FAKENHAM PARISH CHURCH

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January 2026

THE BEACON

Church and Community Magazine



*** New Year reflection**
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*** Get fit with the Ramblers * Community Noticeboard**
*** Let's meet * Old Fakenhamian**
***Town Council news**

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Parish Prayers

4 Jan Market Place, Norwich Street, White Horse Street.
Government, our MPs, local government workers.

11 Jan Bridge Street, Cattle Market Street, Hempton Road.
Medical charities and missions. Aid workers.

18 Jan Greenway Lane, Greenway Close, Buckenham Close, Baxter Close.
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Fakenham Churches Together.

25 Jan North Drive, Thorpeland Road, Lee Warner Avenue, Whitelands.
Those involved in fostering, adoption and IVF.

From the Parish Registers

Funerals
28.11.25 Doris Mary Gay (Polly)

Cover pic:
Revd Tracy Jessop

"Peter, can you remind the angels to check the date for putting out the bins? There's been a few bank holidays recently."



Beacon Deadline
Editorial content to Audrey Sharp by 1st of every month
Advertising artworks to Dee Jackson by 1st of every month
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Rector's Reflection – a New Year restoration



January has a habit of arriving a little more quickly than we expect. One moment we're hunting for wrapping paper and last-minute gifts, and the next we're sweeping pine needles from the carpet and wondering where on earth the last twelve months have gone. The turning of the year can feel like a deep breath after a long climb, an opportunity to pause, to look back, and to consider the path ahead.

New Year's resolutions often spring from that instinct. We promise ourselves that this will be the year we get fitter, get organised, or get around to that thing we've been putting off. And while these good intentions are admirable, they can also quietly weigh on us. By the middle of January, many of us are already feeling a little guilty for not living up to the goals we set with such conviction on New Year's Day.

So, I'd like to offer a gentler start to the year. Instead of resolutions, what if we leaned into restoration? Not the dramatic kind, but the slow, steady, hopeful sort. The kind that comes from small acts—choosing kindness when it's inconvenient, tidying one neglected corner of life rather than attempting a grand overhaul, offering ourselves the same patience we're so ready to give others.

The Christian story speaks often about fresh starts, not as one-off heroic efforts but as daily invitations to begin again. One of my favourite reminders comes from the book of Lamentations: "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:22–23). January feels like a reminder of that: a clean page that doesn't demand perfection, only willingness.

This month is still dark, still cold, and often still a little weary. Yet in the quietness of it all, something new is already happening. Bulbs planted months ago lie hidden beneath frozen soil, preparing for a season we cannot yet see. Nature reminds us that growth rarely happens all at once. It takes root slowly, quietly, faithfully.

Perhaps we could adopt that same rhythm. Instead of trying to become entirely new people overnight, we might simply aim to become a little more attentive, a little more hopeful, a little more ready to notice what is good around us. And our town gives us no shortage of good things to notice: neighbours who look out for one another, volunteers who keep community groups running, and small acts of generosity that happen unseen every day.

As we step into this new year, my prayer is that you find moments of light in the ordinary days, courage in the challenging ones, and companionship for the whole journey ahead. May 2026 be a year of gentle beginnings and steady hope; for you, for our community, and for the world we share.

Rev'd Tracy Jessop.



Churches around Fakenham welcome *you* in January

Parish Church Upper Market Place, Fakenham NR21 9DY

Sun 4	10am Parish Communion on the Feast of the Epiphany
Sun 11	8am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
	10am All Age Worship
	6.30pm Choral Evensong
Sun 18	10am Holy Communion
Sun 25	10am Holy Communion

Other Services Note: No service on Thursday 1st or 8th this month

On Thursday 15th, 22nd and 29th Jan at 9.30am Market Day Holy Communion (a short, said service)

Every Monday (except Bank Holidays) 9.45am Stepping Stones for pre-school children with a grown-up. (Including children's clothes Swap Shop)

Salvation Army Oak Street, Fakenham.

Every Sunday morning at 10.30 am

Methodist Church Chapel Lane, Sculthorpe. NR21 9QB

Morning service of worship 11am each Sunday

Fakenham Baptist Community Church

Sundays 10:30-12:00 at Fakenham Community Centre. All are welcome.

