



E9 Commission on Personnel Report

The Diocesan Commission on Personnel began in 1974 by an act of diocesan convention. Its purpose is to consider compensation and benefits for clergy and other church employees and to make recommendations that seek justice, equity, and fair compensation. The Commission's work focuses on human resources issues: creating and consulting on personnel policies for the diocese and congregations, benefits recommendations for clergy and lay employees, and the clergy compensation scale.

Your Diocesan Commission on Personnel continues to take up, along with the good support, input, and guidance of our Canon to the Ordinary, The Rev. Cn. Cristi Chapman, ongoing resource support for congregations in the form of an [annual update for congregations](#). Through this annual update, congregations can stay current with changes in Washington State Paid Family and Medical Leave, changes to Washington State Minimum Wage and Overtime rules, updates to the [Personnel Handbook Template](#) and encouraging wellness for all lay and clergy employees through use of the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#).

Benefits recommendations this year include **selection of base medical and dental plans** for 2027 (with updates to both medical and dental plans - see diocesan resource website). Health (medical and dental) premiums for the base plan increased 13.5% from 2026. The Commission **proposes a 3.5% COLA** for 2027 clergy and Office of the Bishop staff salaries (see ***Resolutions Committee Report***).

Continuing our common discernment around equity regarding clergy compensation

Regarding the **geographic differential**, we continue to be aware that a notable number of congregations in our diocese are in some of the most expensive housing markets in this nation. We are also aware that we have 3 different metropolitan areas in our diocesan bounds (Seattle-Tacoma, Vancouver WA-Portland OR, Bellingham-Vancouver BC), and we also have a unique reality with congregations on multiple islands, as well as locations that are not as expensive as those metropolitan or island communities. How can congregations both offer viable salaries to attract gifted clergy given the housing realities of our region and approach offering a clergy position that is feasible for a congregation, as well as equitable for a clergy person?

Last year, the Commission presented a model to the convention, and asked congregations to study it and provide feedback. You can read more about the model that was presented in [last year's report](#).

Why are we doing this work? We do this in order that our congregations can be as sustainable as possible, and our clergy can either afford to live closer to their congregations, or it is determined that it is not feasible for the congregation to have their clergy person living as close by because of housing costs.

This model was shared at the 2025 Convention, was shared again in Spring 2026 with a requested feedback form, and at the 2026 Clergy Conference. The feedback we received as a commission was mixed in nature. Some received the model with enthusiasm, others were not opposed to the concept but felt like it was not going to be sustainable for their congregations, and others brought up points that made the Commission members realize that more work needs to be done. For instance, it was shared by some clergy that while some of our congregations are not located in one of the three metropolitan areas of the diocese, much of the healthcare and other goods needed to live in those areas occur in the metro area, and so there is a hidden cost of living associated with accessing those goods and services (ferries, etc.), at least in some regards, in the less expensive location. Our current model does not address those kinds of less evident costs. While there is no perfect model, we believe that our proposed model needs more work, and we would ask for a few congregations in metro, rural, and specialized locales to work with us to identify what an accurate living assessment is, and then we can reconsider how a model might be more authentically applied.

The Commission also produced this resource to offer information on Church Musician Compensation, and this resource continues to be available:

[Resources regarding Church Musician Compensation](#)

Congregational grades use congregational data to calculate a 'grade' for clergy compensation. Thanks to our diocesan staff, congregational grades for 2027 are already accessible. It is calculated on congregational data from 2025. [Congregational Grade Information](#)

The Commission continues to be thankful for and to hold in prayer Canon Dede Moore, on medical leave since last year's convention. Her positive contributions to the Commission on Personnel continue to be experienced in many ways. The chair is also grateful to the Commission members as work continued during her time of sabbatical in Summer 2026.

The Commission offers consultation to clergy and congregations about all matters related to human resources. Please contact the Rev. Cn. Cristi Chapman, Canon to the Ordinary (cchapman@ecww.org), or the Rev. Cn. Elise Johnstone, chair (elise@sjbwestseattle.org) with any questions.

Respectfully submitted by the Rev. Cn. Elise Johnstone, chair.

On behalf of commission members:
The Rev. Cn. Elise Johnstone
The Rev. Mike Mayor
The Rev. Chuck Huff

The Rev. Robert Stevens
Ms. Diane Santiago
Ms. Julene Levin
The Rev. Cn. Cristi Chapman, *ex officio*