

CLC Board of Missions Guidelines for Domestic Subsidized Congregations

Dear Lord Jesus, as You said to Your disciples, "As My Father sent Me, even so I send you," so You also say to us, "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Give us the willingness and desire to share the riches of Your grace and redemption with people everywhere, so that they and we may share with You, Lord, the joys of heaven. Bless Your missionaries and grant power to the Word they proclaim. Amen.

Duties of the CLC Board of Missions

The CLC Constitution assigns the following duties to the CLC Board of Missions:

- The Board of Missions shall explore mission fields and may open missions. If necessary, it may terminate its efforts in any field.
- It shall supervise the congregations and preaching stations receiving subsidy from the Church of the Lutheran Confession.
- It shall authorize the acquisition of property in mission fields in conjunction with the Board of Trustees.
- It shall study the needs and conditions in the mission fields, and provide counsel and assistance as required.

In attempting to fulfill these duties, the Board of Missions has established the following GUIDELINES:

I. The Call by a Subsidized Congregation

- A. The call of a pastor by a subsidized congregation is a call in which the Board of Missions also has an interest as long as the congregation receives subsidy from the CLC. However, the pastoral call to serve a regular CLC mission comes from the congregation, not from the Mission Board. Before calling a pastor, the congregation shall contact the President of the CLC, who is encouraged to consult with the Chairman of the Board of Missions, before forwarding a list of candidates to the congregation. The congregation shall, if possible, consult with the President of the CLC and with the Chairman of the Board of Missions before adding any other names to the list. The calling shall be done by the congregation unless the congregation desires the Board to call in its stead.
- B. The Board of Missions' involvement in the congregation's call to a pastor comes to an end when a congregation becomes self-supporting or in cases when circumstances necessitate a termination of subsidy such as the financial condition of the CLC, or the obvious lack of potential in the area where the congregation is located. The Board will in Christian love endeavor to give financial support to pastors in terminated fields until other means of support can be found.

- C. The Board of Missions' oversight of subsidized congregations does not include doctrinal supervision. If questions arise concerning a pastor's doctrine or conduct, the CLC Constitution, Articles VIII and IX, should be followed.
- D. When a pastor receives a call to serve a subsidized congregation, he should immediately send letters of receipt to:
 - 1. the calling congregation
 - 2. the Chairman of the Board of Missions
 - 3. the President of the CLC
 - 4. the Visitor of his conference

All of these may supply him with the necessary information and counsel with respect to his call. As soon as he comes to a decision concerning his call, he should inform the above-named parties.
- E. When a pastor serving a subsidized congregation receives a call to serve elsewhere, he should immediately send a letter of acknowledgment to the calling congregation, and also notify his congregation, the Chairman of the Mission Board, the President of the CLC, and the Visitor of his conference. He should give opportunity to the Board of Missions to lend him counsel and advice before accepting or declining a call elsewhere.

II. Determination of Subsidy

The following principles will guide the Board of Missions in determining the amount of subsidy to be sent to a congregation. These are to serve as goals.

- A. The congregation is responsible for all its operational expenses. The CLC will provide a limited subsidy to help them meet these expenses.
- B. Subsidy Ceiling. The subsidy ceiling shall be \$3000.00 (*as of December 2013*) per month. Only under extraordinary and critical circumstances shall subsidy be raised above this level. If at any time this should become necessary, the ceiling shall only be raised above this level by a unanimous vote of the entire Board of Missions. Every congregation is expected to abide by and be governed by the compensation schedule outlined elsewhere in these guidelines. Any deviation from this policy should be reported to the Chairman of the Board of Missions. Compensation increases granted by the convention or the Coordinating Council should whenever possible be absorbed by the congregation. Each congregation is expected to raise its level of giving to meet these needs, as do all self-supporting congregations.
- C. Subsidy Reduction. An orderly and attainable subsidy reduction is necessary, both to keep our Mission Expansion program going, and to encourage a God-pleasing stewardship within our congregations. It is part of proper Christian training that each member within our congregations learn the joy and responsibility of good stewardship. With the involvement of all the members, this can prove to be a simple and joyful undertaking.

The subsidy reduction will be automatic. After two full years in operation, or after two years following a major property acquisition either by purchase or by construction, the subsidy will be automatically reduced by \$150.00 (*as of December 2013*) per month each January.

- D. If it proves impossible for a congregation to operate under this reduction, a letter must be written to the Chairman of the Board of Missions outlining alternative plans, and a schedule for reduction. The Board will then carefully weigh all options with the possibility of either postponing the reduction for a time or adjusting it to fit the congregation's financial situation.

