

**PERSONNEL POLICIES MANUAL**  
**Southwest Conference, United Church of Christ**

Revised and Adopted by the Southwest Conference

(Revised 01/13/2021)

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# PERSONNEL POLICIES MANUAL

## Southwest Conference, United Church of Christ

### 1 MISSION:

2 The purpose of this manual is to define the provisions for the administration of the  
3 personnel of the Southwest Conference. This manual affirms the Southwest  
4 Conference's commitment to implementing policies and procedures that result in  
5 healthy relationships.

6 None of the benefits or policies in this Employee Manual is intended by reason of  
7 their publication to confer any rights or privileges upon you, or to entitle you to be or  
8 remain employed. The contents of this Manual are presented as a matter of  
9 information only. While the Southwest Conference believes wholeheartedly in the  
10 plans, policies and procedures described here, they are not conditions of employment.  
11 This Manual is not a contract.

### 12 I. ADMINISTRATION

13 A. In consultation with the Conference Minister, the Personnel Committee of the  
14 Southwest Conference will administer the policies and procedures set forth in this  
15 manual.

16 B. In all other personnel matters pertaining to the Conference Minister, the Personnel  
17 Committee will act in consultation with the Executive Board. In matters pertaining  
18 to misconduct involving the Conference Minister, the Personnel Committee will  
19 refer to "Guidelines for a Conference Minister Fitness Review."

20 C. The Conference Minister may make decisions regarding terms of employment of  
21 all employees and called staff, in consultation with the Personnel Committee; all  
22 such decisions may be appealed to the Executive Board.

23 D. All employed and called staff report to the Conference Minister.

### 24 II. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

25 The Southwest Conference affirms its commitment to support and implement a  
26 program of equal employment opportunity for all.

27 The United Church of Christ Southwest Conference embraces equal employment  
28 opportunity (EEO) and inclusiveness and maintains a model work environment that is  
29 free of discrimination. The policy of the Southwest Conference is to ensure that no  
30 employee or applicant for employment is denied equal opportunity because of race,

31 color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, pregnancy, sexual  
32 orientation, gender identity, genetic information, or any other non-merit-based fact. It  
33 is the goal of the Southwest Conference to maintain an environment free from any  
34 form of discrimination, including sexual harassment

### 35 **III. POLICY AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

36 It is the Southwest Conference's policy to emphasize that sexual harassment is  
37 specifically prohibited. Each employee has a responsibility to maintain the workplace  
38 free of any form of sexual harassment.

39 Sexual harassment is illegal sex discrimination and includes any unwelcome verbal  
40 comments or physical advances, request for sexual favors, and other conduct of a  
41 sexual nature which meets any one of the following three criteria:

42 Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition  
43 of the individual's employment;

44 Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for  
45 employment decisions affecting such individual; or

46 The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's  
47 work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

48 Examples of inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature include, but are not limited to:

49 Verbal: sexual innuendos, suggestive or insulting comments, whistling or other  
50 sounds, jokes or teasing of a sexual nature, sexual propositions or threats, continuing to  
51 express personal interest after being informed the interest is unwelcome;

52 Visual: sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or letters; leering, or obscene gestures;

53 Physical: unwanted physical contact, including kissing, hugging, touching, pinching,  
54 brushing the body, impeding or blocking movement, sexual intercourse, or assault.

55 This policy covers all employees of the Southwest Conference. The Southwest  
56 Conference will not tolerate, condone or allow sexual harassment, whether engaged in  
57 by co-workers or supervisors. The Southwest Conference encourages reporting of all  
58 incidents of sexual harassment regardless of who the offender may be or the offender's  
59 relationship to the Southwest Conference.

60 If a threat or physical contact of a sexually harassing nature occurs, and an employee is  
61 the subject of or a witness to that threat or physical contact, the subject or witness is  
62 asked immediately to make a confidential report to the Conference Minister. However,  
63 if the complaint pertains to conduct of the Conference Minister, the confidential report  
64 should be submitted to the Conference Moderator, who will immediately inform the  
65 Chairperson of the Personnel Committee and the Chairperson of the Committee on  
66 Church and Ministry. The steps below apply to the investigation of any complaint of  
67 sexual harassment.

