

Master of Theology (Pastoral Leadership) (MTh(PL))

Level 9, 120 or 240 credits



This programme is designed for experienced ministry leaders who have completed the Graduate Certificate in Theology (Pastoral Leadership) with a GPA of at least 7.0 (B), or who hold prior academic degrees in undergraduate theology/ministry and significant leadership within a recognised ministry context.

Students in this programme are expected to also engage in the Pastoral Leadership Pathway.

Flexible Study Options

Postgraduate courses are usually taught in block courses of one or two weeks (depending on the particular course). This allows people living outside of Auckland to travel for just the block course teaching, and helps those working full-time to fit postgraduate study into their busy lives.

**Note that, apart from R351, Postgraduate courses do not have a Distance Learning option - live engagement in the lectures is a necessary part of postgraduate study at Laidlaw. In some cases, students may be able to join block courses by video conference.*

Programme Requirements

Level 8 entry:

The MTh degree requires **240 credits** where the candidate holds a BTh or recognised Bachelor's level degree in a discipline other than Theology or Ministry and has completed a bridging programme such as Laidlaw's 120 credit Graduate Diploma in Theology with a grade point average of 7.0 (B) at NZQA level 7.

Level 9 entry:

The MTh degree may be completed with **120 credits** where the candidate has completed a four-year Honours degree in Theology or Ministry with first or second class Honours **OR** a Postgraduate Diploma in Theology with a grade point average of 7.0 (B).

Postgraduate Scholarships

We provide access to a number of postgraduate scholarships and funds for students studying in New Zealand. Please see the Laidlaw website for more details: www.laidlaw.ac.nz/scholarships

By the end of this programme graduates will be able to:

1. Evaluate critically a wide spectrum of literature in each of the coursework areas and in the areas of research undertaken.
2. Demonstrate mastery of the issues of debate in each of these areas.
3. Give a fair and informed account of representative points of view in each subject area.
4. Write a coherent narrative survey which is internally consistent, interacts critically with central issues, and demonstrates ability to form a reasoned opinion.
5. Utilise sound hermeneutical principles in contextualising biblical theology within the subject areas studied.
6. Demonstrate the distinctive contribution of biblical and theological principles to central issues in their subject areas.
7. Participate in the international academic discussion of their field of study with a competence appropriate to Master's level.
8. Reflect on the professional, ethical and relational implications of their study for ministry in the modern world.
9. Make available to the service of the church appropriate aspects of current scholarship in their field of study.

2026 Fees

Domestic: \$2,193 per 30-credit course. **\$8,772** for programme (4 courses, 120 credits).

International: \$6,390 per 30-credit course. **\$25,560** for programme (4 courses, 120 credits).

Pastoral Leadership Pathway: \$800 per year. This includes a 3 day annual retreat, interactive cohort learning sessions, access to international guest speakers/lecturers, and 4 coaching sessions. This fee does not cover transport costs to or from gatherings and would not be covered by a student loan.

NOTE: The MTh (240 credits) programme takes longer than one year to complete and the annual fee may vary. A Student Services fee of \$4.20 per credit is charged for on-campus courses or \$63 per semester for distance learning. Please refer to Fee Schedule for more details (www.laidlaw.ac.nz/fees)

Laidlaw Postgraduate Courses 2026

The MTh(PL) can be made of four to six level 8 courses of 30 credits each and a level 9 Thesis or Dissertation. Within each semester there will be required and/or recommended courses that are specific to the MTh(PL) programme.

Semester One 2026

R155.830 ROMANS

Dr Phillip Porter
25-27 Mar | Wed-Fri, 9am-5pm
27-29 May | Wed-Fri, 9am-5pm

It has been said that Romans is “arguably the most influential letter ever written” (Gorman). In this course students will have the opportunity to explore this letter together in lectures, in group discussion, and in engagement with the remarkable body of (recent) evangelical scholarship this letter has prompted. The course includes exegesis of most chapters in Romans, an assessment of the major approaches to reading Romans, and an exploration of a range of associated theological issues. Along the way, students will be guided to unpack the implications of this letter for their own lives and communities. Students should expect to come out of this course excited about the gospel of Christ and further equipped for Christian life and ministry leadership.

