



THE WESLEYAN CHURCH

**Education & Clergy
Development**

Wesleyan Clergy Compensation Report 2022

Demographics and Factors
Related to Salary

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Introduction

The Wesleyan Church cares deeply about the wellbeing of our clergy and their families. We want them to thrive and experience God's abundant life for themselves and for the vitality of the churches and communities they serve.

Over the last seven years, the Division of Education and Clergy Development has been very fortunate to launch and participate in a number of professional research projects on the wellbeing of our clergy and their families. You can see much of this research [here](#). Through this research we have discovered many key factors related to Wesleyan clergy wellbeing.

However, one significant wellbeing factor, clergy compensation, has yet to be fully studied. Some data exists in district journals, but how it is presented varies from district to district. We also have some data from the original Thrive Financial Initiative study found in the [Financial Foundations Pastors Report](#) about clergy finances. The study presented in this report is the first of its kind in The Wesleyan Church focusing directly on clergy compensation.

In addition, our previous studies on Wesleyan clergy wellbeing by Dr. Matthew Bloom at Notre Dame University ([2014](#) and [2020](#)) and our own [Thrive Financial Initiative research](#) point to the need to better understand Wesleyan clergy compensation and its connection to personal wellbeing and ministry effectiveness.

The Research: To that end, in the summer of 2021, we invited Dr. Matt Bloom to devise a clergy compensation survey for TWC that would encompass questions about various demographics as relate to salaries, benefits and wellbeing. (Earlier in his career Dr. Bloom published a number of studies on compensation, performance and incentives.) In addition, Dr. Tim Steenburgh, Associate Professor of Psychology at Indiana Wesleyan University, agreed to refine and administer the survey and provide analysis of the results.

The survey was disseminated in late August 2021. Dr. Steenburgh has since continued to guide us in preparing and interpreting the data as we prepare final reports. He has a special interest in clergy wellbeing since not only is he an active member of his local Wesleyan church, but his father was a Wesleyan pastor for 48 years. Dr. Steenburgh understands The Wesleyan Church and what life is like growing up in a parsonage.

We were extremely pleased and grateful that over 1100 Wesleyan pastors took the time and effort to participate in this study. We especially want to acknowledge the 500 pastors who took time to submit personal comments through our open-ended comment box. This additional qualitative data leads to stronger results. Such strong participation also indicates the understandably keen interest clergy have regarding compensation and its connection to their wellbeing. The results of this study are significant and will be released in a series of manageable reports. These reports will help pastors, lay leaders, and district and denominational leaders better understand the state of Wesleyan clergy compensation and

its effect on clergy and their families. It will also help local church leaders understand better how to support the financial wellbeing of their clergy.

The Reports: This initial report covers three broad areas of interest in relation to clergy finances: 1) demographics of the clergy who participated in the survey (e.g. age, years in ministry, years in current church, ethnicity, spousal employment); 2) some of the key factors that relate to clergy compensation (e.g. church size, length of time in current church, ministry role); 3) and the initial findings regarding financial health and financial stress clergy are experiencing. The findings are revealing and in some cases surprising. This first report closes with a list of recommendations based on these data. Future reports will focus on Financial Stress, Gender and Ethnicity; solo pastors; and qualitative themes and stories that emerged from the pastors' own testimonies in the open comment section.

One additional note on clergy and their compensation. There are some who might suggest that it is less than spiritual to draw attention to compensation, thinking that clergy should just trust God to care for them. Indeed, clergy enter Christian ministry due to a sense of calling from God, not because they think it is a lucrative career choice. However, scripture is clear that pastors should be fairly compensated for their work (1 Cor. 9:9-14; 1 Tim. 5:17-18) and it has been demonstrated that financial wellbeing is related to all other aspects of wellbeing. If clergy are not adequately compensated, it can affect other dimensions of their wellbeing such as physical and emotional health. It can also cause stress in family relationships and in the workplace. Collectively, these negative factors can result in diminished ministry effectiveness. Our desire is to increase the awareness of the current state of clergy compensation in The Wesleyan Church and some of the resulting effects on clergy wellbeing. The more reliable information we can gather, the better we can take evidenced-based action to come alongside clergy and their families to increase their wellbeing so that they can thrive personally and professionally in their Kingdom building ministry for the glory of God.

As you read through this initial draft of our findings we hope you will pray with us about two things. First, that all of us will listen carefully to what God is saying to us about this crucial topic of clergy compensation. Second, that we will respond to God's leading in ways that will best strengthen our clergy, their families and their ministry in The Wesleyan Church.

Lastly, for all of the pastors who took the time to fill out these surveys and share their stories in the open comments area, and for all of you who are taking the time to study this report and engage in conversations about clergy compensation, we offer a resounding Thank You! May your investment return ten-fold to bless you, our fellow clergy, and The Wesleyan Church.

Rev. Russ Gunsalus, Executive Director of Education & Clergy Development
Rev. David Higle, Director of Clergy Care

Things to Remember While Reading this Report

Part of the Story: This report is only *part* of the story. Other reports in development will include benefits such as health care, retirement contributions, ethnicity and gender as related to compensation. Also, while this report can be useful in helping local churches fairly compensate their pastors, there is other information beyond the scope of this report that needs to be considered, such as the region of the country where the church is located and if located in a rural or urban setting. We need to think together about the best ways to utilize these data, what discussions to have together between local church leaders and their clergy, and what solutions we can bring to challenges we discover.

