



connex

THE NEWSLETTER OF MINISTRY AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND SERVICES

ISSUE 23 | MAY 2010

New Pension and Benefits Administration Provider

In March, you should have received a letter from Charles Black, Chair of the Pension Board, announcing the decision to move the United Church's Pension and Benefits administration from Morneau Sobeco to Hewitt Associates. The transition will occur in early 2011.

As the letter outlined, this decision was made by the Pension Board and approved by the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services after careful deliberation and after listening to your comments as plan members or treasurers. Our goal is to ensure that you receive the best possible pension and benefits administration services.

As we receive more details on the process for transfer to Hewitt, we will update you through regular communications. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at the e-mail or mailing address at right.

Did Not Receive the Letter?

If you did not receive the letter from Charles Black, please contact us immediately to update your address information! If you know of plan members or treasurers who did not receive the letter, please advise them to contact us.

Important updates regarding this transition will be mailed to plan members over the next year, so it is essential that we have up-to-date addresses.

E-mail: HumanResources@united-church.ca

Mail: Human Resources

The United Church of Canada
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300
Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4

Benefits News and Updates

Overseas Travel : Check Your Health Coverage before You Go!

Emergency Travel Assistance (ETA) will not cover members travelling either to countries for which Canada has issued a travel warning, or to countries in which Mondial Assistance (our ETA provider) believes they cannot provide services—such as Haiti.

Also, as of May 1, 2010, the Cuban government requires all visitors to hold travel insurance, with emergency health coverage, that is recognized by Cuban authorities. Details are online: www.united-church.ca/minstaff/benefits/health.

All active members of the health and dental plan should contact Green Shield (1-888-711-1119) in advance of overseas travel to confirm sufficient coverage is in place.

Members of the pensioner health plan do not have travel coverage outside Canada.

Updates from PC-MEPS

(Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services)

Effective Leadership and Healthy Relationships Collaborative Research Project

This new initiative of PC-MEPS (originally proposed by the Steering Group on Oversight and Discipline), approved in January 2010, will roll out in the fall. The purpose of the project is to streamline the work of information-gathering and consultation for the task, steering, and working groups of PC-MEPS. The project will monitor the mindful stewardship of time and financial resources, and allow for a higher level of openness, communication, and transparency between the work of the permanent committee and that of ministry personnel.

The project will operate from a central vision of effective leadership and healthy relationships.

There are three main goals:

1. To promote effective leadership and healthy relationships within The United Church of Canada.
2. To undertake a collaborative research project that meets the quantitative and qualitative research needs of the task, steering, and working groups of the permanent committee in the current and approaching trienniums.
3. To appoint an advisory panel of members from the task, steering, and working groups of the permanent committee to assist resource staff in the direction and directing of this project.

The advisory panel for the research project will be chaired by Tracy Murton. The Human Resources Unit staff members assisting both the advisory group and the project as a whole are Joe Ramsay, Manager, Ministry Personnel Policies and Programs, and Wendy Cranston, Program Coordinator, Ministry Personnel Administration.

The permanent committee hopes the collaborative research project will become a model for the research and consultative needs of task, steering, and working groups in each triennium, and that this model may simplify and uphold collaborative work with other permanent committees.

Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures Review Task Group at Work

This task group met in fall 2009 to plan its work. The co-chairs are Laura Thomson and Dexter Van Dyke, with members Marion Carr, Heather Burton, and Brian Nicholson. Surveys have gone out to identified stakeholders and information is being analyzed. The task group plans to complete their review and make recommendations to PC-MEPS in September. If you have comments on the policy, please feel free to send them to PC-MEPS@united-church.ca.

Treasurers, Please Read

ADP Fee Update Effective July 1, 2010

For the first time in the three years that ADP has been the service provider for the pastoral charge payroll service, ADP fees will increase 2 percent on select services, effective July 1, 2010. ADP will provide full details directly to treasurers.

For example, a pastoral charge processing payroll for three people (based on a monthly payroll and using the Reports on Internet option) would see an annual increase of \$2.82 plus applicable taxes.

Updated information will appear on the United Church website on June 15, 2010, at:

www.united-church.ca/files/minstaff/pastoral/payroll/fees.pdf

Pay Statements

Under Canadian Employment Standards legislation, pay statements must be provided to everyone working in a pastoral charge. ADP produces one pay statement for each person paid through the service in the monthly payroll reports. If you have questions about the payroll reports, contact ADP Client Services at 1-877-701-7017.

Another useful resource for this topic is "Understanding Payroll Reports." Visit www.united-church.ca, search for "Ongoing Support," and then scroll down to the report.

New Travel Expense Code

Travel in a Prescribed Zone now has an earning code for processing the Canada Revenue Agency tax credit through ADP. To set this up, provide your ADP representative with the amount you wish processed, using earning code 54. This appears on the payroll reports as OTHTRAV. The processed amount is subject to tax, CPP, and EI, and appears in boxes 14 and 32 on the T4.

Summer Closing and Payroll

If your pastoral charge closes over the summer and you have employees submitting United Church pension and benefits remittances through the payroll service (administered by ADP), you will need to reconcile remittances missed over the summer months. We recommend one of the following options.