68 In other circumstances (not involving threat or physical contact) the Southwest  
69 Conference encourages individuals who believe they are being harassed to notify  
70 promptly the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome. However, if for any  
71 reason the employee is not comfortable with this direct communication, or direct  
72 communication is ineffective in stopping the behavior, the following steps govern the  
73 reporting of a complaint (which does not involve threat or physical contact) of sexual  
74 harassment:

75 Individuals who believe they have been harassed should report the incident as soon as  
76 possible to the appropriate supervisor or, if the complaint involves the supervisor or the  
77 employee believes the supervisor has not handled or would not handle the matter  
78 appropriately, the Conference Minister.

79 All complaints of harassment will be investigated promptly, in an impartial manner by  
80 such persons the Southwest Conference may from time to time designate. Typically,  
81 the Conference Minister, the chair of the Personnel Committee, and the Conference  
82 moderator would meet to select the response team. The response team should  
83 document all aspects of the investigation, in particular all conversations with anyone  
84 involved in the investigation.

85 In all cases, the employee will be advised of the findings and conclusions of the  
86 investigation.

87 The Southwest Conference will take reasonable steps to maintain confidentiality, and  
88 to protect any sensitive information about the complainant, but due to the nature of  
89 each particular investigation and its results, confidentiality as to all factors cannot be  
90 guaranteed.

91 If the response team finds that harassment occurred, appropriate corrective and/or  
92 disciplinary action will be taken against the harasser. Individuals found to have  
93 engaged in sexual harassment will be disciplined as the Southwest Conference deems  
94 appropriate, up to and including discharge. In addressing substantiated incidents of  
95 sexual harassment, the Southwest Conference's response at a minimum will include  
96 reprimanding the offender and preparing a written record. Additional action may  
97 include: referral to counseling, withholding of a promotion, reassignment, temporary  
98 suspension without pay, or termination of employment. (The complainant will be  
99 informed of the action taken.)

100 If the investigator determines that no sexual harassment has occurred, this finding will  
101 be communicated to the complainant and the alleged harasser, and action as may be  
102 appropriate will be taken.

103 The Southwest Conference will not in any way retaliate against an individual who  
104 makes a report of sexual harassment nor tolerate any retaliation by any employee.  
105 Retaliation is a serious violation of this sexual harassment policy and should be  
106 reported immediately. Any person found to have retaliated against another individual  
107 for reporting sexual harassment will be subject to the same disciplinary action provided  
108 for sexual harassment offenders. Retaliation does not include disciplinary action

109 against an employee for knowingly filing a false report of sexual harassment.

110 The complaint and investigation procedures relating to issues of sexual harassment are  
111 separate from the generic “Complaint Process” otherwise identified in this Handbook  
112 for resolution of disputes. This policy is designed to protect all employees from sexual  
113 harassment in any way associated with the workplace or work environment, no matter  
114 who is the harasser.

#### 115 **IV. CLASSIFICATION OF STAFF**

116 The Southwest Conference, for payroll and benefit purposes, currently recognizes two  
117 (2) major classifications of employees: (1) *Called* - those who are authorized and are  
118 exempt from the wage and hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA);  
119 and (2) *Employed* - those who are not exempt from the wage and hour provisions of  
120 FLSA.

121 A. The Southwest Conference recognizes the following categories of  
122 employed staff:

123 1. Regular Full-time:

124 A regular full-time employee is one who works a minimum of 40 hours per  
125 week. A regular full-time employee may be eligible for employee benefits.

126 2. Regular Part-time:

127 A regular part-time employee is one who works more than 20 and less than  
128 40 hours per week and is employed on a continuing basis. A regular part-time  
129 employee may be eligible for employee benefits on a pro-rated basis.

130 3. Contracted Part-time or Full-time:

131 A contracted employee is one who is not hired on a continuing basis.  
132 Contracted employees are paid at a pre-determined rate. Hourly rate would be  
133 at least minimum wage. Contracted employees are not entitled to employee  
134 benefits.

135 4. Probationary:

136 All employed staff will begin their employment with a six (6) month  
137 probationary period. At the end of the six (6) months, the Personnel  
138 Committee, with the Conference Minister, will conduct an evaluation, after  
139 which the employee will be informed about continued service.

140 B. The Southwest Conference recognizes the following categories of  
141 called staff:

142 1. Regular Full-time:

143 Called staff that work full-time and may be eligible for employee benefits.

144 2. Regular Part-time:

145 Called staff that work less than full-time and are employed on a continuing  
146 basis may be eligible for some employee benefits to be negotiated  
147 individually on a pro-rated basis.

