

# Alpine Presbytery



*Resourcing the braided river*

## Culture and Strategic Framework

**September 2020**

Alpine Presbytery provides church oversight and support for the region of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand that sweeps north of the Waitaki River, through Canterbury and Marlborough, and around Tasman Bay, Golden Bay and West Coast.

# Alpine Presbytery Whanau

## Together we...

Have meaningful connection  
(with God and each other)

Practise deep listening

Discern the Holy Spirit's leading

Nurture faith

Have the freedom to try

Have intentional love  
and acceptance

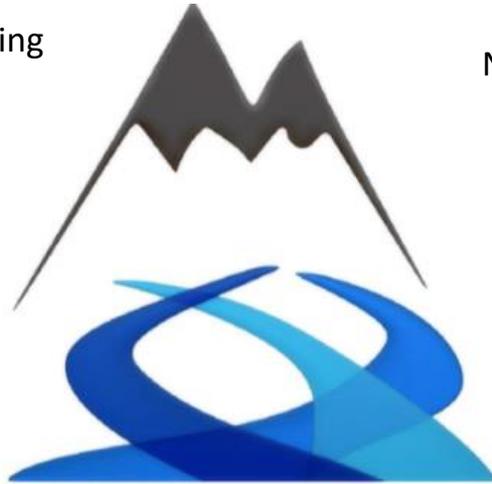
Care for creation

Have trust

Offer hospitality

Share

Walk humbly with God



**In a nutshell, the Presbytery we want to be is...**

**Nurturing and resourcing the life**

of our various communities, churches, and ministries,  
in response to the life of God, among us, and in all creation.

**Seeking to live out our calling**

as God's children welcomed by God's giant 'Haere Mai!'  
From the youngest to the oldest, people are valued, their ministries are encouraged,  
as we collaborate in God's bringing a new world into being.

**Welcoming of diversity**

we respectfully value our unity.

**Growing in the love and grace of Jesus Christ,**

and guided by the Holy Spirit, we build our relationship with God  
through worship, spiritual practices, and whole of life witness.



## **In keeping with this grounding, and depending on God, we actively seek to...**

- Be ministries who enjoy healthy relationships and are connected, supported, and resourced within their local region and wider Presbytery
- Hold a posture of “with” not “at” each other, and use the word “we” not “they”
- Be signs of hope as ministries model the new future God is calling us into that encompasses all areas of injustice and well-being for all
- Nurture cohesive leadership teams who regularly ask questions and seek to bring clarity about their focus and vision for the future, about growing as disciples of Jesus, and about encouraging innovation and mission.
- Support the ongoing formation of leaders, and the identification and nurture of new forms of leadership
- Be ministries where every member is equipped as a follower of Christ in everyday life, engaging in spiritual practices and growing in relationship with God, and those communities seeing new people making decisions to follow Christ.
- Be generous with the sharing of ideas and resources
- Be creative in developing ways to ease the burden of governance and compliance, while safeguarding the people with and around us
- Be a multi-ethnic church with a bicultural commitment
- Be people who care for the earth—the home we share with all the variety of life God has created
- Be present in our local communities, deeply listening to, and learning from others, and being alongside humbly loving and serving
- Be ministries where innovation and experimentation is welcome and encouraged.

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### **How will we measure success?**

#### **In how we reflect the Fruit of the Spirit:**

love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity,  
faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control

Galatian 5:22-23

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**To help us all function as healthy members of the Alpine Presbytery  
we ask that every congregation and ministry forms a Mission Plan  
that reflects the strategic intent of this framework  
and that this framework is engaged with by leadership teams  
at least annually.**

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## **By Way of Background**

As we journey into a new decade, this document informs our life as Alpine Presbytery. In recent years we have acknowledged that our organisational culture is more important than structures, and this document reflects that priority describing the kind of Presbytery we aspire to be. We imagine a healthy Presbytery 'ecosystem' which provides encouragement and support for caring, diverse and creative expressions of ministry and mission in our region.

We re-affirm the intent and direction of the 2015 Strategic Framework, particularly the desire to participate together with God in mission, exploring new ways of being church (both networks of congregations working together, and pioneering new contextual models of church), and continue to examine how we operate as a Presbytery to ensure our processes lead in innovative and creative ways.

This document is not a detailed plan. Our Presbyterian ethos is one of Presbytery and congregations working together. Therefore, this is a living document intended to describe our future together by providing a framework to guide all ministries within our region.

### **1. Our Kaupapa**

Alpine Presbytery exists in recognition of our communal calling to live as those shaped by and in witness to the good news of Jesus Christ; and is therefore to nurture, resource, and encourage God's mission in ministries and other initiatives that promote the fullness of life witnessed in Jesus, and which Jesus calls us to do.

Our vision is that people in our region will be engaged by healthy communities of faith which give witness to God's life by the power of the Holy Spirit. As beacons of hope and life, these communities will invite participation in the Way of Jesus, as we seek the transformation of our society and caring for God's creation.

## 2. Who We Are

In a sense, all those involved in Presbyterian Congregations and Cooperating Ventures, those involved in pioneering ministries, chaplaincies, and Presbytery staff, are all 'Presbytery' as we serve together in the Upper South Island. In recent years we have focused on being a family together, joining God in mission in our region. Organisationally, the Alpine Presbytery is the governing body between congregations and General Assembly, with equal numbers of ministers and Elders from each congregation gathering together once or twice a year to discern together the leading of God. Ordained ministers in other roles apart from local congregations are also members.