St Anthony RC Church Wells Road, Fakenham.

Sunday Vigil Mass every Saturday at 6.00pm

Sunday Mass at 10.45am and Tues-Fri at 10.00am

Orthodox Church of the Holy Transfiguration, Scarborough Road, Gt Walsingham

Every Sunday morning 10.00am Hours 10.30am Liturgy.

Holy Trinity, Hempton

Sunday Mass at 9.30am. Wednesday Mass at 9.30am.

We continue to pray for peace for all the people of Gaza, Israel and throughout the Middle East at this time.
We continue to pray for peace for the people of Ukraine and all areas of conflict.
"God of peace and justice, we pray for the laying down of weapons in every place of war.
We pray for all those who fear tomorrow, that you would hold and protect them".

The story of a hymn - Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine

I was looking at the range of hymns for Epiphany, the best known of which might be 'We three Kings of Orient are', and came across this one. Instantly I heard my late paternal Aunt, a Baptist, sing this in her very tuneful voice.

According to sources, it was the composer, Phoebe Palmer Knapp, {1839-1908} who played the melody to Fanny Crosby, a blind lyricist, asking what this melody conveyed to her. The response was immediate. As a prolific writer, she immediately matched the words of Blessed Assurance to the tune. This was not unusual for this writer, who started hymn writing when she lost her sight, through alleged medical error, aged 5/6. Fanny Crosby lived in New York and went to the Institute for the Blind. Aged 38, she married Alexander van Alstyne, a mission worker, composer and lyricist. Fanny, like her husband, became a mission worker and was also a published poet. Her friend, Phoebe Knapp (also 1839-1908) composed 500 different hymn tunes.

Both Phoebe and Fanny worshipped at John Street Episcopal Methodist Church in New York. Fanny wrote another well-known hymn: ' To God be the glory'.

I'm sure many of you will know 'Blessed assurance', with its familiar chorus.

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine.
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine,
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of his spirit, washed by his blood.

Chorus
This is my story, this is my song.
Praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story; this is my song.
Praising my Saviour all the day long.

Sources: Discipleship Ministries, Wikipedia

Kay Hathway

Floodlighting Sponsorship - helping our light shine



You can keep our Church beautifully lit by sponsoring one of our floodlights for £15 a week, perhaps to celebrate a special occasion or to remember a loved one.

If you would like to sponsor our floodlighting, please use the form available from church or on our website or call us on 01328 862268 for more information.

December
In memory of Sheila Hurst and Prue Barton with love from Dorren.

January
For the lives well-lived of Pam and George Jessop, loved and remembered by Tracy and Dee.
Robert and Kathleen McKimm – beloved parents of Audrey and Joyce
David Sharp (Priest) – beloved husband of Audrey

January Walks with Fakenham Ramblers

Saturday walks start at 10.30am. Wednesday walks begin at 10am.
Bring a packed lunch on Saturday walks which are generally over 6 miles.
Otherwise, sturdy boots and waterproofs are all that's required.
Please arrive ten minutes or so before the walk start time.
Please contact the walk leader for up-to-date walk information.

Date & Time	Venue	Grid Reference Postcode Distance	Walk Leader(s)
Sat 10th Jan, 10.30am	**Weston Longville** Park/meet at Hall for All, Church St.	OS 238/115159 **NR9 5JU** 7miles	**Ann** 07798 664815
Weds 14th Jan, 10am	**Great Massingham** Park/meet at Village Hall	OS 250/797232 **PE32 2HU** 5.7miles	**Alison** 01328 712155
Sat 24th Jan, 10.30am	**Blakeney & Glandford** Park/meet at Blakeney Village Hall	OS 251/026437 **NR25 7PG** 9miles	**Bridget** 07866 034378
Weds 28th Jan, 10am	**Felbrigg & Metton** Park/meet at Felbrigg Hall NT car park. Free for NT members	OS252/195394 **NR11 8PR** 6.25 miles	**Lesley & Christine** 07875 177210

Old Fakenhamian experiences the kindness of strangers.

