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# connex

IMPORTANT UPDATES FROM PC-MEPS

ISSUE 35 | MAY 2013

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## Grounded in Faith:

### News and Reflection from PC-MEPS

by Adam Hanley

The last few months have been full of learning for me as one of the newest members of the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (PC-MEPS). There's been learning about the current work of PC-MEPS, testing of the Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships models, implementation of the Comprehensive Salary plan, and all the existing policies that inform our work.

For me, the most important realization is how strongly our Christian faith grounds the work of PC-MEPS. At our meetings, discussions about salary schedules, insurance premiums, and payroll service updates could easily reflect discussions found in the human resources boardrooms of the secular world. However, decision-making by PC-MEPS is firmly rooted in Christian values, such as justice, equity, and love. These values are held up as reminders that, as a committee, we are dealing with employment policies for God's church.

The faith-based foundation to our work is vital as we continue to lead our church during changing times. Financial pressures are being felt at many levels of our church. This triennium, PC-MEPS is saving money by moving to a single face-to-face meeting a year. Throughout the rest of the year, the committee meets by conference call and uses video-conferencing software.

The Permanent Committee is continuing work amid the Comprehensive Review (for more information see: [www.](http://www.)



[united-church.ca/general-council/gc41/comp-review](http://united-church.ca/general-council/gc41/comp-review)). We are doing our best to make faithful decisions when “everything is on the table,” as General Secretary Nora Sanders told the 41st General Council before the process was approved last August. As the Comprehensive Review continues, we will discover together what changes it yields, including changes for the work of PC-MEPS. For now, committee members will take our faith and discipleship seriously as we tackle the work before us.



Calling for Nominees:

Recognition  
Program

## Circle of Support

Is there someone who has supported you,  
believed in you, and always been there for you?

Many ministry personnel have received incredible support along the way which has greatly enriched and benefitted the experience and impact of ministry. The Circle of Support program offers a formal way for ministry and overseas personnel to recognize individuals who have offered such vital aid. Ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, designated lay ministers, or overseas personnel are invited to nominate a person for recognition once every five years.

The Moderator will sign a certificate of membership in the Circle of Support for your nominee, which will be sent to you. You are invited to present the nominee with the signed certificate of recognition. A copy of the certificate will be placed in the Circle of Support book at The General Council Office for wider church acknowledgment.

For more details, or to make a nomination, please contact the Ministry and Employment Unit at 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3037, e-mail [MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca](mailto:MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca), or mail your request to:

Ministry and Employment Unit, Attn. Heather Brady  
The United Church of Canada  
3250 Bloor Street West, Suite 300  
Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4

### New Times, New Policies

Presbyteries and conferences are pilot testing new proposals, policies, and procedures for supporting a range of ministry and congregational needs. Permission for the testing was approved by the General Council in August 2012 based on a proposal called Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships.

Research leading to the proposal revealed that many serving in both volunteer and paid accountable positions think current pastoral relations procedures are too labour-intensive, complicated, and require expert knowledge or skills beyond that of most volunteers.

For example, one major complaint brought forth has been that too much effort and time are required for hiring, searching for, and selecting a new minister. Some new approaches being tested include:

- London and Toronto Conference are planning to experiment with an online matching process which will compare the profiles of congregations with the profiles of available ministry personnel. That information can then be used to facilitate the congregation's search and selection process.
- Toronto Conference is also contemplating a new process that would eliminate the Joint Needs Assessment Committee (the committee comprised of pastoral charge and Presbytery representatives to determine ministry leadership needs). Instead, Presbyteries would help pastoral charges maintain a current mission statement. If the congregation requests it, the Personnel Minister at the Conference would be able to declare a vacancy upon receiving the Pastoral Charge's mission statement, a position description, and evidence of financial capacity to support the ministry. That would be a change from the current policy, which requires the Presbytery to gather for this purpose.

For more information, please contact Ministry and Employment.

## When Do I Contact the Benefits Centre?

### General:

- To verify group benefits coverage
- To confirm beneficiary information, or other personal information
- Add e-mail address

### Are you a new employee with the United Church?

- Contact the Benefit Centre regarding optional benefits coverage

### Are you an employer who does not use the ADP payroll service? \*

- Treasurers update employee information directly with Benefits Centre

## How Do I Contact the Benefits Centre?

Call the centre directly at  
**1-866-859-5025**

or, using your PIN, go online to <http://ybrcanada.hewitt.com/ucc> to access your benefits resource website.