Normal Reactions: Often we encounter uncomfortable information when reading statistical reports about ourselves or people we care about. For example, it may feel uncomfortable when comparing one's own salary to another pastor of a similar sized church, realizing you might not be compensated as well. Or you might see data that reveals gaps in how your church compensates your pastor. It can be tempting to feel defensive and say, "well yeah, but . . . why didn't you ask such and such?" or "Our situation is different because. . ."

These are all natural responses that any of us might have. However, if we are able to read this report with an open mind and prayerfully consider what God may wish to reveal to us, we will be more likely to discover important areas where we can improve our support for your pastor and all Wesleyan pastors.

At the end of the day this report is intended to help pastors, churches and districts to understand the current state of Wesleyan clergy compensation and then to see what appropriate steps can be taken to help bring equity to clergy compensation. It is a slow process, but this kind of awareness and action will help all of us increase the wellbeing of all clergy and their families.

Generalizations vs. Particular Pastors: Keep in mind that these data represent a wide, birds-eye-view rather than a granular analysis of any particular pastor. We need to be careful not to draw overly strong conclusions, but also recognize that the particular experience of any given pastor is what matters most to them and their church.

This Data Should be Part of a Conversation: The idea in bringing greater awareness to clergy compensation is to start healthy conversations at all levels: between local church leaders and their pastors as they become more informed about fair compensation and how to talk about it in healthy ways; district leadership as they help inform and guide local church leaders and pastors toward more healthy compensation practices; and denominational and district officials who can work to address any systemic factors that will foster more healthy compensation policies and practices.

Look for Correlations and Variations: It is important to realize that a correlation between two items does not prove causation; it is just an association. But, as you notice these correlations it is productive to consider what causal relationships might exist and also what other factors might be involved in those links. Similarly, pay particular attention to significant variation in the data between different groups and different factors as you survey the various charts.

Ask Questions: As you read this report (and future reports), we hope you will let us know what questions emerge about clergy compensation that can be helpful for all clergy to know and useful for further research and analysis. Working together, we hope to discover solutions to clergy compensation challenges, improve clergy compensation where needed, and celebrate the areas where we are doing well.

Pray: As you dive into this initial report, pray God will guide you to insights that will be useful for your particular context and helpful for you in your role as a local church leader, district leader or pastor.

Demographics and Factors Related to Salary

Ministry Status Percentages

#	Which of the following best describes your current ministry employment status? Selected Choice	Percentage
1	Full-time ministry	67%
2	Bivocational ministry	22%
3	Part-time ministry	11%

Over 1100 pastors participated in the clergy compensation study. Two-thirds reported that they were in full-time ministry. The following tables summarize various demographic characteristics of the respondents based on part-time, full-time and bivocational status. These tables do not include the 5% of respondents who reported that they were not currently working in a paid ministry position or those who indicated that their vocational status did not fit within these three categories.

Ministry Status by Age

Age	Full-time ministry	Bivocational ministry	Part-time ministry
Under 25	1%	2%	4%
25-34	17%	11%	12%
35-44	28%	17%	13%
45-54	22%	28%	19%
55-67	27%	35%	30%
68-76	5%	5%	17%
77+	1%	0%	5%
Prefer not to say	0%	1%	0%
Total	664	213	106

The ages of our pastors varied. The majority were between 35 and 67 years old. Few pastors after age 67 (5-6%) continue to serve in full-time or bivocational ministry, however, a significant proportion (22%) continue to serve on a part-time basis into retirement age. It raises the question of why older pastors serve in these ways. Is it a choice stemming from ministry passion and calling? Is it driven by economic necessity? This is a potential point of conversation with lay leaders, DSs and ministers in part-time roles. There are other data points in this study that will be good for ongoing discussion. The qualitative data might also provide us with more insights.

Ministry Status by Sex

Number of participants listed in parentheses

Sex	Full-time ministry	Bivocational ministry	Part-time ministry
Male	84% (559)	79% (168)	63% (67)
Female	15% (101)	21% (44)	37% (39)
Prefer not to say	1% (4)	0% (1)	0% (0)
Total	664	213	106

There are two different ways to analyze the data presented in the table above. Examining the data by ministry status reveals that the majority of pastors (79%) who responded to the survey were male, with the largest number of males (559) found in full-time ministry. Among full-time pastors, females made up only 15% of the group. They were more well-represented within part-time ministry, with more than 1 in 3 part-time pastors being female.

Comparing the data by sex, we see that among the 184 females in the survey, 101 (55%) said they were in full-time ministry. The remainder of female pastors were nearly evenly split between part-time and bivocational ministry. Analyzing the data in this way reveals that a larger proportion of male pastors (559 of 794; 70%) serve in full-time ministry, relative to females.

Ministry Status by Ethnicity

Number of participants listed in parentheses

Ethnicity	Full-time ministry	Bivocational ministry	Part-time ministry	Entire Sample
Asian	2% (10)	1% (3)	1% (1)	1% (14)
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (1)
Native American/First Nations	0% (3)	0% (1)	0% (0)	0% (4)
Black/African American	3% (18)	6% (12)	3% (3)	3% (33)
Black/Caribbean American	0% (3)	1% (2)	1% (1)	1% (6)
Hispanic/Latino	3% (21)	2% (5)	6% (6)	3% (32)
White/Caucasian	88% (587)	84% (178)	85% (90)	87% (855)
Other (please specify)	1% (8)	3% (6)	3% (3)	2% (17)
Prefer not to say	2% (13)	3% (6)	2% (2)	2% (21)
Total	664	213	106	983

A large majority of pastors serving in The Wesleyan Church are White/Caucasian, and this was true across the three employment levels we assessed. While pastors of color made up a much smaller proportion of the sample, relative to their white counterparts they were disproportionately represented among bivocational and part-time ministry positions. Specifically, a greater proportion of Black/African-American pastors (12 of 33, 36%) were bivocational as compared to White/Caucasian pastors (21%). Similarly, Hispanic/Latino pastors (6 of 32, 19%) were more likely to be part-time, relative to White/Caucasian pastors (11%). A question one might want to explore is why there is such a significant variation between the percentages of White/Caucasian and Black/African-American or Hispanic/Latino pastors in full-time ministry.

