



connex

THE NEWSLETTER OF MINISTRY AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND SERVICES

Benefits Premiums: No Changes for 2010

One of the reasons for a change of benefits providers earlier in 2009 was to stabilize the benefits premium rates. The most tangible evidence of stability is that there is no increase to premiums for members or for pastoral charges and other participating employers for 2010! This is certainly welcome news, as our members and participating employers have experienced regular rate increases for the past decade or more.

The rates, unchanged from 2009, are listed below for easy reference of members and treasurers.

Members who have contacted the Human Resources Unit have expressed satisfaction with the service they have received from Green Shield. Their Customer Service Centre is the best place to start with any questions you may have about coverage: 1-888-711-1119.

Please see page 2 for recently approved enhancements to the plan.

2010 Rates

(% of pensionable earnings* unless specified as \$/month)

Employer Premium	
Core Benefits	5.150%
Restorative Care Plan	1.25%
Employee Assistance Plan	\$8.00
<i>Plus, where applicable:</i>	
Employer Indemnity	0.12%
Short-Term Disability	0.46%
Employee Premium	
Long-Term Disability	3.129%
Pensioner Premium Support	\$4.00
Active Member Optional Health & Dental	
Single	\$45.03
Family	\$128.24
Pensioner Premium	
Health and Dental	
Single	\$54.67
Family	\$110.28

*Pensionable earnings: for ministry personnel = salary x 1.40%; for lay personnel = salary.

Green Shield Expands Hours

Effective October 5, 2009, Green Shield's Customer Service Centre is open Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Eastern Time). They can be contacted at 1-888-711-1119 for information on health and dental coverage, the status of a health or dental claim reimbursement, or to replace a Green Shield ID Card.

Submitting Receipts: Don't Wait!

For health and dental claims to be reimbursed, you must submit expense receipts within 12 months of the date of the treatment. Many expenses are submitted automatically by pharmacies, dentists, and other practitioners. For those that you submit through the mail, make a copy, then promptly submit the original receipts to Green Shield, the health and dental benefits provider. If you need a claim form, please call Green Shield at 1-888-711-1119 or visit www.greenshield.ca to download one.

Life Events: 120-Day Notification Window

Do not wait to add new family members to your benefits plans! If you experience a life event such as marriage, or birth or adoption of a child, you must add dependants to your plan within 120 days (approximately four months). For individuals paid through ADP, remember to advise your treasurer of any changes to your benefits coverage, and contact the United Church Pension and Benefits Centre at 1-888-657-4607 to request a Life Event Change Form. Complete the form and send it in promptly to ensure coverage is in place.



Group Insurance Plan: Recently Approved Design Changes

Four enhancements to benefits for members of the United Church benefits plans were recently approved by the Executive of the General Council (GCE).

An increase to the paid long-term disability (LTD) benefits of 2.3% will be implemented, effective January 1, 2010. This will keep pace with the increases that have already been assessed to the active member salary adjustment, also known as the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). The cost of this improvement will be up to \$350,000 over the lifetime of the plan.

The accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) benefit has been 80% of pensionable earnings; however, based on a recent benchmarking report, industry standards for both the not-for-profit sector and the insurance industry suggest this benefit be increased to 100% of pensionable earnings. The main objective of the United Church benefits plans is to provide a basic level of protection against economic loss resulting from such circumstances.

For active group benefits plan members, private duty nursing maximums have been raised from \$10,000 to a lifetime maximum of \$25,000. This benefit is not heavily used, and it is not expected to mean a large increase to the plan costs.

And finally, the GCE has approved the PC-MEPS recommendation for the United Church to self-insure the employer indemnity benefit; this will be a more cost-effective method compared to the current arrangement through Great-West Life. Also, management of this highly unusual benefit by the Human Resources Unit would ensure its correct and efficient administration.

Modifications to the United Church's benefits plans are researched by staff in the Human Resources Unit and sent to PC-MEPS for examination. PC-MEPS makes recommendations on any proposed changes to the Executive of the General Council. Based on the best interests of the denomination, the GCE accepts, or does not accept, these recommendations.

