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connex

IMPORTANT UPDATES FROM PC-MEPS

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Relax! You've Got This

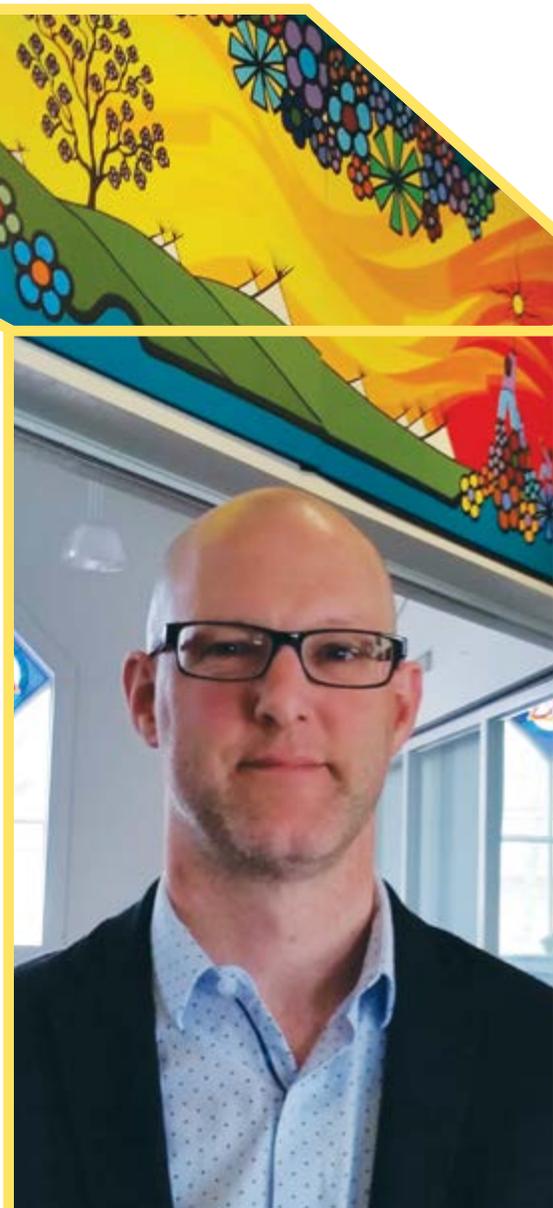
Let me get this off my chest right away. I am not a very disciplined person; neither am I a planner or organizer. So on the Tuesday before Easter I sat down at my desk, excited to get ready for Easter Sunday worship. But I was jolted by the realization that Good Friday was only three days away, and I had nothing planned for the worship service! Immediately the voice in my head started to berate me for not being more like my well-organized, well-prepared colleagues and for being surprised, yet again, by Holy Week.

That voice reminded me of a tomb that I seem to enjoy visiting far too often: the tomb where I compare myself to other ministry colleagues. I do not believe I am alone in sensing an undercurrent of professional competitiveness in many ministry personnel. Comparing ourselves to colleagues may be natural for the rest of the work world, but for ministry personnel it should be different, right? We serve One who celebrated diversity, and we tout Paul's "many gifts, one Spirit" as a credo for life in our ministries.

by Dave Moors

My hope in writing this is that we all might reflect on times when we have doubted our gifts, thought we should have the gifts of another, or joined in on some subtle ministry competition. As ministry personnel we often speak of self-care as a priority, and yet the voice of doubt and discouragement can be a real barrier, a real tomb for our life in God. Thankfully, God's rising occurred early enough for me to get Good Friday put together and move on to the joy of Resurrection Sunday, happy that the big stone had been nudged just a bit more and that God's love is shining in another one of my dark places. Can I get a Hallelujah?!

—*The Rev. Dave Moors is a member of PC-MEPS and an ordained minister who lives in Saskatoon.*



Dave Moors in the foyer of Mayfair Pastoral Charge, Saskatoon. The mural is by artist Kevin Peece.

Ministry and Employment Staffing Update

There have been a number of changes in the Ministry and Employment unit.

In the Pastoral Relations cluster:

- The Rev. Joe Ramsay, Manager for Ministry Personnel Policies and Programs, has left to pursue music and consulting after 11 years of service at the General Council Office.
- The Rev. Dr. Jenny Stephens will take over as Manager for Ministry Personnel Policies and Programs in May. Jenny arrives after serving 14 years as Personnel Minister in Hamilton Conference.
- The Rev. Robin McGauley joined the staff in January as the Program Coordinator of Ministry Vocations with responsibilities for candidacy, admissions, and mutual recognition ministers. Robin was previously Program Director at Five Oaks Education and Retreat Centre.
- Catherine O'Brien will leave her role as Program Coordinator of Ministry Personnel Leadership at the end of May. A search is currently under way for this position.

The Rev. Bronwyn Corlett has returned from leave to her role as Program Coordinator of Recruitment Programs, and Wendy Cranston continues as Program Coordinator of Ministry Personnel Administration. Angie Musonza rounds out the team as Program Assistant.