Returning to Norwich Airport from a short trip to Holland I began a great rummaging in my wallet and handbag for the parking ticket for my car. True to the perversity of inanimate objects, which really do seem to have a life of their own, it was not in my bag. I went to the parking desk and was issued a new ticket which, in the end, I did not need as the system had registered my number plate, so my frantic search had been unnecessary.

After arriving home in the dark and wet, I realised sometime later that I did not have my laptop with me. I felt I knew for sure that it had not been left on the plane. I must have put it on the seat next to me during the frantic rummaging for the ticket and failed to put it back in my handbag.

Next morning I rang the airport and spoke to a young lady called Kat. She found the laptop (hurrah!) and I was preparing to collect it when she asked me where I lived. When I said Fakenham, she said that she lived in Wells and would be coming to Fakenham later that day for the Christmas Lights switch on and would bring it to me. Later that day she arrived and while I was filling in the necessary paperwork, we got chatting. Her sister lives in Fakenham on Wells Road, and she was joining her for our Christmas events. She was absolutely lovely, and I can't thank her enough for her kindness. If you are her sister in Wells Road and are reading this column, I want to say how touched both my husband and I were. He, in particular, was amazed at how the story had turned out. Such a thing would never have happened in the great city of Amsterdam's Schiphol airport. The contrast between our life here in our wonderful rural community and life in a large suburb of Amsterdam had never been so strongly underlined.

If I'd found my ticket, I would have never had the pleasure of meeting Kat. God really does move in mysterious ways. And, it has saved you, for time being, from the column I had been planning for January to do with the Norfolk accent and the role of the glottal stop. Bet you can't wait until February for that!

Gilly Foortse

Town Council news

Farewell to 2025 and welcome to the New Year and our new pool!
2025 certainly brought a few challenges to the town council, with a major review of the council's estate, cemeteries and streetlighting, the new year starts on a very positive note. Excavation work started in December on the new swimming pool and the project is proceeding well.

One person who is really delighted about the new pool coming is Eric Mason, who taught many local youngsters to swim when he coached at the Fakenham Invaders Amateur Swimming Club. Eric, an inspiration to so many, is now 92 years old and still goes on the bus to Kings Lynn to swim twice a week.

In late November we arranged for Eric to have a special tour of the site, as work got underway. He has promised to be a regular once the pool is in operation! As we walked through the gyn at the Leisure Centre several people greeted him, as they clearly remembered him from their schooldays. As he said, "I don't recognise all of them, they were only children when I last saw them, but they all know me".

Eric brought along his scrapbooks, medals and memorabilia and it is clear to see that swimming was a very important part of life for the town. With the help of the Gas Museum and the Fakenham Archive group we were also able to re-unite Eric with Hagar, the mascot of the Invaders. Having been in the museum for many years, he was looking a little 'tired' so we tidied him up for his debut at the FLASH project.

Town Clerk wins national award
We would like to extend congratulations to our Town Clerk, Lesley Meanley, who has been honoured with a top national award from her professional body, the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). Representing clerks from over 5,000 town, parish, and community councils across England and Wales, SLCC awarded Lesley the CiLCA Exemplary Award at its National Conference in October for her submission for the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA). The qualification provides a broad knowledge of all the aspects of a clerk's work including roles and responsibilities, the law, procedures, finance planning and community involvement.

Angela Glynn,
Chairman, Fakenham Town Council



The Talking Times needs a volunteer Admin Assistant

If you enjoy admin tasks and are looking for a volunteer role that really makes a difference, we'd love to hear from you.

The Talking Times is an audio newspaper and magazine for people with visual impairments in the Fakenham and Dereham area.
The purpose of this role is to perform a range of tasks to support the front-line visitors who provide the audio equipment to people with visual impairments and to liaise with all those who read the material for distribution. You need to have good people skills as you will be dealing with volunteers, clients and referral organisations on behalf of The Talking Times. Once a year you'll help organise the annual report.
You'll be part of a busy team, with the convenience of working from your own home. Full training will be given and a laptop provided if necessary.

