

FUTURE SERVICES

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DECEMBER

Friday 12th December

6pm	Helmdon	Carols by Candlelight with Choir
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Sunday 14th December – Third Sunday of Advent

9.00am	Wappenham	Breakfast Church
9.30am	Lois Weedon	Morning Prayer
10.30am	Helmdon	Holy Communion
11.15am	Syresham	Morning Prayer
5.00pm	Whitfield	Carol Service with Choir

Thursday 18th December

5.30pm	Lois Weedon	Carol Service with Choir
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Friday 19th December

7.00pm	Helmdon	Words & Music
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Sunday 21st December – Fourth Sunday of Advent

9.30am	Lois Weedon	Holy Communion
10.30am	Helmdon	Praise & Prayer
11.15am	Wappenham	Praise & Prayer
3.00pm	Radstone	Carol Service
6pm	Syresham	Joint Carol Service with Chapel & Choir, at Church

Wednesday 24th December – Christmas Eve

3pm	Helmdon	Christingle
3pm	Syresham	Christingle (Quiet)
4.30pm	Syresham	Christingle (Traditional)
4.30pm	Whitfield	Christingle
6pm	Wappenham	Carol Service
6pm	Plumpton	Carol Service
11.30pm	Helmdon	First Communion of Christmas

Thursday 25th December – Christmas Day

9am	Whitfield	Holy Communion
9.30am	Lois Weedon	Family Service
10.15am	Helmdon	Holy Communion
11am	Syresham	Family Service
11.30am	Wappenham	Holy Communion

Sunday 28th December – First Sunday of Christmas

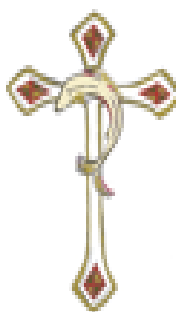
10.30am	Wappenham	Benefice Holy Communion
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The Kingdom Season and Advent
film series continues with:

'Of Gods and Men'

Monks and terrorists in Algeria –
based on real events thirty years ago

Monday 8th December
at 10.30am in Helmdon Reading Room



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 7th December 2025

Second Sunday of Advent

Services in the Benefice:

Benefice Holy Communion

at

Lois Weedon

at

10.30am



Collect & Readings for Second Sunday of Advent

Collect

O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power
and come among us,
and with great might succour us;
that whereas, through our sins and wickedness
we are grievously hindered
in running the race that is set before us,
your bountiful grace and mercy
may speedily help and deliver us;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10


- ¹ A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
² The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
³ His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the
wicked.
⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.
⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the
adder's den.
⁹ They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.
¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to
the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his
dwelling shall be glorious.

New Testament Reading: Romans 15:4-13

⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written
for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the
encouragement of the scriptures we might have
hope. ⁵ May the God of steadfastness and
encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one
another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that
together you may with one voice glorify the God and
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Welcome one
another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you,
for the glory of God.

⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the
circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that
he might confirm the promises given to the
patriarchs, ⁹ and in order that the Gentiles might glorify
God for his mercy. As it is written,
'Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles,
and sing praises to your name';
¹⁰ and again he says,
'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people';
¹¹ and again,
'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and let all the peoples praise him';
¹² and again Isaiah says,
'The root of Jesse shall come,
the one who rises to rule the Gentiles;
in him the Gentiles shall hope.'
¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in
believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power
of the Holy Spirit.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 3. 1-12

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the
wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² 'Repent, for the
kingdom of heaven has come near.' ³ This is the one of
whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,
'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight."' ⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather
belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild
honey. ⁵ Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea
were going out to him, and all the region along the
Jordan, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river
Jordan, confessing their sins.
⁷ But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees
coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of
vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to
come? ⁸ Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹ Do not
presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our
ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to
raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the axe is
lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that
does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into
the fire.
¹¹ 'I baptize you with  water for repentance, but one
who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am
not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you
with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing-fork is in
his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will
gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will
burn with unquenchable fire.'

