

**Committee on Ministry Report
Presbytery of Boston Meeting
December 8, 2022**

Respectfully submitted by Jill Auger

I. For Action:

- A. Motion: We recommend that the Presbytery examine Yan Wang for ordination as the Organizing Pastor of the Chinese Fellowship, an Inquiring Faith Community of the Presbytery of Boston, with oversight through the Committee on Ministry. His statement of faith and faith journey statement follow this report.
- B. Motion: We recommend that the Presbytery approve the 2023 Minimum Compensation Standards that follow this report. As the document indicates, we recommend a 3% increase in pastoral compensation for 2023, and we recommend that other compensation amounts remain the same for 2023, including \$90 for unit compensation.
 - 1. We note that Board of Pensions dues will increase 2% for 2023, because of a 2% increase in medical dues.
 - 2. We also note that the Social Security COLA for 2023 is 8.7%.

II. For Individual Action:

A. MA Requirement for Clergy Who Officiate at Weddings

It was recently brought to our attention that all members of the clergy in Massachusetts are required to be registered with the Commonwealth prior to officiating at in-state weddings. We refer you to the following state website for more information:

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/pre/premar/masmarriage.htm>

III. For Information:

A. Changes in Terms of Call

COM approved:

1. a six-month extension of the contract between the Rev. Pamela Spence Bakker and the session of Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church. She will continue as Interim Pastor, on a half-time basis (instead of a three-quarter-time basis), from December 29, 2022, through June 28, 2023.
2. a six-month extension of the contract between the Rev. Dr. Susan DeHoff and the session of the United Presbyterian Church of Whitinsville. She will continue as Temporary Pastor, on a three-quarter-time basis, from February 1, 2023, through July 31, 2023.

B. Recommendations Regarding Relevant Amendments to Constitution

We discussed the amendments that seemed to fall within the committee's purview and offer the following recommendations:

22-E (honorably retired) - no recommendation
22-F (Immigrant pastors' ordination) - yes
22-I (family leave) - yes
22-J (commissioned ruling elder) - yes
22-K (commissioned ruling elder) - yes
22-L (certified Christian educator) - yes
22-P (council policies) - yes
22-Q (dissolution terms)- no recommendation
22-S (confidentiality)- yes

C. Thanks and Appreciation

The committee expresses great thanks and appreciation to departing Stated Clerk T. J. DeMarco and departing members of the committee Brad Turner and Rick Otty.

Statement of Faith

Yan Wang

I believe in God, the one and only true God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three in one, distinct and yet all are divine.

God is the creator and lord of the universe. All things in the world are sustained and governed according to His holy will. In life and in death, I am under His gracious care. Nothing in creation can separate me from His love, because in Jesus Christ, He has claimed me his own. So I am not my own, but belong body and soul to my faithful savior, Jesus Christ.

I believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Born of the virgin Mary, fully divine and human in one flesh. Through his suffering and death on the cross, Jesus atoned for the sins of the world. Through his resurrection, death is defeated. Those who believe in him receive a new life and a restored relationship with God. By God's grace, I am cleansed by Jesus' precious blood, forgiven and called to follow him and to live my life in gratitude, honoring and enjoying God in worship and in service.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, through whose work I'm called to repentance and a new life in Jesus Christ. I believe the church universal, the body of Christ, is gathered and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. All believers are united as one in Christ. Members of the same body, we are called, gifted and equipped to work for God's Kingdom.

The Scriptures have the highest authority in the church's teaching, worship, mission, and governance. The Bible is the true, divinely inspired Word of God which speaks the truth, life and way in Jesus Christ. Baptism and Lord's Supper are visible, holy signs and seals instituted by God. By our use of them, God helps us to understand more clearly of the Gospel message, so that we may grow more mature in faith and be assured of the eternal life promised in Jesus Christ.

Faith Journey

Yan Wang

In 1973 I was born in a small village in north China. I had no experience with church in my childhood. Throughout my education in the communist China, from elementary to college, I was taught to shun away from religion, for “religion is the opium of the people,” the Marxist dictum declared.

In 1992 when I started my college, China had largely relaxed its political control. During my college years I enjoyed the rare opportunity to explore and expand my spiritual horizons. For the first time in my life, I read the Bible. I tried but the book proved too difficult for me, not to mention it was in English. When I picked up the book again, it was eight years later. Sitting in the classroom in Shandong university I was taught by a retired Presbyterian pastor. In 2002 James Larkin taught Introduction to the Bible at the newly established Department of Religious Studies. Just one year before, I quit my corporate job and was enrolled into the department’s graduate program. At that time, I had a vague yet earnest desire for spiritual fulfilment, though I didn’t know where the studies would lead me to.