For more information or to register your interest, please contact secretary@fakenhamtalkingtimes.org
We'd love to hear from you!

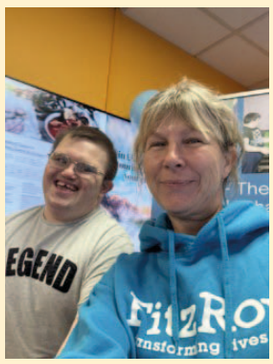
Walking Rugby Group Welcomes New Members

Get Active, Make Friends, and Enjoy Rugby at Your Own Pace
Are you looking for a fun and inclusive way to stay active, meet new people, and enjoy the spirit of rugby? We are inviting individuals over 40 and of all abilities to join us for a unique sporting experience. Walking Rugby is more than just a sport – it's a fantastic way to boost your wellbeing, build friendships, and have a laugh, all while staying connected to your community
It is a slower-paced, low-impact version of the traditional game, making it perfect for those who want to keep fit without the intensity of full-contact rugby. Whether you're a seasoned player, a complete beginner, or simply seeking a new way to stay social and healthy, our group is the perfect place to get involved.
We meet weekly at Fakenham Rugby Club, with club members on hand to guide you through the rules and ensure everyone gets the most out of each game. We play every Wednesday evening (under floodlights during the winter) from 1845 to 2000 hours. All you need is comfortable clothing, trainers with a good tread, and a willingness to give it a go! And your first session is free!
For further information or to join our next session, please contact Jeffrey Pearce at jdpearce@btinternet.com

Hays Travel raises funds for Fitzroy – The Maltings

The team from Hays Travel Fakenham has raised funds to help Fitzroy – The Maltings create a sensory garden. Fitzroy is a local charity that supports people with learning difficulties and autism.

Over £650 was raised last October to go towards creating a calming, inclusive sensory garden to offer enjoyment and relaxation to all who visit. Sincere thanks go to everyone from Fitzroy, Hays and the generosity of the public.







Photos supplied by Hays Travel Fakenham

Al-anon CORRECTION

Here is a correction to the previously published phone number.
The correct number is

0800 0086 811

APOLOGIES for any confusion caused by this error.

The nearest in-person meeting is in Norwich,
but there are also very supportive group meetings on Zoom.

Check the website for further info: al-anonuk.org.uk
The volunteers on the Helpline are understanding and helpful.

If someone's drinking is affecting your life, you are not alone.
Al-Anon has no affiliation with any religion, political entity or organisation.

Contact Help line 0800 0086 811 if you have any questions.

What is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity?



The WPCU is an annual celebration (18 – 25 January) of all Christian Churches together who are invited to pray for the unity of all Christians, to reflect on the scriptures together and to share in the fellowship of jointly organised ecumenical services.

See the flyer to see what's happening in Fakenham to mark the week.

Do joins us in any of the events if you can.

All are welcome.

CHURCHES TOGETHER

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is observed from 18-25 January.

Sunday 18 Jan
Launch Event, Sculthorpe Methodist Church at 3pm
Mon 19 Jan
Salvation Army Service at 4pm
Tues 20 Jan
Methodist-led, in Fakenham Parish Church at 2pm.
Weds 21 Jan *rest day*
Thurs 22 Jan
Holy Communion, Fakenham Parish Church at 9.30am
Fri 23 Jan
Holy Communion, St Anthony's RC Church at 10am
Sat 24 Jan
Vespers, Great Walsingham Orthodox Church at 6pm
Sun 25 Jan
Evening Prayer St Anthony's RC Church at 6pm

