

FUTURE SERVICES

www.astwellparishes.org.uk

JANUARY 2026

Sunday 25th January – Third Sunday of Epiphany

9.30am	Lois Weedon	Matins
9.30am	Whitfield	Holy Communion (Patronal Festival of St John the Evangelist)
10.30am	Helmdon	Morning Prayer
11.15am	Syresham	Praise & Prayer
11.15am	Wappenham	Holy Communion

FEBRUARY 2026

Sunday 1st February - Candlemas

10.30am	Lois Weedon	Benefice Holy Communion for Candlemas
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Wednesday 4th February

10am	Helmdon	Midweek Holy Communion
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Sunday 8th February – Second Sunday before Lent

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

Sunday 15th February – Sunday next before Lent

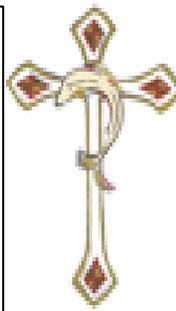
9.30am	Lois Weedon	Holy Communion
10.30am	Helmdon	Praise & Prayer
11.15am	Syresham	Holy Communion
11.15am	Wappenham	Praise & Prayer

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



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.

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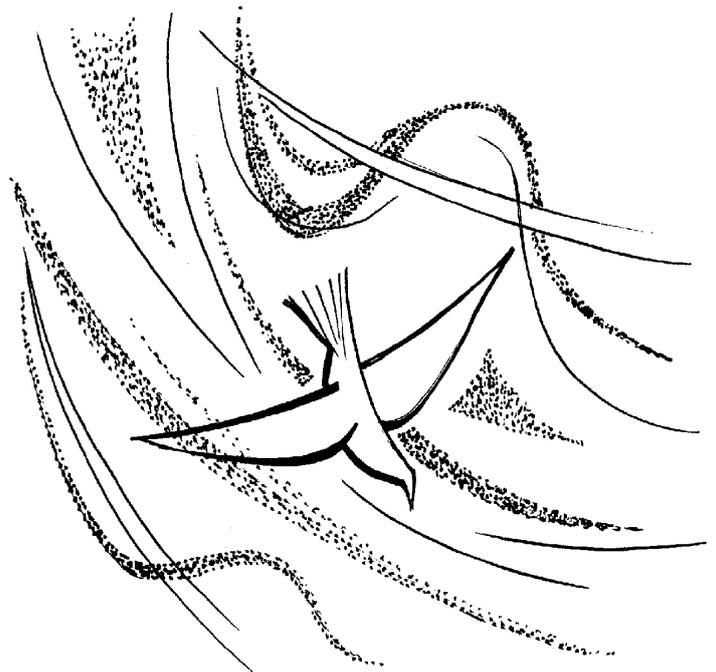
<https://www.facebook.com/astwellbenefice>

Sunday 18th January 2026

Second Sunday of Epiphany

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



Collects & Readings for the Second Sunday of Epiphany

Collect:

Almighty God,
in Christ you make all things new:
transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of
your grace,
and in the renewal of our lives
make known your heavenly glory;
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.

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 49:1-7

¹ Listen to me, O coastlands,
pay attention, you peoples from far away!
The Lord called me before I was born,
while I was in my mother's womb he named me.
² He made my mouth like a sharp sword,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow,
in his quiver he hid me away.
³ And he said to me, 'You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified.'
⁴ But I said, 'I have laboured in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my cause is with the Lord,
and my reward with my God.'
⁵ And now the Lord says,
who formed me in the womb to be his servant,
to bring Jacob back to him,
and that Israel might be gathered to him,
for I am honoured in the sight of the Lord,
and my God has become my strength—
⁶ he says,
'It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to restore the survivors of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.'
⁷ Thus says the Lord,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,
the slave of rulers,
'Kings shall see and stand up,
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,
because of the Lord, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.'

New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Salutation

¹ Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will
of God, and our brother Sosthenes,
² To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who
are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints,
together with all those who in every place call on the
name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and
ours:

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the
Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I give thanks to my God always for you because of the
grace of God that has been given you in Christ
Jesus, ⁵ for in every way you have been enriched in him,
in speech and knowledge of every kind— ⁶ just as the
testimony of Christ has been strengthened among
you— ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift
as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus
Christ. ⁸ He will also strengthen you to the end, so that
you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus
Christ. ⁹ God is faithful; by him you were called into the
fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gospel Reading: John 1:29-42

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and
declared, 'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the
sin of the world! ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, "After me
comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was
before me." ³¹ I myself did not know him; but I came
baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be
revealed to Israel.' ³² And John testified, 'I saw the Spirit
descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on
him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but the one who sent
me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you
see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who
baptizes with the Holy Spirit." ³⁴ And I myself have seen
and have testified that this is the Son of God.'
³⁵ The next day John again was standing with two of his
disciples, ³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by, he
exclaimed, 'Look, here is the Lamb of God!' ³⁷ The two
disciples heard him say this, and they followed
Jesus. ³⁸ When Jesus turned and saw them following, he
said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to
him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher), 'where
are you staying?' ³⁹ He said to them, 'Come and see.'
They came and saw where he was staying, and they
remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in
the afternoon. ⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak
and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's
brother. ⁴¹ He first found his brother Simon and said to
him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated
Anointed). ⁴² He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at
him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You are to be
called Cephas' (which is translated Peter).