148 3. Designated Term:

149 Called staff are employees with an established or tacitly understood  
150 termination date or who work as needed. Designated Term employees are  
151 normally not entitled to employee benefits.

152 C. Forty (40) hours per week will constitute a full-time working  
153 schedule for employed staff.

154 The normal work week for regular full-time called staff will be defined by their  
155 call agreement.

156 D. Called staff are not available as supply preachers. When staff  
157 persons do participate in leading worship, it is expected the local  
158 pastor will be present.

159 **V. COMPENSATION FOR STAFF**

160 A. The Personnel Committee, in consultation with the Treasurer, sets compensation for  
161 all staff except the Conference Minister.

162 B. Compensation will be reviewed periodically, if at all possible annually, and the  
163 Personnel Committee, in consultation with the Treasurer, will recommend  
164 adjustments, if any, to the Executive Board.

165 C. Staff may accept compensation for any work performed on his/her own time  
166 provided that the work is (1) outside the normal expectations of the person's  
167 responsibilities for the Conference, (2) does not infringe upon Conference  
168 responsibilities, and (3) does not interfere with his/her performance for the  
169 Conference.

170 D. Conference staff may not accept remuneration for regular services provided to  
171 local churches. not to be compensated for regular services provided to local  
172 churches.

173 E. All employees are “at will.” That means employees are free to resign at any time  
174 just as the Southwest Conference is free to terminate your employment at any time.

175 **VI. EVALUATION OF EMPLOYED STAFF**

176 A. Employed staff will have a formal performance evaluation done every even year  
177 prior to the compilation of the Conference budget. There will also be informal  
178 reviews (“check-ins”) done periodically by the Conference Minister.

179 B. Newly hired staff will be evaluated for continuing employment after 180 days.

180 C. Feedback questionnaires will be sent to churches, committees and boards based on  
181 the job description of each employee, the events for which s/he carried  
182 responsibilities, and goals of the Conference.

183 D. Feedback from questionnaires will be reviewed by the Personnel Committee and  
184 the Committee develops a summary of the feedback, which is then shared with the  
185 Conference Minister.

186 E. Feedback session will be held by the Chair and the Conference Minister with each  
187 employee. The employee may be asked questions such as:

- 188 a. Which of your duties and responsibilities engaged your time the most  
189 during the past years? How did they help you fulfill your goals?
- 190 b. Which of these were you the most excited about?
- 191 c. What problems did you encounter within the office, the churches, the  
192 committees, the Board?
- 193 d. What goals would you set for yourself for the next year?
- 194 e. What can the SWC do to help you in your job?
- 195 f. How does your job description need to be adjusted based on your actual  
196 work responsibilities?

197 F. The Personnel Committee will meet to discuss whether the focus of time and effort  
198 of the employee is consistent with the established goals of the Conference.

199 G. Following that meeting, the Committee will incorporate the comments from the  
200 feedback session with the employee and develops a written evaluation.

201 H. Once approved, the evaluation will be shared with each employee for his/her  
202 review and signature.

203 I. The signed evaluation will then be placed in the employee’s confidential file, which  
204 will be maintained in the Conference Minister’s office.

205 J. As a possible outcome of an evaluation, the Conference Minister may recommend  
206 job-related growth experience.



207 **VII. EVALUATION FOR NEW HIRES**

- 208 A. Towards the end of the probationary period, the Personnel Committee chair will call  
209 the Conference Minister to determine whether the employee will be retained. If  
210 there are any concerns regarding retention, the Conference Minister may call for a  
211 meeting of the Personnel Committee.
- 212 B. At the end of 180 days probation, the employee will receive a letter pertaining to  
213 his/her retention.

214 **VIII. EVALUATION OF CALLED STAFF**

215 A. EVALUATION OF CONFERENCE MINISTER

216 An evaluation of the Conference Minister will be held annually for the first two  
217 years and biennially on even years thereafter. Additional informal or informal  
218 reviews may be conducted as needed.

