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connex

IMPORTANT UPDATES FROM PC-MEPS

ISSUE 39 | MAY 2014

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Where Will the Wind Take Us?



Back in Peterborough, Ontario, for a little over a year after serving three years in Bella Coola, British Columbia, I am looking forward to the first tree buds, green grass, and flowers beginning to peek through the soil after a long Ontario winter.

As a member of the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (PC-MEPS), I bring the perspective of experience in remote areas and

Native ministry to the table. I am impressed with the diversity and knowledge of the other members of this committee. All from different backgrounds and regions across Canada, these members bring a wealth of experience and enthusiasm for the work of the wider church.

I am an old sailor, having sailed my own 24-foot sloop for many years. Those days are over except for kind invitations I receive; my last sail was on the Pacific Ocean inlet where it meets the Bella Coola River. Years ago, I had a poster on my wall with a sailboat resting in the middle of a calm lake, the sails hanging loose waiting for the wind to come up.



As I think about the Comprehensive Review and General Council's committee work, it reminds me of that poster. The caption on the bottom was from John 3:8, "The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes."

We are all called to listen and sometimes wait for the sound of the Spirit—what direction it leads us in and who might speak that wisdom. Our wisdom and our perspectives are important to the work of our church as the Comprehensive Review and General Council committees strive to birth the church anew, just as spring refreshes our Mother Earth.

—Ann Austin-Cardwell is a designated lay minister from Peterborough, Ontario, and a member of PC-MEPS.

Update on New Compensation Model for Ministry Personnel

The General Council Office continues to prepare for the implementation of the new compensation model for ministry personnel, effective July 1, 2015, for new calls and new appointments. For existing calls or appointments, compensation must move to the new model no later than July 1, 2018.

Currently, ministry compensation is comprised of a base salary plus housing allowance or use of a manse. This model, in place for decades, was developed when it was a rare exception for a minister not to live in a manse. Today less than 20 percent of ministers live in a manse.

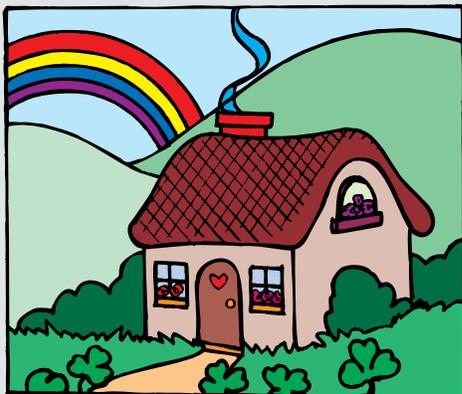
The new compensation model no longer has a separate housing allowance; rather it has six cost of living (COL) group minimums that include a housing component. Pastoral charges are assigned to COL groups based on

the median fair market value of homes in the city/town/rural municipality in which the pastoral charge resides. Home value data is primarily obtained through MLS (Multiple Sales Listing), as well as the Canadian Real Estate Association and regional real estate boards.

The pastoral charge assignment to COL groups will be posted on the United Church website by the end of May or early June 2014. Presbyteries, Conferences, and pastoral charges will have the opportunity to review the COL group assignments once they are posted. A communication providing further details will be sent to these groups in May.

For a detailed description of the model, visit www.united-church.ca/minstaff/compensation/model and select New Compensation Model for Ministry Personnel.

Ministry Personnel Who Live in a Manse



The original intention was for the new compensation model to apply to all ministry personnel, whether they received a housing allowance or resided in a manse. However, circumstances have come to light that prevent the implementation of the new compensation model for ministry personnel who live in a manse. Specifically, the Model Trust Deed (a bylaw of The United Church of Canada) has strong limitations regarding use of the manse. The Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services will be considering an alternative for ministers in manses. Stay tuned to *Connex* or the website noted above for more information as it is available.

Treasurers:
See this issue's insert for

- 2015 Salary Schedule
- Summer Closure

Have You Completed a Doctorate? Are You Interested in Sharing Your Expertise?

The Ministry and Employment unit is developing a resource to identify areas of knowledge and expertise and link these to specific ministry personnel. The plan is to share this resource with ministry personnel, congregations, and committees and courts of the church seeking expertise to address particular issues. We also hope to share this information with EDGE, the United Church's Network for Ministry Development.

Interested in learning more? Please contact Ministry and Employment at 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3037 or e-mail ministryandemployment@united-church.ca.