Ministry Status by Education Level

Highest Level Attained

Education Level	Full-time ministry	Bivocational ministry	Part-time ministry
High school diploma or GED	2%	5%	8%
Some college	10%	10%	15%
Associate's degree	4%	7%	7%
Bachelor's degree	43%	36%	33%
Master's degree	35%	36%	34%
Doctoral degree	6%	6%	4%
Total	663	211	106

When looking at the total of all respondents (980), most reported that they had a Bachelor's (40%) or Master's (35%) degree, with few (6%) reporting they had a doctorate. 81% had a minimum of a Bachelor's degree.

Ministry Status by Marital Status

Marital Status	Full-time ministry	Bivocational ministry	Part-time ministry
I am married	95%	94%	83%
I am single	5%	6%	17%
Total	694	226	118

93% of all pastors reported being married. Part-time ministers, while still predominantly married, had a higher representation of single pastors. In fact, single pastors are three times more likely to serve in part-time roles than pastors who are married. This raises the question if perhaps singleness provides opportunities for individuals to serve in part-time ministry that might not be possible otherwise, or persons in part-time ministry might be younger and therefore more likely to be single or perhaps there is a greater bias for married individuals to serve in full-time ministry. One issue for discussion is the possible need to encourage more single people to consider full-time ministry.

Does Spouse Work Outside Home?

Response	Full-time ministry	Bivocational ministry	Part-time ministry
Yes	75%	66%	57%
No	25%	34%	43%
Total	659	213	98

A majority of pastors (71%) indicated that their spouse worked outside the home. Surprisingly, full-time pastors were most likely to report working spouses as compared to part-time and bivocational pastors. Since bivocational and part-time pastors tend to be older, we wonder if their spouses were more likely to be retired. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of full-time pastors said that it was a financial necessity for their spouses to work. These findings are similar to the 2018 Matt Bloom study of Wesleyan clergy which found that two-thirds of Wesleyan pastors cannot live on just their ministry salary. Taken together, these data suggest that their salaries alone are insufficient for pastors to make a living. We are not sure how this picture compares to other vocations. This issue should be explored in more depth by district and denominational leadership in support of local church pastors.

Years in Vocational Ministry

Years in Ministry	Full-time ministry	Bivocational ministry	Part-time ministry
0-5	14%	21%	31%
6-10	20%	19%	24%
11-15	15%	16%	9%
16-20	15%	10%	5%
21-25	11%	10%	7%
26-30	8%	7%	3%
31-35	7%	8%	6%
36-40	5%	6%	7%

41-45	3%	3%	5%
46-50	1%	1%	2%
More than 50	1%	1%	2%
Total	694	226	118

There seems to be a healthy spread of years in ministry represented up through the 25 year mark. It gradually trails off between 26 and 50 years. These data might indicate that we do not have a shortage of pastors entering vocational ministry and since there is not a big decline after 15-20 years, it does not seem like many pastors are dropping out of ministry early.

Years in Current Ministry Assignment

Years	Full-time ministry	Bivocational ministry	Part-time ministry
0-5	50%	58%	63%
6-10	25%	19%	24%
11-15	10%	8%	7%
16-20	7%	7%	3%
21-25	4%	4%	2%
26-30	3%	4%	1%
31-35	1%	1%	2%
36-40	0%	0%	0%
41-45	0%	0%	0%
46-50	0%	0%	0%
Total	695	226	118

Over half of all pastors report that they have been in their current ministry assignment for 5 years or less. Over three quarters (78%) have been in their current assignment for no more than 10 years. Approximately 7% of the pastors have been serving in their current ministry assignment for over 20 years.

Primary Ministry Role

Ministry Role	Full-time ministry	Bivocational ministry	Part-time ministry
Senior Pastor (with Staff)	36%	16%	8%
Senior Pastor (Solo)	25%	42%	29%
Youth Pastor	6%	3%	8%
Worship Pastor/Director	3%	3%	8%
Children's Pastor/Director	3%	3%	2%
Discipleship/Spiritual Formation Pastor/Director	5%	4%	13%
Pastor of Pastoral/Congregational Care	2%	3%	7%
Pastor of Evangelism/Outreach	2%	2%	2%
Church Planter	1%	8%	2%
Other (please specify)	16%	17%	23%
Total	695	226	118

Average Weekly Attendance of All Survey Participants

Weekly Avg	Full-Time Ministry	Bivocational ministry	Part-time ministry
0-50	21%	65%	50%
51-75	11%	15%	8%
76-100	11%	9%	10%
101-150	13%	4%	7%
151-200	9%	1%	4%
201-250	5%	2%	5%

251-400	7%	2%	11%
401-800	9%	1%	3%
801-1500	7%	1%	2%
1500+	5%	0%	1%
Total	695	226	118

Among all pastors who responded to the survey, over half (58%) were serving in churches where attendance averaged 100 or less. Bivocational and part-time pastors predominantly serve in churches where weekly attendance is 50 or less.