Preparing for Year-End: Trial T4/Relevé Run

By now, all pastoral charges enrolled with the payroll service should be in receipt of their comprehensive Year-End Package from ADP. The most important elements are the United Church **2009 Year-End Notice** highlighting key dates in the process and the **2010 ADP To-Do Checklist** and budget information. Also, there is an **ADP Procedures Guide** and a **Trial T4/Relevé Run**.

We know that year-end is an extremely busy time of year and that the deadlines to make corrections in January are very tight. The Human Resources Unit has done what we can to provide treasurers with as much time as possible to submit your year-end corrections.

If a pastoral charge is not able to meet the deadlines specified, service fees will be charged. *We strongly urge treasurers to review the **Trial T4/Relevé Run** provided by ADP and make any corrections in conjunction with the next input call (before January).*

Please note: The dates and costs associated with year-end provided in the United Church inserts apply; disregard the dates and costs provided in the ADP generic year-end documentation.

Treasurers: Correction to Year-End Package from ADP

On the United Church page **2010 ADP To-Do Checklist**, the back side shows a table of calculations. Under the Ontario column in the Family Coverage section, the formula should read:

$(\text{Annual PE} \times 0.000295 + \$1.21) \times \$1.08$
(the \$1.21 figure is missing due to a printing error)

The correct table is available on the United Church website: www.united-church.ca/local/tools

Holiday Coverage Ensures Uninterrupted Payroll Processing

Treasurers or payroll administrators who confirm the payroll with a call from ADP prior to payday must be available over the holidays to ensure uninterrupted payroll processing. To ensure coverage will be uninterrupted in the event of a vacation or absence, a pastoral charge can add a back-up ADP authorized contact at any time, or arrange to have the payroll run “as is” with ADP. ADP Client Services (1-877-701-7017) can provide further information, including what forms need to be completed to ensure uninterrupted payroll service.

Please note: If no special arrangements have been made with ADP, and ADP is not able to make contact with the contact person by the end of the scheduled input day, ADP will run the payroll “as is” for all salaried staff (ministry personnel and non-ministry personnel); ADP will not process the payroll for casual/hourly employees, since the hours may change from pay period to pay period.

ADP Reports on Internet (ROI)

For treasurers accessing the ADP reports through the Internet, system compatibility issues between Internet Explorer 8 and Vista (from Microsoft) have been resolved. There will be some delay with certifying Windows 7 (released Oct. 22, 2009), so if it is possible to delay a system upgrade on computers accessing ADP Reports on Internet (ROI), please do so.

In other cases, if you have questions about accessing ROI, please contact ADP Client Services at 1-877-701-7017.

A guide to reading ADP’s reports is available on the United Church website. Search “Ongoing Support” to find the link to a downloadable PDF file. Further assistance is available from Lee Corlett, Compensation Program Coordinator, at 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3118.

Ministry Compensation Task Group

At the January 9, 2009, meeting, the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (PC-MEPS) authorized the creation of the Ministry Compensation Task Group to further research, explore, and build policy around the ministry compensation recommendations coming from the 39th General Council, 2006, namely:

- that ministry personnel be paid a comprehensive salary instead of a base salary and housing or a housing allowance
- that a redesigned salary structure be implemented that has minimum and maximum salaries, and a greater differential between categories of ministry personnel
- that a method be established to compensate those persons in exceptionally high-cost, remote locations and clergy couples where one person is restricted from claiming the clergy residence deduction

In March and April 2009, an invitation for expressions of interest to participate in the Ministry Compensation Task Group was posted on the United Church website. The Sub-Executive of the General Council considered appointments from the Nominations Committee in June 2009. Four nominees were selected and two PC-MEPS members were appointed to the task group. Linda Begley and Lee Corlett of the Human Resources Unit are serving as staff resources.