Post Communion Collect:

God of glory,
you nourish us with your Word
who is the bread of life:
fill us with your Holy Spirit
that through us the light of your glory
may shine in all the world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayers for Second Sunday of Epiphany

The feast of Epiphany brings the Christmas season to an end. As we now move on into the Church's year, the poem "Now the Work of Christmas Begins", composed by Howard Thurman, an African American theologian, educator, and civil rights leader, makes an excellent framework for this week's intercessions.

'Now The Work of Christmas Begins' by Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with the flocks,
then the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal those broken in spirit,
to feed the hungry,
to release the oppressed,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among all peoples,
to make a little music with the heart...
And to radiate the Light of Christ,
every day, in every way, in all that we do and in all that we say.
Then the work of Christmas begins.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer to "find the lost"**
Shepherd God, who protects the flock and searches tirelessly for those who wander from the fold, retrieve the lost and bring them home.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer to "heal those broken in spirit"**
Loving God, wrap your loving arms around those who are broken hearted, depressed, or feeling that no one cares about them, and fill their hearts with your peace, joy, and love.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer "to feed the hungry"**
Faithful God, we pray for everyone who is hungry today far away or in our local communities. We pray for those who share this earth with us, but for whom hunger is a crippling, life-threatening danger. We pray for those who have nothing and those who have too little to eat. We give thanks for the generosity of those giving to charity and foodbanks.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer "to release the oppressed"**
Almighty God, who has created us in your own image, give us grace to fearlessly fight against evil and never to accept oppression; help us to employ our freedom in the maintenance of justice in our communities and throughout the world.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer "to rebuild the nations" and "to bring peace among all peoples"**
Creator God we pray for those countries that are being torn apart by war and terrorism. We ask you to bring about changes that would bring peace and restoration, for both populations and cities alike especially in the Ukraine war and in the Holy Land.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer "to make a little music with the heart"**
Father God we especially pray for our own role in doing the true work of Christmas. May we be the ones who radiate the Light of Christ, every day, in every way, in all that we do and in all that we say.

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.

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, Christopher Carr, 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, Revd Will Adams, Ailsa Williams, Jonathan Sayers, Joan McCann, Maralynn Hunter, Ann Smith, John Thorne, Eileen Watson, Geoff Abbey, Jean Spendlove, Vic Butler, Philip Gulliver, Jean Parks, Jean Mackaness, Diane Watts, Peter Stubbs, Nicholas Reynell, Linda Smalley, Tony Wilmot, John Maleham, Betty Stubbs, Wendy Procter, Derek Morris, David Brookhouse, Jonathan Miller, David Powell, Joyce Beech.

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.

BENEFICE CONTACTS

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Wappenham: Sheena Warren

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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
- **Syresham Coffee Morning** is held each Thursday, 10 am-12 noon in the Village Hall.
- **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 - 18th January 2026

January is a good time to take stock of the year past and look ahead to what might happen in the current year.

First, we should rejoice in the level of overall attendance at our services and other events over Christmas. Some services drew low numbers (perhaps Midnight Mass has had its day) but very many people we don't often see in Church came over the period. The figures and last year's figures in general need further analysis, of course.

We are doing well financially. We have again achieved the full payment of our Diocesan share. That involved some generous giving by some of our parishes in excess of the target amount allocated to them in respect of the share – for which many thanks - but that hasn't laid waste any parish's finances.

The need for this generosity arose partly because *the Let's shine Together* festival caused less money to be raised for the benefice considered as a different entity from the parishes (Astwell has a separate *benefice* account). But the parishes together *are* the benefice and the identity of parishes with benefice means that 'benefice' activities should be regarded as shared parish activities. The point is obvious, really, but it doesn't look as if *Let's shine* is thoroughly owned yet by the parishes: there seems to be a bit of an 'it's good, but it's not really us and it interferes with our stuff' attitude. It would be better to take the view that it absolutely is us, and that it has made a huge difference in beneficial ways and with not much negative impact of any kind. We, the Astwell parishes, have offered (and had accepted) the gift of the festival to people by no means signed up to regular churchgoing and we have created a five - figure sum for distribution to good causes. There's impact, there's relevance! It's an amazing achievement and the Astwell parishes have done it. Please pat yourselves on the back!

The success of *Let's shine* last year means that it's going to happen again this year. What else awaits? Well, we'll be looking at the possibility of appointing a Parish Nurse and a Children's and Youth Worker at the upcoming Benefice PCC meeting. There's also – and reference to this is rather appropriate at the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - the matter of Astwell becoming a single parish. Some of you don't find that an attractive prospect, others see some merit in the idea. Further research and discussion is needed.

Every blessing,

Hugh