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**Introduction:**

The Pastor Salary Support Program is available to qualifying congregations, as determined by the program criteria, and guided by the rationale below. The program has an anticipated 3-year enrollment with a review each year. Acceptance into the program requires a significant commitment of time and energy from pastors and congregations, as participation is an intense and guided examination of the church’s life, faith, and community.

As the Pastor Salary Support Program seeks to empower any eligible congregation, particular attention will be given to congregations of color as per General Assembly resolutions RGJ-07 and RGJ-10.

**Program Rationale:**

There are cases where churches are engaged in their community and require a full-time clergyperson. Presbyterian congregations are designed to work with a pastor and Session working in partnership to achieve their goals. A pastor and congregation concerned about finances (due to limited funds) have less focus on God’s call to them to live into the future.

To that end, the Presbytery of Hudson River will provide funding and additional resources to support churches engaged in their communities and seeking full-time pastoral leadership to work with them to achieve a long-term sustainable vision for ministry.

*Highlights:*

* Covenantal Partnership – This program is intense in its participants’ expenditure of time, energy, and resources. Therefore, buy-in and full commitment are necessary among all involved (pastor, church, and the presbytery).
* Building Up – This program is designed for churches that are engaged in their community and demonstrate a healthy potential to further their sense of faith, outreach, and connection to one another. The funds from this program help to provide full-time pastoral leadership to build upon this foundation and to allow the congregation to cultivate their sense of identity and purpose further.
* Planting Seeds – While building on the foundations of a healthy congregation, the program is designed to plant seeds for long-term viability and sustainability by engaging the congregation in a Holy Cow! assessment and working with a coach who will help develop a ministry plan.

**Criteria for the Congregation:**

*Church Life & Mission*

* The congregation has some form of outreach to the community (i.e., food pantry, tutoring program, free use of the church’s space by non-profit groups, etc.).
* The congregation will commit to using MissionInsite to discover more about its neighborhood and use it to develop a ministry plan.
	+ The congregation will complete and submit the QuickInsite Worksheet as a part of the application process. Email Casey Carbone for a copy of your church’s MissionInsite report (casey@hudrivpres.org).
* Before applying, the congregation will participate in a Holy Cow! full version assessment. Pastors and congregational leaders will participate in the study. If the congregation is admitted into the program, pastors and congregational leaders will receive coaching, including developing a plan for viability and sustainability once the program and funding end.
\*Congregations who have not participated in a Holy Cow! assessment for 3 years or more must complete an assessment following the guidelines offered by the Commission on Ministry.
\*\* Congregations will participate in the full version of the Holy Cow! assessment (not the shorter conversation version of the assessment).
* The Session will report or meet with the Pastor Salary Support Team annually to report progress on goals/themes identified in the Holy Cow! report.
\* Churches that are in the search process may apply for this program. However, in consultation with the Commission on Ministry, it will be made clear in the MDP (Ministry Discernment Profile) that partial funding for a full-time position is available for three years and only guaranteed within that time.

*Worship*

* Provide the average yearly attendance for the past five years (this includes online and in-person participants).
* The congregation has a system for accurately tracking and reporting worship attendance.

*Denominational*

* The congregation has submitted its annual statistical report (filed online) to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
* The congregation has its Session minutes reviewed by the presbytery annually (participating in the minute exchange).
* The congregation has by-laws that reflect its current structure. Congregations may request assistance updating their current by-laws if it does not reflect the current state of the church.

*Finances*

* The congregational shall have no more than three times the amount of their annual operating budget in unrestricted funds. (i.e., A church with a budget of $150,000 cannot have more than $450,000 in unrestricted funds.)
\*If there is uncertainty around the unrestricted funds held by the church, please continue to fill out the application and complete the financial health assessment. There will be time to answer questions and clarify what funds may be unrestricted or restricted.
\*\*Congregations will be required to state whether restrictions on funds donor are restricted, or Session restricted.
* The congregation has an annual stewardship campaign and system for tracking giving.
* The congregation is up to date (meaning not behind or late) on any loan payments either on a bank held loan or any Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) entity.
* As part of the application review process Sessions will be required to complete a financial health assessment.
* The congregation, as part of their application, will submit three years' worth of congregational annual reports and corresponding financial reports.

**Criteria for the Pastor:**

* The pastor will be a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Minister of Word and Sacrament or a Commissioned Ruling Elder or a pastor in a denomination mentioned in G-2.0505 (Book of Order).
* The call will be full-time (solo pastorate) and will meet all the Presbytery requirements for full-time calls. The funding provided through this program may be used to bring the call to full-time status.
* The pastor will be up to date on boundary training.
* The pastor will use their continuing education time and funds each year and will report on the content to the Session.
\*Pastors must use their continuing education each year (this is the exception to the Commission on Ministry policy which allows pastors to roll over continuing education from one year to the next).
* The pastor is actively engaged in the life of the presbytery (attendance at presbytery meetings and service on at least one presbytery committee or entity).

