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# connex

IMPORTANT UPDATES FROM PC-MEPS

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## Salary Structure

### The Hard Work of Developing Policy

by Debra Kigar

As a member of the Ministry Compensation Task Group, I have been one of many people involved in researching and designing how to implement a comprehensive salary structure for United Church ministry personnel. (See “Ministry Personnel Compensation” on page 2.) It is impossible to convey to you the degree of work that was involved in this process and the difficult concepts that we struggled with. Each decision was carefully tested and queried through various means and at several levels of the wider church and beyond. Throughout this process I have been awed by the high quality and vast quantity of work done by General Council staff.

The process has been an intellectual, emotional, and personal challenge, made possible because the task group’s guiding principles were always kept in mind. Particularly helpful was the principle “that the salary structure should promote just, fair, equitable, sustainable, and consistent compensation practices for both ministry personnel and pastoral charges; that it should be

easy to understand and administer, and allow for appropriate oversight.” I am confident that the salary structure approved in the spring of 2012 by the Executive of the General Council has been arrived at faithfully, honouring the spirit and the principles of the original recommendations made at the 39th General Council in 2006.

As a minister serving a remote two-point pastoral charge and a former layperson who has served in all church courts, I know this salary structure will have a significant

effect on ministry and lay personnel, on pastoral charges and pastoral relations committees, on staff and on volunteers. I assure you that the commitment to this method of compensating our ministry personnel remains strong, even as the church evaluates all its structures, policies, and programs through the Comprehensive Review process.

—Debra Kigar serves on the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services.



Debra Kigar shows a piece of iceberg in her community of Harrington Harbour, Quebec.

# Ministry Personnel Compensation

## Moving to a New Model

In March 2012, the Executive of the General Council approved the implementation of the following changes to the compensation model for ministry personnel in the United Church:

1. Establish a new minimum salary schedule for those not yet recognized, ordained, or commissioned that will have two steps: step one for the first two years and step two for the third and all subsequent years.
2. Start service credits only at ordination, commissioning, or recognition for the purpose of moving up the salary categories A to F.
3. Implement the new salary structure, which changes the existing base salary plus housing remuneration to one comprehensive amount.
4. Establish a fund to provide financial assistance for the high cost of emergency services or responding to family crises for ministry personnel appointed or called to ministry in high-cost, remote areas.

With the first two changes under way, focus is now on the third: implementation of the new salary structure. **The tentative implementation date is January 1, 2015.** This change is significant and involves many steps:

- Using housing sales data from the Canadian Real Estate Association and local Real Estate Boards and Associations, assign pastoral charges located in cities and towns with similar costs of living into groups; consider pastoral charges that are a considerable distance from major population centres to determine if the group assignment should be adjusted because of above-average costs for goods and services.
- Invite Conferences and presbyteries to review the pastoral charge group assignments and provide feedback based on local knowledge.
- Submit the methodology to compensation experts for review and comment, incorporating any appropriate best practice recommendations.
- Develop the minimum salaries for each group, and post the new salary schedules on the United Church website (search the “compensation” link noted below) for ministry personnel and pastoral charges to review.

As more information becomes available it will be posted at [www.united-church.ca/minstaff/compensation](http://www.united-church.ca/minstaff/compensation).



Ministry personnel—as well as volunteers serving as treasurers, on ministry and personnel committees, and on official church boards—are encouraged to check this section for updates, including any changes to the implementation date.

## Benefits Carrier Working Well

It's four years since Green Shield Canada became the health and dental service provider for the United Church. Our members have reported a high degree of satisfaction with Green Shield, although experiences vary, since no service is perfect. We'd like to remind members of some of the reasons this company was chosen to provide our health and dental coverage.

Green Shield is Canada's only not-for-profit benefits carrier, and it prioritizes affordability and accessibility to health care for its members. It was established in Windsor, Ontario, in 1957. Now with 600 employees, Green Shield is a cornerstone of the community, providing meaningful jobs in a challenged economic climate.