Annual Salary for Lead Pastors Based on Ministry Status

Annual Salary	Full-Time Lead with Staff	Full-Time Lead Solo	Bivocational Lead	Part-time Lead
Less than \$10,000	2%	9%	38%	52%
\$10,001-20,000	7%	11%	34%	31%
\$20,001-30,000	8%	27%	19%	10%
\$30,001-40,000	19%	24%	3%	7%
\$40,001-50,000	16%	15%	3%	0%
\$50,001-60,000	13%	8%	1%	0%
\$60,001-70,000	13%	4%	0%	0%
\$70,001-80,000	8%	2%	1%	0%
\$80,001-90,000	5%	0%	0%	0%

\$90,001-100,000	4%	1%	0%	0%
\$100,001-110,000	2%	0%	0%	0%
\$110,001 or more	3%	0%	0%	0%
Total	248	174	125	42

47% of full-time solo pastors earn less than \$30,000 compared to 17% of full-time lead pastors with staff. 72% of lead bivocational pastors make less than \$20,000 (91% make less than \$30,000), not far off from the 83% of part-time pastors who also make less than \$20,000.

Of the full-time, bivocational and part-time pastors who responded (in all positions, not just lead/solo pastors), salary increases were reported by 51%, 22% and 26% respectively. 81% of full-time pastors had received a raise within the past 5 years, while that number was lower for bivocational (44%) and part-time (55%) pastors. Most pastors reported that their salary and benefits are reviewed every year by the LBA, a finance committee, or a district representative (86% of full-time, 74% of bivocational, 90% of part-time).

When looking at annual salaries of all full-time pastors (including full-time staff pastors—see Appendices 1 and 2), about 28% make less than \$30,000 per year. Less than 20% make over \$60,000 per year. Bivocational pastors' salaries are similar to part-time pastors, with most (83% and 76%, respectively) making \$20,000 or less. Almost half of bivocational pastors make less than \$10,000 and over 90% make less than \$30,000. A majority of bivocational pastors (84%) indicated that their non-ministerial employment was a matter of financial necessity more than a matter of personal preference, and 85% of bivocational pastors reported that they were paid more for their second job than their ministry position. It appears that many of our bivocational pastors desire to be in full-time ministry and are unable to make it without additional income provided by a second job. We will need to look at the qualitative data to see what more we might learn about the experience of bivocational pastors in relation to their employment status and compensation. *See Appendix 2 for Staff Salaries by Position and Church Attendance.*

Financial Health and Stress

What follows are preliminary findings only; more detailed results are in development, but the general findings are worth presenting here. The scores mentioned below were for all pastors of all positions, including full-time, part-time, and bivocational. All pastors were asked to answer a series of questions related to their perceived financial health and stress. Their responses were then scored to provide an index of overall financial health and stress that could range from 1 (low) to 5 (high).

extent to which their ministerial salaries covered basic expenses, leisure, long-term needs, retirement, etc. Overall, pastors averaged 2.6 on a 5 point scale. Scores varied considerably ($SD= 1.23$), suggesting that there was significant variability in pastors' levels of financial health. In fact, 41.8% of pastors scored at 2 or below, suggesting low financial health. financial health scores for bivocational pastors(1.9) and part-time pastors (2.2) were substantially lower than full-time pastors scores (2.9). Overall, these data lead us to conclude that the financial health of clergy is of significant concern.

Financial Stress. Financial Stress was calculated by taking the average response to the four stress related questions from the survey. Scores could range from 1 (low stress) to 5 (high stress). Overall, pastors averaged 2.5, suggesting that their reported levels of financial stress were in the low to moderate range. Approximately 27% of pastors reported stress levels over 3 which is moderate stress, but only 7% reported stress levels of 4 or higher (more severe stress).

Interestingly, there were no significant differences in financial stress when comparing full-time, part-time and bivocational pastors. Perhaps this is because bivocational and part-time pastors have other means of income and, as we saw previously, many spouses are also providing income. However, a question to ask is if moderate stress of 27% is acceptable.

The Relationship Between Financial Health & Stress. Also worth noting was the weak to moderate relationship between financial health and financial stress. Those with lower levels of financial health were more likely to report financial stress; however, the relationship was not strong. Taken together, these data seem to suggest that even though a significant proportion of pastors are reporting difficult financial situations, most are not experiencing high levels of stress as a result. This is somewhat of a paradox. While this is encouraging on one hand, it is important to note the financial situations they are facing. For example, 40.5% said their salary was insufficient to meet their monthly living needs, 51.8% said their pastoral salary did not make it possible to save money for emergency expenses like auto and home repairs or medical expenses, and 60% reported their salary did not allow them to save for important goals such as their children's education, vehicle replacement, etc. It could be that the deep sense of vocational calling pastors experience mitigates some stress since ministry work is very meaningful to our pastors. In addition, the Bloom study demonstrated that resilience scores of Wesleyan pastors are fairly low; stress is one of several contributing factors to low resilience. Taken together, we conclude that stress levels due to finances might not be severe overall, but the financial health concerns are still a reality being experienced by a significant number of Wesleyan clergy. Future reports will further explore the factors related to the financial health and financial stress that our pastors experience.

