

FUTURE SERVICES

www.astwellparishes.org.uk

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 (at Church)
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

Sunday 29th March – Palm Sunday

10.30am	Syresham	Palm Sunday Benefice Holy Communion
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HOLY WEEK

Monday 30th March

7pm	Whitfield	Compline
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Tuesday 31st March

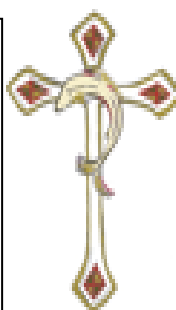
5.30pm	Syresham	Compline
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Wednesday 1st April

7pm	Lois Weedon	Compline
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Maundy Thursday 2nd April

6.30pm	Helmdon	Passover Meal & Holy Communion
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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 22nd February 2026

First Sunday of Lent

Services in the Benefice:

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

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 Tuesdays from 24th February until 24th March, at 7.40pm
(note change of days and time!)

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

Collects & Readings for First Sunday of Lent

Collect:

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:
give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit;
and, as you know our weakness,
so may we know your power to save;
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: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

¹⁵ The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.'

³ ¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' ² The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³ but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die."' ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; ⁵ for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

New Testament Reading: Romans 5:12-19

¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned— ¹³ sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come.

¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶ And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgement following one

trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. ¹⁷ If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹ For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 4:1-11

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' ⁴ But he answered, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone,

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."

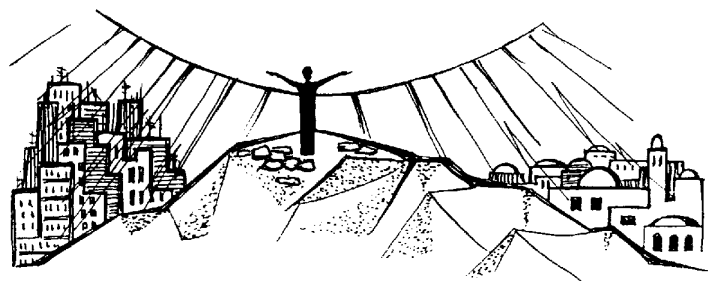
⁷ Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; ⁹ and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! for it is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Post Communion Collect:

Lord God,
you have renewed us with the living bread from heaven; by it you nourish our faith,
increase our hope, and strengthen our love:
teach us always to hunger for him who is the true and living bread, and enable us to live by every word that proceeds from out of your mouth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Prayers for First Sunday of Lent

Holy God, as we begin our Lenten journey, mindful of the temptation and suffering that your son Jesus Christ endured in the wilderness. We ask for you to strengthen us, as we find ourselves in the desert of human faults, failings and sinfulness.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Gracious God, we ask for your guidance in all that our church plans for the coming six weeks of Lent; For the Lenten events and for all special services to be held in Benefice.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Creator God, your love reaches out to the boundaries of our world, to the rich who have everything they need and the poor who have nothing except misery and oppression. We pray for all your people whoever they are, wherever they live and whatever their circumstances; that in their joy and sorrow, the knowledge of your presence might bring comfort, healing and restoration.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Father God, we pray against all areas of our society where good food is wasted or disposed of unnecessarily when it could be used to relieve suffering. We thank you for the work of food banks and charities which support disadvantaged individuals and communities.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Loving God, we pray for all of those, dear to our hearts who are ill or in any kind of need. We also give thanks for those on the road to recovery following illness, surgery or procedures and for those whose only healing will come through death.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Merciful God, when death comes close to us through the loss of a family member or friend, help us to remember them and rejoice in their fellowship, giving thanks for the way that, as their lives touched ours, so we were enriched by that relationship.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Everlasting God, your love and forgiveness washes over us and astonishes us with generosity. May we go out from this time of worship today as people who enjoy complete forgiveness and a restored relationship with you and all those with whom we share our lives.

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.

Dates for your Diary

MARCH

Fri 6th 'An Evening for Ukraine', Tingewick Village Hall, 7 for 7.30pm' Tickets £10., Contact Malcolm Orr Ewing on 07734 166648 for tickets

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

wiggysmith44@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 – 22nd February 2026

Here's what the CofE says about Lent in *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*:

Lent may originally have followed Epiphany, just as Jesus' sojourn in the wilderness followed immediately on his baptism, but it soon became firmly attached to Easter, as the principal occasion for baptism and for the reconciliation of those who had been excluded from the Church's fellowship for apostasy or serious faults. This history explains the characteristic notes of Lent – self-examination, penitence, self-denial, study, and preparation for Easter, to which almsgiving has traditionally been added.

*Now is the healing time decreed
for sins of heart and word and deed,
when we in humble fear record
the wrong that we have done the Lord.*

(Latin, before 12th century)

As the candidates for baptism were instructed in Christian faith, and as penitents prepared themselves, through fasting and penance, to be readmitted to communion, the whole Christian community was invited to join them in the process of study and repentance, the extension of which over forty days would remind them of the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, being tested by Satan. Ashes are an ancient sign of penitence; from the middle ages it became the custom to begin Lent by being marked in ash with the sign of the cross. The calculation of the forty days has varied considerably in Christian history. It is now usual in the West to count them continuously to the end of Holy Week (not including Sundays), so beginning Lent on the sixth Wednesday before Easter, Ash Wednesday. Liturgical dress is the simplest possible. Churches are kept bare of flowers and decoration. Gloria in excelsis is not used. The Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare or Refreshment Sunday) was allowed as a day of relief from the rigour of Lent, and the Feast of the Annunciation almost always falls in Lent; these breaks from austerity are the background to the modern observance of Mothering Sunday on the Fourth Sunday of Lent. As Holy Week approaches, the atmosphere of the season darkens; the readings begin to anticipate the story of Christ's suffering and death, and the reading of the Passion Narrative gave to the Fifth Sunday its name of Passion Sunday. There are many devotional exercises which may be used in Lent and Holy Week outside the set liturgy. The Stations of the Cross, made popular in the West by the Franciscans after they were granted custody of the Christian sites in the Holy Land, are the best known.

Do try to observe Lent in some way. You'll be pleased you have, come Easter!

Hugh