The first meeting of the task group took place at the General Council Office on October 19 and 20, 2009. The Ministry Compensation Task Group invites feedback regarding the ministry compensation recommendations from the United Church constituency at any time at PC-MEPS@united-church.ca or 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3161.

Tell Me the Stories...

“Tell Me the Stories of Jesus” is a much-loved hymn. Since 1925, The United Church of Canada has told the stories of Jesus, passing them on from generation to generation. Our ancestors bequeathed us their faith. We stand on their shoulders. Will the next generation be able to stand on ours?

One way you can help continue Jesus’ story is to remember the United Church with a bequest in your will. Leave a gift of any amount to your congregation, to a church camp, to a favoured outreach ministry, to the wider church through the Mission and Service Fund, or to The United Church of Canada Foundation.

Would a complimentary *Will Workbook* be useful? Would sample bequest wordings help? Please call 1-800-268-3781 ext. 2024 for assistance or for the name of your regional financial development officer (gift planner).

Give witness to the values you hold dear. Please remember the United Church with a gift in estate plans and let the stories of Jesus continue.

We're All in This Together!

Greetings to all of my sisters and brothers in Christ! Let me introduce myself as the newest editor of *Connex*, as well as a brand-new member of the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (PC-MEPS).

Less than four weeks ago I made my inaugural trip to Toronto, where I had the privilege of meeting new and experienced members of the permanent committees who support the work of the Executive of the General Council. I also met our General Secretary, our new Moderator, and many of the “behind the scenes” staff people, who offered wonderful hospitality and good humour. For part of our orientation, we participated in a scavenger hunt that sent us racing through the offices of Church House, looking for posters, brochures, candies, and the helpful faces of our hardworking and talented staff. It was a bit overwhelming to see all of the work that is being done on our behalf.

Now to the task at hand. It was sobering to see the amount of work that is before us. For all those petitions to General Council that were passed, this is where the buck stops. Volunteers from across the country gather throughout the year to work on those priorities, programs, and policies that are proposed at our triennial gatherings. Permanent committees set up task groups and subcommittees to do research, write reports, and propose actions that will make their way to the decision-making body that is the Executive of the General Council. Although I have been an ordained minister for 11 years, have attended General Council (at Wolfville, Nova Scotia, 2003), and have participated on presbytery and Conference committees, this is my first foray into national committee work. I trust that my experience with small churches (in Nova Scotia, Manitoba, and now B.C.), my training in interim ministry and transformational leadership, and my passion for Christ-centred, mission-focused churches will enable me to bring a valued perspective to the table.

Keep in touch. If you have any questions or comments about how we can use *Connex* to better communicate the work of PC-MEPS, I'd love to hear from you! In the meantime, please pray for the work of our national committees, and we will join you in praying for the ministry and mission of Christ's church. Shalom!
—Erin Sterling, editor



Keep Healthy in Flu Season

The Duty of Care desk has prepared some suggestions for altering common worship practices to reduce risk of transmitting infections, including flu. This information can be found on the United Church website: www.united-church.ca/local/duty/emergency.

The file “Being Faithful during Cold and Flu Season” can be printed to share with congregations, worship committees, and other groups.

Coming Soon: New Financial Handbook for Congregations

The Congregational, Educational, and Community Ministries and Human Resources units have collaborated to update the *Financial Handbook for Congregations*. The Human Resources Unit was particularly involved with the sections involving paying staff and pension and benefits information (Chapter 4). This book is a must-have for treasurers or payroll administrators in pastoral charges.

The updated handbook is expected to be ready in early 2010 and will be available to order through United Church Resource Distribution (UCRD) at 1-800-288-7365; or for free download from the United Church's website: www.united-church.ca, search keyword “finance.”

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Connex is the newsletter of the General Council Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services and of the Human Resources Unit. For additional copies to circulate to your M&P committee, church board, or congregation members, or to receive e-mail notification when a new issue is online instead of a print copy, contact us at 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3161 or PC-MEPS@united-church.ca.

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