- 219 1. The Personnel Committee will initiate the evaluation process and develop a  
220 summary of the feedback, which will then be shared with the Conference Minister.  
221 The Chair and the Moderator will meet with the Conference Minister to inform  
222 him/her of the results of the evaluation and receive feedback, which may include a  
223 written response from the Conference Minister. The Conference Minister will  
224 keep a copy of the report for his/her reference.
- 225 2. The written report for the evaluation of the Conference Minister and the  
226 Conference Minister's response will be held in a sealed envelope and only be  
227 opened by mutual agreement of and in the presence of both the chair of the  
228 Personnel Committee and the Moderator of the Conference. The report shall bear  
229 the initials of the Personnel Committee chair, the Conference Moderator, and the  
230 Conference Minister. The sealed envelope will be secured in a locked box kept in  
231 the Conference Office.

232 B. EVALUATION OF ASSOCIATE CONFERENCE MINISTER

233 An evaluation of the Associate Conference Minister (ACM) will be held annually  
234 for the first two years and biennially on even years thereafter. Additional informal  
235 or informal reviews may be conducted as needed.

- 236 1. Feedback questionnaires will be sent to churches, committees and boards  
237 based on the job description of the ACM, the events for which she/ he carried  
238 responsibilities, and goals of the Conference.
- 239 2. Results from questionnaires will be reviewed by the Chair of the Personnel  
240 Committee and the Conference Minister and shared with the ACM during a  
241 feedback session in which he/she may be asked questions such as:
- 242 a. Which of your duties and responsibilities engaged your time the  
243 most during the past years? How did they help you fulfill your  
244 goals?

- 245                           b. Which of these were you the most excited about?  
246                           c. What problems did you encounter within the office, the churches, the  
247                           committees, the Boards?  
248                           d. What goals would you set for yourself for the next year?  
249                           e. What can the SWC do to help you in your job?  
250                           f. How does your job description need to be adjusted based on your  
251                           actual work responsibilities?  
252                           3. The Personnel Committee will meet to discuss whether the focus of time and  
253                           effort of the ACM called staff is consistent with the established goals of the  
254                           Conference.
- 255                           C. Subsequently, the Chair in consultation with the Conference Minister will compose  
256                           a written evaluation of the ACM to submit to each member of the Personnel  
257                           Committee for approval.
- 258                           D. Once approved, the written evaluation will be shared with the ACM for his/her  
259                           signature.
- 260                           E. The signed evaluation will then be placed in the ACM's confidential file, which is  
261                           maintained in the Conference Minister's office.
- 262                           F. Only completed and signed evaluations will be maintained in Conference files. All  
263                           other documents, electronic and hard copies, related to evaluations will be destroyed.

264   **IX.   SEPARATIONS**

265                           A. Retirement

- 266                           1. Employees may choose to receive retirement benefits at the age of fifty-nine  
267                           and a half (59 1/2), subject to the rules, policies and provisions of the Pension  
268                           Boards of the United Church of Christ and the appropriate laws pertaining to  
269                           Social Security.
- 270                           2. Accumulated sick leave or personal days will not be recompensed at time of  
271                           retirement.

272                           B. Resignation

- 273                           1. Unless otherwise specified in a call agreement, all staff members are at-will  
274                           employees. As a matter of courtesy, the Conference will try to give sufficient  
275                           notice before discharging any staff member and requests that staff members  
276                           give sufficient notice upon resignation.
- 277                           2. Called staff may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to the Executive  
278                           Board of the Southwest Conference at least thirty (30) days before the  
279                           effective date, or by mutual agreement with the Executive Board.

280 3. Employed staff may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to  
281 the Conference Minister at least two (2) weeks before the effective  
282 date, or by mutual agreement with the Conference Minister.

283 4. Accrued time off will be paid according to state law or call agreement.

284 C. Call of a New Conference Minister

285 Within the first six months of a new Conference Minister's term of  
286 employment, he or she will notify in writing all staff whether their  
287 employment will continue with the Southwest Conference.

288 D. Termination

289 1. Unsatisfactory Performance.

290 a. Termination of staff, except the Conference Minister, because of  
291 unsatisfactory performance normally will take effect after at least a two  
292 (2) week's written notice, or payment of equivalent salary in lieu of such  
293 notice, unless otherwise specified in a call agreement. If the separation is  
294 for misconduct, illegal activity, or intentional acts intended to harm the  
295 Conference or any of its members, no salary is to be paid beyond the date  
296 of termination. Call agreements may supersede this.

297 b. Employees leaving the employment of the Conference during the notice  
298 period will not be paid beyond the last day of actual service unless the  
299 equivalent salary has been paid.