Understanding the Statistical Variables and Correlations

Variables Associated with Salary among full-time Pastors

Given the large proportion of full-time pastors (all positions) and the variety of part-time and bivocational ministry roles, *the following analyses focus on factors associated with salaries for full-time pastors in all positions.* In what follows, we attempt to answer the question, *what is the relationship between a full-time pastor’s salary and various demographic characteristics that are typically associated with income?* Keep in mind that a correlation between two items is just an association, not proving causation.

Correlational Results for Full-time Pastors in All Positions

We used a statistical test called Pearson’s Correlation (sometimes referred to as *r*) to examine several variables that might be related to salary. The table below provides a summary of those analyses. P values are also reported, which provide an indication of how confident we can be in the relationship that was found (*r*). Lower p values are associated with more confidence. For the purposes of this report, we required a p value of .01 or less as the threshold of confidence in the significance of the findings. “Statistically significant” means we can have confidence there is likely a true difference or relationship. If something is designated “no significant relationship,” statistically speaking it means that any difference or relationship we have observed may have been due to chance and should not get much attention.

A positive relationship means that when one variable increases, the other tends to be higher as well. For example, churches with higher weekly attendance tend to pay their pastors more. Likewise, lower values (e.g., smaller congregations) tend to be associated with lower salaries.

Variable	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Interpretation
Age	-.03	.48	No significant relationship
Level of Education	.23	<.001	Statistically significant, weak positive relationship
Years in Vocational Ministry	.14	<.001	Statistically significant, weak positive relationship
Years in Current Assignment	.10	.01	Statistically significant, weak positive relationship
Average Weekly Attendance	.52	<.001	Statistically significant, moderate positive relationship
Vacation Days per Year	.25	<.001	Statistically significant, weak positive relationship
Sundays in a Row Pastor Can Take Off for Vacation	.17	<.001	Statistically significant, weak positive relationship

Frequency of Salary and Benefit Review by LBA, Finance Cmte or District	- .10	.02	No significant relationship
Percentage of Salary Church Contributes to Retirement	.07	.14	No significant relationship

Church Attendance. Overall, salary for full-time pastors in all positions was not strongly correlated with any of the variables we examined. The strongest correlation we identified, understandably, was between salary and the church’s average weekly attendance ($r=.52$). This would be characterized as a moderate, positive relationship which means that there is definitely a pattern, with pastors in larger churches reporting a higher annual salary. However, when we look at only lead and solo pastors, we did find a stronger, positive relationship ($r=.72$) between church size and salary. This tells us that salaries of staff pastors (full-time) are not as strongly correlated with church size as compared to lead and solo pastors, and this appeared to be particularly true for youth pastors.

Vacation. The next strongest relationship was between salary and days off for vacation ($r=.25$). This would be characterized as a weak, positive relationship. That means that the more vacation days a pastor is given, the more money they are also likely to make. The reverse is true as well; vacation days are associated with lower salary: pastors making less money are provided less days off. Again, though, we have to recognize that this is a weak relationship. A similar, though even weaker positive association was found between salary and the number of consecutive Sundays a pastor can take off ($r=.17$). Again, more consecutive Sundays off was associated with more salary. This points to an interesting opportunity for churches with limited resources. While they may not be able to increase the salary of their pastor they can much more easily increase their vacation days and Sundays off.

Education. Education had the third highest correlation with salary ($r=.23$). Again, it was a positive, weak relationship, but does indicate more education tends to be associated with higher pay.

Years of Service & Age. Interestingly, the number of years serving in vocational ministry (i.e., experience) and the amount of time a pastor had been serving in their current ministry assignment were both very weakly associated with salary. This was surprising since one would assume they would be more strongly associated with salary, that the longer a person was in ministry the more salary they would earn. Also important to note was the lack of relationship between pastors’ ages and their salary. In other words, older pastors were not making more money than younger ones. This does not mean pastors do not receive salary increases, however.

Salary Review. We expected to find a positive correlation between salaries and how frequently the local church/district reviewed pastors' salaries; however, there was no significant relationship. There was also no relationship between the frequency of compensation review and the frequency of salary increases.

In summary, churches that have more resources (i.e., larger congregations) tend to provide their pastors with larger salaries. And, those pastors with larger salaries also tend to enjoy more time off and more consecutive Sundays off for vacation. Education explains only about 5% of the variance we see in

pastor’s salaries. That means there are lots of other factors involved. Years of ministry experience explained very little variance in salary, and age had absolutely no relationship with salary.

Other Variables Associated with Salary

Some variables could not be analyzed using Pearson Correlation, so additional statistical tests more appropriate to the data were used. The table below provides results from t-tests that compared full-time pastor salaries based on demographic variables. Only full-time pastors were used in these analyses to ensure “apples to apples” comparisons.

Variable	t	p	Interpretation
Sex	4.49	<.001	Full-time male pastors are paid significantly more than female pastors
Marital Status	3.70	.001	Full-time married pastors are paid significantly more than single pastors
Ethnicity	2.76	.006	Full-time white pastors are paid significantly more than pastors from other racial/ethnic groups

These data suggest that higher annual salaries were reported among those who were male, married and white. These results are statistically significant and held up in identical comparisons across part-time and bivocational pastors.

A review of the salary tables provided in Appendix II provide more detailed breakdowns of salary across ministry roles and church size. Appendix I provides salary tables of full-time lead pastors with staff and full-time solo pastors.

