



**Pension Newsletter**  
**Issue 15, November 2010**

## **Tough Decisions: No Upgrade to Pensions for 2011**

For members who follow the state of the global economy, it will come as no surprise that United Church pensions will not be upgraded in 2011. Although the Pension Board has been able to upgrade pensions regularly during the past decade due to reasonably stable and predictable economic conditions, the focus has necessarily shifted to ensuring the long-term stability of the pension plan for all members.

In accordance with the **Statement of Beliefs and Guiding Principles of the Pension Plan**, the board needs to confirm that funding levels “ensure a high level of certainty regarding the security of benefits under the Plan.” The most recent assessment of the financial position of the plan, at December 31, 2009, shows that these levels are currently healthy; however, the cost of an upgrade at this time may not be financially sustainable, and could impact the medium- and long-term stability of the pension fund.

The Pension Board has been carefully monitoring the funded status of the plan, specifically in light of the current economic conditions. The combination of a difficult investment environment, historically low interest rates, and the maturing demographics for the plan led the Pension Board to decide that it was not prudent to provide an upgrade at this time.

The primary concern is to keep the plan affordable to all, including members, pastoral charges, and other mission sites. The Pension Board’s monitoring of this situation certainly includes consideration of future upgrades, but recent reviews of the pension plan point to the need for caution while current uncertainties are resolved.

Another guiding principle states that “All Plan-related activities will be based on honesty and understanding and on transparency and full disclosure where relevant and appropriate.” As much as possible, members of the United Church have been kept informed of developments.

Charles Black, Chair of the Pension Board, has been sharing the concerns of the board and its committees with members since October 2008. As Mr. Black stated in one of his communications, “We are using all our resources to safeguard your pension benefit and will keep you informed.”

The full **Statement of Beliefs and Guiding Principles of the Pension Plan** can be found at:  
[www.united-church.ca/minstaff/pension/principles](http://www.united-church.ca/minstaff/pension/principles)

## **Moving to Hewitt in 2011: What Does That Mean?**

In 2011, Hewitt (or Aon Hewitt, as it’s now known) will take the place of the current pension administration provider, Morneau Sobeco.

Hewitt will

- maintain data (e.g., addresses) for all plan members
- respond to inquiries about benefits, retirement and benefits options, and enrolment for new plan members

Once Hewitt takes over the administration of the pension and benefits plans, some things will change:

- call centre contact number and website address
- forms
- ministry personnel and treasurers will be issued a password to enable access to the “Your Benefits Resource” website to download forms, update information, and inquire about different retirement options

As details are finalized in 2011, everything will be explained in *Foresight* and *Connex*. Stay tuned!

## ***There Are No Stupid Questions!***

Have you heard something confusing, surprising, or incomprehensible from the United Church about your pension? Don't hesitate to contact the Human Resources (HR) Unit at the General Council Office with any questions you may have! Pensions can be confusing; the HR staff knows you may have questions about almost every piece of information we send out. That's why we include our contact information with every issue of *Foresight*.

E-mail: [HumanResources@united-church.ca](mailto:HumanResources@united-church.ca)

Call: 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3161

## ***Pre-retirement Seminars***

Pre-retirement seminars are educational sessions that explain details of the United Church health and pension plans. The Human Resources Unit at the General Council Office offers support through monthly teleconferences. Call at your convenience to learn more and ask questions. Contact information and schedules are available from the Human Resources Unit.

## ***Contact Us***

Your questions and comments are welcome.

E-mail: [HumanResources@united-church.ca](mailto:HumanResources@united-church.ca)

or: [4sight@united-church.ca](mailto:4sight@united-church.ca)

Call: 1-800-268-3781 ext. 3161

Mail: Attn. Human Resources

The United Church of Canada

3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300

Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4

To receive e-mail notification of the online availability of new issues, please send us your e-mail address, name, and home address. All issues are online. Visit [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca) and search for "Foresight."

***Join the Church Leadership Network! <http://churchleadership.united-church.ca>***