

FUTURE SERVICES

www.astwellparishes.org.uk

MAY 2026

Wed 6th May

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE MIDWEEK HOLY COMMUNION AT HELMDON IS CANCELLED THIS MONTH.

**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)

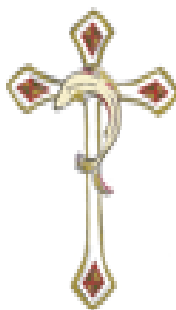
9.30am	Lois Weedon	Matins
9.30am	Whitfield	Holy Communion
10.30am	Helmdon	Morning Prayer
11.15am	Syresham	Praise & Prayer
11.15am	Wappenham	Holy Communion

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 3rd May 2026

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Services in the Benefice:

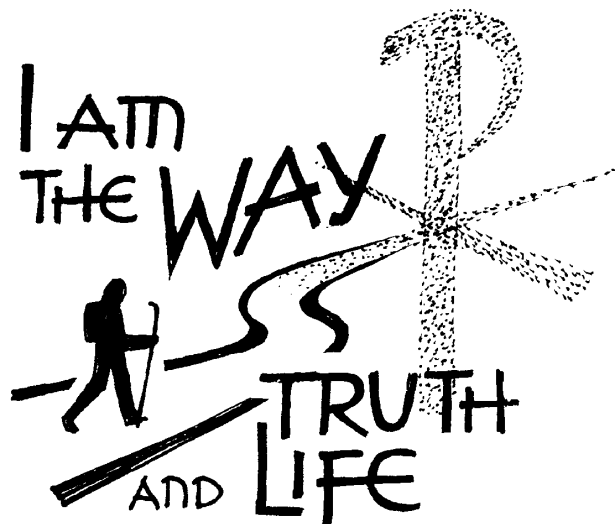
9am Wappenham Breakfast Church

9.30am Lois Weedon Morning Prayer

10.30am Helmdon Holy Communion

11.15am Syresham Morning Prayer

2pm Helmdon Wedding Blessing



Collects & Readings for Fifth Sunday of Easter

Collect:

Almighty God,
who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ
have overcome death and opened to us the gate of
everlasting life:
grant that, as by your grace going before us
you put into our minds good desires,
so by your continual help
we may bring them to good effect;
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm: 31. 1-5, 15-16

New Testament Reading: Acts 7.55-end

⁵⁵ But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven
and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the
right hand of God. ⁵⁶ 'Look,' he said, 'I see the heavens
opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand
of God!' ⁵⁷ But they covered their ears, and with a loud
shout all rushed together against him. ⁵⁸ Then they
dragged him out of the city and began to stone him;
and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young
man named Saul. ⁵⁹ While they were stoning Stephen,
he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' ⁶⁰ Then he
knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not
hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he
died.

New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 2:2-10

² Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual
milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— ³ if
indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.
⁴ Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by
mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight,
and ⁵ like living stones, let yourselves be built into a
spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer
spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus
Christ. ⁶ For it stands in scripture:
'See, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.'
⁷ To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those
who do not believe,
'The stone that the builders rejected
has become the very head of the corner',
⁸ and
'A stone that makes them stumble,
and a rock that makes them fall.'
They stumble because they disobey the word, as they
were destined to do.
⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy
nation, God's own people, in order that you may
proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of

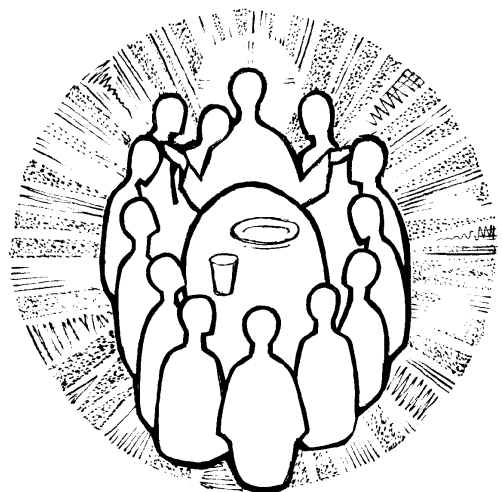
darkness into his marvellous light.
¹⁰ Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

Gospel Reading: John 14:1-14

¹ 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God,
believe also in me. ² In my Father's house there are
many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have
told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go
and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will
take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may
be also. ⁴ And you know the way to the place where I am
going.' ⁵ Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know
where you are going. How can we know the
way?' ⁶ Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth,
and the life. No one comes to the Father except through
me. ⁷ If you know me, you will know my Father also.
From now on you do know him and have seen him.'
⁸ Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we
will be satisfied.' ⁹ Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with
you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me?
Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you
say, "Show us the Father"? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I
am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words
that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the
Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Believe me
that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if
you do not, then believe me because of the works
themselves. ¹² Very truly, I tell you, the one who
believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in
fact, will do greater works than these, because I am
going to the Father. ¹³ I will do whatever you ask in my
name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If
in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

Post Communion Collect:

Eternal God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the
life: grant us to walk in his way,
to rejoice in his truth,
and to share his risen life;
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.



