

FUTURE SERVICES

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FEBRUARY 2026

Wednesday 18th February - Ash Wednesday

10am	Helmdon	Ash Wednesday Service
7pm	Syresham	Ash Wednesday Service

Sunday 22nd February - First Sunday of Lent

9.30am	Lois Weedon	Matins
9.30am	Whitfield	Holy Communion
10.30am	Helmdon	Morning Prayer
11.15am	Syresham	Praise & Prayer
11.15am	Wappenham	Holy Communion

MARCH 2026

Sunday 1st March - Second Sunday of Lent

10.30am	Helmdon	Benefice Holy Communion with speaker Jill Lammond from DAWN (Dignity for All Women Now)
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Sunday 8th March - Third Sunday of Lent

9am	Wappenham	Breakfast Church
9.30am	Lois Weedon	Morning Prayer
10.30am	Helmdon	Holy Communion
11.15am	Syresham	Morning Prayer

Sunday 15th March - Mothering Sunday

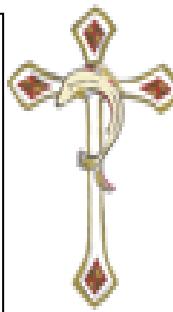
9.30am	Lois Weedon	Holy Communion
10.30am	Syresham	Family Service with the Chapel
10.30am	Helmdon	Family Praise & Prayer
11.15am	Wappenham	Family Praise & Prayer

Sunday 22nd March - Fifth Sunday of Lent

9.30am	Lois Weedon	Matins
9.30am	Whitfield	Holy Communion
10.30am	Helmdon	Morning Prayer
11.15am	Syresham	Praise & Prayer
11.15am	Wappenham	Holy Communion

PEWS NEWS

The Astwell Benefice



St Mary Magdalene Helmdon with Stuchbury & St Lawrence Radstone, St James the Great Syresham with St John the Evangelist Whitfield, St Mary & St Peter Lois Weedon with Weston & Plumpton, and St Mary the Virgin Wappenham.
www.astwellparishes.org.uk
<https://www.facebook.com/astwellbenefice>

Sunday 15th February 2026

Sunday next before Lent

Services in the Benefice:

9.30am	Lois Weedon	Holy Communion
10.30am	Helmdon	Praise & Prayer
11.15am	Syresham	Holy Communion
11.15am	Wappenham	Praise & Prayer

LENT SESSIONS

At this year's Lent sessions, we will be reading and discussing David Ford's *'Meeting God in John'*

The sessions will run as follows:

at Helmdon Reading Room on Mondays from 23rd February till 30th March, at 11am and

at Syresham Chapel Schoolroom on Wednesday 25th February and then Tuesdays till 24th March, at 7.30pm

Please let Hugh know if you would like to come so that the appropriate number of books can be ordered.

Collects & Readings for the Sunday Next before Lent

Collect:

Almighty Father,
whose Son was revealed in majesty
before he suffered death upon the cross:
give us grace to perceive his glory,
that we may be strengthened to suffer with him
and be changed into his likeness, from glory to
glory;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Old Testament Reading: Exodus 24. 12-end

¹² The Lord said to Moses, 'Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.' ¹³ So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. ¹⁴ To the elders he had said, 'Wait here for us, until we come to you again; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them.' ¹⁵ Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶ The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. ¹⁷ Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. ¹⁸ Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

New Testament Reading: 2 Peter 1. 16-end

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For he received honour and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.' ¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

¹⁹ So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, ²¹ because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 17:1-9

¹ Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³ Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' ⁵ While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!' ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, 'Get up and do not be afraid.' ⁸ And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, 'Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.'

Post Communion Collect:

Holy God,
we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ:
may we who are partakers at his table
reflect his life in word and deed,
that all the world may know his power to change
and save.

This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Prayers for Sunday next before Lent

Holy God your Son Jesus was wonderfully transfigured in front of his disciples high upon the holy mountain, and at that time he asked them to keep it a secret. Help us, not to keep the secret but to proclaim it to all that Jesus Christ is Lord. Give us strength to live the Gospel and to carry our cross in order that the world to come to know him in the same, personal way as we do.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Gracious God we pray for all the members of the Church in their vocation and ministry that they may serve you in truth and love. We pray especially for our Rector, Reader and lay people who are called to serve our Benefice. We also pray for all the events and services which are planned for this coming Lent and Easter.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Creator God, you gave us a beautiful world to live in and to care for. We know that in many areas our Stewardship has not met your expectations yet, through the victory of Jesus Christ, we know also that you can transfigure and restore all things in creation. We pray earnestly, for a change of heart and attitude, an awakening to a better way of living, and the courage to reject wrong principles and decisions throughout the world.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Father God, forgive us when we waste our lives by being too busy to enjoy your creation. Teach us how to make spaces in the day to do the things we most enjoy. Just as you rested from your work, help us to practise the discipline of recreation.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Loving God, we pray for all who lie stricken with illness, grief or despair. Bring healing to every broken life, relief to all who are in pain, hope to the dying and strength to all who care for them.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Merciful God, we raise before you those whom we love who are already transformed in likeness to your glorious body. Comfort us and all who mourn; give them a patient faith in this time of darkness and strengthen them with the knowledge of your love

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Everlasting God in the week that lies before us may we reflect your love in our families, our church and our community; so that the world can see that we are transformed by Christ and thereby draw others into Jesus' loving care.

Merciful father: accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

TO HOLD IN YOUR PRAYERS THIS WEEK:

We bring before our loving heavenly Father those in our villages and others we know who are unwell, recovering from injury or illness and all those who need our prayers for any reason.

