



[The Rev Dr Geoff New, Principal of Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, presented this paper on KCML's Statement of Intent in person to the PCANZ Council of Assembly in late November 2025.]

The symbol of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCANZ) is the burning bush of Exodus 3. This symbol recalls God's sustaining presence amid suffering and that God is the first to see, hear, and act. God calls people to serve the purposes of God in their generation, and to do so as a worshipping and witnessing community. Ultimately, we experience this through what God has done, and continues to do, through Jesus Christ by the power and presence of the Spirit. We can see in the PCANZ's symbol of the burning bush, images of the ministry of Jesus. The "X" symbolises the manger at Bethlehem (Luke 2), the leaves symbolise abiding in the true vine (John 15), and the flames symbolise the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2). As those called by God, we respond knowing that we love because God first loved us (1 John 4), and we proclaim the peace that comes through the work of the cross (Col 1) because God is reconciling all things to God. KCML's ministry rests on these gifts and graces.

KCML's primary purpose is to train and form ordained leadership (minister/elder) as well as providing diverse and theologically robust opportunities for formational learning for leaders in the wider PCANZ and partner churches. We see the role of the church is to help form people in and through the Lordship of Jesus Christ; and to experience the everlasting gift of God that we all begin afresh with Jesus.¹ All ministry and formation flows from the ongoing ministry of the risen Christ. KCML seeks to contribute to that formation through offering training based on biblical and theological reflection which is transformative and grounded in people's local settings. We seek to provide accessible ways for people to engage in training. We want KCML to be a trustworthy, warm, welcoming, welcomed, safe, faithful, and discerning presence for congregations and presbyteries.

We are a church who live in the now but not yet. We recognise that there is much we want to know, to learn, and to grow into. But we also recognise that there will be ongoing imperfection until Christ returns. We are part of a church that is working out what it means to follow Christ in this time and place. At times, the church experiences joy and other times anxiety; sometimes we experience the illusion of success and other times the truthfulness of failure. In that sense, God's grace is sufficient for us.

To fulfil our role, KCML is committed to creating training and resources which provides stability yet not stagnation, change yet not chaos. We take seriously that we train people for the ministry of Word and sacrament. We are moved by a spirit of discovery. We trust that in Scripture we will discover new ideas, old ideas, and new old ways of receiving its light.² The Spirit is active, and sometimes we miss the signs, so we work to be discerning and pay attention to God. This means KCML's posture is always to lean into prayer and the ministry of Word (Acts 6). In all this, KCML seeks to offer a voice to the church to help her respond to the great resurrection message concerning Christ: "He has risen! . . . He is going ahead of you . . . There you will see him, just as he told you" (Mark 16).

¹ This comment, "begin afresh with Jesus", is the fruit of reflection by Rev Dr Andrew Nicol (KCML); from reading material by Karl Barth, Michael Jinkins, and Rev Dr Jason Goroncy (former Dean of Studies, KCML)

² This comment about Scripture is from Elie Wiesel.