Intercessions for Fifth Sunday of Easter

Risen and reigning Lord, assure our troubled hearts that you have gone to prepare a place for us, so that where you are, we may be also. You alone are the way, the truth, and the life by whom the Father comes to us, so that through you, we have seen him and know him. Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Risen and reigning Lord, how often are we like Thomas, questioning your son Jesus whilst thinking that we're on our own to work things out. Help us to listen to your promises, to receive your assurances, to let you remove troubles from our hearts and may we always remember your constant presence with us. We pray for our Benefice and all who strive to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Risen and reigning Lord, we pray for those people of the world featured in the news: the victims of accident, war, disease, violence, greed and natural disasters. We pray for hope and we pray for peace in Ukraine, The Middle East and Sudan and all other countries torn apart by senseless violence.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Risen and reigning Lord, on this day, we pray for King Charles and Camilla, our Queen, and the Royal Family and pray that they all be guided and strengthened by your Holy Spirit, to serve The United Kingdom in love and service.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Risen and reigning Lord, we pray for family and colleagues, friends and lovers, for neighbours and strangers; for those with whom we break bread at home, at work, in the community, and in our church; for all who grow, harvest and prepare the food we eat and for those who cook it and serve it.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Risen and reigning Lord, whose touch alone could heal the sick, hear our prayers for your servants who are ill as we ask for your help and mercy to restore them to health.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Risen and reigning Lord, 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 that family house which is your heavenly kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Risen and reigning Lord, we thank you for showing us the Way, in human terms that we find easier to understand and which helps us to recognise all the wonderful things in your world for which we should be grateful

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 ,

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

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

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Email: rectorastwell@gmail.com

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

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Sarah Rudkin: Benefice Secretary & Pews News Editor,

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Churchwardens /Representatives (for individual church matters):

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& Paul Stothard, stothy@live.co.uk

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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

Benefice Bulletin – 3rd May 2026

(More tales from Hugh's travels in Italy!)

Earlier mosaics this week from the 5th/6th century in Ravenna. Out of the many wonderful images available from the Ravenna of those times, here are two from two baptisteries, one from the Orthodox baptistry, the other from the Arian one. Can you tell which one is Arian? (The third human figure represents the River Jordan.)



(cont overleaf)

Benefice Bulletin (cont...)



Arianism, the key idea of which is that Christ is not of one substance with the Father, and not co-eternal with the Father, but brought into being by the Father, was condemned at the Council of Nicea as heretical but continued to be the belief of some Christians, particularly Germanic ones. One such was the Ostrogoth Theodoric, who took power in Ravenna in the 5th century and commissioned the building of the Arian baptistry there.

Today's Gospel reading from John 14, with Jesus' exasperated response to Philip, 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father' should, perhaps, have been enough to see off the Arians (along with other scriptural citations), but things didn't prove that easy - and indeed a separation between Jesus and the Father may be easier to believe in than orthodox Nicene Trinitarianism.

We went to Ravenna from Bologna where there is a wonderful conglomeration of churches going under the name of St Stephen, the subject of the Acts reading for today. The Lombards took charge of Bologna in the 8th century and apparently the Lombards (Germanic themselves) revered Stephen highly and they are responsible for the early stages of the San Stefano complex. This illustration of the stoning of Stephen is, however, by a later Bolognese painter, Annibale Carracci (16th/17th centuries). I like the figure of Paul, bottom left, indicating 'Get on with it!'



You could argue it either way as to Arianism or orthodox Trinitarianism in respect of Luke's account in Acts of the stoning. Stephen imitates Jesus' appeal to his Father to forgive his executioners and his committing his spirit into his Father's hands. Stephen, though, addresses Jesus rather than the Father. This suggests to me that Luke sees Jesus as equivalent to the Father. In any case, Arian and non-Arian alike would have seen Stephen's stoning as recommending to Christians absolute fidelity to Christ even to death - a challenge it makes to us today.

The Arian baptistry mosaic is the first picture. I'm not sure you can tell from the iconography, unless the youthfulness of Christ gestures to subordinate status in relation to the Father.

Hugh