Note: these reduction goals are crucial to our church's mission effort. If the subsidy reduction plan were to be fully implemented with the cooperation of all our mission congregations, that would make it possible to open a new Mission at least every two years. In other words, we could see five new mission congregations in the CLC during a ten-year period...supported entirely from your reductions! Truly, as our Lord has said, "*The fields are white unto harvest!*"

- E. During a vacancy the subsidy for the pastor's salary does not continue except to the extent needed to remunerate the interim pastor. The congregation shall consult with the Chairman of the Board of Missions before establishing the interim pastor's salary (cf. Article IX, B).
- F. Exploratory work in potential mission fields is to be done by our exploratory missionary program. However, special opportunities may arise which merit limited funding on a temporary basis. This funding does not constitute mission status for the congregation.
- G. Only in cases of necessity will the CLC provide help for moving expenses, and then only upon a written request from the congregation. The congregation is expected to choose an economical means of moving its pastor.

III. Code Salary of Pastors (effective July 1, 2017 – FY18)

- A. The salary of pastors shall be determined in this manner:
 - 1. Base Salary: \$ 2,403.00 per month.
 - 2. Retired pastors serving full-time in missions on a temporary basis shall receive at least \$1,000 per month plus housing, utilities, and car allowance, and continued CLC retirement benefits.
 - 3. Experience Increment: \$6.25 per month for each year spent in the service of the church (up to 25 years). In exceptional cases, eligibility for this increment shall be determined by the Board of Missions.
 - 4. Child Allowance: \$40 per month for each child, through high school or age 18. (**NO ALLOWANCE for children born after 7/1/2013**)

5. Car Allowance: current IRS established mileage rate, rounded to the nearest hundred miles per month. In general this shall be based on the mileage the pastor listed for his previous year's income tax deduction, but excluding conference driving.
6. Housing: Either in the form of a home owned by the congregation or a rented home. Note: under special circumstances the Board of Missions may consider it to be in the best interest of all concerned to make exceptions.
7. Utilities: All utilities of the parsonage, including fuel, electricity, water and sewer, trash collection and telephone (excluding long distance personal calls) will be paid by the congregation.

B. Fringe Benefits:

1. Consideration of Medical Insurance needs or CLC Tier 2 compensation.
2. Retirement: CLC approved premiums will be paid by the congregation and provided to all workers after one year in the public ministry. The current premium is \$ 170 per month (\$180 per month beginning 1/1/2019). No social security allowance will be provided.

There shall be no other fringe benefits, such as social security, or any similar thing. The pastor is expected to pay for these out of his salary. Note: When a congregation becomes self-supporting it may, of course, give its pastor whatever fringe benefits it deems appropriate.

- C. Vacation:** Two weeks of vacation each year will be allowed for pastors with one to nine years of service in the ministry, and three weeks of vacation will be granted to pastors with ten or more years of service.

Note regarding outside employment by a Mission Congregation Pastor: It is the general policy of the CLC that a pastor should not turn to outside employment to supplement his salary. If a situation arises where it is imperative that the pastor supplement his salary through outside employment, the Board of Missions shall be consulted in advance.

IV. Local Operation of the Congregation

- A. The congregation will determine its own program and budget for local operation and will send this budget to the Chairman of the Board of Missions (by February 15 of each year).
- B. The congregation shall seek the permission of the Board of Missions to buy, sell, and/or trade property or equipment, or to build, repair or improve its place of worship, parsonage, or any other building if the cost is over \$500. In every such case, permission should be obtained before engaging in any action. The Board of Missions should be informed concerning all special gifts (non-budgetary) and all funds in special accounts in the mission congregation.

- C. The congregation's selection of a conference shall be determined in consultation with the Board of Missions.
- D. The congregation is required to send a record of its regular and special voters' meetings, its annual reports, quarterly financial reports, occasional bulletins, and other helpful information to the members of the Board of Missions. Copies of all advertising brochures, newspaper ads, radio scripts, etc., should be submitted to the Board of Missions in case they may be appropriate for utilization by other groups. The congregation shall provide the Board with their proposed annual budget for the current year by the first of February. These items will give the Board the necessary background to lend counsel and advice to the congregation as needed (cf. Introduction, especially points C and D).
- E. The pastor is asked to send the members of the Board of Missions a quarterly statistical report and, more importantly, a quarterly letter in which he gives his evaluation of his mission field in terms of progress, problems, suggestions for improvements and future needs. Note: The Board of Missions may make use of these reports, bulletins, minutes, etc., to provide information to the CLC by means of the Mission Newsletter. Reporting forms will be provided by the Board of Missions which will make reporting process more convenient. Any special activities should be reported in a timely manner.
- F. Each member of the congregation, as a disciple of our Lord, is privileged to be a witness for the Gospel. The congregation as a whole should also make it part of its regular business to conduct organized outreach efforts to the community. Each CLC mission should have either an organized Outreach Committee, or should have outreach efforts as an agenda item for each meeting of the Church Council, and for the voters' meetings. Reports on these outreach efforts will be important factors for the Mission Board to consider when evaluating our domestic mission fields.
- G. Mission pastors are expected to regularly attend regional and synod-wide conferences and conventions. They are also strongly encouraged to participate in area study clubs, whenever possible.
- H. A subsidized congregation is one which is not yet able to support one full time called servant, as well as operational expenses. For this reason mission congregations will not ordinarily be eligible to open a Christian Day School. Extraordinary situations will be considered by the Mission Board on a case by case basis.