300 c. Accrued time off for any staff person terminated for unsatisfactory  
301 performance will be paid according to state law or call agreement.

302 2. Reduction in Work Force.

303 In the event of termination as a result of a reduction in the work force, the  
304 Southwest Conference may consider a severance package for affected staff.

305 **X. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

306 A. An employee may ask to have reviewed any unresolved grievance using the  
307 following procedure. This procedure applies to types of issues not addressed in  
308 other sections of Personnel Policies Manual.

309 B. The following Grievance Procedure is established to provide recourse for  
310 employed staff, who feel they have been treated unjustly:

311 1. A written grievance should be submitted to and received by the Conference  
312 Minister within thirty (30) days of the incident. The Conference Minister will  
313 have ten (10) working days to meet with the complainant and an additional ten

- 314 (ten) working days to respond in writing.
- 315 2. If complainant is dissatisfied with the Conference Minister's response and the  
316 situation is not resolved, the complainant may appeal to the Personnel  
317 Committee within five (5) working days. The written grievance and the  
318 Conference Minister's response document should be sent to the Chair of the  
319 Personnel Committee. The Chair, in consultation with the Committee, will  
320 investigate and make a decision within thirty (30) days of receipt of the  
321 appeal. The decision of the Personnel Committee is final.
- 322 3. If the grievance is about the Conference Minister, and does not involve a  
323 question of fitness, the written grievance should be submitted to the Chair of  
324 the Personnel Committee within thirty (30) days of the incident. The Chair, in  
325 consultation with the Committee, will investigate and make a decision within  
326 thirty (30) days of the receipt of the grievance.
- 327 C. The following Grievance Procedure is established to provide recourse for called  
328 staff, who feel they have been treated unjustly:
- 329 1. A written grievance should be submitted to and received by the Conference  
330 Minister within thirty (30) days of the incident. The Conference Minister will  
331 have ten (10) working days to meet with the complainant and an additional ten  
332 (ten) working days to respond in writing.
- 333 2. If complainant is dissatisfied with the Conference Minister's response and the  
334 situation is not resolved, the complainant may appeal to the Personnel  
335 Committee within five (5) working days. The written grievance and the  
336 Conference Minister's response document should be sent to the Chair of the  
337 Personnel Committee. The Chair, in consultation with the Committee, will  
338 investigate and make a decision within thirty (30) days of receipt of the  
339 appeal.
- 340 3. If the grievance is about the Conference Minister, and does not involve a  
341 question of fitness, the written grievance should be submitted to the Chair of  
342 the Personnel Committee within thirty (30) days of the incident. The Chair, in  
343 consultation with the Committee, will investigate and make a decision within  
344 thirty (30) days of the receipt of the grievance.
- 345 4. If the called staff is dissatisfied with the Personnel Committee's resolution, the  
346 written complaint and the Personnel Committee's resolution document should  
347 be sent to the Conference Moderator within five (5) working days, who, in  
348 consultation with the Executive Board, will investigate and make a decision  
349 within thirty (30) days. The decision of the Executive Board is final.

350 **XI. CURRENT BENEFITS POLICY**

351 The call agreement for a called staff member would supersede any benefit programs

352 listed below.

353 A. Vacation

- 354 1. The Southwest Conference will provide vacation days with full pay for all  
355 regular full-time and part-time, called and employed staff. Full time = 40  
356 hours. Part time = less than 40 hours and more than 20 hours.
- 357 2. Regular full-time called staff will receive five (5) weeks of vacation in each  
358 calendar year. Additional benefits will be defined in the call agreement.
- 359 3. Regular part-time called staff vacation will be negotiated with the Conference  
360 Minister. Additional benefits will be defined in the call agreement.
- 361 4. During the first year for employed staff, 1 ¼ days each month is vested, but is  
362 not available for use until after six months of employment. After first year:  
363 employed staff would continue to accrue 1¼ days vacation per month until  
364 Jan. 1 of following year. After the first year of service, 15 days of vacation can  
365 be taken anytime during the year.
- 366 5. At the end of ten (10) consecutive years of employment, employed staff will  
367 be granted an additional one-time five (5) days of Vacation. At the end of  
368 twenty (20) years employed staff will get a one-time additional fifteen (15)  
369 days of Vacation.
- 370 6. Part time employees are granted Vacation in proportion to a 40 hour fulltime  
371 work week. Fifteen days of vacation would total 120 hours for a full time  
372 employee. A 32 hour employed staff person, would have 32/40 (or 80%) of 120  
373 vacation hours (or 96 hours), the equivalent of 3 weeks vacation.
- 374 7. Unused Vacation may be carried forward into the next year only. Upon  
375 termination for whatever reason, only 5 days of Vacation may be cashed out.
- 376 8. Pay in lieu of Vacation will be allowed only in those instances when an  
377 employed staff is laid off, discharged, or resigns with due notice. Pay for  
378 vacation will be calculated as a percentage of the time worked that year up to  
379 the time of resignation or dismissal minus any Vacation time already taken.
- 380 9. Vacation may be taken at the discretion of the employed staff member, in  
381 consultation with the Conference Minister, and with regard to the efficient  
382 operation of work demands and requirements.
- 383 10. Vacation taken beyond 15 days will be taken without pay.

