



connex

IMPORTANT UPDATES FROM MINISTRY AND EMPLOYMENT

Please circulate to ✓ Treasurer ✓ M&P Committee
 ✓ Ministry Personnel ✓ Lay Employees ✓ Church Board/Office

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Supporting Leaders through the Office of Vocation

By Rev. Norm Seli

In 2018, I was involved in the life of Toronto Conference in pastoral relations as well as the Interview Board and with General Council Executive, and the Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools Committee. Many a meeting would be punctuated with my exclamation, “That’s not our problem, let’s leave it to the new Office of Vocation to sort out!” We would share a guilty chuckle around the table. In October, the Nominations Committee invited me to be the first chair of the Board of Vocation. I imagined that it was ironic punishment. I thought to decline...and then I decided to give it a day of prayer and reflection.

I wondered what I might have to offer this calling and what this



The Board of Vocation. Standing, left to right: Hewitt Holmes, Natasha Pearen, MaryJo Eckert Tracy, Darrell Reine, Moses Kanhai, Norm Seli, Mark Green, Sungmin Jung. Sitting: Jean Bethune, Judy Zarubick, Deb Kigar (currently on leave), Darla Sloan, Eileen Antone. Absent: Sandra Brooks, Andrew Kinoti Lairenge. Photo: The United Church of Canada.

new body might have to offer The United Church of Canada. I had heard a lot of skepticism, and even some fear, about what this Office of Vocation might mean for the on-the-ground leadership of our United Church, and I didn’t want to

be part of something so scary. Then I reflected on the challenges I had experienced in my own ministry, in trying to help candidates for ministry, and in wading through the regional differences that baffled and confused all but the most immersed

continued

of our leaders. I realized that even the best systems seem to eventually evolve into different expressions of efficiency, losing track of our best aspirations in the name of getting things done quickly and easily (easily for some, anyway).

It was in the midst of this realization that I felt that God was calling me to be part of something new: An Office of Vocation not yet

ruled by efficiency and habit but able to prioritize access, inclusion, accountability, justice, and love. A body that can function nationally and thereby overcome regional disparity and offer consistent support to our ministers and communities across this vast and diverse country.

There may be several reasons that the Nominations Committee

thought I could do this job, but the reason I took it is that I am actually excited about supporting our leaders and our church as we respond to God's call to share the incredible ministry of Jesus Christ.

—The Rev. Norm Seli is Chair of the Board of Vocation and serves in team ministry at Jubilee United Church in Toronto.



LEAD TEAM



Photo: © Renata Varha | Dreamstime.com

Saving for a Sabbatical

Because providing for a sabbatical for ministry personnel is included in the terms of every call or appointment, communities of faith should begin planning for a sabbatical at the beginning of the pastoral relationship.

Some pastoral charges find it helpful to budget annually for the sabbatical, so that when it begins after the fifth year of the pastoral relationship the pastoral charge has money set aside to use toward supply ministry.

For more information about sabbatical leave, please contact the Rev. Adam Hanley, Program Coordinator Ministry Personnel Vitality, at ahanley@united-church.ca or 1-800-268-3781, ext. 3147.

