ 5,314	\$ 10,152

9) History of Trends

To be investigated

10) Similar compensation to other faith-based salaries?

At the time of the current data analysis, other faith-based salaries were unavailable.

11) Is there any difference in salary by educational background?

There is only limited information about pastors' educational background. Data is missing from 221 pastors. Among pastors who reported their educational background, 120 of them completed Master of Divinity, and their mean salary was \$65,954.

Education	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mean Differ.	Median Differ.
Course of Study Completion	36	8.7	\$ 52,671	\$ 39,000	\$ 49,000	\$ 115,000	\$ (13,284)	\$ (16,501)
Doctor of Ministry	1	0.2	\$ 54,600	\$ 54,600	\$ 54,600	\$ 54,600	\$ (11,354)	\$ (10,900)
Master of Arts	2	0.5	\$ 59,183	\$ 58,365	\$ 59,183	\$ 60,000	\$ (6,772)	\$ (6,318)
Master of Christian Education	1	0.2	\$ 50,900	\$ 50,900	\$ 50,900	\$ 50,900	\$ (15,054)	\$ (14,600)
Master of Divinity	120	29.1	\$ 65,954	\$ 39,000	\$ 65,500	\$ 125,000	Reference	Reference
Master of Theology	2	0.5	\$ 96,703	\$ 76,386	\$ 96,703	\$ 117,020	\$ 30,749	\$ 31,203
Master's of Divinity	4	1.0	\$ 60,275	\$ 43,500	\$ 56,300	\$ 85,000	\$ (5,679)	\$ (9,200)
Virginia Licensing School	26	6.3	\$ 54,399	\$ 35,000	\$ 48,000	\$ 80,000	\$ (11,555)	\$ (17,500)
Missing	221	53.5	\$ 79,397	\$ 33,000	\$ 76,600	\$ 151,101	\$ 13,443	\$ 11,100

12) Total amount of accountable reimbursement for clergy living in parsonages

Pastors who lived in the parsonage received, on average, \$4,460 for accountable reimbursement.

Parsonage	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum
No	177	42.9	\$ 3,738	\$ 500	\$ 3,500	\$ 21,000
Yes	177	42.9	\$ 4,460	\$ 500	\$ 4,000	\$ 20,000

13) Can you figure out the amount of money that is not going into Pensions

To be investigated upon clarification of pension calculations.

14) Salary Range by District in each category?

See below for Tables regarding salary range by district within each clergy status. Note that there are only two associate members in our dataset.

Clergy Category = Associate Member						
District	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Mountain View	1	50	\$ 50,348	\$ 50,348	\$ 50,348	\$ 50,348
Shenandoah River	1	50	\$ 68,000	\$ 68,000	\$ 68,000	\$ 68,000

Clergy Category = Full Elder						
District	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Coastal Virginia	35	13	\$ 77,918	\$ 52,972	\$ 76,000	\$ 129,357
Living Waters	16	6	\$ 68,641	\$ 52,132	\$ 69,075	\$ 87,284
Mission Rivers	35	13	\$ 73,095	\$ 46,112	\$ 71,173	\$ 117,020
Mountain View	14	5	\$ 70,346	\$ 43,650	\$ 63,782	\$ 113,181
Northern Virginia	72	27	\$ 90,688	\$ 50,000	\$ 86,904	\$ 151,101
Shenandoah River	24	9	\$ 75,211	\$ 46,000	\$ 74,250	\$ 126,945
Three Notch'd	43	16	\$ 81,374	\$ 46,000	\$ 77,574	\$ 133,000
Valley Ridge	25	9	\$ 74,428	\$ 33,000	\$ 75,600	\$ 97,775

