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connex

IMPORTANT UPDATES FROM PC-MEPS

ISSUE 45 | NOVEMBER 2015

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Finding Our Way Through

Change. It happens all the time, everywhere. Few of us love change and the chaos that often follows. More of us resist it, avoid it, and try to ignore it. We deny it's happening, hide from it, argue against it, and generally want things to continue in the same way as they are now... forever!

We know, however, that change is important—some would say vital—in our lives, work, family, and relationships. Jesus knew this and advocated for so much change that people around him thought he was dangerous. Even his disciples didn't understand his capacity to introduce change to the culture, societal norms, and ways of relating to God.

Often that same Spirit of God is what nudges, pushes, or shoves us toward change. The past few months, since General Council 42 in August 2015, have introduced us to many changes in the church as well. And the response has been varied.

The elected members and staff who serve on the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services are no different than you and your neighbour. Our

response to change is varied as well. As we attend to the work given to us from the General Council, we are committed to helping all of us negotiate a way through the changes in a healthy, life-giving, and Spirit-led way. As always, our confidential Employee and Family Assistance Program is available for anyone who feels overwhelmed and challenged by the results of these changes.

As we move through these changing times, we know that God is with us—in our meetings and work, worship and play, struggles and celebrations—as we are nudged and invited to discover where God is calling us to be. We take a deep breath and are ready to step forward...

—Elizabeth Brown is an ordained minister from Winnipeg, MB.



Tom Sturdy

Elizabeth Brown in Churchill, MB

Our website is changing soon! Stay tuned to www.united-church.ca to see the new look: more resources, more accessible!

Financial Assistance Funds

The United Church offers financial assistance? Yes! The United Church has funds to support ministry personnel and lay members of the church during times of financial hardship, personal or vocational assessment, post-secondary education, and sabbatical leave. Each of these eight funds has specific qualifying criteria:

The **Compassionate Assistance Fund** provides grants or loans where, due to extraordinary need, the family income is insufficient to meet recognized basic living expenses. Ministry personnel, candidates, members of the pension plan, dependants of ministry personnel and pension plan members, lay employees of pastoral charges and presbytery-accountable ministries, and overseas personnel are eligible to apply.

The **Minister's Loan Fund** lends a small sum at low interest in the case of emergency to active ministry personnel who are in financial difficulty. This is a revolving fund; repayment of loans enables the church to provide funds to others.

The **Personnel Emergency Fund**, working in conjunction with the presbytery and employment insurance programs where appropriate, provides financial support (salary, housing, and employer-paid benefits) to a pastoral charge in order to fulfill the obligation of salary continuance to a ministry personnel or congregational designated minister who is under suspension as part of a ministry review, a formal complaint of sexual misconduct, or a criminal offence charge. The fund may also consider extraordinary costs when the individual is under review of the presbytery.

The **Support and Advocacy Fund** assists gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and two-spirited ministry personnel who experience difficulty maintaining employment in the church because of their known or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Ministry personnel who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or two-spirited can apply.

The **Fund for Survivors of Sexual Abuse** supports ministry personnel who are survivors of sexual abuse to stay in active ministry while participating in therapy to deal with their history. This fund extends the church's ministry to contribute financially to the cost of counselling or therapy to enhance the healing of individuals who have experienced sexual abuse in a United Church context, as defined by the Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures.

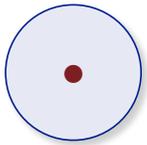
The **Ministry and Life Assessment (Vocational Assessment) Fund** provides funding to ministry personnel for vocational assessments undertaken at their own initiative. Active ministry personnel are eligible to apply.

The **Torrance E. Bissell Bursary Fund** provides grants for undergraduate education to dependant children of ministry personnel in the United Church who are paid at the minimum salary for their category. Candidates for ministry are not eligible for this bursary.

The **Interim Ministry Sabbatical Fund** helps cover the salaries and benefits of interim ministers taking sabbaticals. Interim ministers who have completed 60 months of service in recognized intentional interim ministry appointments over a period of eight years or less are eligible to apply.

Where do I get more information and apply?

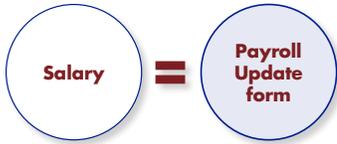
For more information, or to submit an application for any fund, contact your Conference personnel minister. For staff of the Conference and General Council Offices, contact Wendy Cranston, Program Coordinator for Ministry Personnel Administration: 1-800-231-7680 ext. 3113 or wcranston@united-church.ca.



TREASURERS: Year-End Payroll Processes

A package was recently sent from Ministry and Employment: details for 2015/2016 payroll and all required ADP forms. Didn't receive one? Contact MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca.