1. Rather than pay the employee's salary for 10 months and then not pay a salary for two months, pay 10 months of salary over 12 months (divide the salary by 12 rather than by 10). This way, the employee will receive pay for 12 months and there will be no gap in the processing.
2. Make one-time adjustments to pension and benefits remittances one or two months prior to the summer closure, depending on the closure period. To calculate the one-time adjustment amounts to pass on to ADP, go to www.united-church.ca. Search for and select "Budgeting Tools for Treasurers," and then select "Tools for Treasurers" (Lay or Ministry).

To ensure uninterrupted benefits coverage, you must contact the Human Resources Unit at General Council Office (adp-pay@united-church.ca or 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3114) to tell us which option you will use to cover your remittances for the summer months. When you contact us, please provide your pastoral charge name and ADP company code.

Harassment or Violence in the Workplace: New Legislation in Five Provinces

The United Church of Canada is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all staff and volunteers, and has in place policies to meet that need.

As Ontario Bill 168 goes into effect on June 15, 2010, Ontario will join with Alberta, Saskatchewan, PEI, and Quebec. This legislation, new to Ontario, requires that all workplaces with five or more employees have policies and procedures regarding workplace violence, including harassment and bullying. The legislation also requires that a risk assessment be done and that appropriate reporting mechanisms be in place so action can be taken when required.

To comply with Bill 168, the General Council and Conference offices of the United Church are amending current harassment policy to include specific references to workplace violence. Recommendations for changes will go to the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services, and then to the Executive of the General Council for final approval. This policy and other helpful tools will be available on the website as soon as possible after that.

Please read Connex Xtra for an article on this topic by Catherine O'Brien, Program Coordinator, Ministry Personnel Leadership. Congregations and community ministries may find the Ontario Service Safety Alliance website useful: www.ossa.com/content/resources/Bill168-WorkplaceViolence.cfm.

Letter from the Editor

To all God's beloved: grace to you, and the peace of Christ!

I am astonished when I consider the diverse desks and computers this issue will reach. I hope each of you experiences growth and blessing as spring spreads across the land.

The congregation I serve recently explored A Song of Faith. This poetic offering is a lyrical snapshot of what the United Church understands its faith to be in the current theological, political, and social context, and teaches us "to be alert to the sacred in the midst of life." What simple concepts and yet what complex and demanding calls upon our lives!

This issue of Connex highlights several ventures of the Permanent Committee as we attempt to be faithful to those callings. It is not an easy road, and often our decision-making is difficult. We have different experiences and points of view, and different responses to the challenges before us. It might be easy to get stuck and be unable to move forward. But we are a blessed and gifted people, and the Spirit is on the move, urging us ahead, to find better ways to serve, equip, and communicate.

I encourage you, as you read, to pray for the groups of people across this church who have met, worked, prayed, and struggled to come to the decisions that you read about here. I continue giving thanks to God that so many are willing to offer their time, gifts, and hearts to the health and well-being of the body of Christ—and you are a part of it! Thank you!

—Erin Sterling, PC-MEPS

On June 10, 2010, The United Church of Canada celebrates its 85th anniversary. The theme for this year's celebration is "Remember, renew, rejoice!" / "Célébrer le passé, chanter notre avenir!" For more information about anniversary resources available to congregations, please visit us at www.united-church.ca/85th.

Green Shield: Customer Service Star!

It's been about a year since the Human Resources Unit announced Green Shield as the new health and dental benefits provider for the United Church. The transfer to the new carrier went very smoothly and although some inconsistencies came to light between the old provider and the new, overall administration and customer service for our members has improved significantly.

This good-news story revealed Green Shield's automatic follow-up system for stale-dated reimbursement cheques:

A member contacted us with a story of waiting, seemingly forever, for a reimbursement cheque. But then, just as she was about to call Green Shield, the cheque arrived. In reading the communication, she discovered the cheque had been reissued because the initial cheque (which must have been lost in the mail) had been stale-dated. Green Shield has advised us that this is standard, but that only one reissued cheque will be sent. If the replacement is not cashed within six months, the money is returned to the United Church's account to benefit the whole of the membership.

Correction: Financial Handbook

If you downloaded the Financial Handbook for Congregations as soon as it was available, there is an update on page 42, which may not have made it into your copy:

Updated, correct: Section 4.9.4: "Taxable Allowance," EN 20 (TXB ALLW)

Previous, incorrect: EN 20 (TAX ALLOW)

Looking for Information or Assistance?

The Human Resources Unit of the United Church is your one-stop shop for information on workplace-related issues, including benefits, pensions, compensation, pastoral relationships, administration, admissions, and much more.

Contact us by phone, e-mail, or mail:

- 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3161 or 416-231-7680 ext. 3161
- HumanResources@united-church.ca
- The United Church of Canada

Attn: Human Resources

3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300 Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider for the United Church is Shepell.fgi. For active members, this service provides immediate, confidential short-term counselling for any concern. The website is full of interesting and helpful information for employees who have issues or concerns that are causing them stress, be it in the workplace, at home, or anywhere else. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- Phone: 1-800-387-4765
- Visit: www.shepellfgi.com

All about Connex

Connex is the newsletter of the General Council Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services and of the unit that supports their work, Human Resources. **This information is also important for M&P committees, church boards, and treasurers.** If, rather than receiving a hard copy, you would prefer an e-mail to notify you that the current, printer-friendly issue is available on the United Church website, please e-mail us at PC-MEPS@united-church.ca or call us at 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3161. Please feel free to comment on Connex or to suggest content for future issues.

Contact: Connex Editor, c/o PC-MEPS

The United Church of Canada
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300
Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4
PC-MEPS@united-church.ca