Recommendations

1. Smaller churches should consider providing their pastor(s) more vacation time and more consecutive Sundays off. Offering this benefit is of minimal financial impact on local church budgets and can provide significant wellbeing for clergy. Larger churches offer more time off and more consecutive Sundays off than pastors of smaller churches, yet solo pastors have a broader range of responsibilities, experience greater stress, and have lower salaries.
2. Pastors should receive regular salary increases over time. Although local churches tend to review clergy salaries regularly, the number of years serving in vocational ministry (i.e., experience) and the amount of time a pastor had been serving in their current ministry assignment were both very weakly associated with salary. It is also recommended that districts consider providing a representative to work with the pastor and local church leadership to assist in negotiating pastor salaries.
3. Since nearly two-thirds of full-time lead/solo pastors report that their pastoral salaries alone are insufficient to make a living it is recommended that district and denominational leadership explore this issue further to help enable pastors to receive a livable wage. Consideration might be given to appointing a district representative who can work with both pastor and local church leadership to help support pastors to achieve a liveable wage.
4. The Wesleyan Church needs to better understand why there is not a higher percentage of Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino in full-time ministry. As compared to White/Caucasian pastors, Black/African-American pastors tend to be bivocational and Hispanic/Latino pastors tend to be part-time. Further study of this issue and identification of factors at play are needed to help ensure that our pastors of color are adequately compensated.
5. Further investigation should be done to determine the factors that lead to a larger proportion of males (70%) serving full time in contrast to female pastors (55%).
6. Since a majority of bivocational pastors (84%) indicated that their non-ministerial employment was a matter of financial necessity, further study and discussion is recommended to determine if they would like to be employed full-time or if they prefer to remain bivocational.
7. Single pastors are by far more likely to be part-time. It is recommended to explore the experience of single pastors to learn more about why a higher percentage are not employed full-time.

We encourage all readers to consider other recommendations as well. Please feel free to share those with us at clergycare@wesleyan.org.

Noteworthy Observations

1. A larger proportion of males (70%) serve full-time compared to females (55%).
2. A significant proportion of pastors (22%) continue to serve on a part-time basis into retirement age.
3. A greater proportion of Black/African-American pastors (12 of 33, 36%) were bivocational as compared to White/Caucasian pastors (21%). Similarly, Hispanic/Latino pastors (6 of 32, 19%) were more likely to be part-time, relative to White/Caucasian pastors (11%).
4. 81% of pastors have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree.
5. Single pastors are three times more likely to serve in part-time roles than married pastors.
6. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of full-time pastors said that it was a financial necessity for their spouses to work.
7. About 28% of all full-time pastors make less than \$30,000 per year. Less than 20% make over \$60,000 per year.
8. Salaries of full-time staff pastors are not as strongly correlated with church size as compared to lead and solo pastors.
9. There was also no relationship between the frequency of compensation review and the frequency of salary increases.
10. Pastors making less money also are provided less days off; pastors with larger salaries also tend to enjoy more time off, and more consecutive Sundays off for vacation.
11. While the financial health of clergy is of significant concern, stress levels related to finances are moderate.

APPENDIX I:

Salary by Church Attendance for Full-time Lead & Solo Pastors

Full-time Lead with Staff

Church Size → Salary ↓	0-50	51-75	76-100	101-150	151-200	201-250	251-400	401-800	801-1500	1500+
Less than \$10,000	12%	7%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$10,001-20,000	15%	17%	19%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$20,001-30,000	15%	20%	9%	12%	3%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%
\$30,001-40,000	31%	27%	44%	20%	11%	16%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$40,001-50,000	15%	20%	9%	31%	8%	16%	17%	7%	0%	0%
\$50,001-60,000	8%	10%	9%	14%	29%	11%	17%	0%	0%	0%
\$60,001-70,000	0%	0%	9%	14%	11%	37%	29%	21%	18%	0%
\$70,001-80,000	0%	0%	0%	4%	18%	5%	13%	36%	0%	20%

\$80,001-90,000	4%	0%	0%	2%	8%	5%	8%	14%	18%	0%
\$90,001-100,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	11%	8%	7%	18%	0%
\$100,001-110,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7%	36%	0%
\$110,001 or more	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	7%	9%	80%
Total	26	30	32	49	38	19	24	14	11	5

Full-time Lead Solo

Church Size → Salary ↓	0-50	51-75	76-100	101-150	151-200	201-250	251-400	401-800	801-1500	1500+
Less than \$10,000	12%	5%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$10,001-20,000	15%	11%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$20,001-30,000	37%	16%	15%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$30,001-40,000	18%	30%	31%	36%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

\$40,001-50,000	10%	22%	19%	18%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$50,001-60,000	5%	8%	23%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$60,001-70,000	2%	3%	4%	27%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$70,001-80,000	0%	3%	4%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$80,001-90,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$90,001-100,000	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$100,001-110,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$110,001 or more	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	98	37	26	11	2	0	0	0	0	0

APPENDIX II:

Salary by Church Attendance and Full-Time Staff Position

Full-time Youth Pastor

Church Size → Salary ↓	0-50	51-75	76-100	101-150	151-200	201-250	251-400	401-800	801-1500	1500+
Less than \$10,000	100%	0%	0%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$10,001-20,000	0%	100%	33%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$20,001-30,000	0%	0%	33%	22%	0%	25%	0%	14%	17%	33%
\$30,001-40,000	0%	0%	33%	44%	67%	25%	25%	43%	50%	0%
\$40,001-50,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%	25%	75%	14%	33%	33%
\$50,001-60,000	0%	0%	0%	11%	0%	25%	0%	14%	0%	33%
\$60,001-70,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$70,001-80,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$80,001-90,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	0%
Total	1	1	3	9	6	4	4	7	6	3