IMPORTANT CLARIFICATION: ADP Payroll Form



The **Payroll Update Form** is to be used when the minister is paid in accordance with the new compensation model, which means the minister receives a salary only and no separate housing allowance.

The **New/Change Employee Sheet** is to be used when the minister lives in the manse, or has not yet transitioned to the new compensation model, which means the minister receives a salary plus a separate housing allowance or use of the manse.



TREASURERS
 Do not send CRA "Letter of Authority" to ADP.
 Report Clergy Residence Deduction on payroll forms only.

Transitioning Your Minister to the New Compensation Model

Pastoral charges have until July 1, 2018, to transition their minister's pay to the new compensation model (for existing calls and appointment renewals). Once the charge decides when this transition is to happen, ensure the following steps are taken:

- 1 Carefully review the March 2015 communication sent to pastoral charges and presbyteries, "Transitioning to the new compensation model for ministry personnel." It is available on www.united-church.ca: search "compensation model," and on the Compensation Model web page, open the March 2015 "Letter to Pastoral Charges and Presbyteries" PDF.
- 2 Make sure you use the ADP Payroll Update Form.
- 3 On the Payroll Update Form, be sure to complete Section 8—Employer Type.

If you transition your minister's salary to the new model effective January 1, 2016:

- Add the 2016 annual cost of living increase (2%) to the minister's regular salary.
- Then, use this salary when completing the "New Compensation Model—Transition Worksheet" provided in the March 2015 communication to pastoral charges and presbyteries.

Webinars

Since July 2015, valuable experience has been gained on where errors may occur in transitioning minister salaries. To ensure your transition is successful, we recommend you attend one of the following webinars:

Thursday, December 10, 2015
—1:00 to 2:00 p.m. EST

Thursday, January 7, 2016
—1:00 to 2:00 p.m. EST

Tuesday, January 19, 2016
—1:00 to 2:00 p.m. EST

To confirm your attendance, e-mail MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca with "Compensation Webinar" in the subject line.

Questions related to the new compensation model and/or ADP forms?

E-mail: MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca

Call: 1-800-268-378 ext. 3161 or 3118

Benefits Update: Rates Remain the Same for 2016

Good news: The premiums paid by both members and employers (pastoral charges and ministry sites) for benefits remain at the 2015 rate for 2016. The church has been able to subsidize the full cost for the basic benefits and for optional coverage premiums paid by members. United Church plans have a current discount level of 20 percent off the full costs.

Benefit	Full Rate for 2016	United Church -20%	United Church 2016 Rates
	(Premium a % of Pensionable Earnings unless specified as \$)		
Restorative Care Plan (employer paid)	1.11%	0.22%	0.89 %
Employer Indemnity (employer paid)	0.12%	0.024%	0.096 %
Pension Contributions (employer-paid portion)	Rate remains unchanged at 9 %		
Core Benefits (employer paid) Total	5.39%	1.09%	4.30 %
Pension Contributions (employee-paid portion)	Rate remains unchanged at 6%		
Long-Term Disability (employee paid)	3.13%	0.63%	2.50 %
Optional Life (employee paid)*	Various		No changes to rate table
Optional Spousal Life (employee paid)*	Various		No changes to rate table
Optional AD&D (employee paid)*	Various		No changes to rate table
Optional Health and Dental (employee paid)**			
Single	\$ 45.03	\$ 9.01	\$36.02
Family	\$128.24	\$25.65	\$102.59
Pensioner Health and Dental (member paid)**			
Single	\$ 59.68	\$11.94	\$47.74
Family	\$120.36	\$24.07	\$96.29

*Optional life insurance cost depends on age and chosen coverage level.

**Plus applicable tax in ON & MB (8%) and QC (9%).

CORRECTION: Drug Costs Article

In the article "Controlling Drug Costs for You and the Church" in the October 2015 issue of *Connex*, the drug class for which Green Shield has put cost controls in place is "biologics" (not "statins," as the article incorrectly indicated). Members prescribed biologics will receive a letter explaining the cost savings steps to take.

Check your T4/T4-A for the premiums paid on employer-provided benefits. These, and qualifying out-of-pocket medical expenses (for example, the balance you paid on prescription drugs or glasses) can be claimed on your income tax.

TAX TIPS: T4, T4-A

Make sure **YOUR ADDRESS ON YOUR PAY STUB** is correct! This is where we send you important information! Update your address via your treasurer; or if you are retired, call Ministry and Employment.



To Get E-mail Notification

Receive e-mail notification about *Connex* (four messages per year): please ensure your e-mail address is in your Benefits Centre profile

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



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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