- \* Employers using ADP payroll services update all employee information with the New/Change Employee sheet, available from ADP (1-877-377-4784), or contact Ministry and Employment.

# Understanding Your Benefits: Dental Reimbursement

Decision making about coverage through the United Church's health and dental plans by Green Shield Canada is continually evaluated and reviewed by pharmacists, dentists, and other health care practitioners who examine the scientific evidence and make evidence-based decisions to ensure the appropriate treatments are used in each situation.

One example of how this works is in dentists' practice of screening for cancers. While dental visualization aids can highlight abnormal tissue, studies have concluded there is little benefit gained (specifically, from "reflectance" or "autofluorescence"). If the dentist decides to use a visualization aid as part of the standard visual and tactile oral screening, it should not be considered a separate procedure and would not be reimbursed as a separate charge.

Similarly, when a dentist uses laser technology, rather than retraction cords, in the process of gum preparation for a crown or bridge it is not considered a separate procedure and would not be reimbursed as a separate charge. The reimbursement for the work done would be for gum preparation for a crown regardless of the technique used.

Browse online at [www.greenshield.ca](http://www.greenshield.ca) to get information about Health and Dental plans offered through Green Shield Canada.

The website also allows members to apply for direct deposit reimbursement, and online submissions for some procedures; it's easy to subscribe!

Follow us on Twitter!  
[@UCCan\\_MandE](https://twitter.com/UCCan_MandE)



## Acupuncture: Benefits Rule Change (Ontario)

Are you in Ontario and using Acupuncture?

As of July 1, 2013, claims rules are changing.



Green Shield Canada will only reimburse claims from acupuncturists who are registered with the College of

Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario. At press time, there are 3,760 acupuncturists registered; you can confirm if your practitioner is registered by calling Green Shield at 1-888-711-1119.

## Anniversary Letters

This year, on June 10th, we will celebrate the 88th anniversary of church union. This is also an opportunity to recognize the significant anniversaries of individuals who have entered into the order of ministry within The United Church of Canada.

Each year the Moderator recognizes the vital leadership and vocational service offered by ordained and diaconal ministers with a special letter signed and sent to each person celebrating a significant anniversary. Whether it has been five years since entering the order of ministry or 75 years, we offer gratitude and appreciation for ministers' dedication and continued commitment to God's calling.

## Help with T1213: Deductions at Source

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) updated the often-confusing Clergy Residence Deduction forms and processes in 2008; unfortunately, many have found the update confusing.

It's important to remember that the cash housing allowance ministry personnel receive is NOT entirely tax free; in fact any tax deduction is based on actual living circumstances. To have "at source" deductions adjusted by a treasurer or payroll administrator, the minister must do the paperwork.

This link from CRA describes the process for reducing tax deductions:  
[www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/clclng/ncmtx/rdcng/thrty-eng.html](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/clclng/ncmtx/rdcng/thrty-eng.html)

Note that this online resource does not specifically mention Clergy Residence deductions.

Erik Mathiesen, Executive Officer of Finance, has found that unless the incremental income is essential, the paperwork hassle generally outweighs any benefit.

Check [www.united-church.ca/local/congfin](http://www.united-church.ca/local/congfin) or see also [www.united-church.ca/local](http://www.united-church.ca/local) for more pastoral charge and ministry personnel financial information.



### 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.

## Tucked In

A counsellor at one of our United Church camps—let's call him Ian—spent his first night at camp tucking his small charges in.

At the last cot he came to, Ian found a seven-year-old boy somewhat intimidated by his first time at camp. Before Ian could say anything, the boy said, "Are you tucking me in?" Puzzled by the question, Ian answered, "Yes." The little boy said, "I've heard about being tucked in but no one's ever tucked me in before."

Sobering isn't it? Seven years old, and no one had ever tucked him in. Our wise counsellor Ian—himself an alumnus of United Church camps—made sure the little boy was tucked in every night.

A bequest sent that child to camp. Jennie McKay, a member of the United Church in the boy's community had left a bequest to her congregation for that purpose.

You too could be a Miss McKay. You could change a child's life and that of your congregation as well. Why not tuck a bequest into your will to benefit the United Church? It could make a world of difference.

For information, call 1-800-268-3781, ext. 2023 or e-mail [legacy@united-church.ca](mailto:legacy@united-church.ca).



*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.

For additional copies to circulate to your M&P committee, church board, congregation members, or presbytery representatives, or to comment on *Connex* or suggest topics for future issues, please contact the editor:

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