

Who would have thought, amongst all the members of all these four churches over the last 50 years, that none of them would be continuing now?

It is like getting to that point in life when family and friends start actually dying. It would have been unimaginable just ten years ago!

Jesus's followers finally get to see the big Temple in Jerusalem. This is where God lives. This, and this alone, is the place to find Him. When the empire of Babylon had taken everyone away as slaves, the first temple had been destroyed. As soon as the slaves got free they rebuilt it. Bigger, better. "Yes!" they thought, "This is it. This is the holy place of God. Huge stones as eternal as He is!"

All that was needed to make everything perfect was for God to end history and sweep away their enemies with legions of angels and then they'd be home and dry.

How disappointing of Jesus not to see things this way!

But Jesus says,

"Don't get tied to the Temple, it will all fall down one day!

Don't get all excited by "End of the World" preachers, they'll all be wrong.

Don't put any store by floods, famines wars and weird stuff in the sky, none of that matters. These things will come and go.

What you have to worry about is how to gain your souls.

You gain them by living into them.

You will have sadness and rejections to deal with. You will have things happen to you to make you doubt your best friends, even your family members. People in your own church will walk away from you.

But at every step you need to ask yourselves "What would Jesus do?"

You gain your souls by becoming more Christ-like in the life you are given."

What does this say to us, in the basement of old St Giles Church building, about to be sold to "who knows who"?

We invest our lives in God into our churches. We give money in memory of loved ones and buy a set of candles, or an altar cloth, or a stained glass window. The more we decorate the more we grow to love the place. But there is a danger in this.

A church building is really just a box to house the Church; the Body of Christ; us!

And we are the body of Christ as a community,

so that each of us can find the Spirit of Christ inside the body.

The Spirit of Christ is not something interesting, something wonderfully holy or something magical.

It is something we need to let seep into us, transforming our way of living, of thinking, of dealing with each other and life in general, until others begin to see Christ in us.

You all know I am no friend of brass plaques. Not because I want to devalue the love and memory they express. But because somehow we start to worship the "beautiful stones and the gifts dedicated to God..."

We can so easily mistake the lovely silver chalice as more important than the wine. We can so easily mistake the building for the people. Grace Church will always be the congregation first and

the address only second. You cannot catch holiness with a plaque, or a liturgy or a building. "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth" Jesus once said

Today is a good day then, because we meet in a less-than gorgeous basement hall. We have the simplest candles and pottery cups for wine. We are leaving what we know and setting out to what we don't know. We are un-cluttering ourselves from the accumulated "things" of the churches and going forward with only trust that God will help us work things out. this is a little closer to Jesus and his disciples way of living.

Next week we will worship in 700 Kennedy Rd. A new building, a lovely building, (but still just a box to hold God's people, the Body of Christ). We don't know where exactly the choir will sit!!!! We don't know how things like the heating works or even where all the light switches are. We will not be insulated in the familiar or the safe, but we will be invited to walk into this next stage of our life in Christ having to trust in Him to show us the way.

I hope 700 Kennedy Rd becomes a place of holiness because we, and others, get to meet God there, and find His Spirit touching us there. I hope it becomes like a home for us. I hope we love it. And I hope that each of us knows that it is God's son Jesus that we follow, that we worship.

One day... the day will come when not one new stone at 700 Kennedy Road will be left upon another; all will be thrown down. And that, though heart-wrenchingly sad, will not be the end of us.

So today we say our goodbyes to St Giles church as a place where we have met God and found strength and blessings. With Jesus as companion we can say sad goodbyes to it and step out onto the journey with him. We can treasure this place (and St George's, and St Crispin's and Epiphany) and never forget. But we can let go, and let God go with us. Always.