Full-time Worship Pastor/Director

Church Size → Salary ↓	0-50	51-75	76-100	101-150	151-200	201-250	251-400	401-800	801-1500	1500+
Less than \$10,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$10,001-20,000	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$20,001-30,000	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	20%	14%	0%
\$30,001-40,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	20%	29%	0%
\$40,001-50,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	29%	67%
\$50,001-60,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	40%	29%	0%
\$60,001-70,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$70,001-80,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%
Total	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	5	7	3

Full-time Children's Pastor

Church Size → Salary ↓	0-50	51-75	76-100	101-150	151-200	201-250	251-400	401-800	801-1500	1500+
Less than \$10,000	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$10,001-20,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$20,001-30,000	0%	0%	0%	25%	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%
\$30,001-40,000	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	50%	20%	40%	0%

\$40,001-50,000	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%	40%	20%	0%
\$50,001-60,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	40%	40%	0%
\$60,001-70,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Total	0	0	0	4	2	0	2	5	5	1

Full-time Discipleship/Spiritual Formation Pastor

Church Size → Salary ↓	0-50	51-75	76-100	101-150	151-200	201-250	251-400	401-800	801-1500	1500+
Less than \$10,000	100%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	0%
\$10,001-20,000	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$20,001-30,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$30,001-40,000	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	50%	0%	33%	20%	17%
\$40,001-50,000	0%	0%	100%	0%	75%	25%	50%	33%	0%	17%
\$50,001-60,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	25%	25%	17%	20%	0%
\$60,001-70,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	17%	20%	33%
\$70,001-80,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$80,001-90,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%
\$90,001-100,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	0%
\$100,001-110,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%
Total	2	2	1	2	4	4	4	6	5	6

Full-time Pastoral/Congregational Care Pastor

Church Size → Salary ↓	0-50	51-75	76-100	101-150	151-200	201-250	251-400	401-800	801-1500	1500+
Less than \$10,000	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$10,001-20,000	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$20,001-30,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%
\$30,001-40,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	50%	0%	67%
\$40,001-50,000	0%	0%	50%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%
\$50,001-60,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%
\$60,001-70,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%
\$70,001-80,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%
Total	2	0	2	2	1	0	0	4	2	3

Full-time Evangelism/Outreach Pastor

Church Size → Salary ↓	0-50	51-75	76-100	101-150	151-200	201-250	251-400	401-800	801-1500	1500+
Less than \$10,000	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$10,001-20,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$20,001-30,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%	0%	0%
\$30,001-40,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
\$40,001-50,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	67%	50%	50%
\$50,001-60,000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	3	2	2

APPENDIX III:

2021 Wesleyan Clergy Compensation Survey Questions

Introduction

The Wesleyan Church leadership deeply appreciates your ministry as a pastor. We are asking you to complete the following survey questions, which should take less than 10 minutes, to help the denomination better understand clergy compensation and its connection to personal wellbeing. Your individual responses will be confidential and only reported in aggregate with other Wesleyan clergy throughout the denomination. To further protect you, all data will be deidentified by an independent researcher so that the denomination cannot identify you personally.

1. How many years have you served in vocational ministry?

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 46-50
- More than 50

2. Which of the following best describes your current ministry employment status?

- Not presently employed in a paid ministry position
- Part-time ministry
- Full-time ministry
- bivocational ministry
- Other (please specify) _____

3. Which of the following best describes your primary ministry role?



- Senior Pastor (with Staff)
- Senior Pastor (Solo)
- Youth Pastor
- Worship Pastor/Director
- Children's Pastor/Director
- Discipleship/Spiritual Formation Pastor/Director
- Pastor of Pastoral/Congregational Care
- Pastor of Evangelism/Outreach
- Church Planter
- Other (please specify) _____

4. How many years have you served in your current ministry assignment?

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 46-50
- More than 50

5. What is your current church's average weekly attendance?

- 0-50
- 51-75
- 76-100
- 101-150
- 151-200
- 201-250
- 251-400
- 401-800
- 801-1500
- 1500+

6. How many years since you last received an increase in your salary?

- One year or less

- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- More than 15 years
- I have not received an increase in my salary at this church

7. How many years since you last received an increase in your benefits?

- One year or less
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- More than 15 years
- I have not received an increase in my benefits at this church

8. Which best describes your marital status?

- I am married
- I am single

9. How many dependents do you have? (This is the number of dependents you report on your tax form; be sure to count yourself)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. Does your spouse work outside of the home?

- Yes
- No

End of Block: Ministry Demographics

Start of Block: Compensation

11. What is your annual cash salary for the current ministry position you hold?

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,001-20,000
- \$20,001-30,000
- \$30,001-40,000
- \$40,001-50,000
- \$50,001-60,000
- \$60,001-70,000
- \$70,001-80,000
- \$80,001-90,000
- \$90,001-100,000
- \$100,001-110,000
- \$110,001 or more

12. Which source of income is greatest?

- Your pastoral position

Display This Choice:

If Which of the following best describes your current ministry employment status? = bivocational ministry

- Your second job
- Your spouse's employment

13. Which source of income is greatest for you?

- Your pastoral position
- Your second job

14. Do you receive a regular pay increase? If so, please indicate how frequently you receive the increase.

- Yes, I receive pay increases approximately every year
- Yes, I receive pay increases about every two years
- Yes, I receive pay increases about every three years
- No, I do not receive regular pay increases

