

FUTURE SERVICES

www.astwellparishes.org.uk

*Please note that there will be no
Midweek Holy Communion service
at Helmdon on
Wednesday 31st December*

JANUARY 2026

Sunday 4th January – Epiphany

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

Sunday 11th January – Plough Sunday

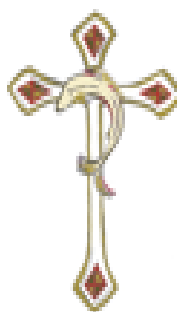
10.30am	Whitfield	Benefice Holy Communion
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Sunday 18th January – Second Sunday of Epiphany

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

Sunday 25th January – Third Sunday of Epiphany

9.30am	Lois Weedon	Matins
9.30am	Whitfield	Holy Communion (Patronal Festival for St John the Evangelist)
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 28th December 2025

First Sunday of Christmas

Services in the Benefice:

Benefice Holy Communion

10.30am

at Wappenham



*Collects & Readings for
First Sunday of Christmas*

Collect:

Almighty God,
who wonderfully created us in your own image
and yet more wonderfully restored us
through your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as he came to share in our humanity,
so we may share the life of his divinity;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 63:7-9

⁷ I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord,
the praiseworthy acts of the Lord,
because of all that the Lord has done for us,
and the great favour to the house of Israel
that he has shown them according to his mercy,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

⁸ For he said, 'Surely they are my people,
children who will not deal falsely';

and he became their saviour

⁹ in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel

but his presence that saved them;

in his love and in his pity he redeemed them;

he lifted them up and carried them all the days of
old.

New Testament Reading: Hebrews 2. 10 - end

¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom
all things exist, in bringing many children to glory,
should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect
through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and
those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this
reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and
sisters, ¹² saying,

'I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters,
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.'

¹³ And again,

'I will put my trust in him.'

And again,

'Here am I and the children whom God has given me.'

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood,
he himself likewise shared the same things, so that
through death he might destroy the one who has the
power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who
all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of
death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help
angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore
he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every
respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful
high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of
atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he
himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to
help those who are being tested.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:13-23

¹³ Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared
to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and
his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I
tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to
destroy him.' ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and
his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵ and remained
there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what
had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out
of Egypt I have called my son.'

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise
men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the
children in and around Bethlehem who were two years
old or under, according to the time that he had learned
from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what had been
spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸ 'A voice was heard in Ramah,

wailing and loud lamentation,

Rachel weeping for her children;

she refused to be consoled, because they are no
more.'

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly
appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ 'Get
up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of
Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are
dead.' ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his
mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he
heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of
his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after
being warned in a dream, he went away to the district
of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called
Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the
prophets might be fulfilled, 'He will be called a
Nazorean.'

Post Communion Collect:

Heavenly Father,

whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an
earthly home:

help your Church to live as one family,

united in love and obedience,

and bring us all at last to our home in heaven;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Prayers for First Sunday of Christmas

Father God, help us to remember that the Christmas story did not end in the stable but continued as Jesus grew into a man, unnoticed by the world until his appearance at the temple which was for him his spiritual home on earth. As 2025 draws to a close and a New Year begins and with it the next chapter of our lives, help us to grow in faith and wisdom and to recognise your presence with us in all we do and say.

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer

Everlasting God, strengthen your church that we may be a Benefice united in prayer and in practical help and support for one another. We pray for courage, wisdom and guidance to stand up for our faith when it is challenged. Inspire our clergy and our lay people to lead and guide us all in our ministries as we go into 2026.

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer

Loving God, creator and preserver of all mankind, we pray for people of every race, and in every kind of need: make your ways known on earth, your saving power among nations. We earnestly pray that the coming year will see an end to war and terrorism and pray for all who are striving to find a peaceful solution for all the war-torn parts of our world.

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer

Gracious God, you sent the angels to sing at the birth of your son in Bethlehem; give the song of the kingdom to all who weep; to the sick and the lonely; the aged and the dying. Give the song of joy to all who are now on the road to recovery and recuperation and the song of thanks to all who helped them on that road

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer

Faithful God, we pray for those whose hearts have been saddened by the death of someone close and dear to them, for members of our families who have died and whose anniversary we recall. Help us to experience the comfort of the Holy Spirit within us, and the fellowship of the church family around us until we are reunited once more in your heavenly kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer

As we look forward to the year that is ahead, we have faith that God will supply every need of ours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus

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 Reverend Will Adams, whose memorial service will be held at Syresham on Saturday 10th January at 2pm.

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 all refugees fleeing persecution, all victims of war and terror, and all those affected by the Covid-19 virus.

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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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 for 28th December 2025

This Sunday, we celebrate, if that is the right word, the Holy Innocents martyred by King Herod as he sought to deal with the threat of another King, Jesus.

There's a threat to us here – that we might feel that the suffering of innocents, of children, of which there has been so much in this last year, for instance, in the land of Jesus, the Holy Land, might disallow our faith in the God of Love who has come to us at Christmas. Or perhaps not a threat, exactly, but something that pushes us away from the Christmas we've just celebrated and its joyousness as to our Jesus-destined future to a more truthful, though bleaker, understanding of how the world is.

On this, however, the theologian John Hicks writes:

I find that the realities of human goodness and human happiness make it a credible possibility that this life with its baffling mixture of good and evil, and including both its dark miseries and its shining joys, including both man's malevolence and his self-forgetting love, is indeed part of a long and slow pilgrim's progress towards the Celestial City.

And Hick puts to us this question:

Can there be a future good so great as to render acceptable, in retrospect, the whole human experience, with all its wickedness and suffering as well as all its sanctity and happiness?

And he answers it:

I think that perhaps there can, and indeed that perhaps there is.

This Sunday we face an evil act from long ago, but one mirrored in our own time. We need to believe in and work for a future good that shows that, for all the sum of human distress down the centuries, and notwithstanding such evils as we remember on this Holy Innocents Day - we need to believe in and work for a future good that shows that our creation and all the events and experiences that our creation have led to have been worth God's while.

Happy New Year as we work on that in the power of our incarnate God, who will bring the universe, through his incarnation, death and resurrection – and our efforts too - to its perfect consummation.

Hugh