## Hearing from the Wider Church

General Council Office staff provided detailed presentations on the new ministry compensation model at the May 2013 annual Conference meetings in Bay of Quinte, Maritime, Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa, Newfoundland and Labrador, East District, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, and Saskatchewan, and at workshops in British Columbia. Some of the questions asked during these presentations concerned

- transitioning from the current salary-plus-housing system to the new salary structure
- the transition for ministry personnel and pastoral charges that live in/ provide a manse
- how pensionable earnings will be affected

These matters are all being very carefully considered.

## Feedback Continues to Be Important!

To share the structure and process behind it, Ministry and Employment will be posting the presentation on the new ministry compensation model at [www.united-church.ca/minstaff/compensation](http://www.united-church.ca/minstaff/compensation). A series of Web-based presentations will be held to hear from all interested in learning more about it. This is expected in late 2013 or early 2014.

## Final Details

Once the details have been finalized, ministry personnel as well as pastoral charges and other ministry sites will receive detailed information directly on the steps and timelines involved in transitioning to the new salary structure.

Be sure to review the December issue of *Connex* for further updates!

Green Shield Canada has online services that can help with claims, such as direct deposit of reimbursements and information for members on strategies to manage chronic health conditions; the website is easily accessed with your Green Shield card number. Learn more about Green Shield's services, like direct deposit of reimbursements, at [www.greenshield.ca](http://www.greenshield.ca).



## Annual ADP Year-End Payroll Communication

Watch for the annual year-end communication that will be sent to ADP payroll administrators around the end of October. This important communication will provide

- notable changes for 2013/2014
- a 2013 year-end notice
- a 2014 to-do checklist
- the most current version of the New/Change Employee Sheet and addendums

## Invoicing Fees

The United Church Benefits Centre is expected to start issuing invoices in late 2013 to members and pastoral charges that, for whatever reason, are not using the payroll service (ADP). As detailed in the January 2012 *Connex X-tra* ([www.united-church.ca/communications/newsletters/connex](http://www.united-church.ca/communications/newsletters/connex)) the cost is high to produce these invoices for the very few exceptions. The \$55 per-invoice cost-recovery fee will take effect in the second quarter of 2014.

If your pastoral charge or ministry site would like to avoid this fee, please contact ADP to add all employees to the existing ADP payroll, or register your pastoral charge or ministry site with the payroll service at 1-866-383-7747 ext. 7032950 before this date.



## Take Your Medicine!

Although it seems like common sense, it's a fact that many folks do not take their medications as prescribed. Ensuring patients are taking the correct drugs at the correct time for the correct amount of time is one of the hardest tasks of health and dental service providers. The costs of not taking medications as prescribed can be a recurrence of the original problem, more costly medications to handle worse health situations, or even hospitalization.

Green Shield Canada recently launched a new service plan for members who have been prescribed high blood pressure and high cholesterol medications. Members receive information on why adherence to prescriptions is critical to their health, with options to get reminders on taking and refilling prescriptions.

Along with eating healthy, whole foods and getting regular exercise, taking medications as

## Ministry and Employment Welcomes Bronwyn Corlett

The Rev. Bronwyn Corlett has been appointed as the Program Coordinator, Ministry Recruitment at the General Council Office. Bronwyn provides leadership for developing policies and programs related to promoting the vocation of professional church leadership and recruiting ministry personnel. Her work includes support for intercultural ministry and innovative expressions of local mission as the General Council contemplates the future leadership needs of the church. She works with staff colleagues in Conference offices and elected and appointed members in all courts of the church to develop recruitment strategies



Bronwyn Corlett

for a new generation of church leadership.

Before her move to the General Council Office, Bronwyn was serving as an ordained minister at Binkley Pastoral Charge in Hamilton Conference. (As a side note, she is not related to Lee Corlett, Ministry and Employment's Compensation Program Coordinator.)

prescribed contributes to healthier, happier, and longer life. Are you part of Green Shield's enhanced program to ensure adherence to your prescription regimen? Let us know what you think! E-mail [MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca](mailto:MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca).

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



### 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.



## Need **connex** help?

*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:

c/o PC-MEPS / The United Church of Canada  
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300, Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4

E-mail: [MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca](mailto:MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca)

Phone: 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3161

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