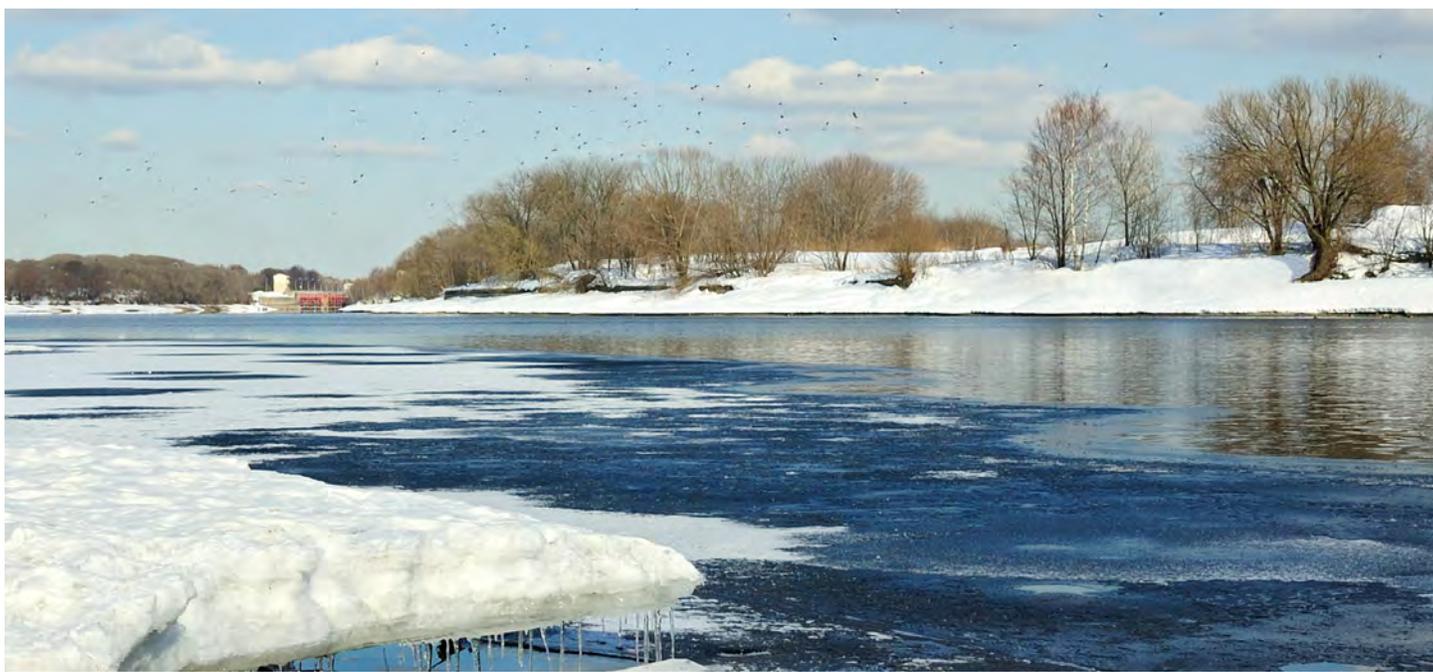


Photo: © Anna Kucharcova | Dreamstime.com



Responsible Investment Efforts through SHARE

Dollarama sources more than half of its goods from 24 countries, where unscrupulous labour recruiters may exploit workers and job seekers by charging them fees, withholding personal papers/passports, and failing to provide written contracts spelling out the terms of employment. Last year, Dollarama committed to producing new disclosures about its sustainability practices, but it has not yet committed to developing policies that address known human rights issues like forced labour and labour recruitment fees.



Photo: © Onetouchspark | Dreamstime.com

The Pension Plan of The United Church of Canada has filed a shareholder proposal with Dollarama asking the company to report on how it identifies risks to human rights and plans to mitigate or prevent them. We have specifically urged the company to

- adopt a policy addressing labour recruitment fees and forced labour in the supply chain
- add provisions to supplier contracts to back up the policy
- work with other companies in global initiatives to address labour recruitment

Through SHARE, the plan has also joined investors with more than \$2.3 trillion in total assets under management in asking the Canadian government to require companies to develop and report annually on their efforts to prevent and mitigate the risk of modern slavery and child labour in their supply chains. In response, the government announced it will conduct consultations on developing new supply chain legislation.

STRAIGHT TALK about Our Pension Plan

The Guarantee Period: Minimum Protection (Value for Money) NOT Maximum Payments

All retirement pensions under the plan include a guarantee. This guarantee is protection for you and your family. It is not a limit on your pension.

What Happens to Your Pension if You Die after Retirement?

Without a Spouse

You will have a **Life Pension with a 15-year (180-month) guarantee**.

- Don't worry—your pension won't stop until you die, even if you live for 50 more years!
- If you die before 180 monthly payments are made, your beneficiary will receive the value of the remaining payments.

With a Spouse

Unless you and your spouse decide to choose an optional form, you will receive a **Joint and Survivor 66²/₃ percent with a 5-year (60-month) guarantee**.

- Sixty unreduced monthly payments are guaranteed no matter what happens.
- If you die before 60 payments are made, your spouse will continue to get the same monthly amount until the 60-month guarantee ends. The next month, your spouse will get 66²/₃ percent of the original.
- Even if both you and your spouse die after receiving only a few payments, your beneficiary will receive the value of the remaining payments (60 minus the number of payments already received).
- As long as either you or your spouse is alive, the pension won't end.



