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connex

IMPORTANT UPDATES FROM PC-MEPS

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The Manual and Resources: 2013 Update

In 1928, *The Manual* was introduced as a resource containing the by-laws and key policies of The United Church of Canada. Since then, the language and procedures in *The Manual* have become increasingly complex and legalistic, making this resource a source of frustration and confusion for many. In 2010, the Executive of the General Council initiated a project to simplify church processes. A staff working group was created to make *The Manual* more user-friendly. Members of the group were Joel den Haan of Alberta Northwest Conference, Bill Doyle of Saskatchewan Conference, and Cynthia Gunn, Alan Hall, and Wendy Cranston of the General Council Office.

The working group first sought feedback from the wider church. The response confirmed the need to re-focus energy on mission, and develop policies that are value-based and flexible. The response also emphasized the importance of a manual that is accessible and easy to understand. Wendy Cranston, Program Coordinator, Ministry Personnel Administration, explains the goal was “to make *The Manual*, along with the many other resources the church has, accessible to everyone who needs to use them. If every person who enters a United Church ministry cannot understand the resource they need, power ends up in a select few hands instead of in all of our hands.”

Over the last two years members of the working group redrafted the by-laws, and the majority of the church’s procedural resources (e.g. *Joint Needs Assessment*, *Trustees Handbook*, etc.). They have created a balance between providing enough regulation for the church to function in a fair and orderly way, and enough flexibility so that courts and people are free to carry out ministry in ways that meet local needs.

The new *Manual* and the majority of procedural resources will be available April 1, 2013 and will be in effect July 1, 2013. If you have any questions, please call Cynthia Gunn or Wendy Cranston at the General Council Office at 1-800-268-3781, and ask to be directed to their extensions; or email MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca, using “Manual” in the subject line.



Getting to Know Your Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services!

The committee draws together the wisdom and experience of ministry personnel and lay volunteers from across the church and is comprised of fifteen members appointed by the Executive of the General Council. For the next three years, members will be facing important issues, ensuring the United Church's policies and practices are upheld fairly and faithfully. Here's a look at committee members:

1. This stay-at-home mother of two young children is dedicated to justice, the integrity of our human resource policies and our capacity as a church to support ministry personnel. Committee chair **Tracy Murton** lives with her family in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
2. This designated lay minister has experience in a variety of ministry personnel and education tasks and committees in three Saskatchewan presbyteries. She also has a talent for juggling and playing hand drums! **Lorna King** is from Nipawin, Saskatchewan.
3. A new member of the General Council Executive, this person believes strongly in our vision to become an intercultural church and is excited about learning the United Church human resource and employment practices. **Vilvan Gunasingham** is a lay person from Markham, Ontario.
4. This former personnel minister has gifts and skills in supporting healthy ministers and their pastoral relationships, and served as part of the Candidacy Pathway pilot project in Bay of Quinte Conference. **Victoria Fillier** is an ordained minister living in Calgary, Alberta.
5. An avid tennis and golf enthusiast, this person also feels called to serve the health and well-being of all employees of the United Church. As part of this goal, he has a particular interest in our United Church pension fund. An athlete in the board room and on the courts, he is returning for his second term as a committee member. **Brian Copeland** is an ordained minister from Nepean, Ontario.
6. This member balances her time between working in congregations as a diaconal minister (for 30 years!) and serving as a recreation and social coordinator in an assisted residence for seniors. This is her second triennium on the Permanent Committee. **Lynda Gow** is from Edmonton, Alberta.
7. Her ministry has taken her to remote areas of the Great Bear rainforest to work with the Nuxalkmc communities of British Columbia's central coast. She brings an awareness of the challenges that remote ministries and First Nation peoples face in our church. **Ann Austin-Cardwell** is a designated lay minister from Peterborough, Ontario.
8. Retiring after 41 years of pastoral ministry and a wide variety of experiences in all courts of the church, this member is now entering his second term contributing his skills and expertise on the Permanent Committee. **Jack Spencer** is a retired ordained minister from Kensington, Prince Edward Island.
9. This avid traveller believes that the work of permanent committees is informed by the local church and that our work in pastoral charges is enriched by what happens at the General Council Office. This is her second triennium serving the Permanent Committee. **Elizabeth Brown** is an ordained minister from Winnipeg, Manitoba.
10. After a triennium participating in the Ministry Compensation Task Group, this member found pleasure in committee work as it balances the simpler structures of congregational life on Canada's east coast. **Debra Kigar** is a diaconal minister from Harrington Harbour, Quebec.
11. He is the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Facilitator for Vancouver Burrard & South Presbyteries, and a self-professed church geek. He views this appointment as an opportunity to engage in ministry and denominational issues within the broader church, and to serve as a resource on these issues with the community he serves. **Eric Hamlyn** is a designated lay minister from Vancouver, British Columbia.
12. This committee member is a fourth generation African Canadian United Church minister with 36 years of experience in matters related to intercultural ministry and employment practices. When he is not working, he can be found cooking and listening to the blues. **Bob Gibson** is an ordained minister from Petrolia, Ontario.

