

Understanding Extravagant Generosity

This one apportionment has two distinct parts: The Episcopal Fund, managed by the General Council on Finance and Administration to support the work of the bishops of The United Methodist Church, and the Episcopal Housing Fund, managed by the Conference Treasurer, to provide housing for the bishop of the Oklahoma and Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conferences, Bishop Robert E. Hayes Jr.

First, let us consider the work and responsibilities of an active bishop in our church. According to the *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 414, the first responsibility is to “lead and oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of The United Methodist Church which confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and particularly to lead the Church in its mission of witness and service in the world.” The second task is to “strengthen the local church, giving spiritual leadership to both laity and clergy; and to build relationships with people of local congregations of the area.”

The Episcopal Fund pays salaries and professional travel and moving expenses of bishops, provides pension and health insurance coverage for bishops and their spouses, pays episcopal office expenses up to a specified amount each year, and pays each episcopal area annually to assist in providing an episcopal residence.

The amount apportioned for Episcopal Housing is added to the funds provided by the Episcopal Fund and to earnings from funds restricted for this purpose. [The Oklahoma Conference](#) and the [Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference](#) jointly provide a home for the Hayes family.

Ministerial Support
Episcopal Fund and Housing

Ministerial Support Equitable Compensation

It is not a large apportionment, but Equitable Compensation meets some very real needs—both for ministers and churches in the Oklahoma Annual Conference. In this, as in every other annual conference, there are small congregations and circuits which cannot pay sufficient salary to meet the minimum salary standards set by our annual conference.

Meeting these basic salary requirements is the first priority of this apportionment. But it is not the only way in which this apportionment helps to meet the needs of churches and pastors. Occasionally the skills and leadership abilities of a particular pastor are especially needed in a specific church. When the church in need cannot provide adequate support for the pastor, these funds are used to help close the gap for a brief period of time, while the church grows into its potential and assumes full responsibility for supporting its pastor.

Equitable Compensation is divided into 4 areas. The first is minimum compensation. Not every church can meet the requirements to qualify for equitable compensation support. No two churches within 20 miles of each other can participate in the minimum compensation plan unless they combine to form a circuit. The charge is expected to pay at least half the required compensation amount, and that amount was at least \$10,000 in 2006. The churches also must pay the pension amount on the base compensation they pay the pastor. Churches are urged to increase their pastoral compensation by 5 percent each year, and cannot continue in the program if they reduce the amount of pastoral support.

The second area is exceptional support and is designed for a short period of time, maximum is four years, to help a church and its pastor. The third area is missional support and is designed to help those congregations who are not self-sufficient and where the cabinet believes it is important that the United Methodist Church has a presence in that community.

The fourth area is a new one and is designed to help start new congregations where the pastor best suited to start the church has a compensation package larger than the new church start budget can support.

Equitable Compensation is a relatively small apportionment, but it does a big job!