



2026 STATIONING MANUAL

Handbook for Parishes, Presbyters
and Synod Superintendents

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Stationing Manual 2026

Introduction to Stationing

Stationing is the way the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa decides where its ministry leaders will serve. It is more than filling a vacancy. Stationing is a strategic and spiritual process that looks at the needs of the whole Church—our mission, our people, our buildings, and our financial resources. Its purpose is to help shape the future of our shared ministry.

The Methodist Church uses a connexional approach. This means decisions are made for the good of the whole Church, not only for one parish or one person. Stationing requires prayer, careful listening, honest conversation, and respect for the pastoral needs of both Presbyters and congregations.

The Stationing Committee oversees placements within parishes. Synod Superintendents and the Lay Representative for Stationing support both Presbyters and parishes to ensure the process is fair, transparent, and based on trust. For students entering stationing for the first time, the Principal of Trinity College provides this support.

This guideline helps Synod Superintendents, Parishes, Congregations, and Presbyters understand and follow the stationing process. It supports our Laws and Regulations (S2 11.1–13.5) and helps to ensure that every appointment is made with clarity, integrity, and wisdom.

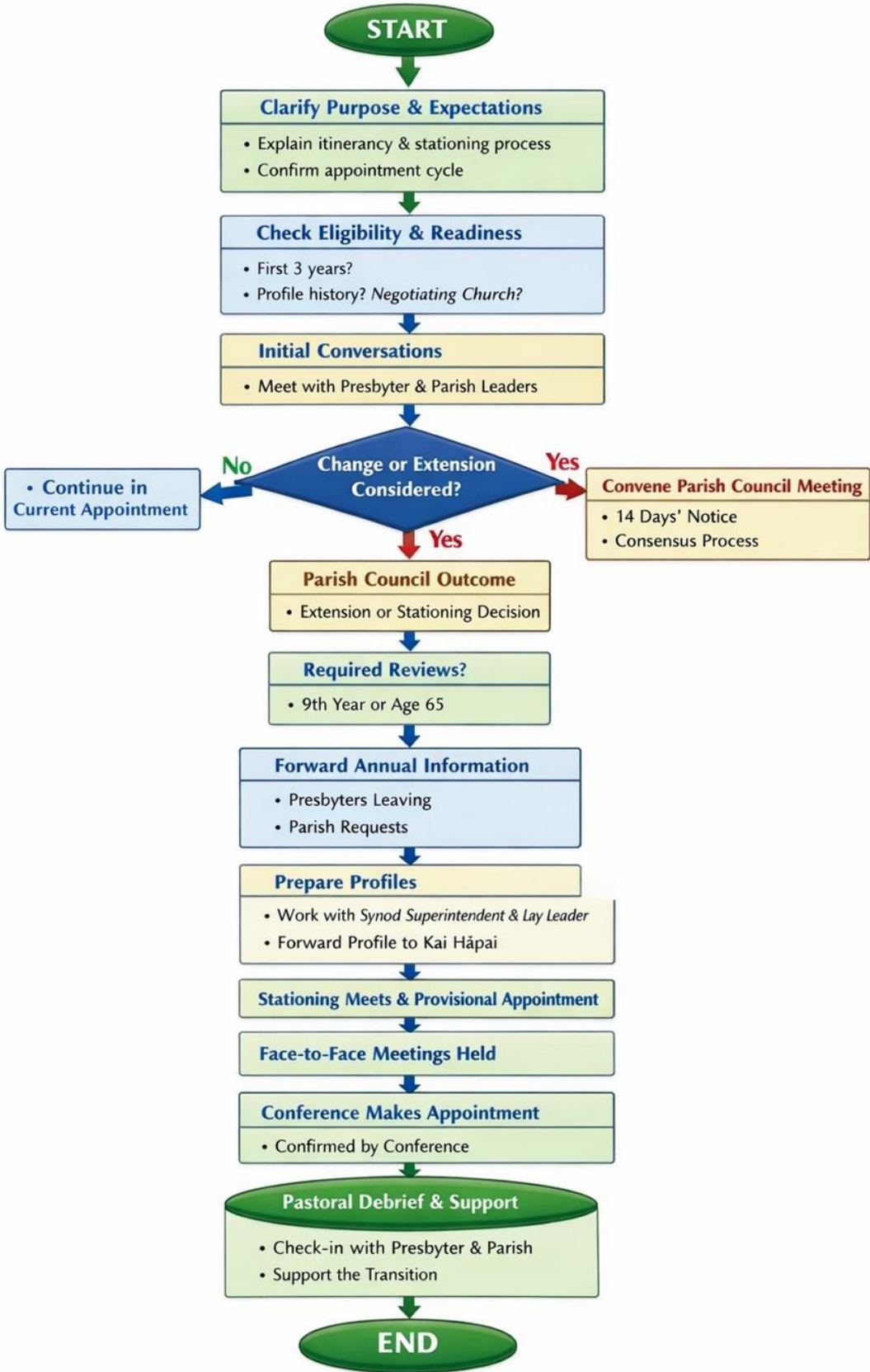
The process includes:

- Clarifying purpose and expectations
- Checking eligibility and readiness
- Facilitating initial conversations
- Managing change or extension discussions
- Convening Parish Council meetings
- Conducting required reviews
- Preparing profiles with Synod and Lay leadership
- Engaging in stationing meetings and provisional appointments
- Supporting face-to-face discernment
- Confirming appointments through Conference
- Providing pastoral support throughout

Flowchart

The flowchart on the next page gives a simple visual overview of the stationing process, helping leaders, parishes, and presbyters follow each step with confidence and understanding.

Quick Reference Flowchart: Stationing Conversations



Timeline 2026

- 12th March Synod Superintendents advise General Secretary, copy to Kai Hāpai of those who intend to enter stationing 2026.
- 22nd March Synod Superintendents receive stationing guidelines and profiles for distribution in their synod.
- 23 Mar – 1May Synod Superintendents and Synod Lay Leaders meet with Parish Councils/Leaders Meeting and Presbyters to help prepare profiles.
- 1st May Parishes and Presbyters send their completed profiles to their Synod Superintendent.
- 11th May Synod Superintendents send all completed and checked profiles to the Kai Hāpai.
- 18th May Te Hāpai ō ki Muri office circulate all Presbyter and Parish profiles to Synod Superintendents and Principal.
Te Hāpai Ō Ki Muri Office will send to all Parish Contact people the profiles of all presbyters.
Te Hāpai Ō Ki Muri Office will send to all Presbyters the profiles of all Parishes.
- 18 May – 3 Jul Synod Superintendents and Lay Leaders will meet with each Parish and Presbyter of their Synod to discuss profiles and consider which profiles match their needs.
Principal and Ministry Formation Co-ordinator will meet with each Ministry Student to be stationed to discuss possible matches for stationing.
- 6th July Synod Superintendent and Principal will forward the possible matches to the Kai Hāpai.
- 20th July Kai Hāpai will send to Synod Superintendents and Principal draft stationing worksheet
- 4th-5th August Stationing meeting.
- 5th-7th August Synod Superintendents advise Parish Contact people and Presbyters of their Synod of the provisional matching of the stationing committee.
- 8th Aug – 20th Sep Face to face meetings are held.
- 21st Sept Final date for results of all face-to-face meetings to Kai Hāpai.
- 24th Sept Pre-Conference Stationing meeting.
- 2nd – 7th Oct Conference
- 27th November Synod Superintendents confirm Induction dates and send to Kai Hāpai.
- 22nd January 27 Final date for Covenants to be completed and with Kai Hāpai.
- 1st February All appointments begin

¹ Laws and Regulations: S2: 11.1.1

Stationing Process

1. Notification of possible movement

By 12 March, Synod Superintendents must advise the General Secretary and Kai Hāpai of all Parishes and Presbyters in their Synod seeking a new appointment.