Post Communion Collect:

Father in heaven,
who sent your Son to redeem the world
and will send him again to be our judge:
give us grace so to imitate him
in the humility and purity of his first coming
that, when he comes again,
we may be ready to greet him
with joyful love and firm faith;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayers for Second Sunday of Advent

Almighty God, you sent your servant John the Baptist to prepare your people to welcome the Messiah. Turn our disobedient hearts to you, so that when Christ comes again to be our judge we may stand with confidence before his glory.
Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Faithful God we pray for your blessing to be upon this congregation, upon the Church throughout the world and upon our Benefice. May your presence be seen vividly in what we do and say each day. We pray that your joy and your love will flow freely in and through us and that we might never be perfect examples of your love in action.
Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Creator God, with axe and winnowing fork you clear a holy space where hurt and destruction have no place, and a little child is King. Clear the trouble spots of our world from hatred and despair and sow seeds of joy and peace so that shoots of hope may spring forth and all people, whatever their creed, race, colour or gender may live together in harmony with one another.
Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, we remember all whose illness stems from a mental health issue, who often suffer in silence because of stigma and who reach out for help that is often not there because of stretched services. Help us to break through the ignorance that causes stigma and recognise that mental illness is as real as a broken leg or influenza and give them hope through patience and encouragement.
Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Loving 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.**

Glorious God, source of joy and righteousness, enable us as redeemed and forgiven children evermore to rejoice in singing your praises. May what we have sung and spoken with our lips become strong belief in our hearts and what we believe in our hearts become our way of life, throughout this Advent and in the years to come.

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, Joan Hadfield and Alan Jones.

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:

Ailsa Williams, 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:

Revd Will Adams, 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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Wappenham: Sheena Warren

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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.

Dates for your Diary

DECEMBER

Mon 8th Kingdom Season & Advent Film, 10.30am, Helmdon Reading Room

Benefice Bulletin for 7th December 2025

I've had a number of favourable comments about the Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion last Sunday. One factor generating that response may have been the different liturgy, which perhaps engaged people's attention more than a wholly familiar one

I suspect another factor was the music. The Choir was on fine form (congratulations to them and particularly to David Wright), the new organ sounded impressive (many thanks, Jenny and Chris Saunders!) and the larger than usual number of people present enhanced the singing (and maybe the conversation after the service).

There are down sides to Benefice services, though. Not everyone is able or willing to make the journey to a church outside their village, so we have a lower level of church attendance overall. The reduction in services at one's home church and consequent reduction of money coming in through collections have been commented on as have the financial consequences of giving away Benefice service collections to speakers from charities. Having two Benefice services in a row is not comfortable for some. I don't, however, sense great discontent at the current arrangement and it would be possible to mitigate at least some of the difficulties.

What the Benefice services haven't done is ruin our finances. I'm delighted to be able to say that we shall have the money in the bank, when the last regular instalments of parish payments have been made later this month, to pay in full the Share the Diocese has asked from us. Many thanks to all who have helped this to happen and a particular thanks to our Treasurers who have kept tabs on the figures for us, and have, I suspect, suffered a degree of anxiety when it has seemed we would fall short. (If any of you are going on with my pound-a-day-till-Christmas suggestion, don't stop!)

Next year we shall again make the whole – albeit higher - Share because we are genuinely seeking to do God's will and God honours this commitment, but it may be proper to reconsider the proportions of the Share each parish is currently paying.

This financial success is all the more notable given the loss of income to the Benefice resulting from the Let's Shine Festival, which took away energy from Benefice fundraising. That loss didn't ultimately matter because we were doing a very good thing which God honoured. The planning for this year's Festival is now quite advanced and a Let's Shine Community Fund committee has been brought into being to disburse monies accruing from the first Festival to charitable causes; it will shortly be possible for applications to be made (via the website: <https://www.letsshinetogether.co.uk>).

So, a lot of good news. Sadly, though, we have to mourn Will Adams, highly-respected and much-loved former Rector of Astwell. Please remember him, Linda, Jim, Kate and all the family in your prayers.

Hugh