Beloved in Christ,

**A CONVERSATION AROUND DEVELOPING THE ST. PAUL’S MANUKA ‘MINISTRY PRECINCT’**

Greetings!

As participants in God’s transforming mission we face a number of challenges and exciting opportunities. The way that the world around us relates to the church has changed. We are no longer the central and privileged institution we once were. However this gives us the opportunity to consider how we may use the resources we have so that the ministry of the present may be continued, and the future mission endowed. The link between ministry, mission and property resources can seem tenuous - however if we see all three on the same page, new prospects emerge.

It is my desire that the existing people of God continue to receive ongoing care and ministry. Not simply now, but into the future. It is also my dream that the communities we live in and the individuals who make them up are transformed by the love of Jesus. This is the mission into which we are called.

Sometimes it can seem hard to see how we can continue ministry and reach out in mission, the needs are so great and our resources so small. Yet God has blessed us with land and property. It is my hope that we will act as good stewards of what God has given us. This is why I am inviting you to consider ‘partnering’ with myself and the Diocese in evaluating how best we might utilise the space and facilities contiguous with St. Paul’s church building.

This is nothing new for you as a parish. Indeed, in previous years you have proposed different ways to utilise your resources.

Undertaking several building and development projects over the last four years has allowed us, as a diocese, to learn important lessons in the way such developments can be funded and in the way that the needs of parishioners and the Diocese can be matched to skilled professionals. Key amongst what we have learned is that the capacity of the Diocese to take on the risk of such projects must be put within a context where true collaboration occurs; the needs of both the local parish and the
diocesan family are to be met.

I do not know the shape of any building or development that may emerge from a possible partnership between the Parish of Manuka and the Diocese; this is something that we need to explore and craft together. That said, any development must provide:

- better facilities for St Paul’s;
- a beautiful and practical site to enhance the historic grounds and church building;
- new, continuing income streams that can be used to fund the ministry of the parish and other ministries; and
- real solutions to the costs and imposts upon the Parish that will inevitably occur during the development so that disruption to the life of the Parish is minimised.

I’ll look forward to engaging with you more fully on these matters in the New Year.

For Jesus,

The Right Reverend Stuart Robinson
Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn
26 November 2014

Cc Bishop Trevor Edwards
Mr Trevor Ament
Archdeacon Matthew Brain