15. How frequently does the LBA, Finance Committee, or a District representative review your salary and benefits?

- Every year
- Every 2 years
- Every 3 years
- Every 4 years
- Every 5 years or less frequently
- I don't know

16. Which of the following benefits does your church provide to you?

- Health insurance
- Retirement benefits
- Parsonage or housing allowance
- Automobile
- Life insurance
- Disability insurance
- Childcare
- Continuing education
- Sabbatical (extended leave for study and renewal apart from vacation)
- Other (e.g., books, seminars, subscriptions, entertainment, expense accounts, etc.). If so, please list them here. _____

Display This Question:

If Which of the following benefits does your church provide to you? = Retirement benefits

17. What **percentage of your salary** does your church contribute to your retirement plan?

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20

Use slider to respond ()



Display This Question:

If Which of the following benefits does your church provide to you? = Parsonage or housing allowance

18. Which of the following does your church provide to you?

- Parsonage
- Housing support or allowance

Display This Question:

If Which of the following benefits does your church provide to you? = Health insurance
Or Which of the following benefits does your church provide to you? = Parsonage or housing allowance
Or Which of the following benefits does your church provide to you? = Life insurance
Or Which of the following benefits does your church provide to you? = Life insurance
Or Which of the following benefits does your church provide to you? = Childcare
Or Which of the following benefits does your church provide to you? = Continuing education

19. How much does your church contribute toward the following **each month**?

Display This Choice:

If Which of the following benefits does your church provide to you? = Health insurance

- Health insurance _____

Display This Choice:

If Which of the following does your church provide to you? = Housing support or allowance

- Housing allowance _____

Display This Choice:

If Which of the following does your church provide to you? = Parsonage

- Parsonage (list fair market rental value) _____

Display This Choice:

If Which of the following benefits does your church provide to you? = Life insurance

- Life insurance _____

Display This Choice:

If Which of the following benefits does your church provide to you? = Childcare



- Child care _____

Display This Choice:

If Which of the following benefits does your church provide to you? = Continuing education

- Continuing education _____

20. Which of the following is true about health insurance for your family members?

- My church pays for health insurance for my family members
- My church will not pay for health insurance for family members
- My church would pay for health insurance for my family members but they are already covered
- Other (please explain) _____

21. How often does your church provide sabbaticals?

- Every year
- Every 2 years
- Every 3 years
- Every 4 years
- Every 5 years
- Every 6 years
- Every 7 years
- Other (please specify) _____

22. Does your church pay for sabbatical?

- Yes
- No

If Which of the following benefits does your church provide to you? = Sabbatical (extended leave for study and renewal apart from vacation)

23. How much time does your church provide for sabbatical?

- Less than one week
- One week
- Two weeks
- Three weeks
- One month
- Longer than one month (please specify) _____

24. On average, how many uninterrupted days-off from church work are you able to take **during the week**?

- None
- One
- Two
- Three
- Four or more

25. On average, how many days of vacation, without work-related interruptions, are you able to take **each year**?

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

26. How many Sundays in a row are you allowed to take off?

- I cannot take Sundays off
- I cannot take consecutive Sundays off
- 2 Sundays in a row
- 3 Sundays in a row
- 4 or more Sundays in a row

End of Block: Compensation

Start of Block: PastorFeedback

Rating Intro For the following questions we would like you to provide your perspective on the compensation your church provides. Please know that this information will help us understand how our clergy are doing and guide our efforts to better support our pastors and their families.

27. My church salary is sufficient to meet my monthly living needs, including those of my dependents.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

28. My pastoral salary makes it possible for me to save money for emergency expenses, such as auto and home repairs, or medical expenses.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

29. My pastoral salary provides enough money for leisure, recreational interests, entertainment and other personal and family activities.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

30. My pastoral salary allows me to save for other important goals such as children's education, vehicle replacement, etc.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

31. My pastoral salary allows me to make additional contributions to my retirement fund.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

32. My non-ministry employment (decision to be bivocational) is a matter of financial need more than a matter of preference.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

33. Concerns about my personal finances cause me stress at work.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

34. Concerns about my personal finances cause me stress at home.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

35. Concerns about our personal finances cause difficulties between me and my spouse.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

36. How often do you or your spouse worry about your personal finances?

- Never
- Once in a while
- Often
- Almost daily
- Daily

37. It is a financial necessity for my spouse to work outside of the home.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

38. We are interested in any other thoughts or concerns you might wish to share with us about the compensation and benefits you receive as a pastor.

End of Block: PastorFeedback

Start of Block: BasicDemographics

39. Before we finish, please take 30 more seconds to answer 4 demographic questions so that we can better understand how these factors may relate to clergy compensation and Wellbeing.

40. What is your age in years?

- Under 25
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-67
- 68-76
- 77+
- Prefer not to say

41. What is your ethnicity?

- Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Native American/First Nations
- Black/African American
- Black/Caribbean American
- Hispanic/Latino
- White/Caucasian
- Other (please specify) _____
- Prefer not to say

42. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

43. What is the highest level of education you have obtained?

- High school diploma or GED
- Some college
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree

End of Block: Basic Demographics

Start of Block: Block 4

Thank you!

That completes the survey. Thank you for taking the time to share your experiences with us. Your participation is vital to helping the wellbeing of our Wesleyan pastors. A copy of the final report will be sent to all pastors when the study is completed. When you click next, you will be redirected to the Clergy Care Resource page from Education & Clergy Development.

End of Block: Block 4