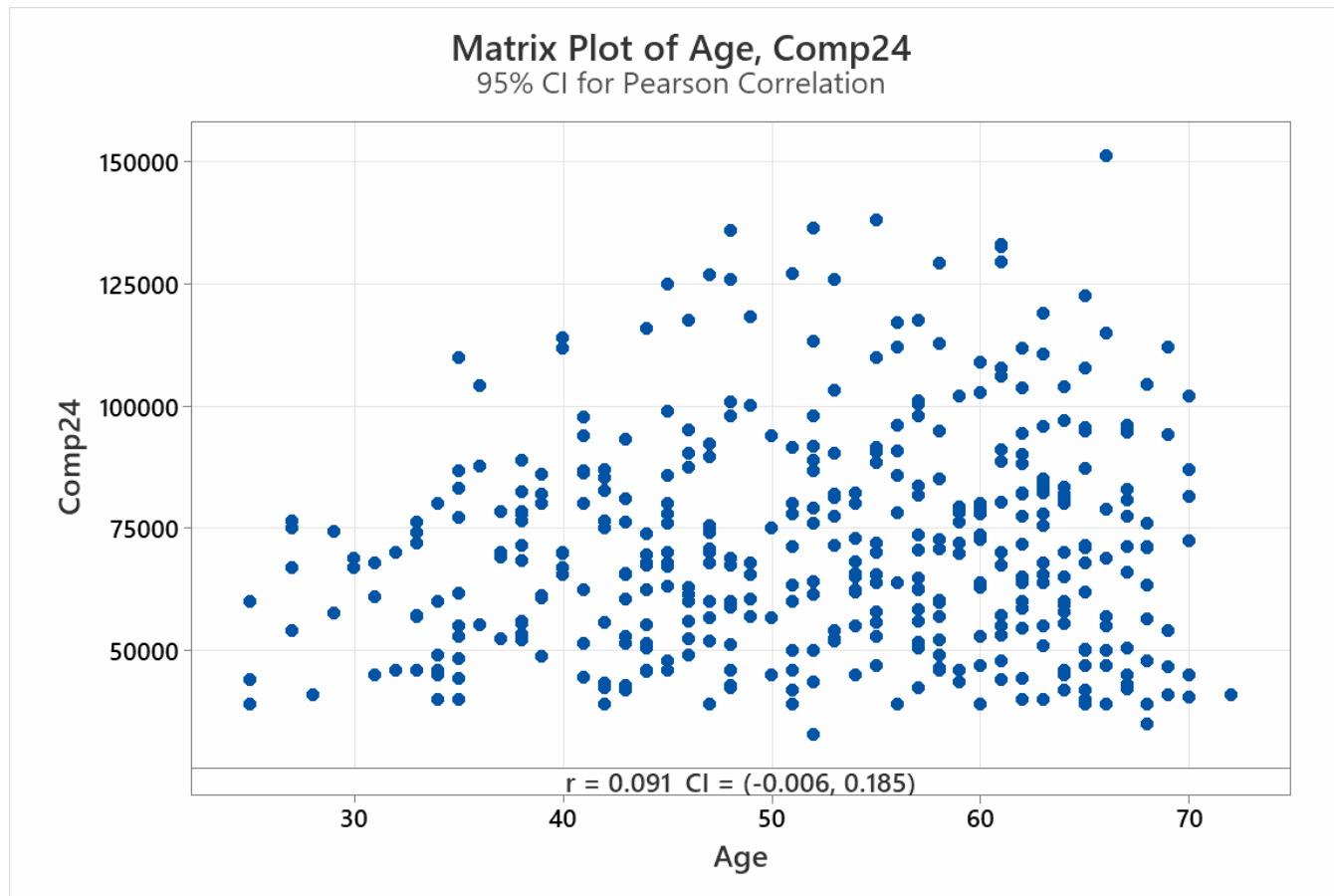
Clergy Category = Full Time Local Pastor						
District	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Coastal Virginia	12	11	\$ 49,086	\$ 39,000	\$ 45,450	\$ 70,750
Living Waters	13	12	\$ 45,677	\$ 39,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 53,233
Mission Rivers	20	19	\$ 52,460	\$ 39,000	\$ 45,280	\$ 90,920
Mountain View	5	5	\$ 49,281	\$ 35,000	\$ 51,760	\$ 62,100
Northern Virginia	11	10	\$ 77,706	\$ 62,344	\$ 73,000	\$ 115,000
Shenandoah River	15	14	\$ 50,126	\$ 39,000	\$ 46,901	\$ 76,600
Three Notch'd	19	18	\$ 57,641	\$ 40,518	\$ 58,700	\$ 78,930
Valley Ridge	12	11	\$ 49,151	\$ 39,000	\$ 48,000	\$ 62,811

Clergy Category = Provisional Elder						
District	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Coastal Virginia	4	10	\$ 55,375	\$ 42,500	\$ 53,500	\$ 72,000
Living Waters	4	10	\$ 56,436	\$ 44,550	\$ 56,900	\$ 67,394
Mission Rivers	4	10	\$ 61,704	\$ 45,000	\$ 57,558	\$ 86,700
Mountain View	2	5	\$ 69,950	\$ 67,100	\$ 69,950	\$ 72,800
Northern Virginia	15	38	\$ 66,591	\$ 40,000	\$ 70,000	\$ 92,250
Shenandoah River	6	15	\$ 61,232	\$ 46,000	\$ 54,719	\$ 89,000
Three Notch'd	2	5	\$ 69,500	\$ 69,000	\$ 69,500	\$ 70,000
Valley Ridge	3	8	\$ 46,500	\$ 41,000	\$ 46,000	\$ 52,500

16) Salary range by age and length of service

16a) By Age

See below a chart for correlation between age and total compensation 2024. The correlation coefficient of 0.091 indicates a weak association between the two variables. In other words, an advanced age doesn't necessarily yield a higher salary. For example, among the pastors at the age of 51, there is a great variability in their salaries, ranging from the low of less than \$50,000 to the high of \$135,000.



16b) By Length of Service

While age is not a good predictor of salary, the length of service is. Overall, the longer pastors served the Virginia Conference, the higher their salaries were. For example, those who served 21 years or more received, on average, \$22,363 more than those who served 1 to 10 years.

Length of Service (Years under Appointment)	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mean Differ.	Median Differ.
1 - 10 years	138	33.4	\$ 60,593	\$ 35,000	\$ 60,263	\$ 117,439	Reference	Reference
11 - 20 years	146	35.4	\$ 71,005	\$ 33,000	\$ 69,244	\$ 127,000	\$ 10,412	\$ 8,981
21 or more years	129	31.2	\$ 82,956	\$ 41,900	\$ 81,897	\$ 151,101	\$ 22,363	\$ 21,635

17) Salary range by senior pastor and associate pastor

See below for the salary range (minimum, mean and median, to maximum) for senior pastors and associate pastors. Generally, there was a small mean difference(\$827) in salary between the positions, while there was a bit more difference (\$2,000) in median salary .

Position	N	Percent	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum	Mean Differ.	Median Differ.
Associate	38	9.2	\$ 70,508	\$ 39,000	\$ 70,000	\$ 115,869	Reference	Reference
Lead	375	90.8	\$ 71,335	\$ 33,000	\$ 68,000	\$ 151,101	\$ 827	\$ (2,000)

18) Run in comparison to average worship attendance

See below for the correlation between average worship attendance and total compensation in 2024. The correlation coefficient is .466. This means there exists a moderate correlation between the two variables. In other words, the more members attend worship, the higher the salary of the pastor.

The results of multiple regression analysis (Table 4) show that the average worship attendance has a strong effect on pastor salaries, that is, for each worship attender, 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.

Matrix Plot of WorshipAttend, Comp24
95% CI for Pearson Correlation

