

Dear People of St Albans.

As you all know, since we have been unable to use our beloved church we have benefited from the kindness and hospitality of both St Ronan's and San Antonio's, for weekday and occasional Sunday worship, our outreach and social services and a few funerals. We have appreciated their willingness to share their facilities with us.

Some months ago, the Vicar and Churchwardens were invited to meet with local Catholic and Presbyterian leaders to discuss our respective positions about our buildings, and to see if there might be benefit in long-term cooperation regarding our properties. At that meeting we agreed there might be some logic to working together regarding properties. But we also said that the spiritual and emotional attachment and identity that we Anglicans have with our St Alban's plant was likely to carry more weight.

It is important for you to know that the other congregations' impressions of their future in the eastern bays are different from ours. They seem to feel that decline is inevitable, we don't. We have several new people and families in church, an Alpha Course completing, a growing Sunday School and an enthusiastic Sunday evening service twice a month, all of which are encouraging growth. We have a vision of where we are going in the future, in developing as a retreat parish, we have momentum with REDC and have taken the next steps towards the rebuild.

In August, Vestry received a letter from St Ronan's asking if we were prepared to explore this joint -use idea more formally. The same letter was sent to the Catholic Church, who are facing uncertainties, particularly about the future of their school. Some of you may have heard about these moves from your friends, or read the latest Presbyterian parish magazine, and wondered what was going on.

As a Vestry we did not know how best to respond. We appreciate the other parishes' temporary hospitality, but after significant discussion and consultation our parish has already committed to returning to our Ngaio Street property. We discussed it with Bishop Justin. His advice was that it could do no harm to find out what they have in mind and so we wrote back asking for a firm proposal of how this could work.

With no clear proposal and the fluid situations of the different churches, Vestry's dilemma has been around what to say to you the congregation, and when. We were concerned these possibilities could distract our attention and take the wind out of the sails for the direction we had already agreed to. The recent SGM put our money where our mouth is and set our faces towards our future ministry in this community. There is much work still to do and should any concrete proposals for buildings cooperation be received, you would be the first to know.

For recent information about our future plans and actions, please go to www.stalbanschurch.nz and read Vestrylink No. 6 and the documents online in the section marked Redevelopment.