

FUTURE SERVICES

www.astwellparishes.org.uk

MAY 2026

Sunday 3rd May – Fifth Sunday of Easter

9am	Wappenham	Breakfast Church
9.30am	Lois Weedon	Morning Prayer
10.30am	Helmdon	Holy Communion
11.15am	Syresham	Morning Prayer
2pm	Helmdon	Wedding Blessing

Sunday 10th May – Rogation Sunday (Sixth Sunday of Easter)

9.30am	Lois Weedon	BCP Holy Communion
11.00am	College Farm Buildings, Helmdon NN13 5QB	Benefice Rogation Service with speaker from RABI, followed by Roast Pork Lunch

(See www.astwellparishes.org.uk for more information/to book)

Thursday 14th May – Ascension Day

6.30pm	Helmdon	Benefice Ascension Day Service
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Saturday 16th May

2pm	Syresham	Wedding Blessing
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Sunday 17th May – Seventh Sunday of Easter

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

Saturday 23rd May

1pm	Lois Weedon	Wedding
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Sunday 24th May – Pentecost (Whit Sunday)

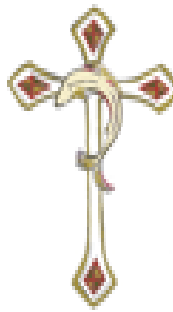
9.30am	Lois Weedon	Matins
9.30am	Whitfield	Holy Communion
10.30am	Helmdon	Morning Prayer
11.15am	Syresham	Praise & Prayer
11.15am	Wappenham	Holy Communion

Sunday 31st May – Trinity Sunday

10.30am	Radstone	Benefice Holy Communion
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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.
- **Syresham Coffee Morning** is held each Thursday, 10 am-12 noon in the Village Hall.
- **Lois Weedon** - 10am until 12 noon, first Friday of the month, in Village Hall.



PEWS NEWS

The Astwell Benefice

St Mary Magdalene Helmdon with Stuchbury & St Lawrence Radstone, St James the Great Syresham, 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 26th April 2026

Fourth Sunday of Easter

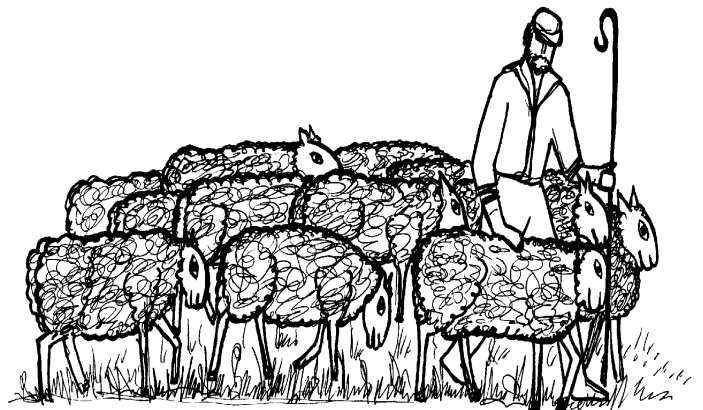
Services in the Benefice:

Please note the change to the normal service pattern

9.30am Lois Weedon Matins

10.30am Helmdon Holy Communion by Extension

11.15am Syresham Praise & Prayer



Collects & Readings for Fourth Sunday of Easter

Collect:

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the
life:

raise us, who trust in him,
from the death of sin to the life of righteousness,
that we may seek those things which are above,
where he reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm 23

New Testament Reading: Acts 2. 42 -end

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching
and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the
prayers.

⁴³Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders
and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All who
believed were together and had all things in
common; ⁴⁵they would sell their possessions and
goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had
need. ⁴⁶Day by day, as they spent much time together
in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their
food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God
and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by
day the Lord added to their number those who were
being saved.

¹⁹For it is to your credit if, being aware of God, you
endure pain while suffering unjustly. ²⁰If you endure
when you are beaten for doing wrong, where is the
credit in that? But if you endure when you do right and
suffer for it, you have God's approval. ²¹For to this you
have been called, because Christ also suffered for you,
leaving you an example, so that you should follow in
his steps.

²²'He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.'

²³When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when
he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted
himself to the one who judges justly. ²⁴He himself bore
our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from
sins, we might live for righteousness; by his
wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were going
astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the
shepherd and guardian of your souls.

New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 2. 19-25

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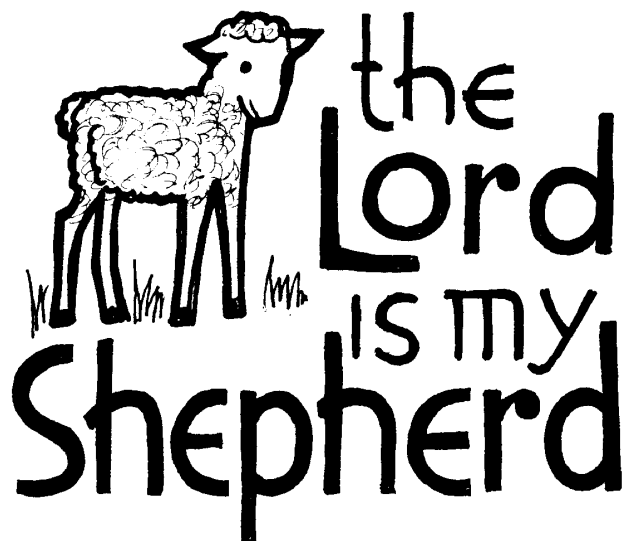
Gospel Reading: John 10:1-10

¹'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the
sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a
thief and a bandit. ²The one who enters by the gate is
the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the
gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his
own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has
brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the
sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They
will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him
because they do not know the voice of strangers.' ⁶Jesus
used this figure of speech with them, but they did not
understand what he was saying to them.