Alpine Presbytery came into existence in May 2014 after the merging of five former Presbyteries – South Canterbury, Mid-Canterbury, Christchurch, Nelson-Marlborough and the West Coast. Our Presbytery covers a large geographic area stretching from the Waitaki River to Cook Strait and from East to West coasts of the South Island. At the beginning of 2020 there are 58 parishes, two “new mission projects” and various school, hospital and defence-force chaplaincies.

## 3. Our Context

We live in a time of significant change and reorientation. There are constant changes in our culture, and being church in these times is challenging when many are indifferent about traditional forms of spiritual expression, and express a deep distrust of organised religion.

The Christchurch and Waiiau (Kaikoura) earthquakes have shaken us in more ways than we may have first imagined and some changes have been forced upon us in terms of assessing buildings and the make-up of churches. This has highlighted brokenness not only in buildings, but also in our faith communities. We are not as strong as we once were. Our current Covid-19 epidemic will only intensify this shaking and examination of who and what we are.

Despite the challenges we have seen some new forms of mission and ministry beginning to emerge. Part of the challenge in these days is imagining how to “*be church*” and not just be overburdened with “*doing church*”. Good News stories are evident as our faith communities adjust in this changing environment.

Our time needs to encourage innovation while holding fast to the good things our heritage gives us. Therefore this Strategic Framework needs to give us the freedom to explore new opportunities to support and resource mission and innovative projects that will connect with and bring Good News to our surrounding communities. Whether it be larger churches, clusters of churches or smaller faith communities, we are seeking to have one common aim – to bring the Good News close to people around us.

To enable us to navigate through our time we value **relationship** –with God, and with one another. We acknowledge a need for spiritual renewal. We are ever conscious of the need to be empowered by God’s Spirit in these days of opportunity as we are called to play our part in the presence of Christ in a world that needs God’s love, grace, and newness of life. We are part of the body of Christ, not in competition with other churches, but collaborating in mutual respect, humility, and intentionality.

## 4. Our Calling

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand believes it is called by God to work with others in making Jesus Christ known through –

- Teaching and nurturing people in Christian faith
- Loving service responding to human need
- Proclaiming the gospel
- Seeking to transform society
- Caring for God's creation

As the Alpine Presbytery whanau, we affirm this and acknowledge this is lived out in a variety of ways around our region.

When Jesus announced the good news in Mark 1:14,15 he described the arrival of God's reign, God's new way, and God's intention to establish a new Common-Wealth. It was, in effect, a giant 'Haere mai' - a welcome by God into relationship.

This means many things, including:

- ✓ The invitation to live out our humanity **fully alive**
- ✓ For all to be aware of and experience God's **love**
- ✓ For right **relationship** with God, each other, and all of creation
- ✓ The invitation to **participate** with God, in making the world beautiful and whole
- ✓ To lives of **freedom**, to be ourselves, to live in community, to live by the Spirit, and to be in relationship with God
- ✓ To see **justice** for all (the blind, disadvantaged, oppressed, captive, and all forms of poverty)

The church is those graciously called by God, to live in community in the light of God's saving love, and to make this known to the world that God loves. We are formed through our wrestling with and engagement with Scripture, the Holy Spirit, our history, our context, and with each other. A healthy church is one that is nourishing relationships with God, each other, people in the local community, the wider church, and the land.

To live out the good news, and be a healthy church, we recognise the need to be intentional in our individual and corporate growth. We all have more to learn about true life in Jesus and being disciples of Jesus. By disciple we mean one who is following Christ, living out the gospel in their daily lives, and growing in heart and character to be more Christ-like. Discipleship is to journey with others helping them do the same. It involves intentionality, relationship, learning, humility, authenticity and accountability. The responsibility of this lies at a local level, and Presbytery's role is to help resource congregations to grow in this way.

## 5. Our Ecosystem

Together, we are members of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12).

We recognise that relationship and culture are the keys to thriving in God's love together.

We want to see an abundant richness of diversity and variety of expressions of God's love flourish in our midst. So, while this plan is about *what we do*, it is also about *how we do this*.

He waka eke noa.  
A canoe which we  
are all in  
with no exceptions.

### Relationship, relationship, relationship.

As human beings and children of God we are created to be in relationship with God and with one another. But relationship doesn't just happen, we have to work at it.

As a Presbytery we invest in relationship.

Our Presbytery retreats are about relationship.

Our staffing is focussed around building relationship. Our resourcing is focussed on building one another up in love.

Even our 'Gatherings' are as much about relationship as they are about business.

We believe that God's transformative and redeeming power is at work in our relationships with God, with one another and with the creation in which we live.

The key to healthy relationships is trust and respect.

We build trust and respect through shared experiences, by doing stuff together, face to face.

As we work together towards the future we imagine, we recognise that our fullness of life springs from the Spirit of God alive beyond, beside, and within us. We will nurture and value the fruit of the Spirit in our midst. We will seek always to treat one another with kindness, gentleness, patience and love.

He aha te mea nui o te ao?  
He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata.  
What is the most important thing in the world?  
It is people, it is people, it is people.