In same the classroom sat another graduate student named Rong Li. Several years later I married her. In 2006 she was a missionary in China sent by Christian Reformed Church (CRC), and I, a PhD student of Judaic Studies, an unbeliever. It took a little faith to get married—for both of us, probably this is true for everyone. For her, much more faith to expect and wait for the day when the unbelieving would become a believer. But God is all faithful. His plan and time never fail. In 2014, I was a visiting scholar at the Center for Judaic Studies, Boston University. God’s grace descended on me. The same year on December 14, I was Baptized into Christ in Church of the Servant, my wife’s home church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

In July of 2015, God gifted me with a beautiful daughter Emily. In seeking for her baptism, my wife and I came to First United Presbyterian Church of Cambridge. Since then First United has been our church family. Nurtured in this loving and caring Christian community, my faith has grown more mature and deeper.

My appointment at Boston University expired at the end of 2015. I decided not to return to China, but started my theological training in the same university. My three and half years studying at Boston University School of Theology were the most challenging time, academically, spiritually, economically, in all of my life. The experience humbled me and made me to seek more of God’s grace and to rely on His grace, which He gave me abundantly. In May of 2019, I graduated with a Master of Divinity Magna Cum Laude.

Soon after my graduation, my wife and I started a Mandarin Bible Study at home. The fellowship survived the Covid pandemic. In July, 2022, we came back to meet in person and resumed our study and worship. My faith journey continues as I live to honor and serve God, leading the fellowship on our shared journey to follow Jesus in His redemptive work for God’s Kingdom.

PRESBYTERY OF BOSTON

2023 Minimum Compensation Standards

For All Installed and Most Non-Installed Pastoral Positions

Each presbytery of the PCUSA is responsible for establishing minimum compensation standards for its pastors (Book of Order – G-3.0303c) and ensuring calls meet or exceed the minimum standards. (G-2.0804). The Presbytery of Boston has voted to apply the following standards to terms of call in 2023 for all installed and most non-installed positions.

Past practice of the Committee on Ministry has been to present two documents to the presbytery for approval – this one, with the 2023 minimum terms of compensation, and a second, larger document entitled, *Pastoral Compensation Standards: Explanation*. The latter is in need of review, and until such review is finalized, the 2021 version, with an explanatory note, is available as a reference on the presbytery website (under Committees - Ministry.)

Finally, the Committee on Ministry recognizes that in 2022 our congregations and pastors continued to deal with challenges for worship and ministry and finances as a result of the COVID pandemic. So, even as we are recommending a 3% increase in compensation, and recognize there will also be a 2% increase in 2023 Board of Pensions medical dues, we urge congregations to seek grace from COM should they be unable to meet the minimum compensation standards for 2023 without reducing hours.

A. Minimum Base Compensation

Base compensation includes cash salary and allowances, housing or manse allowance, and most church contributions to deferred income and for medical expenditures over and above the Board of Pensions dues. Normally, what is included in calculating base compensation is the same as what is used for calculating the Board of Pensions figure for Effective Salary.

The presbytery requires that all congregations pay their pastors at least the Adjusted Minimum Base Compensation appropriate to their years of service since ordination, computed as follows:

- The *Entry-level* Minimum Base Compensation for 2023 is \$ 63,182.00.
- To compute the *Adjusted* Minimum Base Compensation for any pastor, the Entry-level Minimum Base is augmented by an Experience Adjustment of 1% of the entry-level minimum base each year for the first 10 full years of active ministry following ordination, and by 0.5% for each subsequent full year beyond ten. For example:
 - the adjusted minimum base compensation for a minister with 7 full years of ordination, would be $\$63,182 * 1.07 = \$67,605$
 - the adjusted minimum base compensation for a minister with 13 full years of ordination, would be $\$63,182 * 1.115 = \$70,448$

Note: The experience adjustment percentage is used only to calculate an Adjusted Minimum Base Compensation based on a pastor's years of service. The experience percentage is not meant to be combined with the recommended percentage increase in effective salary in section E below for compensation levels currently above the minimum.

B. Minimum Mandatory Monetary Benefits

1. Board of Pensions dues for 2023: 39% of Effective Salary, as follows:
PPO medical coverage: 29% (a 2% increase from 2022)
pension: 8.5%
death and disability: 1%
temporary disability: .5% - (this was new in 2021)

Note for non-installed positions: The Committee on Ministry encourages participation in the Board of Pensions medical coverage for non-installed pastors contracted to work 20 or more hours per week.

2. SECA (Social Security Offset): 7.65% of Effective Salary (Note: this 7.65% is not included in Effective Salary total.)

- . **NOTE: Presbyteries of the PCUSA are currently voting on an amendment to the Book of Order that would require 2024 terms of call include “*provision for a minimum of twelve weeks paid family medical leave.*” This leave is to accommodate the birth, foster placement, or adoption of a child; to provide care to an ill or disabled family member; to heal following a loss or tragic event.**

C. Minimum Mandatory Non-Monetary Benefits

1. Vacation: 4 weeks, including 4 Sundays, if the pastor has been ordained less than 7 full years from the effective date of the new terms of call; 5 weeks, including 5 Sundays, if the pastor has been ordained 7 full years or more.