Benefits Enrolment Clarified

Step 1. If you are eligible for benefits, your payroll administrator or treasurer initiates *Core* benefit deductions for member only (single).

Step 2. The deduction triggers the United Church Benefits Centre team to issue a Welcome Package. The package is mailed to the member's home address *within six weeks of first deduction* and includes an enrolment form for you to complete.

Step 3. At the same time, member data is sent to Green Shield Canada, and a Core Single member record is set up.

Step 4. Once Core coverage is set up with Green Shield Canada, the member can enrol dependants

(spouse, minor children, and full-time students under the age of 25) and sign up for Optional coverage, if desired, by completing the enrolment form.

Step 5. Optional coverage will be in effect on the *first* of the month *following* the receipt of the completed enrolment form by the United Church Benefits Centre.

Things to Remember

If you don't elect optional coverage when first eligible, you won't be able to opt in later unless you experience a life event, such as the birth of a child, a marriage, a divorce, loss of coverage through your spouse, and so on.

Keep your receipts if you have health or dental expenses before your coverage is established. Once your coverage is set up, you can submit the claims.



COMPENSATION AND PAYROLL

Changes to Cost of Living Groups: Clarification

With the first triennial review of Cost of Living (COL) group assignments, the cost of living changes in some communities resulted in a change of COL group effective January 1, 2019.

- If the pastoral charge moves to a lower COL group, the minister's current salary may not be reduced. The original terms of compensation stated in the call or appointment must continue to be honoured. This includes the annual cost of living and years of service category adjustments.

- If the pastoral charge moves to a higher COL group, the minister's salary must move to the new minimum plus any increment above minimum stipulated in the call or appointment terms.

For more detail, please see www.united-church.ca and search "minister's salary and COL group."



Photo: © Monty Peter | Dreamstime.com

CONTACT US

Connex is the newsletter of the Ministry and Employment unit at General Council Office and The Pension Plan of The United Church of Canada.

United Church Benefits Centre: 1-855-647-8222

(update personal information; start pension)

Benefits@united-church.ca

Disability@united-church.ca

Pension@united-church.ca

Green Shield Canada: 1-888-711-1119 greenshield.ca

(questions on coverage for health and dental; online tools; reminders)

Pastoral Charge Payroll Service: 1-800-268-3781, ext. 3132 or 2757

payroll@united-church.ca

Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP): Confidential, 24/7

1-800-387-4765 (English), 1-800-361-5676 (français) shepell.com

Ministry and Employment unit at GCO: 1-800-268-3781

MinistryandEmployment@united-church.ca

Let us help

WorkLife Services

Professional advice and services to help you resolve a wide range of work, health and life concerns.

In our increasingly fast-paced world, you may find it challenging to take care of yourself while balancing your responsibilities at work with your obligations at home. In addition to counselling, your Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) can help by offering you timely, professional assistance and support to manage all of life's stages and complexities.

WorkLife Services consist of the following:

Family Support Services

- Daycare centres and after-school programs
- Seniors' accommodations and nursing homes
- Adoption services
- Caregiver support groups

Financial Support Services

- Credit and debt management
- Budgeting
- Financial aspects of separation or divorce
- Retirement planning

Legal Support Services

- Landlord and tenant issues
- Summons, warrants, and subpoenas
- Custody and child support
- Wills and estate planning

Nutrition Support Services

- Weight loss/gain
- Boosting energy and stress resilience
- Healthy eating on the go
- Accommodating shift work

Naturopathic Services

- Work-life balance
- Illness prevention
- Energy levels
- Midlife health changes



How it works

WorkLife Services are provided through telephonic consultations with our professionals. Initial sessions may involve an assessment and education component and can include goal definition and action planning. Follow-up sessions ensure you are on track to achieving your goals.

Connect with us for confidential support or to learn more

Access the full suite of **WorkLife Services** to help you resolve work, health and life concerns through your EFAP.

For immediate assistance, contact us at **1.844.880.9142** or visit **workhealthlife.com**.



Download My EAP app now at your device app store or scan the QR code.



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