Media release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 2 Nov 2026

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa NZ seeks survivors of minister who committed historic abuse over decades

Today the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand acknowledges that the late David Wentworth Pimm sexually abused children in communities where he served. He was in ministry for more than forty years. Thanks to the work of the Royal Commission and survivors, our Church has had a change in culture around how it responds and we are naming this former minister to encourage his victims to come forward to us for redress.

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand Assembly Executive Secretary, Rev Erin Pendreigh, said the Church deeply regrets his actions and the deep harm that he caused.

Currently the Church is working with three victims of Pimm's historic abuse and from information we have received believe there to be more. As Pimm died in 2014, the Church cannot take disciplinary steps against him.

Rev Pendreigh said she could not stress enough to anyone who was abused by Pimm that it was not their fault, and that they were let down by the Church. "If you spoke up and were not believed or silenced, or asked to forgive, that was terribly wrong and we are truly sorry."

The Church urges all those harmed by David Wentworth Pimm as part of their involvement with the PCANZ to make contact. "We are ready to listen, to begin redress when you are ready. You will be treated with respect and care. We can't take away this betrayal, but we can through our survivor-centered redress try to help in ways that are important for each survivor. Our focus now is on being accountable and transparent," Rev Pendreigh said.

"As our Moderator said in our public apology to all our survivors last year, we failed to provide protection, and we didn't act when alarms were raised. We did not uphold our own values and commitments to vulnerable children. This breach of trust is unjustifiable, and we have such profound remorse that this heartbreaking abuse was allowed to happen," Rev Pendreigh said.

The Church continues to strengthen its safeguards to prevent future harm, she said.

"We are committed to making sure we do not repeat past failings through strong consistent policies and procedures to both report and prevent abuse. Through our mandated protective policies, every person representing or working for us must adhere to our Code of Ethics policy. And where a church member is responsible for children and young people – tamariki and rangatahi - our Child Protection Policy must be enforced."

The Church has released the information below on David Wentworth Pimm's ministry from 1955 to 2003.

Anyone who wishes to report historic abuse by David Wentworth Pimm, or historic abuse by anyone connected with the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, is encouraged to contact the Church to discuss options or make a claim for redress. Email redress@presbyterian.org.nz or

Freephone 0800 727 337 or see the PCANZ website https://www.presbyterian.org.nz/about-us/contact-us/historic-abuse

For non-historic complaints, anyone can make a complaint about any acts of inappropriate or unethical behaviour by a Presbyterian Church office holder or member.

Information on the ministry of David Wentworth Pimm:
David Pimm was originally from **Mataura Presbytery**. He had been studying to become a Home Missionary and was issued a Presbyterial Certificate by the Mataura Presbytery in **August 1955.**
His first position was at **Granity-Karamea**. This parish also included **Hector** and **Seddonville**. He was home missionary here from **October 1955 to December 1958.** He was known to be involved in activities with children and youth here.
He attended the **Theological Hall** from **1959 to 1961** (ministry training). During this time he was living in **Dunedin** and may have been involved in student supply in local churches.
His first parish after completing his training at the Hall was **Fortrose** in Southland. He was there from **21st December 1961 to December 1965**. He might have had some involvement in children's activities in neighbouring parishes in Southland.
His next parish was at **Opotiki**. He was here from **19th January 1966 to December 1971**.
He then moved to **Ahuriri-Putorino** in Hawke's Bay. He was here from **3rd February 1972 to 30th October 1978.**
Itinerant minister 1978 – 1981
This was followed by a period of itinerant ministry over the next two years in which he served for short periods in a number of parishes. We don't always have precise dates for when these temporary ministries began and ended, an approximate timeline is below. As he was an itinerant minister, names of churches are not known:
Titoki Including Tangiteroria) – first half of 1979
Southern Urewera (Murupara and Galatea) – 2nd half of 1979
Lauder, Central Otago – December 1979 – March 1980 (possibly September 1980)
Kelso, West Otago – Mid April – July 1980
Riversdale [Southland] – (possibility August 1980)
Akaroa, Banks Peninsula – October to December 1980
He then returned to settled parish ministry at **St. John's, Palmerston North** from **4th February 1981 to 31st January 1986**, when he looks to have retired.
It is unknown if he might have been in active retired ministry and assisted in other parishes.
He retired to Knox Presbyterian Church Feilding in 2003 and was there for some years. This was the home church he attended.

ENDS.

Notes for the reporter:

All Presbyterian churches, congregations and leaders were informed 29 October 2026 that a media release concerning abuse by David Wentworth Pimm would be released by the Church on 2 November 2026. Due to the disturbing nature of this communication, we communicated support available for anyone affected - survivors and whanau, church leaders, congregations, and affected communities.

PCANZ Redress: The Presbyterian Church encourages anyone who wishes to discuss or disclose anything concerning historic abuse connected with the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, to please contact the Church's Redress Hauora Coordinator: **Freephone: 0800 727 337** and **Email: redress@presbyterian.org.nz**
For more information about the Church's survivor-centred Puretumu Torowhānui (holistic) redress see the PCANZ website: https://www.presbyterian.org.nz/about-us/contact-us/historic-abuse

Through our redress process, through listening to survivors, we think it highly likely that David Wentworth Pimm committed abuse. **We believe our survivors** and will work with them individually to provide redress.

The Presbyterian Church has a **zero tolerance towards abuse** which is rigorously enforced. We know this historically has not always been the case at all our churches for which we are deeply sorry.

The **Church takes allegations of sexual misconduct very seriously**, and any allegations of a criminal nature involving children are reported to the Police, and complainants are supported to do so.

Keeping people safe – both in the Church and in the community – is hugely important to us. The Presbyterian Church has robust policies it has strengthened concerning work with children and young people, including a Child Protection Policy and Children's and Youth Ministry Code of Ethics.

Watch or download the **PCANZ's 2025 public apology** to its survivors here: https://www.presbyterian.org.nz/a-public-apology-to-survivors-of-abuse-in-presbyterian-church-care

Complaints that are not historic: Any complaints or queries of a non-historic nature are directed to the PCANZ ComplaintsandDisputesManager@presbyterian.org.nz or phone 0800 244 357; or to the Police.

Definitions:
Call: A minister in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand is not moved on, nor told what church to go be a minister at, a minister must be *called* to a congregation. The congregation, working through its elders, chooses and invites a minister. The terms for a call are initially developed by the ministry settlement board for approval by the parish (the church) and the presbytery. The final terms of call/letter of appointment are developed by negotiation with the minister considering the call. Presbytery approval is required if the minister will receive a stipend.
Supply: In Presbyterian church ministry, supply means a temporary arrangement where a visiting or substitute minister, commissioned elder, intern, or lay person lead worship and preach when they have been invited and/or the church's minister is unavailable.
The Church at Local Level: The Presbyterian Church at the local level is organised into congregations and parishes. Parishes are governed by a Session or Parish Council whose members are elected by the congregation. Sessions or Parish Councils made up of elders are responsible for the oversight of parish life. Elders, who may be young or old, are elected by the congregation.
Presbytery: A presbytery is a regional court of the PCANZ. Each parish is represented on the presbytery by their minister and an elder. The presbytery has responsibility for all the parishes and other ministries in its area. Its job is to coordinate mission, look after personnel matters and make sure parishes are functioning well. The PCANZ has seven presbyteries. In the past, it has had 20 or more.
The General Assembly: Presbyteries are accountable to the General Assembly, the highest court of the Church. The General Assembly sets the policy and the direction of the Church as a whole, as well as approving the various regulations that help the Church to operate effectively.