At the **March Strategy meeting**, the **Kai Hāpai** will distribute the **Stationing Information Pack** and explain the process. From there, Synod Superintendents are responsible for managing the stationing process within their Synods (and the Principal for those students who will be stationed for the first time).

Important Notes:

- **Presbyters** entering the stationing process are committing to ending their current appointment at the end of the connexional year. Therefore, Presbyters should not enter stationing simply to explore options or with the intent to withdraw later.
- **Parishes** must treat their participation in the process as a firm commitment. Financial viability of any appointment should be confirmed by the Synod before entering the stationing process.
- Any withdrawal from the stationing process by a Parish or a Presbyter will only be approved in truly exceptional circumstances. The Synod Superintendent must and consult with the Kai Hāpai immediately. A full and reasoned explanation must then be provided before any exemption can be confirmed. In the rare occasion of an exemption the Kai Hāpai will notify all Synod Superintendents of the withdrawal.

2. Stationing Profiles

All Parishes and Presbyters seeking a change of appointment **must complete a Stationing Profile**. It is the responsibility of the Synod Superintendent with the Synod Lay representative to Stationing to work with parishes and presbyters to guide them in the completion of their profiles. The completed profile to be in the hands of the Synod Superintendent no later than **Monday 18th May**.

- **For Parishes:**

When you prepare your profile, make sure it matches the strategic vision of your Parish. The profile should clearly describe your goals and direction, and explain how the presbyter or deacon will help your Parish live out that vision. It should also show how your vision connects with the wider Synod vision.

The profile needs to outline the main responsibilities of the role, along with the skills, experience, and personal qualities you are looking for. This helps attract presbyters and deacons who not only meet the practical requirements but who also feel inspired by your mission. Including a small number of high-quality images can help bring your profile to life and make it more appealing to those considering your Parish or ministry context

You must also include your Parish accounts and a projected budget. This shows that the role is financially sustainable and that your vision is supported by good financial planning. Bringing together vision, expectations, and financial clarity ensures a strong, strategic, and well-prepared approach to stationing.

- **For Presbyters:**

When you prepare your profile for a new appointment, give an honest and balanced picture of who you are. Highlight your key strengths, what you enjoy in ministry, and the gifts you bring to a role. These may include leadership, communication, cultural understanding, or adaptability. Use specific examples that show these strengths in real situations. You may also include a small number of appropriate images that reflect your ministry context or interests, helping others gain a fuller sense of who you are.”

It is also important to name your areas for growth. These are not failures, but parts of your ministry you are working to develop. Showing this self-awareness demonstrates openness to learning and growth.

A strong profile shows confidence and humility. It helps others see how your strengths can contribute to a new appointment, while also showing your commitment to ongoing development.

3. Role of Synod Superintendents and Principal

The Synod Superintendent and Principal (for those from Trinity College) has a key responsibility in supporting both Parishes and Presbyters through the Stationing process.

Their role is to ensure that everyone involved is well-prepared, well-informed, and able to participate with confidence and integrity.

The Superintendent must carry out full and meaningful conversations with presbyters and parishes/congregations. This includes meeting face-to-face with:

- the Parish Council/leaders meeting of any parish seeking an appointment, and
- the Presbyter (and their spouse or partner) when the Presbyter is seeking a new appointment.

The Superintendent must ensure that all profiles are clear, accurate, and reflect the vision, needs, and expectations of the Parish or Presbyter. This enables effective advocacy during the Stationing process and supports good decision-making for the wider Connexion.

Superintendents must **not** contact Presbyters in another Synod to discuss possible appointments. Any such conversations must be directed to the appropriate Synod Superintendent or Principal for Trinity College students. This protects the integrity of the process and ensures consistent, transparent communication.