#wpcu2026

Let's meet …Lisa Hallett



Lisa, a paramedic, has had an interesting and varied career. She was born in Liverpool, but left when only 6 months old, as her father, who worked in insurance, got a job in Coltishall village. Lisa recalls a wonderful childhood, living on a newish estate where there were lots of children, and a beautiful river and common. Growing up, she joined Fire cadets, and her first career choice was to be a firefighter. She attended Paston College in North Walsham to do her A levels, but failed to get into the fire service, due to an eyesight problem at that time. She also was interested in becoming a paramedic, but was told that she needed to be 21.
It was then, she decided to do something completely different and became a travel agent. Following that, she applied to UEA to do nurse training. Once qualified, Lisa moved to Liverpool near her father and worked in a local hospital. From there she moved to Turkey, somewhere she knew from her travel agent days, and taught English as a second language. Lisa returned to the UK in order to support her Mum with her younger sister, who has learning difficulties. It was here that she applied to the UEA again, this time to do paramedic training. She recalls that she knew this was exactly what she wanted. Now she works full time for the East of England Ambulance service but in two roles. She works half time on the front line, where she is a team leader, attending call outs in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Herts and Bedford. She also works as a clinical triage, helping to determine the nature of calls passed on by 999 call handlers, assessing whether an ambulance needs to attend.

What might Fakenham benefit from? An Italian Restaurant.

Which event in your life, has been the most rewarding? I met my lovely husband Phil, online, about seven years ago, and two years ago we got married at The Castle in Norwich. I come from a large family and it enabled us to have the best family reunion at such a happy occasion. Both my Dad and stepdad, walked me down the aisle.

What is Phil's line of work? He's a physiotherapy assistant on a cancer ward in NNUH. It's very demanding work.

Who has been a great influence in your life? My dear Mum. She was a single parent bringing us three girls up, and we're constantly in touch. A strong person, and literally, my best mate.

Your earliest memory? Summer holidays in Nan's caravan parked on a farm in Scotland. I was about 5 years old.

Is a religious faith important in your life? I feel myself to be a spiritual person, believe in a higher power and I have a faith. I find the greatest difficulty with organised religions is that they direct you in what to believe.

What do you like best about your job? The people we serve. I get a glimpse into the lives of others, always interesting. Once I had tea and cakes with nuns in Hunstanton, when I was called there.

And the worst thing? Seeing people suffer.

What do you do in your spare time? I'm a huge reader, and I love crime novels. I'm currently reading Bare Bones by Kathy Reichs.

Anything else? Yes, my husband and I have an allotment, and we've grown lots of vegetables, including cauliflowers, beans, courgettes and squash. It is hard work, but so peaceful up there, and rewarding.

You mentioned your younger sister, does she ever stay with you? She lives in a supported living complex, but a good neighbour, Violet, suggested the Fakenham Gateway Club ran events she might be interested in. So, it has worked out really well, and when she stays here, she can attend.

What about your other sister? She tends to visit us here, although I have been to see her in Australia twice.

Family is clearly an important part of your life. You have a big family? I have sixteen cousins, and we keep in touch. Before I was born, my Dad was a stand-up comic and appeared in Liverpool with Cilla Black and Les Dennis.

Does music play a part in your life? Phil and I attend live music events, where possible. We saw Robbie Williams at Sandringham, but my favourite venue is Thetford Forest. We love going there.

What's one thing you're really good at? I think I give of myself and am empathic.

And something you're not so good at? Relaxing, because I feel guilty about it.

How might friends describe you? As talkative!

What is your favourite holiday destination? Crete. The people are lovely and the weather so good.

What did you learn from your parents? Resilience; not giving up.

Any advice you might give? Never give up on your dreams.

Kay Hathway

Christ Church, Fulmodeston

January Services

Sunday Jan 5th	4.00 pm	Evening Prayer
Sunday Jan 12th	11.00 am	Holy Communion
Sunday Jan 19th	10.00 am	Parish Communion at Fakenham
Sunday Jan 26th	4.00 pm	Evening Prayer



Thank you to all who supported our Advent Fair, in whatever way. It was a busy December and we were grateful for the services of Jonathan Dodd at the organ, which really makes our little church come that extra bit alive.

January is a murky old month isn't it? Probably all cultures recognise the symbolism of a light shining in the darkness: we can find something really helpful and hopeful about the simple act of lighting a candle. There is always hope even in a world which can feel rather gloomy and we need reminding of this.

A bright, light and Happy New Year to you all from us at Christ Church, Fulmodeston.

