

Mele, you have come this far.  
Now it is time for us to let you go and let you fly!  
There will be some gentle breezes, stiff winds, and the occasional howling gale, but the view will be magnificent.  
And if you can use the air currents wisely, you will travel far.

When I first met Mele, she was a very new and somewhat nervous prospective candidate.  
And I was a very new and somewhat nervous candidates convener.  
Neither of us quite knew what we were doing.  
But as we met, I grew to admire and respect Mele's thoughtfulness, her deep spirituality, her care for others, her commitment to the call she had heard to serve.

For lots of complicated reasons, Mele was not accepted that year as a candidate.  
I think that shocked all of us.

But this was when we started to discover the real Mele - for underneath that gentle caring is a rather determined and courageous woman, with a sharp sense of humour and a great capacity for joy.

Mele tackled Trinity College (and I use the verb advisedly) as a private student, earned her laurels in two different parish placements - Dinsdale and St Paul's, London Street - and became David Bell's star pupil on Mahara.

We watched Mele spreading her wings with great joy - and we were ready to riot if you did not get through the selection process the second time!

But you did. You have been stationed at Beckenham, in far away Christchurch. And we have to let you go.

Go with our love.  
Some part of us will go with you. Some part of you will still be with us.

May God be the wind beneath your wings.