The Superintendent acts as an essential link between the Parish, the Presbyter, and the Stationing system—helping to ensure that appointments serve both local needs and the mission of the whole Church.

The Principal of Trinity Methodist Theological College provides this same support for students entering stationing for the first time, ensuring their profiles are well prepared and reflect their gifts, abilities, and potential for ministry.

4. Discerning Possible Matches

The Te Hāpai ō ki Muri office will ensure profiles are available to Synod Superintendents and the Principal by the **18th May 2026**. Parishes that are seeking an appointment will

receive the profiles of all available Presbyters and Deacons. Presbyters that are seeking an appointment will receive the profile of all available parish appointments.

Please note: all profile information provided for the Stationing process must be treated with strict confidentiality and shared only with those directly involved in the discernment process, such as the Parish Council/Leaders Meeting, individuals making themselves available, Synod Superintendents, and members of the Stationing Committee.

When you receive the profile pack, please read and study all the profiles carefully, and then in conversation with your Synod Superintendent, identify those Parishes / Presbyters which you feel are a good match, those you have some question about and those you do not see as a possible match.

A **'good match'** is one that considers the effective use of the Presbyters skills, is theologically compatible, with an alignment between the vision and mission of the parish and the vision of the Presbyter or Deacon.

5. Stationing Meeting.

The purpose of the Stationing meeting is to prayerfully and strategically discern and make provisional appointments for Presbyters and Parishes within the Connexion, ensuring the best possible matches based on vision, need, and availability.

The Stationing Committee considers all Parish and Presbyter profiles, considers the number of available ministers and appointment needs, and prioritises placements in the interests of the wider Church. It also provides a space for Synod Superintendents to advocate for ministers and parishes, while ensuring pastoral care and clear communication throughout the process.

Please note that the Stationing Committee can also consider any Presbyter not on the Stationing Sheet, who has completed six years in their current appointment. The Committee may only lift those presbyters who have completed 6 years in their appointment and only after prior conversation with the presbyter and their whanau.

Provisional appointments will be communicated to each Parish and Presbyter by their Synod Superintendent— or by the Principal for students—immediately after the stationing meeting. An embargo period normally applies, meaning the information must not be shared beyond the Presbyter, their immediate family, or the Parish contact person. This ensures Synod Superintendents have enough time to inform all Presbyters and Parishes for whom they are responsible.

6. Face-to-Face Meetings

Face-to-face meetings are held on the understanding that the Stationing Committee has made the best possible provisional match between a Presbyter and a Parish. The purpose of the meeting is to confirm this match through open and constructive conversation (talanoa).

The arrangements for the face-to-face meeting requires the Parish Steward and the Synod Superintendent to make arrangements for the visit. The Superintendent in conversation with the Presbyter appointed and the Parish Steward should agree on a suitable date, time, and venue. All face-to-face meetings must be completed by **21st September 2026**.

The face-to-face meeting is not a formal interview, nor does it involve a trial preaching service. Rather, it is an opportunity to begin building a relationship, explore each other's leadership styles and expectations, clarify the tasks the Presbyter or Deacon will undertake in the Parish, and raise any questions or concerns from either party. It is a shared conversation to discern whether the profiles align well in practice. It is the beginning of the pastoral relationship.

After the meeting, the Synod Superintendent will report the outcome to the Kai Hāpai, either confirming the appointment or indicating that the match will not proceed. If the meeting does not confirm the appointment, the Synod Superintendent will work with the Kai Hāpai to explore other options, such as supply ministry.

7. Pre-Conference Stationing Meeting

At this meeting the stationing sheet will be read and checked prior to its presentation at Conference for approval. This meeting of stationing considers the whole stationing sheet. It is a meeting of both partners (Tauīwi and Te Taha Māori).

