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# connex

IMPORTANT UPDATES FROM PC-MEPS

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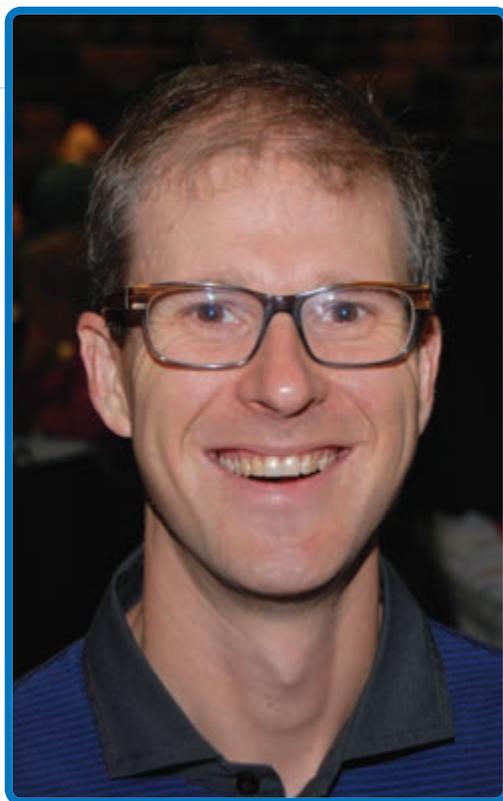
## Embracing the Tasks Ahead

In the circle of the church year, we still find ourselves in the Sundays of Ordinary Time. But in the life of our faith communities, it feels far from ordinary, as programs and activities have returned to full swing. Or you could be like me, serving a rural congregation where the farmers in your faith community might be so busy with work on the farm that congregational life takes a bit longer to pick up after the summer.

In the midst of the busyness, the work of the 42nd General Council may feel like the distant past. As the new chair of the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (PC-MEPS), the experience, work, and decisions made at this General Council feel ever present. Maybe you were a commissioner at the meeting or a keen follower of the online live streaming, or maybe you were unplugged enjoying some good Sabbath time. In any case, the next three years will be full of study, clarification of structural change, and remits.

As I write this, the work of this triennium related to the Comprehensive Review is still being sifted out for PC-MEPS. As we help the denomination clarify and implement decisions made at General Council, I want to reassure you that PC-MEPS will seek to be faithful in our meetings and deliberations over the next three years. The committee is gifted with lay members and ordained, diaconal, and designated lay ministers; together we will be prayerful in the work before us.

Many of you prayed for the commissioners in the Prayer Pilgrimage leading up to General Council. Please continue to pray for members of the Executive of the General Council and its committees and task groups. And please remember in prayer the staff of the General Council Office and Conference offices during this time of transition and change. Peace.



The United Church of Canada

Adam Hanley

—*The Rev. Adam Hanley serves at Kelvin Teeterville Vanessa Pastoral Charge in Scotland, Ontario, and is the newly appointed Chair of the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services.*

## Restorative Care Plan To Be Extended in 2016

At General Council 42, a proposal to extend coverage under the Restorative Care Plan (RCP) to United Church mission units, outreach ministries, and other ministries was approved. This plan already provides short-term disability coverage to ministry and (as of January 2015) lay personnel in pastoral charges. The terms of the proposal come into effect in 2016 with the publication of the new *Manual*, and coverage under the RCP will become mandatory at these ministries.

The RCP provides benefits to assist with costs entailed when ministry personnel are disabled: salary, benefits, supply, and staffing costs during the person's absence. It also provides disability management expertise to ensure those who become ill or disabled receive the proper care and provides support so that people can return to work as soon as they are able.

"The purpose of this proposal is to ensure that everyone is protected," said Greg White of Hamilton Conference during the debate at General Council.

Read the original press release at [www.gc42.ca/news/restorative-care-plan](http://www.gc42.ca/news/restorative-care-plan).

Be sure to contact Myron, disability leave analyst, in Ministry & Employment unit in **ALL** cases of sick leave *beyond two weeks*.

**1-800-268-3781 ext 4127 or  
mbaryckj@united-church.ca**

## Controlling Drug Costs for You and the Church

Drugs are one of the largest costs related to illness. For one particular class of drug, statins, these costs are astronomical. Sometimes costing in the hundreds of dollars for a single dose, statins are a very special class of drug; this has encouraged Green Shield to work with pharmacies to mitigate these high costs to health plans for you, the member, and the church as the employer.

If you have been prescribed a statin drug, Green Shield will have sent you a letter to share these important details: coverage for statins will *only be recognized if you are purchasing them from a specific pharmacy*. These are well-known chains: Shoppers, Rexall, and PharmaPlus, to name a few. Green Shield has streamlined the coverage for these drugs to take advantage of the savings these stores can leverage through bulk purchase, saving money for you and the church. If this requirement causes undue hardship, exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

When drug costs are so high, it's easy to think that not taking the full dose can help to save on costs, but the fact is that unless you take the full prescribed amount, the drug is 0 percent effective. This can lead to far more serious, and potentially costly, treatments in the future.

By making this change to take advantage of the buying power of the pharmacy chains, both Green Shield and the United Church hope this can improve the health outcomes for members prescribed these expensive medications.