The presbytery considers annual vacation time to be important for refreshment, relaxation, health, and work effectiveness. The presbytery recommends that all vacation time be taken during the year in which it is earned.

2. Sick Leave: 1 week of paid or unpaid sick leave, as required by Massachusetts law.

See Section D.4. below, and “Sick Leave” in Section V. “Definitions,” of *Pastoral Compensation Standards: Explanation*.

3. Study Leave: 2 weeks, including 2 Sundays

The presbytery recommends that pastors’ study leave be allowed to accumulate for up to two years (for a leave of 4 weeks), to enable the pastor occasionally to attend a special continuing educational event that is longer than two weeks or that requires considerable travel there and back.

D. Recommended Monetary Benefits

Each pastor and congregation or session will want to designate and distribute dollar amounts for the following accounts according to anticipated expenses; for example, a pastor may have a smaller amount of travel expenses, but greater professional or continuing education expenses.

1. Accountable Reimbursement Travel account: \$1,500 suggested
2. Accountable Reimbursement Continuing Education/Study Leave account: \$1,500 suggested, which can accumulate up to a limit of three years’ worth
3. Accountable Reimbursement Professional Expenses account: \$600 suggested, which can accumulate up to a limit of three years’ worth

D. Recommended Monetary Benefits (continued)

4. One week of *paid* sick leave, going beyond the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' requirement of one week (40 hours) of *unpaid* sick leave.
5. Congregations may offer additional reimbursement accounts and other compensation as appropriate to their and their pastors' circumstances.

E. Recommended Increase in Effective Salary:

3.0% for 2023.

F. Part-time Calls

These standards should serve as guidelines to pro-rate compensation for part-time calls, except that

1. paid time off for study leave and vacation must remain at 2 and 4 or 5 weeks, respectively;
2. time off, paid or unpaid, for sick leave must remain at 1 week.

Part-time calls must be reported to the Board of Pensions through Benefits Connect in terms of hours per week. In its formulae, the Board considers 35 hours per week to represent full time. Internally, most congregations and ministers understand that full-time pastors devote 45 or more hours per week to their calls.

For part-time, non-installed calls of 20 hours or more per week, see note in Section B. above regarding medical coverage.

G. Unit Compensation

In 2023, the Minimum Unit Compensation Rate is \$90.00 (no increase from 2022)

Compensation for any service during any day must be at least one unit; compensation for service exceeding one unit (whether defined as "a morning, an afternoon or an evening," or as three to four hours) will be appropriately higher. The presbytery has established specific Unit Assignments for certain pastoral services, as follows:

1. Temporary moderator of a session or congregational meeting: 1.5 units or \$135.
2. Pulpit Supply
 - a. Single worship service on a Sunday: 2 units or \$ 180
 - b. Two worship services on the same day: 3 units or \$ 270
 - c. Note: A congregation hosting a Neutral Pulpit for a candidate under consideration by another congregation is not expected to compensate that candidate for preaching.

H. Manse Notes

1. Manse – Cash Salary Ratio

If the terms of call include a manse, the Board of Pensions requires that the value of the reported Manse allowance must be at least 30% of the sum of all the other components of Effective Salary.

2. Equity-Equivalent Accumulation Fund

If the terms of call include a manse, the Presbytery of Boston recommends that an additional 5% of the value of the pastor's adjusted minimum base compensation be added to the terms of call in the form of a suitable deferred income account to make up for lack of equity growth.

I. Summary

Entry Level Minimum Base Compensation: -----\$ 63,182.00

Recommended increase in compensation:-----3.0 %

Minimum Unit Compensation ----- \$ 90

Mandatory benefits:

Board of Pensions dues: 39%

Vacation ----- 4 or 5 weeks

Study Leave----- 2 weeks

SECA Offset ----- 7.65 %

Sick Leave ----- 1 week (recommend paid)

Recommended Accountable Reimbursement benefits:

Travel ----- \$ 1,500

Continuing Education/Study Leave -- \$ 1,500

Professional Expenses ----- \$ 600

Recommended non-monetary benefits:

Sick Leave ----- 1 week paid

J. Annual Review and Reporting of Terms of Call to the Committee on Ministry

1. The pastor and the session or its personnel committee shall annually review the adequacy of the terms of call and modify them as may be deemed advisable.
 - a. The modified (or “revised”) terms of call for installed pastors must then be presented for approval by the congregation at a duly-called congregational meeting. For non-installed pastors, approval is by the session.
 - b. The terms of call approved by the session for non-installed pastors for the following year shall be submitted to the COM for its approval.
2. Local churches may, for good and valid reasons, petition the presbytery through the COM to approve terms of call that do not conform to these minimum standards. When doing so they shall either submit a plan that brings them into compliance within three years, or request an exception to the policy by documenting the particular circumstances that prevent compliance. Such exceptions must be included in the written original call, or the amended terms of call, and the presbytery may specify conditions for continuing to grant the exceptions.