8. Covenants

Immediately after Conference, a Covenant must be prepared for all part-time, supply ministries, and those who are on probation. This document is essential as it sets out clear expectations and responsibilities for both the Presbyter and the Parish in the new appointment. The Covenant also ensures that the presbyter receives the correct stipend.

It is the joint responsibility of the Parish and the Synod Superintendent to ensure that the Covenant is completed and signed. Covenants as soon as possible following Conference, but must be completed by the **22nd January 2027**. The draft covenant should be sent to the Kai Hāpai for checking. Once checked the document must be signed by the presbyter, parish steward, Synod Superintendent, Partner Church official (in case of Co-operating Venture) and Principal (for a Probationer) and Kai Hāpai. The Kai Hāpai will forward the completed signed covenant to the General Secretary for the final signature. Once finalised, copies must be provided to all parties. The original signed Covenant will be held on file by the Administration Division at the Connexional Office.

9. Moving house

Moving to a new appointment is a significant moment in the life of a Presbyter and their whānau, as well as the parish they are leaving. It involves practical, emotional, and relational transitions, and the Church is committed to supporting Presbyters and Parishes through this process with care and clarity.

The Administration Division oversees the coordination of removals, ensuring that Presbyters are guided well and that important details are not overlooked.

Once stationing decisions are confirmed, the Kai Hāpai provides the Connexional Office with the names and contact details of those who will be moving. Connexional Office staff will then make direct contact with Presbyters to offer guidance, outline the steps ahead, and respond to any questions. Alongside this, Synod Superintendents work closely with parishes to ensure property

inspections are completed and that any required work is planned and underway so the parsonage is ready to receive the incoming Presbyter.

This is a demanding process for everyone involved. It requires ongoing communication between Presbyters, Parishes, and Synod Superintendents, as well as patience, flexibility, and mutual understanding. Pressures are felt on all sides, and a spirit of cooperation helps ensure a smooth transition. Synod Superintendents play a key role in supporting Presbyters to respond promptly to Connexional Office requests. It is only if any concerns arise that the Connexional Office staff will coordinate responses through the Kai Hāpai for resolution.

In November, a detailed planning booklet will be sent to all Presbyters who will be re-locating to a new parsonage and also to Parish contact people. This resource includes checklists and guidance to support both Presbyters and Parishes in navigating the many tasks associated with relocation. It is important that these checklists are reviewed early and used throughout the transition period. Presbyters and Parishes should also consider annual leave arrangements as part of their planning to ensure a balanced and manageable move for all involved.

10. Induction Services

Induction Services are a vital part of establishing a healthy and enduring pastoral relationship between a newly appointed presbyter and the congregation or Parish, as well as nurturing strong collegial and missional connections within the wider Synod and the whole Connexion. These services affirm that ministry is shared: at an induction, the presbyter, the parish, and the Synod each make commitments to one another, grounding the appointment in mutual trust, shared responsibility, and ongoing pastoral support.

It is the responsibility of the Synod Superintendent to arrange the Induction Service for an incoming appointment, in consultation with the Parish Steward and the presbyter. The Superintendent should notify the Te Hāpai ō ki Muri office of the planned arrangements by **27 November**. The Kai Hāpai will then ensure that the wider Church is informed of all induction dates, enabling members of the Connexion to attend, send greetings, and offer prayerful support for the new ministry. Such shared participation strengthens the collegial bonds of our Church and affirms the collective responsibility we hold for those called to serve among us.

11. Transition and Orientation

Transitions from one appointment to another are sacred moments in the life of a presbyter and a congregation, marking a movement from what has been into what will be. When a presbyter prepares to move to a new role, it is important that the transition is planned with care, respect, and pastoral sensitivity. This season often holds mixed emotions: grief, sorrow, and loss at the ending of a shared ministry, alongside deep thanksgiving for all that has been offered and received. These feelings are felt not only by the presbyter and their whānau, but also by the congregation who is both farewelling a trusted spiritual leader and preparing to welcome someone new. Attending well to this transition honours the relationships formed, allows space for healthy closure, and supports the parish in being ready to receive and partner with their incoming minister. Good preparation ensures continuity in ministry and strengthens the foundations for the next chapter of shared mission and service.