384 B. Sick Leave

- 385 1. The Southwest Conference will provide Sick Leave with full Salary to eligible  
386 employees at the rate of five (5) maximum sick days (or 40 hours). That would

387 equal approximately 3 1/3 hours per month, beginning with the last day of the  
388 first month of employment.

389 2. Sick leave can be “rolled-over” from one year to the next, but not for more than  
390 two years. Only 40 hours of sick paid leave can be used in any given year.

391 3. Unused sick leave at the end of the year of service cannot be paid out.

392 4. In the event that an employee with at least one (1) year of service has exceeded  
393 the allowed sick days (5) in a given year the Conference Minister is empowered to  
394 arrange for full salary, during illness, up to an additional four (4) weeks; and the  
395 Executive Board for any period longer than that.

396 5. In the event of the illness of the Conference Minister, the Executive Board is  
397 empowered to arrange for full salary longer than 5 days.

398 6. In the event of a Long-Term Disability of an employee covered by the Family  
399 Protection Plan of the UCC, the Conference will be responsible for full salary and  
400 benefits (Housing, pension, Life, Disability, Social Security, and Health  
401 Insurance) for the months of the disability prior to benefit coverage by disability  
402 insurance.

403 7. Part time employees are eligible for Sick Leave on a pro-rated basis as calculated  
404 in A.6. above.

#### 405 C. Holidays

406 1. The Southwest Conference recognizes the following days during the year as paid  
407 holidays for its employees:

- 408 New Years Day
- 409 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday
- 410 President's Day
- 411 Good Friday
- 412 Memorial Day
- 413 Independence Day
- 414 Labor Day
- 415 Thanksgiving (2 Days)
- 416 Christmas (2 Days)
- 417 The Monday following the Annual Meeting.

418 2. Any holiday which falls on a Sunday will be observed on the following Monday.  
419 Any holiday which falls on a Saturday will be observed on another work day  
420 arranged with the Conference Minister.

421 3. If a regular full-time or regular part-time employed staff is required to work on a  
422 holiday, or over their normal weekly hours, he/she will be granted  
423 compensatory time, subject to the approval of the head of staff.

#### 424 D. Family Leave

- 425 1. Family leave for up to twelve work weeks may be granted by the Personnel  
426 Committee and the Conference Minister to regular employed staff because of  
427 birth or adoption in order to care for such child, and must be used within a six-  
428 month period beginning on the date of such birth or placement.
- 429 2. Family leave for up to twelve work weeks may be granted by the Personnel  
430 Committee and the Conference Minister to regular employed staff in order to  
431 care for the spouse, children or parent of the employee, if such spouse,  
432 children or parent has a serious health condition. The Personnel Committee  
433 and the Conference Minister may require that a request for leave for these  
434 reasons be supported by certification issued by the appropriate health care  
435 provider and may require subsequent recertification as requested.
- 436 3. During unpaid family leave, the Conference will continue the health and dental  
437 insurance of the employee – and employee is still responsible for normal family  
438 coverage.
- 439 4. Employed staff who fail to return to work, after the period of paid and/or  
440 unpaid leave granted by the Personnel Committee or the Conference Minister,  
441 will have their employment terminated.

442 E. Extended time off

- 443 1. An employed staff who is not able to continue employment or who chooses to  
444 interrupt his/her employment for a period of time, not to exceed six (6) months,  
445 may be granted a leave-of-absence by the Conference Minister.
- 446 2. During the leave-of-absence, salary and benefits will not be paid. The  
447 employee's service to the Conference may be reinstated and if so, from the point  
448 at which leave-of-absence was granted, that he/she will not be subject to the  
449 probationary period or the waiting period for selected benefits.

