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Dear friends,

I would like to thank all those involved in the mammoth distribution of this magazine last month. We have a group of regular distributors, under the guidance of Betty Weaver, who quietly and efficiently deliver to all those who subscribe. Those of us who just pick up our magazine from the doormat take these good folk for granted. Recently someone commented to me, "I have no idea who delivers my Towers. It is just there each month". Thanks go to them. For September we distributed to both villages a copy for each household. We may not be the largest communities in the world, but it is still a great many places to deliver. Thanks go to all those who undertook this distribution. Particular thanks go to Brynne Poole and Janet Collins who organised the magazines. What a task! One reality this does highlight is that there are roads where no-one subscribes, others where very few take the magazine. Pemberton Avenue and Harebridge Crescent would be two examples. We used to regularly pray for people in the various roads, but I feel this may have become over-looked. The prayer diaries are still on our website. A couple of years ago the Elim Church were visiting every street in Ingatestone on Sunday mornings. They found many people at home who said they were Anglicans, coming to church once a year. Many houses were empty, with people worshipping at Lakeside or Bluewater. We all need to do what we can to keep contact with as many people in the villages as possible. The distribution of the Towers helps.

Our harvest festivals are again this year focussed on Harvests for the Hungry and Homestart. Sue and I went to Bulgaria last year. Sue went in the previous year and is going with Katy and Janet from the Ingatestone congregations this year, together with other distributors. Sue and I were involved in the press launch in early September at the Cathedral for the 2009 appeal. We are both featured in some of the promotional material. It is shocking to us to watch ourselves delivering items to some of the poorest people in Europe. I was truly appalled to see the conditions that some of the people lived under. I saw very

primitive conditions also in Uganda, but at least there it does not get to -30 degrees in the winter. Frankly I have no idea how these people survive. The conditions in the old people's homes, the orphanages, in institutions for those unable to care for themselves were in many cases very disturbing. On the visit last year we talked with many people in authority to try and understand why things were as we found them. The reality is, if we have only lived in Britain, we have always lived in a rich country. It is not surprising that we cannot understand why things are as they are elsewhere. Please remember Sue, Katy, Janet and the others in the team when they travel to Lom in early November. Also please do what you can to help support the project. I was delighted that this year The Cricketers in Fryerning are collecting for us. As we celebrate our own harvest and acknowledge all that we have, we need to consider others. We really do live in a global village.

Bishop Laurie spent time in the parishes in August with me as part of my Episcopal Review. Every two years incumbents meet with the Archdeacon or the Bishop to review the ministry. We also meet annually with a consultant. I am fortunate to undertake this role for others, as well as advising the local Readers and mentoring new incumbents. One reality from all these discussions is how difficult ministry is in the 21st century. The reality is that it is probably harder now than at any time in the history of our ancient buildings for people to see the relevance of the church. The B.B.C. website ran an item at the end of August about the fifteenth anniversary of the Sunday trading legislation. It contained a photo of people looking up and apparently praying. They were in a pub watching a football match on a large screen. We all know the world is a very different place from even only a few years ago. We have to do what we can to show people the importance and relevance of faith and regular worship to their lives. I worry sometimes about ten years time. When I first came to Ingatestone I said we needed to look ten years on. That was eight and a half years ago. Things are healthier in our churches now. We must not be complacent. Issues relating to levels of giving and the future are real and need to be addressed.

Yours in Christ *Patrick*