## Find/Confirm an Approved Provider

Green Shield's new Find a Provider feature will help you search for eligible dental, paramedical, and vision care providers who are registered and in good standing with our provider registry.

Simply select the type of provider you are looking for and whether you would like to search by address or by postal code, up to a search radius of 100 kilometres. To narrow down your search, you can also apply additional search filters from the Provider Information section, such as a provider's city, last name, business name, or phone number.

Once you select "search" you'll receive a summary of details for the providers and a map of the providers' locations. Find this feature by registering at [www.greenshield.ca](http://www.greenshield.ca).

**Note:** Not all paramedical providers will be displayed. Green Shield wants to show you the providers that make things more convenient for you by billing Green Shield directly—no need for you to submit a paper claim form to Green Shield!

## Get the Best Doctors Working for You

The United Church's health benefits package has a new feature: Best Doctors. This feature gives members of the plans access to the best diagnostic tools available. To explain the service, here's an example:

Jay has been feeling unwell for a number of months, but the doctor in his small town is having a hard time diagnosing what seems to be the cause of Jay's poor health. Because Jay works at the United Church in town and has access to the health benefits, he calls up Best Doctors. Jay's doctor is then able to submit the information on file to Best Doctors, and they in turn share this information anonymously with a large pool of diagnostic experts with a wide range of medical expertise. This consulting group agrees on a recommendation and then shares it with Jay's doctor through Best Doctors. Jay's doctor can then discuss the treatments or medications required so Jay can start on the road to recovery!

There is no extra charge for this service, as the church has subscribed to have it available for all members in the core benefits plan. The goal is to diagnose a condition as soon as possible, to reduce the suffering of patients, and to get effective treatments quickly. This service has an additional advantage—it provides access to expertise that can be in short supply for those in remote areas or even in growing population centres. This means fewer costs in misapplied treatment programs and healthier outcomes for our members. Learn more at [www.bestdoctorscanada.com](http://www.bestdoctorscanada.com) or contact Best Doctors at 1-877-419-2378 or [customer.ca@bestdoctors.com](mailto:customer.ca@bestdoctors.com). Best Doctors will be sending more information to members shortly.

### Online Benefits Tools

Green Shield online services are available by registering at [www.greenshield.ca](http://www.greenshield.ca).

## Candidacy Pathway Authorized for Remit

General Council 42 authorized a category 2 remit to approve a seven-phase Candidacy Pathway to the order of ministry and to recognition as a designated lay minister. Background information accompanies a category 2 remit, which is voted on by presbyteries.

The seven phases of the Pathway are: call forth, identify, accompany, equip, assess, authorize, and celebrate.

The Candidacy Pathway is intended to improve the speed and effectiveness of the process to becoming an ordered minister or a designated lay minister in the United Church. For example, it allows a person to begin a process of inquiry immediately, rather than having to be a member of the United Church for 24 months. However, two years involvement in a local ministry or mission is still required before beginning the candidacy process.

Here are some aspects of the Candidacy Pathway:

- It provides creative and invitational approaches for calling forth people to serve as ministry personnel.
- A variety of tools and agencies may be used to test a person's giftedness for ministry.
- Students and candidates will be supported by Circles of Accompaniment, people who will have no official evaluative role.
- A variety of supervised ministry education opportunities will be open to candidates for ordained ministry.

Candidacy boards will assess suitability and readiness and, with the Conference, will authorize candidates for ordination, commissioning, or recognition.

If the remit is approved, the Executive of the General Council will develop a policy document for the Candidacy Pathway and an implementation strategy.

**Read the GC42 press release at [www.gc42.ca/news/candidacy-pathway-authorized-remit-0](http://www.gc42.ca/news/candidacy-pathway-authorized-remit-0).**

# Ministry Personnel: Request for Information

General Council Office needs your help! When contacting ministry personnel we occasionally discover phone numbers, mailing or e-mail addresses, and even names have changed from what is in our database. We are trying to make communicating with ministry personnel easier and less expensive.

All ministry personnel serving in a pastoral charge or ministry

site, including students serving in appointments, are requested to complete Part 1 of form PR 404—Ministry Personnel Personal Information Form. You are also invited to complete Part 2, if you wish. The form can be found at [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca).

Please submit the completed form by **November 30, 2015**. Mail to Pastoral Relations, Ministry and

Employment unit, The United Church of Canada, 3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300, Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4 or scan and e-mail it to [ministry@united-church.ca](mailto:ministry@united-church.ca).

Once you have filed the form, any subsequent changes are done via form PR 405—Ministry Personnel Change of Personal Information Form—found at [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca).



## Is My Drug Covered? The Drug Coverage Search Tool

This function on the Green Shield website gives you the ability to search a drug name or drug identification number (DIN) to get information specific to your own coverage or coverage for your family, such as whether the drug is covered, the reimbursement level, and information on whether the drug requires prior authorization. If your drug requires authorization, you can even download an authorization form, print it, and bring it to your physician.

To access this tool register at [www.greenshield.ca](http://www.greenshield.ca). Once you log in “Is my drug covered?” option is listed as one of the available services. You can also call Green Shield at 1-888-711-1119.



— or —

### Contact

Ministry and Employment:  
[MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca](mailto:MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca)  
or  
1-800-268-3781 ext. 3161

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## 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:

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