

FUTURE SERVICES

www.astwellparishes.org.uk

MARCH/APRIL 2026

Sunday 29th March – Palm Sunday

10.30am Syresham Palm Sunday Benefice
Holy Communion

Monday 30th March

7pm Whitfield Compline

Tuesday 31st March

5.30pm Syresham Compline

Wednesday 1st April

7pm Lois Weedon Compline

Maundy Thursday 2nd April

6.30pm Helmdon Passover Meal &
Holy Communion

Good Friday 3rd April

9.30am Lois Weedon Meditation
10.30am Syresham Procession Church to
Chapel (inc service)
11.15am Wappenham Meditation
2.30pm Helmdon Procession from War
Memorial
3.00pm Helmdon Good Friday Liturgy
in Church

Easter Saturday 4th April

9.00pm Plumpton Easter Vigil & First
Communion of Easter

Easter Sunday 5th April

6.15am Radstone Dawn Fire
9.00am Whitfield Holy Communion
9.30am Lois Weedon Holy Communion
10.15am Helmdon Holy Communion
& Baptism
11.15am Syresham Holy Communion
11.30am Wappenham Holy Communion

Wednesday 8th April

10am Helmdon Midweek Holy
Communion

*(pls note that this replaces the service usually
held on first Wed of the month)*

Sunday 12th April – Second Sunday of Easter

9.00am Wappenham Breakfast Church
9.30am Lois Weedon Morning Prayer
10.30am Helmdon Holy Communion
11.15am Syresham Morning Prayer
2.00pm Lois Weedon Baptism

Sunday 19th April – Third Sunday of Easter

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



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 March 2026

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Services in the Benefice:

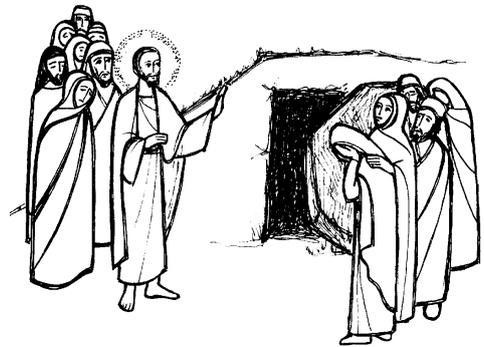
9.30am Lois Weedon Matins

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

Collects & Readings for Fifth Sunday of Lent

Collect:

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
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: Ezekiel 37:1-14

(Please refer to your bible for this reading)

New Testament Reading: Romans 8:6-11

⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Gospel Reading: John 11:1-45

¹Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' ⁴But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' ⁵Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. ⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' ⁸The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' ⁹Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' ¹¹After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' ¹²The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' ¹³Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' ¹⁶Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

¹⁷When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' ²³Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' ²⁴Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' ²⁵Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' ²⁷She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

²⁸When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' ²⁹And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³²When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' ³⁵Jesus began to weep. ³⁶So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' ³⁷But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

³⁸Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' ⁴¹So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' ⁴³When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

⁴⁵Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Post Communion Collect:

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us that what we do for the least of our
brothers and sisters we do also for you:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as you were the servant of all,
and gave up your life and died for us,
but are alive and reign, now and for ever.

Prayers for Fifth Sunday of Lent

Holy God, before raising Lazarus Jesus gave you thanks. Following his example, we now give you thanks for hearing our prayers of intercession even before we pray them.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Gracious God, in St. Matthew's Gospel Jesus reminds us "that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." And so, we thank you for Jesus' presence here with us today in this place as we raise our hearts and voices in worship, praise and thanksgiving.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Creator God, drive away despair from our politics, revive our dreams of justice and truth, restore our passion for what is good and right. Establish your just and gentle rule throughout the world where there is conflict and where peace has been powerless and violent people hold sway.

We pray for all those who lead our nations of the world and for those in authority that they may always work for peace and for the good of their people.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Father God, in his dealing with Mary, Martha and Lazarus Jesus showed his love for those friends who had become like family to him. We thank you for our friends and for the richness and diversity that they bring to our lives. Help us to return that gift to them whenever we meet and to keep in touch with those who we see less frequently.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Loving God, touch, heal and restore all who are ill. Open their hearts and their minds to welcome your restoring power so that their sickness ends, and your healing begins.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Merciful God, the death of a friend is one of life's most difficult situations to cope with. Help us through Jesus' example to recognise that our tears are natural and bring healing. Help us also to see that, through his sacrifice that first Good Friday, death is no longer such a final thing and that we shall meet again in God's good time.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Everlasting God, we thank you for having heard us and, confident that all is safely in your hands, we go back out into the world surrounded by your love and care in all that we do in the coming week.

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, 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:

Andrew Jackson, 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.



BENEFICE CONTACTS

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

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Dates for your Diary

MARCH

Sat 28th *The Friends of St Mary Magdalene are holding a 'Music and Food' quiz at Helmdon Reading Room, 7:30pm*

MAY

Sat 16th *Notability Concert, Syresham Church, 7.30pm*

Regular Coffee Mornings

- **Helmdon** - Tuesdays, 10 am-12 noon in Reading Room
- **Whitfield** - first Tuesday of the month, 10am-12 noon, in Village Hall.
- **Wappenham** - first Wednesday of the month, 10 am-12 noon, in Village Hall.
- **Lois Weedon** - 10am until 12 noon, first Friday of the month, in Village Hall.

Benefice Bulletin – 22nd March 2026

On Monday next week Year One of Helmdon School will be coming to Helmdon Church to find out about how churches are decorated in Lent. Wrong season, really. They came towards Christmas last year on the same decoration quest – but at Christmas there was a bit more that we could offer decoration-wise than in no-flower Lent. Still, we will have a good time together talking about Holy Week and Easter and each child will get a palm cross (a bit of seasonal decoration, I suppose), so I don't think they'll feel short-changed. But maybe we should offer them a bit more.

This Sunday is Passion Sunday, the beginning of Passiontide, the two weeks leading up to Easter. A lot of the writing on Passiontide and its characteristics I've been looking at quickly slips into Holy Week, the second week of Passiontide, and into an account of what goes on in the Triduum – the great three days from Maundy Thursday evening to dawn at Easter. However, there are things that some Christian denominations, and some Anglican churches, do that happen – or don't happen - at the beginning of Passiontide.

As to the not happening: if you usually ring bells at the Mass, you might not do it in Passiontide; not very relevant in Astwell Communion services as they are (at the moment) and not helpful for the Helmdon School visit (or should I get out my liturgical bells?). It's also suggested that churches might turn the dial down on musical excitement in general; I think the most excitable, singing-wise, we might get in Astwell on Sunday is 'At the name of Jesus' and I feel no inclination to put this (with either possible tune) under an interdict.

But then there's something that happens positively in some churches on Passion Sunday: the veiling of the cross, something added, not withdrawn. That might be a decoration we could put before the Helmdon children (if decoration is the right word) and even before ourselves – fish about in your vestries and you might find a purple veil. The idea of that veiling in Passiontide comes from John's Gospel as it records the period between the raising of Lazarus (this Sunday's gospel) and Jesus' concealing himself before his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday: *Jesus therefore no longer walked about openly among the Jews, but went to a town called Ephraim in the region near the wilderness; and he remained there with the disciples.* For us, though, the unusualness of a veiled cross might give our attention to Jesus and his sacrifice for us a renewed freshness and intensity and reveal more of, rather than conceal, Jesus' love of us.

The Helmdon children will notice the veiled cross and ask about it.

But what about you, as individuals, in Passiontide? It's a time for focussing on Jesus' passion ahead of Holy Week. How are you going to do that?

With blessings,

Hugh