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Dear friends,

It is now six months since we changed the magazine, giving it the slightly amended title of *Towers* to reflect that it is the parish magazine of the two churches of which I have the privilege to be Rector. I know that many people have been appreciative of the changes that have been made to include much more local information. Items from Phil Manterfield, Head Teacher of the Church of England Junior School, from the Brownies who are regular parts of the Church life, and archive material, have all added to the scope of the magazine. An enormous amount of time and effort goes into the whole mechanism that enables you to be reading the magazine. There are a wide range of contributors, who give their time and efforts towards producing the articles, to meet the deadlines for the next edition. Margaret and Vicky, who compile the magazine from supplied material, together with supplementing from items they find themselves. They then get the magazine to the Chelmsford Diocesan Print Unit for printing. Betty Weaver then collects the 500 copies and distributes them to the various distributors, or leaves them for the distributors to collect from the churches. Add to these good people, Jill Williams who organises the advertising. A large number of people who are all working to provide you with a parish magazine. It is so easy for everyone to take people for granted. We should all be grateful for their enthusiasm and commitment.

Church life, like all life, is always changing. One of the attractions of the faith is that it has a core of unchanging realities. The belief that Jesus died for us, to take away our sins, and that the Holy Spirit is available to help us to live our lives as best we can, are central to our Christian experience and understanding of how to live our lives. But our Christian experience is not just limited to an hour on a Sunday morning. If it just gives us a sense of closeness to God for an hour a week, then something serious is missing. The faith is about the way we

live and approach all that life has in store. We all have good times. We all have difficult times. But our relationship with Jesus through prayer, and our empowering by the Holy Spirit, will carry us through. We have many people at the moment with medical difficulties. I am delighted that at Ingatestone the intercessions list has really been embraced by many people, and that there are now large numbers of names being read out. Names can also be added at Fryerning. I would ask that you check with the person concerned that they are happy for their names to be read publicly in this way. They may have some legitimate reason related to their family, which means they are happy for you, or indeed Sue, myself or others, to pray for them, but do not wish for it to be a public announcement. Allen Matthew wrote an excellent *Word in Season* item last month about intercessory prayer and the importance of bringing every aspect of our lives and others before God in prayer. My prayer is that we are a people who take prayer very seriously. In the changing scenes of life, knowledge of the presence of God is a powerful reality.

As churches, we rely on the enthusiasm and commitment of people, and inevitably there is constant change. Vicky and Simon came to Ingatestone Church on my very first Sunday, just over four years ago. Very quickly they were in the Choir. Reading the lessons and the intercessions rota followed. Vicky was authorised by the Bishop to assist at communion. When Michelle Green left for a new life in the USA, Vicky volunteered her IT skills to assist with this magazine. The birth of Antonia brought probably the youngest ever member of the Choir. When Vicky could not find a suitable mother and toddlers group, she began EMUs. Now, with Simon's new job, they have moved to the north east of England, near Vicky's mum. We are all delighted for them and indeed can see God's hand at work in the move. We are grateful and thankful for their time with us. Their enthusiasm and commitment to the church here has been an inspiration. They will be missed. We pray that others will now receive the baton with compiling this magazine and co-ordinating EMUs. We are very blessed. Our churches have many enthusiastic and committed people.

Yours in Christ, *Patrick*.

