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

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRIEST

Dear Church Family,

This Sunday I'm excited to start a new sermon series exploring the life of Jacob. I don't know how well you know the story of Jacob, which begins in Genesis 25, but it's a fascinating tale, which reveals so much to us about the ancient world, about people's character and behaviour, about ourselves, about God's character and nature, and most importantly about God's unfolding plan of redemption. What Jacob is emphatically not is a moral exemplar for us to follow!

As we go through the series I hope you will see how God's plan of redemption has been unfolding over thousands of years, I hope you will see how magnificent and awesome the God we worship is, and I hope we will all, myself included, have a better understanding of how the Old Testament works to teach us New Testament people.

I've been asked why I like Old Testament readings so much; so here are a couple of brief reasons:

- i) People often seem to think that the Old Testament reveals an angry and wrathful God, who smites everyone and everything in sight, and they then struggle to reconcile that image of God with the image of the loving Christ. But when I read the Old Testament, I read of a God who again and again calls his people back to him, who is long-suffering, and who works everything for their ultimate good out of his love for them. A God who is always faithful, even when his people aren't, and who then sends Jesus as a continuation of his love.
- ii) As many of you know, when I first became a missionary I lived with a very experienced missionary couple and they told the story of how when they first went as missionaries to a people group that had never heard the gospel, they spent all their time telling them about Jesus and how he loved them. This message was received by some, but understood by none, which they didn't realise until one night when they showed the entire village a film called the 'Jesus Film.' The film is a retelling of the Gospel story. The missionaries were shocked when all the villagers cheered when Judas betrayed Jesus. In their culture, there was great honour in befriending and then betraying a rival village, and so to them Judas was the hero not the villain. Now I'm fairly certain here in Sussex, no one is going to think that Judas is the hero, however it does highlight the danger of thinking that Jesus arrived out of nowhere. The Old Testament helps us understand who Jesus is, and as the Reformer Martin Luther said, 'the greatest commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself.' Or to put it another way, we can't understand the New Testament without the Old Testament. Sunday's passage from Matthew on the baptism of Christ is a great example of that. In those 5 verses there are at least five allusions to Old Testament passages.

Therefore, if we want to love God and follow Christ we need to understand not just the New Testament but the Old as well. If we do, our view of God will be expanded, and we will see afresh the wonderful love of God.

Don't forget to sign up to Alpha if you're exploring or are new to the Christian faith. If you're free on Wednesday morning don't forget we have a Communion service with Bible study at 10.30 at Sullington, where we will begin looking at the book of Acts.



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## THIS WEEK'S CHURCH SERVICES:

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January**

10:30am SULLINGTON:  
Celtic Communion

**Sunday 18th January**

8:30am THAKEHAM:  
Celtic Holy Communion

10:30am SULLINGTON:  
Joint Holy Communion

We look forward to welcoming you!

“I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry.  
He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire;  
he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.  
He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.  
Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him.  
Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods.  
Many, Lord my God, are the wonders you have done, the things you planned for us. None can compare with you; were I to speak and tell of your deeds, they would be too many to declare.  
Sacrifice and offering you did not desire— but my ears you have opened burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require.  
Then I said, “Here I am, I have come— it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart.”



# NOTICES:

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## Churchsuite Rota Training



Churchsuite is software which helps to streamline church administration. It can be particularly helpful to record the different rotas across the parishes, allowing those who set up rotas to do so easily, to share them and to make and communicate changes. Rotas can easily be summarised for those who want to see an overview of all the rotas. For those who are on rotas, you can be sent an email with a list of your dates and an overview of who will be working with you and who is scheduled for other dates in case you need to make any swaps. Anyone who receives the weekly bulletin by email, from Sullington or Thakeham, already has an account even if you haven't used it. If you are interested in finding out how to access and use Churchsuite either as a rota member or leader I will be running training on Saturday 17th January in the Chesswood Room at Thakeham Village Hall. I will be available from 10 – 11.15am and you can arrive at any time. The priority for the first half hour will be for rota users, how to access Churchsuite and your rotas, and how to set your privacy settings so that your name can appear on the summary rota. In the second half hour I will focus on setting up and communicating rotas. Ideally you should bring your own device laptop and/or phone so that you can log into your account. It would be helpful if you could let me know if you intend to drop in so that I have sufficient resources. Please email [jane@23across.co.uk](mailto:jane@23across.co.uk).

