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Sullington & Thakeham with Warminghurst
 Same family. Two parishes. Working together.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRIEST

Dear Church Family,

As I'm sure you are all aware, today is St George's Day. For most of us these days it is probably a day that passes without much comment. In recent decades we English have become rather embarrassed by anything that might have even the faintest whiff of jingoism about it, and so we have quietly moved away from the celebrations which previous generations would have enjoyed on St George's day.

This year, however, with events at home and abroad that seem to be seeking to co-opt Christian language and imagery I feel it is worth us briefly reflecting on some of these topics. In the UK there have been a number of well documented events recently where faith and Englishness seem to have been brought together, to make either implicitly or explicitly the claim that to be English is to be Christian, hence individuals such as Tommy Robinson organising a 'Unite the Kingdom' Christmas service in December last year. In the United States, Donald Trump and many of his supporters seem to have been making similar moves, with journalists reporting that some of the military commanders had encouraged their troops to see the war against Iran as the start of Armageddon, and Trump's recent post on social media which seemed dangerously like he was depicting himself as the second-coming of Christ.

History, however, should warn us against allowing such influences to infiltrate our churches or our thinking as Christians, which is not to say that it is wrong to be patriotic, but that must be tempered by our call to 'love God, and to love our neighbour as ourselves.' The German pastor, theologian, and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer, saw the German church largely kowtowing to Nazi ideology, believing that the mix of nationalism and traditionalism would allow the church to play a central role in the state. Of course over time what actually happened was that the Gospel message was subverted by the political message, and some within the church even ended up as going so far as to purge the church of non-aryan elements. This led him to distinguish between a correct patriotism, and a blind nationalism. Nationalism, he argued, led to blind unquestioning obedience to the state, whereas patriotism, especially in its ideal form of 'responsible patriotism' meant loving one's country whilst holding it accountable to high moral standards, and fighting against injustice; this belief would eventually lead him to reject his pacifism and join an assassination plot against Hitler.

It is not wrong to be proud to be English, or to celebrate our patron saint, but we must remember that many of the ideals that have made our land so attractive to so many are rooted in values drawn directly from the Gospel. It is from the Gospel that we as a nation have derived the belief that we are all equal, and as stated above Jesus is clear that we are called to love our neighbour without exception, and that is that standard we as Christians must hold ourselves to. None of this, of course, absolves the state from its responsibilities, which are to protect its citizens and allow all of its citizens to thrive without fear or favour. So this St George's day, let us celebrate our nation's Christian heritage, and take inspiration from the example of our patron saint who as a Cappadocian (probably Turkish) Roman Army officer considered his faith more important than his job, and who was ultimately martyred for his refusal to renounce Christ, and boldly live as Christ calls us to. Let us pray today's collect together:

“God of hosts, who so kindled the flame of love in the heart of your servant George that he bore witness to the risen Lord by his life and by his death: give us the same faith and power of love that we who rejoice in his triumphs may come to share with him the fullness of the resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.”



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THIS WEEK'S CHURCH SERVICES:

SUNDAY 26th APRIL:

10:30am THAKEHAM:
Holy Communion

10:30am SULLINGTON:
Morning Prayer

**We look forward to
welcoming you!**



“The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”



NOTICES:

APCM IN THAKEHAM AND SULLINGTON



You are invited to the APCM at Thakeham on Sunday 10th May straight after Church For all 10:30am service.

Sullington tonight on the 23rd April at 6:30pm at the Sullington Parish Hall.

Thank you

EVENTS:

ST MARY'S CHURCH SULLINGTON POP-UP PRELOVED CLOTHING SALE



MAY 9TH & 10TH 2026
10AM - 3.30 PM

KINDLY HOSTED AT
THE CAFE @ THE OLD WORKSHOP
SULLINGTON MANOR FARM. RH20 4AE

FOR FURTHER INFO OR TO DONATE QUALITY CLOTHES
PLEASE EMAIL POPUPSTM@GMAIL.COM

ALL CLOTHING SALES PROCEEDS SUPPORT THE CHURCH

Join us for the pop-up preloved clothing sale on may 9th and 10th from 10am-3:30pm. Invite a friend, enjoy a coffee and cake. Hope you are able to make it!

St Mary's Church Plant Sale

SATURDAY 16TH MAY
THAKEHAM VILLAGE HALL
11-1PM

*A selection of plants, delicious cakes
and bacon butties available! Invite a
friend, hope you can make it!*

You are invited to join us for the St Mary's plant sale on 16th May. There will be a wide variety of plants, cakes and bacon butties available.