Please pray for the family and friends of Linda Adams, whose funeral will be held at 11am on Saturday 21st February at Whitfield

From Helmdon: Barbara Buxton, Diane Thorpe, and Joan Hadfield.

From Lois Weedon & Weston: Joan Jacobs, Lis Cockrell, Caroline Hunt, Margaret Seckington and Anna Mackaness.

From Syresham: George Summers and Suzanne Prestcott.

From Wappenham: Judy King, Dorothy & David Nicholson, and Edwin & Phyllis King.

For those known to us:

Margaret Reardon, Pauline Collis, Evelyn Johnson, Ollie Dotterill, Francis Potsoni, Mary Coates, Emily Barthelamy, May Oliver, Lily & Theo Wright, Christobel Grant and Diane Snow.

Please pray for those bereaved, and the family & friends of:

Alan Jones, Linda and Will Adams, Ailsa Williams, Jonathan Sayers, Joan McCann, Maralynn Hunter, Ann Smith, John Thorne and Eileen Watson.

Also, please pray for the work of the Beacon Centre, the Wolverton Mission, the Hope Centre, Katharine House Hospice, Northampton Women's Aid and The Women's Refuge. We also continue to pray for refugees fleeing persecution and all victims of hatred, terrorism and war.

2026 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

FEBRUARY

Tues 17th

The Friends of St James are hosting a pancake lunch in the Chapel Schoolroom, Syresham, 12-2pm.

BENEFICE CONTACTS

Reverend Hugh White (Rector):

Tel: 01869 347889

Email: rectorastwell@gmail.com

Please contact the Rector or your Churchwarden/Representative if you have queries about baptisms, weddings, or funerals.

Paul Stothard: Reader & Lay Chair

stothy@live.co.uk, Tel: 01295 760816

Alice Palmer: Benefice Treasurer

alice.palmer16@btinternet.com, Tel: 01280 850252

Fiona Mason: Benefice Safeguarding Officer

fomason@hotmail.com Tel: 01280 850439

Sheena Warren: Chair of Social & Fundraising Committee

sheena@bellplantation.co.uk,

Tel: 01327 860230

Wiggy Smith: Chair of Pastoral Care Committee

wiggy.smith44@gmail.com, Tel: 01295 760953

Sarah Rudkin: Benefice Secretary & Pews News Editor,

rectorastwellbenefice@aol.co.uk, Tel: 01327 830965

Churchwardens /Representatives (for individual church matters):

Helmdon: Cliff Netten, apnetten@hotmail.com
& Paul Stothard, stothy@live.co.uk

Lois Weedon & Weston: Frank Hunter
frank.hunter@btinternet.com

Radstone: Penny Bonner
penny.bonner@btconnect.com

Syresham: Alice Palmer
alice.palmer16@btinternet.com

Wappenham: Sheena Warren
sheena@bellplantation.co.uk

Whitfield: Claire Bonner cbonner00@gmail.com

Regular events held in the Benefice:

- **Helmdon Coffee Morning** is held each Tuesday, 10 am-12 noon in the Reading Room
- **Whitfield Coffee Morning** is held on the first Tuesday of the month ,10am-12 noon in the Village Hall.
- **St Mary's, Wappenham Coffee Morning**, is held on the first Wednesday of the month, 10 am-12 noon, in the Village Hall.
- **St Mary & St Peter, Lois Weedon Coffee Morning** is held from 10am until 12 noon on the first Friday of each month, in Lois Weedon Village Hall.

Benefice Bulletin - 15th February 2026

As we approach Lent, here's George Herbert's poem 'Lent'. It's sometimes a bit obscure and I'm not sure the glosses are always correct. The poem responds to 17th Century Puritan sentiment that Lent shouldn't be kept because it was unbiblical.

Welcome deare feast of Lent: who loves not thee,
He loves not Temperance, or Authoritie,

But is compos'd of passion.

The Scriptures bid us *fast*; the Church sayes, *now*:

Give to thy Mother, what thou wouldst allow the Church

To ev'ry Corporation.organisation with rules

The humble soul compos'd of love and fear
Begins at home, and layes the burden there,

When doctrines disagree.

He sayes, in things which use hath justly got,

custom, brought into being

I am a scandal to the Church, and not

The Church is so to me.

True Christians should be glad of an occasion

To use their temperance, seeking no evasion,

When good is seasonable;

Unlesse Authoritie, which should increase

The obligation in us, make it lesse,*

And Power itself disable.

Besides the cleanness of sweet abstinence,

Quick thoughts and motions at a small expense,

A face not fearing light:

Whereas in fulnesse there are sluttish fumes,

Sowre exhalations, and dishonest rheumes,²

Revenging the delight.

Then those same pendant profits, which the spring
And Easter intimate, enlarge the thing,*

And goodnesse of the deed.

Neither ought other mens abuse of Lent

Spoil the good use; lest by that argument

We forfeit all our Creed.

It's true, we cannot reach Christ's fortieth day;

Yet to go part of that religious way,

Is better than to rest:

We cannot reach our Savior's purity;

Yet are bid, *Be holy ev'n as he.*

In both let's do our best.

Who goeth in the way which Christ hath gone,
Is much more sure to meet with him, than one

That travelleth by-ways:

Perhaps my God, though he be far before,

May turn, and take me by the hand, and more

May strengthen my decays.

Yet Lord instruct us to improve our fast

By starving sin and taking such repast

As may our faults control:

That ev'ry man may revel at his door,

Not in his parlor; banqueting the poor,

And among those his soul.

*unless (Church) authority should demand too much and
disincline people to obey

*the approaching rewards of Spring and Easter increase
the significance and value of the Lenten fast

Blessings
Hugh