V. Exploratory Missionary Program

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." -Matthew 28:18.

- A. The Exploratory Missionary shall serve under a call from the CLC through its Board of Missions.
- B. The location and duration of each field of labor shall be determined by the Board of Missions. In most cases, a 12-24 month exploratory period is envisioned. The group involved shall fully understand the exploratory nature of this venture. Under no circumstances shall this be considered a permanent mission commitment. Property purchase or building construction is forbidden until the exploratory period is completed, unless special circumstances exist.
- C. The primary function of the exploratory mission program is to develop exploratory fields by conducting services, organizing and guiding the nucleus in its mission efforts, and carefully evaluating long-range mission potential.
- D. During the exploratory period, the Board of Missions, in consultation with the Exploratory Missionary, shall carefully evaluate the field to determine a future course of action. Attendance, offerings, congregational activity, the potential for the use of the Means of Grace in the community, and other factors will be prayerfully considered. If a decision is made to place the group or mission congregation on mission status, it shall then be subject to the regular Guidelines for Subsidized Congregations. If the field does not merit full-time mission effort, arrangements shall be made to minister to those in this field in the best manner possible. Having completed his work, the Exploratory Missionary shall then be sent to another exploratory field.
- E. All general offerings received during the exploratory period shall be applied to expenses pertaining to the exploratory work. Any special funds, gifts or bequests received by the group should be reported to the Mission Board along with the monthly treasurer's report. The Board of Missions shall assume the full cost of moving the missionary.
- F. Formation of a legal, incorporated congregation should not take place until actual "mission status" has been granted by the Board of Missions. A name may be chosen for purposes of identification, advertising, etc. and a provisional constitution should be adopted (See model provisional constitution), but legal incorporation should be postponed until it is certain that a permanent congregation will be formed. An exploratory group can usually find ways to function in a satisfactory manner without legal incorporation. In some cases, e.g., a tax-exempt number from a neighboring CLC congregation may be borrowed to assist in purchases for the new group. If possible, temporary

officers should be selected in order to insure good order. It will certainly be necessary to have a chairman, treasurer and elder, though these offices could be combined if necessary.

- G. It must be understood by everyone involved that this is an "exploratory period," and that no permanent commitment has been made either by the missionary or by the Mission Board. While the exploratory nature of the effort must remain clear, the new group will certainly be encouraged toward a prayerful sense of commitment, and confidence. The observation of the Psalmist remains true: *"I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken."*
- H. Membership rolls should be maintained, and orderly transfers from other CLC congregations should be encouraged (even though the group is not a legal entity, transfers will be recognized by other CLC congregations).
- I. The missionary shall report monthly to the Board of Missions. A copy of the report should be sent to each member of the Board individually, as well as to the President of the CLC. The report should cover the overall outlook for the group, calls and contacts made, attendance, pastoral acts such as baptisms and confirmations, and all other pertinent information. If possible, the opinions and assessments of key group members may also be solicited, and included in reports to the Mission Board, perhaps on a quarterly basis. Of course, the missionary is encouraged to contribute his views and suggestions.

Concluding Remarks

These guidelines are intended as an aid to members of the Board of Missions and to the subsidized congregations of the CLC, to the end that all things may be done decently and in order (I Cor.14:40). Our chief purpose as Christians, whether as members of the Board of Missions or members of the subsidized congregations, is to show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, by going into all the world and preaching our Lord's Gospel to every creature. May our gracious Lord bless our efforts for His mercy's sake. Amen.

*"Up! The ripening fields ye see.
Mighty shall the harvest be!
But the reapers still are few,
Great the work they have to do."*

*"Lord of Harvest, let there be
Joy and strength to work for Thee,
Till the nations far and near
See Thy light and learn Thy fear."
TLH 507: 5-6*