13. This member is serving a second triennium on the Permanent Committee. As a volunteer in all courts of the church for many years, she will bring extensive skills and experience to her recent appointment as chairperson of the Candidacy Pathway Steering Group. **Marion Carr** is a lay person from Delta, British Columbia.

14. As a new father to a baby girl, this individual still finds the time to serve in his first term on the Permanent Committee, as well as the General Council Executive. He brings a passion for issues related to young ministers and clergy couples. **Adam Hanley** is an ordained minister from Woodstock, Ontario.

15. Currently serving as a member-at-large with the General Council Executive, this Committee member brings experience as a former staff member at the General Council Office. **John Kim** is a lay person from North Vancouver, British Columbia.



Extending the Rules: News and a Reflection

By Tracy Murton, Chair PC-MEPS



The Permanent Committee of Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (also known as PC-MEPS) oversees and supports policies related to ministry personnel and vocational practices of the United Church. As chair of PC-MEPS, I am reminded of the poet Mary Oliver's reflection that as long as you're dancing, you can break the rules.

Five years ago, I was a Staff Associate employed by two presbyteries to support youth, young adults, and their leaders: a time of much dancing and rule-breaking. As one who yearns for policies and practices that are consistent and faithful to ministry personnel, regardless of category or status, I have come to embody the theological principles that inform this work. I know we are all called to vocations where we may skilfully serve and be received with respect and honour. This respect is a vital aspect of the employment relationship in The United Church of Canada.

In the midst of the context of the Comprehensive Review, we are deeply committed to prayerful, intentional and transparent support of ministry personnel and the varied contexts within which they work. We continue to be open to the movement of the Spirit who calls us to a community where our attention to rules is understood in the context of faithful witness and action.

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Upcoming *Connex* issues will feature reflections from different Committee members, providing an opportunity to learn more about the Permanent Committee and its work throughout the triennium.

Tracy Murton continued ...

It is in this context that the Sub-Executive of the General Council has approved the implementation of prerequisites for admission into the Designated Lay Ministry Program that will ensure a base level of competency in critical theological reflection for all applicants. In addition, the Sub-Executive approved a new compensation model for Supervised Ministry Education (internships) that will standardize compensation for those offering ministry to pastoral charges as part of their training.

These changes were made after careful and prayerful consideration by the Permanent Committee members of PC-MEPS.

In other news, our committee's work is progressing on the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships model in order to enable a number of Conferences to test some of the principles in anticipation of the 42nd General Council 2015.

We are happy to have the chance to give you, the constituency, a deeper sense of the people who have been called and appointed to this work on behalf of the Executive of the General Council. Look for my colleague Eric Hamlyn's reflections in May's issue of *Connex*.

Benefits:

Still Receiving Invoices?

Pastoral charges still being invoiced separately for pension and benefit remittances should expect interim invoices to arrive in April. Staff currently processing these remittances in the Ministry and Employment unit would like to thank those that have already submitted payments for this time period.

Start Dates defined by Employers

For new employees at a pastoral charge, the terms of employment or the pastoral relationship will define the start date of health and dental benefits. These may start right away or there may be a probationary period of three months.

Although there may be a delay in the processing of paperwork and delivery of the Green Shield card, the start date of benefits defined by your employer is the effective date. If you incur medical expenses before your coverage has been confirmed by Green Shield, please keep your receipts! The eligible expenses can be submitted once your coverage has been confirmed by Green Shield.

If you have elected optional coverage, be sure to check your pay stub to confirm deductions for premiums are being made.

E-mail Notification

To receive e-mail notification about *Connex* (four messages per year), please ensure your e-mail address is correctly noted in your Benefits Centre profile.

Pensioner Members: Call the Benefits Centre at 1-866-859-5025.

Active Members: Call the Benefits Centre at 1-866-859-5025, or go online at <http://ybrcanada.hewitt.com/ucc> and update the field.

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Connex is the newsletter of the General Council Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (PC-MEPS) and of the Ministry and Employment unit.

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