Carolyn Thomas-Coxhead

FAKENHAM AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY ARCHIVE



Over the last 20 years there has been considerable development in the north of the town and a good example of this is the photograph, taken in 2025 by Peter Boggis, which shows work under way to redevelop Morrisons filling station on Clipbush Lane. Morrisons replaced the Safeway supermarket here in 2004 and much more development is planned for it this year.

You can see many more photographs of Fakenham and the surrounding villages, as well as slide shows, displays and lots of scrapbooks by coming to one of our meetings in church on the last Tuesday of every month, from 2.00 to 4.00. You can also see them by looking on www.fakenhamcommunityarchive,weebly.com.

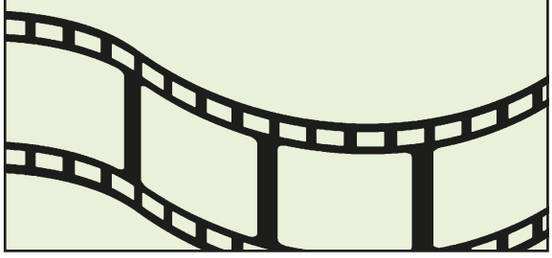
Howard Young

Community Noticeboard

Fakenham Film Society

The rescheduled AGM
Community Centre
7th January 2026 at 4.00pm.

The first film in our 2026 season is
Another Year (2010)
Thursday 15th January at 7.30pm
Central Cinema, Fakenham.



The Wensum Dementia Cafe

A warm welcome awaits you at
Fakenham Cricket Club, in Field Lane
every Friday from 10am until noon.

Come and meet our friendly helpers who love to chat while enjoying handicrafts, games and puzzles, or simply enjoy a friendly chat over tea, coffee and cakes.

For further details call Sharon 07827603415



FIRST FOCUS LUNCH CLUB

In increasingly busy lives, when many of us often surrender to the temptations of fast food, we may also risk losing cooking skills and having less nutritious diets.

Helping to overcome this is Fakenham charity First Focus where you can now attend our new Lunch Club.

From Wednesday 14th January, every other Wednesday from 10.30 you can go to the Scout Hut (behind the library) and join in with making a delicious main meal and dessert. If you prefer you can just watch and learn how to make them, but whatever you decide to do you can then join in with sampling the finished products together.

All ingredients and equipment are free (but you are welcome to make a donation) and you may make some new friends at the same time as getting lots of cooking tips and enjoy lots of new culinary activities.

If you'd like to come along, or need more info, please ring 01328 855083 or email clarissafirstfocus@gmail.com

Community Noticeboard



Can you deliver The Beacon?

Here are some examples where
we need your help-
You don't have to live there!
Greenway Lane north and / or south
William Road
Station close
Barons Hall / Hall Close
It you can help, please contact
fakenhambeacon@gmail.com
Thank you!

ROSEMARY ROOMS Dementia Support Group

The Gallow, Fakenham Racecourse

Every Monday 10.30 – 12.30 (except Christmas Day)

We offer a chance to socialise for people with memory problems and those who are helping them. There are refreshments, games, jigsaws and conversations.

Contact Judith 01328 864061
or Pam 01328 829735 if you have queries.



New to Fakenham?
Hoping to make new friends?

We have a thriving Mothers' Union at Fakenham Parish Church.

Come and meet us
you will be warmly welcomed!
Meetings on 2nd Tuesday of each month at 2pm in the Trinity Room in the Church.

Open Meetings to which everyone is welcome!

Would like a chat beforehand?
Contact Eunice on 01328 855665

Charity #: 1208763
Veterans Central West Raynham SHQ,
5 Blenheim Way,
West Raynham Business Park,
Fakenham, NR21 7PL

Veterans Central, will be running a monthly drop-in hub in Swaffham on the **last Tuesday of the month** between **Jan** and **May** from **10.30 am - 1pm,** starting on **27 Jan**.

Come along for a **FREE** hot drink, cake, a chat and the chance to ask question about veterans' support.

Venue: The Regency Room,
Swaffham Assembly Rooms.

You are welcome to bring partners or carers.
More information? Contact:
ops@veteranscentral.co.uk
Mobile: 07713 860040

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- EFAT (NCC) First Aid

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