Update: Effective Leadership and Healthy Pastoral Relationships

Conference Test Projects

The 41st General Council in 2012 approved the testing of new oversight and discipline and pastoral relations policies and processes to see if simplified, regionally flexible, staff-supported processes would result in healthier pastoral relationships between ministry personnel and local ministries. Ten Conferences have decided to participate. Here are three examples of Conference tests that give a good idea of the breadth of the Effective Leadership project.

British Columbia Conference

In British Columbia Conference, the responsibility for mission, vision, support to ministry personnel, and support to local ministries remains in the presbyteries. The responsibility for the more technical aspects of pastoral relations and oversight and discipline policies is moving to the Conference and will be staff supported. The Conference has hired a project manager and additional staff who have been deployed to the presbyteries to support the implementation of the Effective Leadership project. Interested in reading further? Please see www.bc.united-church.ca/content/effective-leadership-project.

Hamilton Conference

Hamilton Conference in partnership with Bruce Presbytery is testing a new model for equipping and sustaining leadership and nurturing healthy pastoral relationships in churches and presbyteries. A project implementation team has been set up for general project oversight, for communication around the project, and to support mission and ministry by enabling congregations to explore their own “essence” through an essence statement development process. (An essence statement is a brief statement of who a congregation is and what its gifts are.)

Bruce Presbytery has entrusted the work of oversight and discipline to a Leadership Commission, which is emphasizing the vocational support of ministry personnel, but is also equipped to deal with matters of discipline that may come before the presbytery in this timeframe. For more details, please see hamconf.org. Under the Resources tab, select Resources, then Contact, and then Contact – March 2014.

Synode Montréal & Ottawa Conference

Synode Montréal & Ottawa Conference is testing policy changes in two main areas: pastoral relations, including the simplification of the joint needs assessment process and an annual renewal of a congregational “Living Ministry Profile”; and pastoral care and oversight, including the development of a new tool for carrying out triennial visits between the presbytery and local ministries. For more details, please see www.montrealandottawaconference.ca/en-gb/node/162 and select Effective Leadership Pilot Projects – QA.pdf at the bottom of the page.

Next Steps

All participating Conferences are starting the evaluation of the changes they are testing. The Effective Leadership project management team will complete the first part of the evaluation by the autumn of 2014. Evaluating long-term changes such as health of pastoral relationships can take time, so the project management team has planned for ongoing evaluations.

The overall objectives of the Effective Leadership project:

- improving the fit of pastoral relationships
- increasing the number of ministry personnel and pastoral charges that report having a healthy pastoral relationship
- increasing the number of ministry personnel who report receiving the support they need to perform their ministry well
- decreasing the number of ministry personnel who report that they feel isolated
- increasing the vitality of pastoral charges and other local ministries
- proving viability with overall financial capacity
- decreasing volunteer workload
- increasing the competency for handling pastoral relations, oversight, and discipline
- increasing the consistency within each Conference in how pastoral relations, oversight, and discipline are handled
- increasing the efficiency of pastoral relations, oversight, and discipline



2015 Disability Plan Changes

As outlined in the last issue of *Connex*, all staff, both ministry and lay, who are members of the group benefits plans will be covered by a modified form of the Restorative Care Plan effective January 1, 2015. This means

Members who are absent from work due to illness will receive 100 percent of salary (plus housing if applicable) during the first two weeks of absence. If the illness extends beyond the two-week qualifying period, 100 percent of salary will continue to qualifying members for up to a total of six months or the date of returning to work, whichever is sooner.

For Treasurers, reimbursement of 85 percent of salary (plus housing, if applicable) will begin after two weeks for those who qualify. It also means that the current premiums for disability benefits will be changing. Although work is continuing to determine what the exact premiums will be, the rate will be higher compared to what it is currently is for lay staff, but the rate for ministry personnel will be lower. The rate should be released in the October issue of *Connex*.

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Member Survey!

Our short, online survey wants to know: How can we assist you?

Look for a communication in June that will direct you to either an online link or paper survey.

Members who receive e-mail communications from Ministry and Employment will get a link to the Survey Monkey website to complete the questionnaire. If you currently receive newsletters in the mail, you will get a letter from Ministry and Employment with the choice to complete the short, printed survey or go online to complete it.

If you'd like to start receiving communications by e-mail from Ministry and Employment, simply go to YBR: Your Benefits Resource at <http://ybrcanada.hewitt.com/ucc> (have your PIN handy) and update your profile with your personal e-mail, or call the Benefits Centre directly at 1-866-859-5025.

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.

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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