R351.830 POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH AND WRITING

Dr Samuel Carpenter and Rev. Dr Sarah Penwarden
17-20 Feb | Tue-Thurs 9am-5pm, Fri 9am-1:30pm
31 Mar-2 April | Tue-Wed 9am-5pm, Thurs 9am-1:30pm

Postgraduate Research and Writing introduces you to the wonder and joy of research. It is a course designed to inspire students with the vast breadth of cutting-edge investigations that are being done by the lecturers at Laidlaw, and then to teach them how to research themselves by partnering with one of these lecturers. Students will develop and hone the skills of research and writing by designing and implementing a short research project in their own area of interest.

R361.830 RESEARCH PAPER

Supervised research on an approved topic in an aspect of Theology and/or related disciplines.

R512.830 FOUNDATIONS OF MINISTRY SUPERVISION

Rev. Dr Karen Kemp and Dr David Crawley
4-6 Mar | Wed-Fri, 9am-5pm
6-8 May | Wed-Fri, 9am-5pm

This is the first of two courses which together comprise a Postgraduate Certificate in Theology, designed to equip graduates to offer professional supervision in a range of ministry contexts (understanding ministry in the broad sense of Christian vocation). It examines the nature and purpose of professional supervision, including its importance in people-related ministries. Several theoretical approaches to supervision will be evaluated and participants will reflect critically on theological, ethical, and cultural dimensions of offering supervision in their own contexts.

Note: Entry to this course is normally through enrolment in the PGCertTh(MinSup). If you are enrolled in a different programme, please contact the Postgraduate Administrator to see if you are eligible to select this course.

R609.830 MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE 21ST CENTURY (RECOMMENDED FOR PL STUDENTS)

Dr Allen Yeh
9-13 March | Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm

The Mission of the Church in the 21st Century is a theological exploration of best mission practice analysed through studying scripture, church history, and contemporary cultural contexts in Aotearoa and beyond. This course is designed to contribute to a renewed missional understanding given modern-day shifts in culture, politics, worldviews, and missional realities.

READY TO APPLY? ANY QUESTIONS?

0800 999 777

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UPDATED 1 DECEMBER 2025

Semester Two 2026

R236.830 BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

Rev. Dr Myk Habets
20-22 July | Mon-Wed, 9am-5pm
12-14 Oct | Mon-Wed, 9am-5pm

This course provides an opportunity for students to engage in theological or historical disciplines in an advanced way. The course involves a concentrated study of a theological theme or doctrine, or of a selected historical period, development or issue. Critical issues of background and context are explored, and contemporary applications to the complex cultural landscapes that exist within Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond are explored.

R351.830 POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH AND WRITING

Dr Samuel Carpenter and Rev. Dr Sarah Penwarden
By distance throughout the Semester.

Postgraduate Research and Writing introduces you to the wonder and joy of research. It is a course designed to inspire students with the vast breadth of cutting-edge investigations that are being done by the lecturers at Laidlaw, and then to teach them how to research themselves by partnering with one of these lecturers. Students will develop and hone the skills of research and writing by designing and implementing a short research project in their own area of interest.

XXX.830 THE INNER LIFE OF THE LEADER (REQUIRED FOR PL STUDENTS)

Rev. Dr Karen Kemp
TBC

This course explores the critical role of the inner life in the formation of the leader and sustainability of Christian ministry. It addresses four foundational areas - spiritual integrity, intimacy with God, emotional and moral resilience, and the formation of authentic discipleship. Through engagement with Scripture, classic and contemporary texts, personal reflection, and embodied practice, students will develop a robust theology of the inner life that integrates both Pākehā and Māori understandings of spirituality, and cultivate a life deeply rooted in Christ, to sustain and enable Christlike stewardship of power in the service of ministry that is both faithful and fruitful.