Key aspects of preparing to leave include:

- Concluding pastoral relationships well, including appropriate farewells and the handing over of responsibilities.
- Ensuring that parish records, resources, and key information are up to date and accessible.
- Working collaboratively with parish leaders to prepare the way for the incoming minister.
- Making the parsonage available for inspection and any necessary maintenance or preparation work.

The Synod Superintendent plays a vital role in this process. Their responsibilities include:

- Supporting the minister and parish through the transition process.
- Ensuring the departure is managed with care and pastoral sensitivity.
- Assisting with practical arrangements, particularly in preparing the parsonage for the new minister.
- Facilitating good communication between the parish, the departing minister, and the incoming minister.
- Providing oversight to ensure that all steps in the transition are completed smoothly and in alignment with Connexional processes.

At the same time, the Parish, working with the Synod Superintendent needs to ensure there is an effective orientation process for the new minister.

Beginning a new appointment is both an exciting and significant moment in a minister's journey, offering opportunities for relationship building, spiritual growth, and shared mission within a new community of faith. A well-planned orientation process supports a smooth transition for the minister, their whānau, and the parish, ensuring that the early months of ministry are grounded in clarity, care, and partnership.

A good orientation provides practical support, clear information, and thoughtful guidance to help the minister settle into their new context. This includes introducing the rhythms of parish life, offering insight into the wider community, and ensuring access to the people, structures, and resources that will sustain their ministry. Orientation should also attend to the spiritual and pastoral aspects of transition, acknowledging the emotions that accompany change and providing space for reflection, encouragement, and prayer.

A thoughtful orientation lays the foundation for healthy pastoral relationships, strengthens trust between minister and congregation, and enables the new appointment to begin with confidence, mutual understanding, and shared purpose. The following guidelines offer a framework for supporting ministers as they begin their new appointment.

1. Pre-Arrival Preparation

- **Clear Communication:** The parish leadership and Synod Superintendent provide the minister with information about the community, congregation, and expectations before their arrival.
- **Parsonage Preparation:** Ensure the home is clean, functional, and welcoming. Include essentials like contact lists, local information (e.g. rubbish collection day), and a welcome pack.
- **Introduction Pack:** Include parish profiles, key contact persons, schedules of services, and a calendar of upcoming events.

2. Warm Welcome

- **Welcome Visit or Gathering:** Host a small welcome event or shared meal with key leaders and parishioners.
- **Pastoral Care for the Minister and Family:** Consider how the minister's spouse/partner and family are welcomed and supported.

3. Clear Orientation Plan

- **Meet Key People:** Arrange introductions to lay leaders, staff, ecumenical colleagues, community leaders, and other Presbyters in the area.
- **Tour of the Area:** Provide a guided tour of the parish boundaries, facilities, local services (schools, medical practices, etc.), and places of significance.
- **Review of Roles and Expectations:** Clarify parish expectations, current ministries, community engagement activities, and reporting structures.

4. Practical Support

- **Technology & Resources Setup:** Ensure the minister has access to email accounts, church management systems, keys, equipment, and any online tools used by the parish.
- **Financial and Administrative Briefing:** Provide information about stipends, reimbursement processes, and parish finances.

5. Ongoing Support and Check-ins

- **Mentoring or Peer Support:** Link the minister with a mentor or peer support group.
- **Regular Check-ins:** Establish a rhythm of pastoral and supervisory check-ins during the first 3–6 months.
- **Opportunity for Feedback:** Invite the minister to share feedback about their orientation experience to help improve the process for others.

The office of Te Hāpai Ō Ki Muri will send to Synod Superintendents, parishes and presbyters moving a more detailed guideline after Conference.