450 F. Continuing Education

- 451 1. In a continuing commitment to the growth and development of employed staff,  
452 in particular in relation to assigned duties, the Conference Minister will  
453 administer a program of continuing education to be applied to all employed  
454 staff according to specifically developed plans as may be appropriate to the  
455 responsibilities of the employee. It is expected that regular full-time called  
456 staff will participate in at least one substantive continuing education  
457 experience per year, up to one (1) week.
- 458 2. All called staff will negotiate terms of their sabbatical leave in their call  
459 agreement.
- 460 a. The purpose of the Sabbatical Leave is to refresh and enhance the faith,  
461 ministry and personal life of the called staff in ways which will benefit  
462 both the called staff and the conference.

- 463 b. A plan for the use of the Sabbatical Leave will be worked out by the  
464 Conference Minister in consultation with the Executive Board.
- 465 c. A report on the Sabbatical experience will be submitted to the  
466 Executive Board.
- 467 d. It is expected that a person will continue in the service of the Southwest  
468 Conference for a period of at least one (1) year following the  
469 Sabbatical Leave.
- 470 e. Sabbatical Leave time is not cumulative and must be used in the sixth year  
471 unless by mutual agreement.

472 G. Other Benefits

473 1. Annuity and Retirement Fund.

- 474 a. All eligible employees will be enrolled in a pension plan, subject to the  
475 policies, rules and provisions of the Pension Boards of the United Church  
476 of Christ and the Internal Revenue Service.
- 477 b. Employed staff who work more than 20 hours per week are eligible to be  
478 enrolled in The Annuity Fund-UCC, effective on the day of employment.  
479 The amount of contribution will be calculated by multiplying the total of  
480 the eligible employee's salary by the pension contribution rate approved by  
481 the General Synod.
- 482 c. Called staff who work more than 20 hours per week are eligible to be  
483 enrolled in The Annuity Fund-UCC, effective on the day of employment,  
484 at the rate currently recommended by the General Synod of base salary  
485 plus housing allowance. The amount of contribution will be calculated by  
486 multiplying the total of the eligible employee's base salary by the pension  
487 contribution rate approved by the General Synod.

488 2. Social Security.

- 489 a. The Southwest Conference will pay the employer's share of Social Security  
490 Tax for all employed staff, as required by law.
- 491 b. Called staff are required by law to pay Social Security on a self-employed  
492 basis and are required, by law, to pay the Social Security Tax directly.  
493 Called staff exempt from SICA taxes are eligible for this benefit. The  
494 Conference will reimburse the called staff for one-half the SICA amount.

495 3. Worker's Compensation Insurance.

496 The Southwest Conference will provide Worker's Compensation Insurance  
497 coverage to all employees who qualify under the law.



498 4. Housing Allowance.

499 The Executive Board will designate, each year, the estimated amount for  
500 housing allowance for called staff in accordance with Section 107 of the  
501 Internal Revenue Code.

502 5. Health Insurance.

503 Full-time Employed Staff: The Southwest Conference offers health and  
504 insurance coverage for eligible full-time Employed Staff in the Group Health  
505 Insurance Plan carried by the Southwest Conference (currently United  
506 Healthcare). Employees pay the full amount of their dependents' coverage. The  
507 Conference does not offer dental insurance, but employees can work with our  
508 group provider to establish a Health Saving Account (HAS) and similar  
509 products.

510 *Reimbursement Option:* For those current Employed Staff working full-time,  
511 less than full time, or who have coverage through a spouse or other source, a  
512 health cost reimbursement option is also available. The maximum  
513 reimbursement amount shall not exceed 75% of the cost if the employee were to  
514 participate in the health plan offered by the conference. This option is not  
515 available to new hires after June 30, 2019.

516 6. Life Insurance and Disability Income Benefit Plan.

517 a. All employed staff who are enrolled in The Annuity Fund-UCC may  
518 enroll in the LIFE AND DISABILITY PLAN with the Conference paying  
519 1.5% of base salary effective on the day of enrollment.

520 b. Eligible called staff who are enrolled in The Annuity Fund-UCC may  
521 enroll in the LIFE AND DISABILITY PLAN, effective on the day of  
522 enrollment, at 1.5% of the combined base salary.