R361.830 RESEARCH PAPER

Supervised research on an approved topic in an aspect of Theology and/or related disciplines.

R405.830 MENTAL HEALTH & HUMAN FLOURISHING

Rev. Dr Maja Whitaker and Rev. Dr Sarah Penwarden
16 Jul | Thurs, 7:30pm-9:00pm (online tutorial)
17-20 Aug | Mon-Thurs, 9am-5pm
21 Aug | Fri, 9am-1:30pm

Mental distress can be a common but challenging aspect of human experience. In this course, students will explore how to understand mental distress from within the framework of practical theology. Students will learn how to articulate a theology of mental distress as well as human flourishing and shalom, through a focus on mental health in general and particular experiences such as anxiety, depression and bipolar disorder. Students will gain an understanding of issues of stigma surrounding mental distress in society. Students will evaluate pastoral responses to mental distress, and will articulate an understanding of what a wise, compassionate, and informed pastoral response might involve within the varied cultural contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond.

R513.830 DEVELOPING A MINISTRY SUPERVISION PRACTICE

Rev. Dr Karen Kemp and Dr David Crawley
29-31 Jul | Wed-Fri, 9am-5pm
9-11 Sep | Wed-Fri, 9am-5pm

Pre-requisite: R512.830

This is the second of two courses which comprise a Postgraduate Certificate in Theology, designed to equip graduates to offer professional supervision in a range of ministry contexts (understanding ministry in the broad sense of Christian vocation). Through the integration of theory, practice, and theology, it enables practitioners to develop a framework for supervision appropriate to their own cultural and professional contexts, and to engage in critically reflective practice.

Note: Entry to this course is normally through enrolment in the PGCertTh(MinSup). If you are enrolled in a different programme, please contact the Postgraduate Administrator to see if you are eligible to select this course.

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Pastoral Leadership (PL) Pathway

Participants with at least 80% attendance will receive a certificate of completion.

To apply for the PL Pathway please contact the Pastoral Leadership Coordinator Louise Wernich - Lwernich@laidlaw.ac.nz

ANNUAL RETREAT

Facilitators: Matt Lilly and Louise Wernich
21-23 April
Flaxmill Retreat Centre

The three-day retreat is a focused, immersive learning experience within the Pastoral Leadership Pathway, designed to integrate theological reflection with practical ministry formation. Across learning sessions, group discussion, and prayer, participants engage deeply with key themes such as the formation of healthy, disciple-making communities; the inner life of the leader; engagement with God's mission; communication and preaching; spiritual vitality; organisational leadership; ethics; pastoral care; and other contextual issues.

The intensive provides space to wrestle with real-world pastoral challenges, learn from experienced practitioners, and apply insights directly to ministry. Strengthened by the cohort learning environment, this gathering accelerates leadership growth.

MONTHLY ONLINE GATHERINGS

Facilitators: Matt Lilly and Louise Wernich
10 monthly sessions on a Wednesday evening 7pm-9pm
or Thursday morning 9am-11am

Each month, you join online sessions featuring expert input and training from a variety of experienced ministry practitioners. These gatherings combine input with interactive discussion, giving participants space to reflect, ask questions, and engage with peers. The sessions foster ongoing learning, community connection, and practical application.

COACHING SESSIONS

Centre for Church Leaders Senior Coaches
4 1-hour sessions

You receive personalised coaching that supports your growth in pastoral identity, skill, and formation. Through reflective conversation and practical guidance, the Senior Coach helps you integrate learning with real ministry, set meaningful goals, and navigate leadership challenges. These sessions provide a trusted space for encouragement, clarity, and next steps, ensuring you are accompanied and well-supported throughout the pathway.

ACCESS TO GUEST SPEAKERS/LECTURES

Invites to be sent out when applicable

You benefit from input and proximity to international and local guests who bring fresh insight, diverse experience, and practical wisdom. These sessions broaden perspectives, deepen theological reflection, and expose you to a range of ministry contexts and leadership approaches - contributing to your overall formation journey.

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