Sermon: (based on 2 Kings 2-1-15)

After conducting reviews in Dunedin and Tokomairiro this week a common issue is Succession Planning. Some jobs go on forever! Others are regularly changed.

Passing on the mantle – here we need a new Parish Steward, and Convenor for a committee; recently we appointed a Convenor for two different committees, and someone to oversee Kids Klub.

Taking on the mantle is a responsibility:

[1] to carry on the traditions, including supporting others who do so.

[2] to hear God’s voice leading us on.

[3] to challenge the Church to follow God.

Paul reassessed his old life so God could use him in new ways. In some areas it meant a calling to let go, in others a calling to new ministry. He spent some time working it all out (Gal 1.17):   
**I went at once to Arabia, and then I returned to Damascus.**

Jesus too: **Jesus returned from the Jordan… & was led by the Spirit into the desert … for 40 days** (Luke 4.1-2).

Elijah also, as we saw last week: (1 Kings 19)

There is humour in today’s story – Elijah tries to get rid of Elisha, prophets warn Elisha that Elijah is going, and Elisha strikes the water. Was Elijah reluctant to give up the mantle? Was Elijah testing Elisha’s resolve? (the job *was* all-engrossing and dangerous). Elisha was very keen, too keen?

Sometimes in church life the *eager* candidate is the wrong one! Maybe a paedophile, or power-hungry, or with inappropriate abilities (someone who creates unnecessary conflict).

None true for us, I hope, except the keenness! Nevertheless we need to ask ourselves:

Is God calling you to let go? (this is what Elijah needed to do, what Saul/Paul needed to do?)

Is God calling you to new ministry? (We assume no obvious skills = God cannot be asking us – fake news!)

Is there help and encouragement needed for both giving up and taking on? If so, what?

There is training, there are those who have done it before you who can advise, and God is still around!

As we look at Elisha’s ministry, it seems a pale shadow of Elijah’s, nevertheless God worked through him.

We may (or may not) be ‘as good as whoever-is-doing-the-job’; this is irrelevant. God works through us all.