⁷So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am
the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are
thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to
them. ⁹I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be
saved, and will come in and go out and find
pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and
destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it
abundantly.

Post Communion Collect:

Merciful Father,
you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good
shepherd, and in his love for us to lay down his life
and rise again:
keep us always under his protection,
and give us grace to follow in his steps;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Intercessions for Fourth Sunday of Easter

Lord, you are our Shepherd, and we pray that you will protect us from all danger by keeping watch over us, guide us towards green pastures where we can be nourished by your word and lead us to pure still waters where we can be refreshed by your love.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Lord, you are our Shepherd, and we pray for our church leaders that they too may care for and lead us by following the example of love and service you demonstrated in your earthly ministry.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Lord, you are our Shepherd, and we pray for the world that was given to us as an inheritance, on the understanding that we would care for it as shepherds care for their flocks. Teach us to look after our beautiful planet and care for it wisely, whilst sharing its gifts more fairly and working together with all of its inhabitants to ease its sufferings.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Lord, you are our Shepherd, and we pray for our families and friends who need to hear the voice of Jesus the Good Shepherd; who knows every one of them by name; who offers rest to the weary and salvation to sinners and life eternal to all who accept him into their lives.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Lord, you are our Shepherd who seeks out the lost and the sick. We pray for those we know who are lost in illness and ask you to reassure them with the knowledge that you are watching over them in their suffering and that many are praying for their recovery.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Lord, you are our Shepherd, so we pray for those who have died and for those who ache with sorrow in their loss of a loved one. May those we now name before you find rest in the Spirit's embrace as you welcome them into the great sheepfold, safe in your keeping for ever

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Lord, you are our Shepherd, and we thank you for this time we have shared in prayer and thanksgiving. In the week ahead we ask you to lead us down the streets of our towns and villages and guide us safely along the roads and motorways we travel.

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, Anna Mackaness, Clyde Burbidge and Jack Sheppard.

From Syresham: George Summers and Suzanne Prestcott.

From Wappenham: Judy King, Dorothy & David Nicholson, Edwin & Phyllis King, Charlotte & Arif Supple.

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.

Dates for your Diary

APRIL

Sat 25th "Spring Walk" by the Friends of St James, Syresham, 10am

MAY

Sat 9th Plant Sale, at the Chapel, Weston, 10-1pm (proceeds to St Mary & St Peter, Lois Weedon)

Sun 10th Benefice Rogation Service & Roast Pork Lunch at College Farm Buildings, Helmdon at 11am, with guest speaker from RABI

Sat 16th Notability Concert, Syresham Church, 7.30pm

Sun 17th Messy Church at Syresham, 3pm

Mon 18th Astwell Benefice APCM, Wappenham Village Hall, 7pm

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

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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

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Radstone: Penny Bonner

penny.bonner@btconnect.com

Syresham: Alice Palmer

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Wappenham: Sheena Warren

sheena@bellplantation.co.uk

Whitfield: Claire Bonner cbonner00@gmail.com

Benefice Bulletin – 26th April 2026



I first saw this mosaic some fifty years ago, high up in the apse of Cefalù Cathedral in Sicily, and it made a deep impression on me; I was delighted to see it again a few days back. The mosaic, Byzantine in style, dates to the 12th century but is a version of a much more ancient image of Christ Pantocrator (Ruler of all). The inscription arching over Christ reads 'Factus homo Factor hominis factique Redemptor, Judico corporeus corpora corda Deus'. The Latin is rather playful and has squeezed itself into an elegiac couplet (line 1: dum diddy dum dum dum // diddy dum dum dum diddy dum dum: line 2: Dum diddy dum diddy dum// dum diddy dum diddy dum), so translation isn't easy but this might do: 'Made man, maker of man and Redeemer of the [man] made, I, corporeal God, judge bodies and hearts.'

Christ holds a Bible open at John 8.12, 'I am the light of the world....'.
(Continued overleaf)

Benefice Bulletin (cont...)

That text, and the brightness of the mosaic, as perhaps also the playfulness of the Latin verse and the expression on Christ's face (merciful, pitying, if stern?), suggest judgement may not be grim. Some great early Byzantine theologians were inclined to a view that all are saved.



In Syracuse, there's a dark masterpiece by Caravaggio in the church built at the place of the martyrdom of St Lucy in 304 AD, during the Diocletian persecution. Lucy lies on the floor, very dead, the stab wound in her neck grimly apparent, as her grave is dug. Lucy's name, though, comes from the Latin 'lux' and her light-giving kindness to those in need and her martyrdom have been sources of spiritual illumination down the ages and across the world - Lucy is particularly remembered in Sweden, for instance.



A particular enlightenment for me came about through being in the Cathedral at Syracuse for Mass last Sunday. I'd been in the building years before and knew it was built on the site of a Greek Temple, not only using much of its fabric, but leaving that fabric *in situ*. I'd not, however, been to a service previously and the experience last Sunday was a rich and rewarding one on account of the sense of continuity between Classical Greek worship and Christian worship, a sense enforced by the huge Doric columns from five centuries before Christ being integrally part of the worship space. Of course, Greek and Roman ruins have often provided material for Christian churches, but what has happened in Syracuse has given the ancient Greek building new life and purpose, in harmony with its old form and function, and enriching the modern place and its activities. One wonders what attitudes Bishop Zozimo, who decided in the 7th century AD to use the Temple of Minerva/Athena in his building of Syracuse Cathedral, had towards ancient Greek culture. Did he feel, Minerva/Athena being the goddess of wisdom, that there was a natural consonance between her Temple and Christ, the Logos, the Wisdom of God?

Hugh