

RESOLUTION B: COMPENSATION FOR NON-STIPENDIARY VOCATIONAL DEACONS

Resolved, that the 43rd Convention of the Diocese of El Camino Real declares it will be the policy of this diocese that all active vocational deacons shall be paid amounts sufficient to enable them to participate in programs offered by the Church Pension Fund.

Resolved, that each congregation of the diocese with a serving vocational deacon be required to pay twenty-five dollars (\$25) or more per month to their deacon as remuneration.

Resolved, that each such congregation also provide the required contribution of eighteen percent (18%) to the Church Pension Fund for the benefit of the deacon.

Resolved, that this resolution will go into effect as of January 1, 2024.

Resolved, that this resolution will not apply to any deacon who is 72 years of age or older as of January 1, 2024 or who thereafter attains age 72.

Resolved, that deacons may decline the monthly compensation.

Explanation:

Deacons in the Episcopal Church, including the Diocese of El Camino Real, serve at the behest of their diocesan bishop in parish and diocesan positions without remuneration. The Church Pension Fund (CPF) provides resources for paid clergy and lay employees in Episcopal congregations who participate in the CPF pension plan.

One of the resources the Church Pension Fund offers is the opportunity to participate in CREDO, a conference that helps active and retired clergy by presenting a holistic approach to wellness for mind, body, spirit, and heart. Participants examine and evaluate their health and wellness from spiritual, vocational, physical, emotional, and financial points of view. The Church Pension Fund also provides pension and retirement savings plans, health benefits, and educational services.

The Church Pension Group (CPG, which is the umbrella organization for the Church Pension Fund) previously required a specified minimum contribution be made to the fund in order for full-time clergy to participate in any of CPG's programs. With the increased numbers of bi-vocational priests, CPG needed to remove the minimum payment requirement, which then created a way to include all clergy: priests and deacons. At recent conferences, representatives of the Church Pension Fund have stated that if deacons and non-stipendiary priests were paid a nominal amount on a regular basis, they would be eligible for these benefits.

This proposed resolution requires congregations to make a nominal payment of \$25 or more a month to their deacon(s), as well as a monthly payment of 18% (\$4.50 for \$25) to the Church Pension Fund, to enable deacons to participate in the programs and benefits available through the Church Pension Fund.

Compensation will be provided to any deacon serving unless declined by the deacon. Deacons may decline the compensation for a variety of reasons (e.g., a theological understanding that deacons serve without compensation or possible impact on other retirement benefits being received). However, per the rules of the Church Pension Group, retirement contributions cannot be made for any clergy age 72 years or older.

This resolution is not in any way intended to suggest that the proposed payments adequately compensate deacons for the work they do in a volunteer capacity. The purpose is to give deacons access to Church Pension Fund resources. This resolution would only apply to those deacons not already participating in the Church Pension Fund. Concerns about minimum wage implications are alleviated by a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals opinion holding that the Ministerial Exception applies to wage and hour issues.

This resolution is patterned after resolutions previously adopted by the Dioceses of Vermont, New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Olympia. At this time, the Association of Episcopal Deacons (AED) reports that 19 dioceses have adopted Deacon Compensation resolutions.

Proposed by

Deacons' Council of the Diocese of El Camino Real:

The Rev. Robin M Poppoff, Santa Clara Valley Deanery (contact person)

The Rev. Tina Heidmann, Monterey Deanery

The Rev. Susan Arnold, San Luis Obispo Deanery