In the Pension and Benefits cluster management:

- Linda Begley, Manager of Pension, Benefits, and Compensation, has retired after 11 years.
- This management role is currently filled by David Dawrant, Acting Manager of Pension and Benefits Administration; Shenagh Rosa, Acting Manager of Pension Compliance and Communication; and Derek Hurst, Manager of Fund Investments. Each brings extensive experience in their area of responsibility.

There's a New Website, and I Can't Find Something



In February, The United Church of Canada website, www.united-church.ca, was updated. As a result, most previous website links that have been used for years (and may be on local ministry or presbytery websites) will not work.

To find information on our new website, use Search—the red magnifying glass button at the top right of the homepage. If you can't find something on the church's website, ask! Contact **MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca** or phone 1-800-268-3781.

WHERE ARE YOU?

If you haven't received any e-mail or post from Ministry and Employment in a year or more, it's probably because your address is incorrect or unknown in our Benefits database.

For active members, if we can match you to an employer, you may have received a letter sent to you at your employer's address. This means your address is not correct in our system.

What to do? Check your pay stub; does it have your correct address?

YES? Please e-mail **MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca**. Ministry and Employment has to intervene.

NO? Speak to your treasurer. They have to correct your address via ADP forms sent to ADP.

For pensioner members, simply contact Ministry and Employment: **MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca** or 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3161.

Invoicing for Benefits

Important Information for July 1 Change to McAteer Group: Invoice Payments

For those employees paying directly for benefits due to a leave or “in-search” period and the small number of employers still being invoiced for pension and benefits directly, this important information was recently included with your invoice:

- ❑ Cheques will not be accepted after June 30, 2016.
- ❑ Payment will only be accepted via direct debit or electronic funds transfer.

The Ministry Employment unit and McAteer Group, the new service provider operating the Benefits Centre, will provide more details in direct communications expected closer to the date of the change. All employers are encouraged to pay employees via ADP.

All Outstanding Premiums Must Be Up-to-Date

No outstanding balances for pension and benefits will be transferred to McAteer Group. If an employer has any outstanding premiums owing, *health and dental coverage for employees will be suspended until full payment is received.* Once all outstanding premiums are paid, including balances owing and any premiums unbilled due to a suspension period, health and dental coverage will be reinstated retroactively.

- 1:** This procedure will be followed both at the change to McAteer Group on July 1 and going forward if any invoices are unpaid. A more detailed explanation will be provided to pastoral charges, ministry sites, and other employers.
- 2:** Ministry and Employment unit staff will contact the employees of all employers who receive invoices directly with more details about the process.



Ministry and Employment
The United Church of Canada • L'Église Unie du Canada

Contact Ministry and Employment:

MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca

or 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3161.

McAteer Group: New Benefits Centre Operations

As announced in the March *Connex*, McAteer Group will take over the coordination of the member and employer Benefits Centre for the United Church's pension and benefits plan as of July 1, 2016. To be clear: your health and dental coverage is not changing, and Green Shield remains the health and dental provider. In addition, Shepell.fgi remains the Employee and Family Assistance Provider, Great West Life remains the life and long-term disability insurance provider, and RBC Investor Services remains the pension payroll provider.

Each member and employer will receive more information through a direct mailing from McAteer Group, including contact information, website links, and other updates to your Benefits Centre information. Should you not receive this information for any reason by the third week of June, please don't hesitate to contact the Ministry and Employment unit: **MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca** or 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3161.



Benefits 101: Be Proactive

New Dentist: When dentists welcome new patients to their practice, baseline examinations are often performed to establish what the new patient needs in terms of treatment. If you have already been to another dentist within 24 months of a “new patient” visit, some of these dental procedures may not be covered!

Do This: Request a predetermination of benefits in advance of the appointment. Green Shield’s number is on your card.

This is an estimate of what they will cover and how much of the cost you will have to pay.

High-Cost Medical Items: If you have been recommended by a doctor or dentist to have a procedure or purchase equipment related to a medical condition, you don’t know exactly how much will be covered.

Do This: Acquire a predetermination of benefits from Green Shield before committing to the costs of the recommended product or procedure.

Also: All out-of-pocket expenses or medical costs that you are required to pay can be claimed on your income tax as medical expenses.



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“I Don’t Know If I’m Calling the Right Person...”

Almost everyone who calls Ministry and Employment says the same thing: “I’m not sure if I’ve got the right number...” It’s our ministry to never let a question go unanswered; we may not be the place to call for whatever question you have, but we’ll find you the right place or person to speak with.

We definitely prefer that you call us, even if we need to refer you to another area, than for you to worry or be unsure about who to contact about a concern you have. Transitions happen and contacts change, but you can always keep our number handy: 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3161.

Benefits members have access to Shepell.fgi, the Employee and Family Assistance Provider. Get started online at www.shepellfgi.com with articles and assessment tools to manage stress, develop healthy habits, and find all kinds of great information! Call 24/7: 1-800-387-4765 (French: 1-800-361-5676).



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



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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