



## 'In Touch' Issue No. 2 July 2012



**Mission Action Planning.** (MAP) Thank you to the many people who have given appreciative comments about the first newsletter, which set out our Mission Action Plan. Since then the PCC and I, together with some other volunteers, have been making progress in thinking about how to achieve our five goals. More will be shared about this in the autumn. One exciting development has been the interest in opening a distribution point for the Bedford Food bank, which is likely to hold a weekly session in the church after Wednesday morning Communion, starting in the autumn. Many of the Food Bank's clients come from the Goldington area, and the Food Bank had been prayerfully seeking venues in Goldington and Queen's Park, (where many of its clients live) to augment what is on offer in Brickhill and at the Salvation Army building in Bedford. Representatives of the Food Bank are coming to our morning service on 16th September, and there will be opportunities to find out more, and to ask how you can help meet the needs of an increasing number of people in our community who find themselves in desperate need. The PCC and I are excited about this coming 'out of the blue' for it is in line with our second 'key priority' of our Mission Action Plan "To 'open up' our church to the local community to offer support and pastoral care: so that more 'come in' and more of us 'get out' into our community."

**August services** During August following suggestions made by those who supported the August services last year, we shall be aiming to have more informal services. Each will be on a sporting theme (we don't want to fall foul of those who control the uses of the word 'Olympic'!). Each service will start as normal at 9.30am. The first week will be a non-Eucharistic service-similar to our 'First Sunday service'. The second week will be a Family Communion, and then week 3 will be a non-Eucharistic service, while the last week will once again be a 'Family Communion'. On the first and third Sundays (5th and 19th August) those who like to have Communion weekly can of course have this at 8am and/or on Wednesdays at 10 am.

You may remember that the first of our key priorities for the next 5 years is to 'make more of our worship attractive and accessible to younger people and families, including those of little church background'. So I would make a special plea to those people who tend to use August to worship elsewhere, to stick with us, so that we can try this out and also have some 'regulars' to welcome visitors. (You are of course excused if you are away on holiday!)

By the way, at the time of writing we're still looking for another pianist/or musician who could accompany singing with another instrument for August 26th if you can offer help, Sheila Berry will be delighted to hear from you....

**Ngozi and the future of Curacies at Goldington** This is of course year 4 of Ngozi's training period as a curate. Sometime this year she will move to her next parish. Please keep her in your prayers as she discerns where God may be calling her. It is no longer just a matter of the Bishop 'finding' somewhere for curates, and Ngozi will certainly need our prayerful support as she follows up likely positions. In practice, we may lose her well before next June. Obviously none of us looks forward to losing her warm pastoral ministry here in Goldington, but equally we will want her to have the reassurance of a definite sense of God's call to the next place, as she had when she first visited Goldington in 2008.

Please also keep me and the PCC in your prayers, for our deficit budget means that, on present performance, we seem unlikely to afford to have another curate. Priory Methodist Church have recently reversed their deficit with a successful campaign and it should be a matter for our prayers that those who are able to increase their giving in Goldington will be able, once again, to help us address our financial situation; I'm sure most of us would wish St Mary's to continue to play its part in training the ministers of the future. We are excited that Rev'd Jackie Buck will be joining us for 3 years as part of her training at the end of September, and I am sure she will bring many gifts, not least to the MAP priority area of children and young families. However, as you will recall from her introductory piece in June's parish magazine, Jackie comes as a self-supporting part-time minister, so we need to think in terms of the level of input that Revd. Barbara Johnson gave. 15 hours per week, with the best will in the world, cannot be a substitute for the loss of a full-time colleague, and we must keep our expectations realistic.

**This brings me to....Back to Church Sunday.** With Jackie starting that day, I did ponder calling it 'Buck to Church Sunday'! I am writing about this in the September 'Parish and People' but please think and pray now about who God might want you to invite; my experience is that a name or a face will come into one's mind when God wishes us to do something for that person. I have obtained 50 invitation cards. Imagine how our service would look with 50 extra people visiting? The worst that could happen is that they will say 'no thanks!' (but the fact that you asked them may sow a seed that will bear fruit at a later date). Your encouragement, however, might be all they need to experience the fulfilment of worshipping in a welcoming church family. "Do not tremble, do not be afraid, Did I not proclaim my purposes for you long ago? You are my witnesses" (Isaiah 44.8)

With my love and prayers

Richard