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Dear friends,

The 24th of April was an important day in the history of St. Edmund and St. Mary Parish Church. It was the afternoon when old members of the Ingatestone Boy's Club gathered in the church for a re-union that was focussed on Miss Pemberton. As a daughter of the Rector, she committed her life to generations of boys of the village. It was good to hear about the Christian foundations of the club and Miss Pemberton's desire to bring Christian values into the lives of the boys. Her niece had travelled from Herefordshire for the service, after which she unveiled the new plaque in recognition of Miss Pemberton's service to the village, which has a prominent place in the church. Talking with her afterwards, she recalled visits to the old Rectory and playing in the large garden. She remembered the cottages that stood along the High Street up to the path that lead up to the church. Bernard Cranmer MBE, Club President joined in the discussion, recalling how the village used to be big houses and small cottages for those who worked in the big houses. Sometimes we like to delude ourselves that the village has not changed. Like anything that is alive, the village is in a constant process of change. It is a basic theme in the Bible, that you need to understand and acknowledge the past, so that you can face the future with confidence. For the Christian, that includes reflecting on how God had been at work in individual lives and in communities. The life of Miss Pemberton is a clear example of God being at work in this community. May those who carry her torch today be worthy of her example.

After Easter, the choir vestry at St. Edmund and St. Mary Parish Church has been used during the week by Crossways Christian Counselling Foundation. This is an excellent use of our building, using a room that would otherwise be empty. Crossways already works with people from the local community. We will be looking forward to developing links with Crossways in the future. Jan Cadman is Director and Supervisor. Together with her husband Rob they have been involved in the Marriage Preparation Days run twice a year by Frances and myself. Jan and I were together members of a Spiritual Director's course some years ago. I have great admiration for the work Jan and her team undertake. Recent times have seen it expand to centres here, in Chelmsford and in Southend. All of the

counsellors are Christians, and this faith foundation shapes the way they undertake their work. The arrival of Crossways based here can be seen as another example of God at work amongst us.

"Time flies when you are having fun." So goes the modern phrase. The 16th of June marks the third anniversary of Frances and myself beginning our respective ministries in the local communities. I feel like I have been here a long time. When I shared this with someone recently, she looked horrified and said, "but that must mean you are not enjoying it here". This is not the case at all, just the opposite. They have been a very rewarding and exciting three years. I need to remind myself sometimes that it is only three years, less than the time I was at Leyton. God has done so much in this time that I still need to catch my breath and remember it is just three years. The time has most definitely not dragged. We need to be open to have God doing so much more with us in the future.

The arrival of Sue Cruse officially as my curate in July is a great blessing and something which simply could not have been envisaged three years ago. She will work with me in the two parishes on two days a week and on Sundays in her continued training. For that is what a title post is, continued training. I also have to attend courses and days to develop my role as supervisor. I will arrange too for Sue to work with Frances, so that she can benefit from her experience as a NSM. On a recent training incumbent's course it was emphasised that training is the essence of the relationship. I am responsible for this training, with the Diocese arranging activities for curates and incumbents that have to be attended. It was made very clear that no-one is to see a curate as "an extra pair of hands". I recall arriving in Leyton as the curate and being over-awed by the expectations of others and my own feeling of inadequacy. This is a standard curate experience! I am sure that you will all be welcoming to Sue in her new role. Despite having been on placement with us for six months from 1st of November, the situation will be different for the Rev. Sue.

The ministry of Miss Pemberton in founding the Boy's Club. The arrival of the Crossways Counselling Foundation to work from the church. A curate coming to minister with us. These are all examples of God being at work in our villages. We can find many more, like many of you visiting people who are otherwise on their own and demonstrating God's love and care. People sometimes say, "where is God?" If the last three years have taught us anything, it is that God is active among us.

Yours in Christ, *Patrick*