**Funding Sources and Parameters:**

* The Session may request up to 50% of the effective salary and Board of Pension dues each year, for up to three years.
	+ Effective Salary: 50% = $31,597.50
	+ Board of Pensions: 50% = $12,323.03
	+ Total: $43,920.53
	\*2024 Terms of Call
* At the end of the three years, the session may not apply to this program again for 10 years.

**Process:**

* Once the completed application has been received, a meeting will be scheduled with the pastor, and congregational finance, mission, and personnel chairs, who will also be expected to attend (depending on the church structure, the closest equivalent will be expected to attend, or the church will need to designate elders to fill those positions) to review the following:
	+ The application.
	+ Related financial documents (including the financial health assessment).
	+ Holy Cow! assessment and other components.
* The Pastor Salary Support Team will review the application and make a recommendation to the Council. (The Pastor Salary Support Team and Session will consult with the Commission on Ministry if the congregation in question has a vacant pulpit.)
* The Session and pastor will meet with the PSSP Team at the end of the first year of funding to review progress made on items identified in the Holy Cow! assessment and discuss what steps are currently being worked on in the congregation.
* Throughout the process the pastor and Session will occasionally meet with the Director for Congregational Connection to explore additional resources that may be of benefit to the pastor and congregation.
* At the end of the three-year program the congregation will participate in another Holy Cow! assessment.

**Additional Resources:**

* In addition to the Pastor Salary Support Program, there are additional resources from the Board of Pensions, which may apply to some pastors and/or congregations. These programs are separate from Hudson River Presbytery and have a different application process for qualified individuals and congregations. It is expected that congregations and pastors in the Pastor Salary Support program apply for these opportunities if they are eligible and meet the criteria:
	+ Minister Educational Debt Assistance
	+ Sabbath Sabbatical Grant
	+ Transition to College Grant

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| **Pastor Salary Support Application**(Applications can be sent to casey@hudrivpres.org) |
| Name of Congregation: |  |
| Date Submitted: |  |
|  |
| Name of Primary Contact: |  |
| Address: |  |
| Email: |  |
| Phone: |  |
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| Session Approval Date: |  |
| \*Attach dated statement (i.e. minutes) of approval signed by the Clerk of Session. |
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| Church Life & Mission |
| 1. Please identify areas of outreach to the community (i.e., food pantry, tutoring program, free use of space by non-profit groups, etc.). |
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| 2. Have you generated a MissionInsite Report? (y/n)\*A report will be made available if one has not been generated. |  |
| 3. Have you done a Holy Cow! assessment within the last three years? (y/n)\*A full Holy Cow! assessment. |  |
| 4. Have you identified a team for coaching? (i.e., Session, etc.) (y/n) |  |
| 5. Does your congregation currently have a pastor? (y/n) |  |
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| Worship |
| 1. Does your congregation have a system for tracking attendance? (y/n) |  |
| 2. Provide the average yearly attendance for the past five years (including attendance). \*Please provide attendance numbers to the best of your ability.  |
|  | In-Person | Online | Total | Note(s): |
| Year 20 |  |  |  |  |
| Year 20 |  |  |  |  |
| Year 20 |  |  |  |  |
| Year 20 |  |  |  |  |
| Year 20 |  |  |  |  |
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| Denomination |
| 1. Has the congregation submitted the annual statistical report (filed online) to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)? (y/n) |  |
| 2. Has the congregation had its Session minutes reviewed by the presbytery annually (participating in the minute exchange)? (y/n) |  |
| 3. Does the congregation have by-laws that reflect the current structure of the church? (y/n) |  |
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| Finances |
| 1. What is the congregation’s annual operating budget?  |  |
| 2. How much does the congregation hold in unrestricted funds?\*Please identify donor restricted and Session restricted funds.\*\*If you are unsure, assistance can be provided.  |  |
| 3. Does the congregation have an annual stewardship campaign? (y/n) |  |
| 4. Does the congregation have a system for tracking donations? (y/n) |  |
| 5. Is the congregation up to date on any loan payments either to a bank held loan or any Presbyterian (U.S.A.) entity? (y/n)\*Having a loan does not disqualify a congregation. A congregation must be up-to-date and on time with their current payments.  |  |
| 6. Have you completed the financial health assessment form? (y/n)\*Please attach a copy of the completed financial health assessment form to this application or complete the financial health assessment online. <https://forms.office.com/r/eFuCrcK3eh> |  |
| 7. What percentage of a call can the congregation provide currently? (i.e. ½ Time, ¾ Time, etc.,) / This includes effective (cash) salary, housing, and Board of Pension dues. |
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| Additional Comment(s): Please include any additional information about the congregation. |
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| Checklist |
|  | The congregation has completed a Holy Cow! Assessment (Full-Assessment) |
|  | The congregation has reviewed its MissionInsite Report and submitted the QuickInsite Worksheet.  |
|  | The congregation has updated bylaws. |
|  | The congregation has completed the application above.  |
|  | The congregation has submitted a financial health assessment electronically or via email. |
|  | The congregation has submitted three years of annual reports and financial reports. |
|  | The congregation has scheduled a meeting with the Pastor Salary Support Team. |