# UPCOMING EVENTS:

## Try Alpha

Curious about the Christian faith?  
Thakeham and Sullington Parish Churches  
Come and join our new Alpha Course.

You are not committing to anything, but you'd be so  
welcome to the first meeting to explore what Alpha is all about!  
Feel free to invite a friend.

Weekly meetings begin on 21st January at 7pm

Scan the QR code below to register your interest:



Alternatively sign up via our website:

<https://www.stmarysthakeham.org/alpha/>

Or simply email and register your interest at [stwparish@gmail.com](mailto:stwparish@gmail.com)

You are invited to Celebrate the 65<sup>th</sup> Wedding  
Anniversary of Denis and Pat Snape  
on 28<sup>th</sup> January at 2 pm in the  
Thakeham Church Rooms

Alpha Course starting from 21<sup>st</sup> Jan  
click the link to register your interest!



CELEBRATE THE 65<sup>TH</sup>  
WEDDING ANNIVERSARY FOR

DENIS  
*and*  
PAT SNAPE

28 | 01 | 26

TWO O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON UNTIL FOUR

*In the Thakeham Church Rooms*

WE WILL HAVE TEA, CAKE AND FIZZ FOR  
YOU TO ENJOY! WE LOOK FORWARD TO  
CELEBRATING WITH YOU

# UPCOMING EVENTS:

St Mary's Thakeham

## Live Ceilidh Band & Curry

Thakeham Village Hall  
Saturday 7th February

7.30pm-11.00pm

- Delicious homemade curry
- Wonderful band with caller
- Bar available

£25  
per  
person



To buy tickets  
please scan  
the QR code

or  
email: [Liz@whiteheadfamily.org](mailto:Liz@whiteheadfamily.org)



Join us for Ceilidh Band and Curry on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February, at Thakeham Village Hall. At 7:30pm.

Please buy your tickets by scanning the QR code below or email: [liz@whiteheadfamily.org](mailto:liz@whiteheadfamily.org)

National Call for Prayer & Fasting  
21st-23rd January 2026

Isaiah 28:6 He will be a spirit of justice to the one who sits in judgement, a source of strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate.

# TURN THE BATTLE

UK & IRELAND

Worship & Prayer  
for our Local Region & Nation  
Thakeham Village Hall  
Fri 23rd January  
7-9pm

## THREE DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING ACROSS THE UK & IRELAND

We are in a decisive moment — the spiritual battle is at the gate — this is a call for the Church to respond with urgency, unity, and humility.

This is not a conference or an event — it's a grassroots movement of prayer, for all Christians. Wherever you are, let's rise up in united prayer. We are being called to three things:

**A Fresh Commitment to Prayer**  
Seeking God with hunger and humility.  
2 Chronicles 7:14

**A Fresh Commitment to Consecration**  
Returning to holiness and wholehearted obedience.  
Romans 12:1

**A Fresh Commitment to Bold Living**  
Courageous witness and living out the gospel with power and clarity.  
2 Timothy 1:7-8



Find out more  
[www.turnthebattle.uk](http://www.turnthebattle.uk)

[turnthebattlethakeham@gmail.com](mailto:turnthebattlethakeham@gmail.com)

A local Thakeham home group are honoured to be a hosting hub for this national call to pray and fast for our country on 23rd Jan 7-9pm at Thakeham Village Hall. We would love worshipers and prayer warriors to join us co labouring with God and to pray what is on His heart for our region and the UK. Please do pass onto your church and small groups. It's open to all.  
Blessings Karen, Debby & Cliff