

FUTURE SERVICES

www.astwellparishes.org.uk

FEBRUARY 2026

Sunday 15th February – Sunday next before Lent

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

Wednesday 18th February – Ash Wednesday

10am	Helmdon	Ash Wednesday Service
7pm	Syresham	Ash Wednesday Service

Sunday 22nd February – First Sunday of Lent

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

MARCH 2026

Sunday 1st March – Second Sunday of Lent

10.30am	Helmdon	Benefice Holy Communion with speaker Jill Lammond from DAWN (Dignity for All Women Now)
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Sunday 8th March – Third Sunday of Lent

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

Sunday 15th March – Mothering Sunday

9.30am	Lois Weedon	Holy Communion
10.30am	Syresham	Family Service with the Chapel
10.30am	Helmdon	Family Praise & Prayer
11.15am	Wappenham	Family Praise & Prayer



PEWS NEWS

The Astwell Benefice

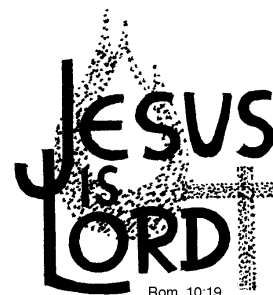
St Mary Magdalene Helmdon with Stuchbury & St Lawrence Radstone, St James the Great Syresham with St John the Evangelist Whitfield, St Mary & St Peter Lois Weedon with Weston & Plumpton, and St Mary the Virgin Wappenham.
www.astwellparishes.org.uk
<https://www.facebook.com/astwellbenefice>

Sunday 8th February 2026

Second Sunday before Lent

Services in the Benefice:

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



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 on Mondays from 23rd February till 30th March, at 11am

and

at Syresham (Chapel Schoolroom)
 on Wednesday 25th February
 and then Tuesdays till 24th March, at 7.30pm

Please let Hugh know if you would like to come so that the appropriate number of books can be ordered.

Collects & Readings for Second Sunday before Lent

Collect:

Almighty God,
you have created the heavens and the earth
and made us in your own image:
teach us to discern your hand in all your works
and your likeness in all your children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns
supreme over all things,
now and for ever.

Old Testament Reading: Genesis 1:1-2:3
(please see Lictionary/Bible for full reading)

New Testament Reading: Romans 8:18-25

¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰ for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 6. 25-end

²⁵ 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸ And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more

clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" ³² For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

³⁴ 'So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Post Communion Collect:

God our creator,
by your gift the tree of life was set at the heart of
the earthly paradise,
and the bread of life at the heart of your Church:
may we who have been nourished at your table
on earth be transformed by the glory of the
Saviour's cross and enjoy the delights of eternity;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Prayers for Second Sunday before Lent

Holy God, sometimes our lives are so full of worries that we forget how you look after us through every aspect of our lives. When our worries begin to spiral out of control, help us turn them into a conversation with you, confident that you will calm our anxiety and give us hope for the future.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Gracious God, we pray for your church, and the churches in our local community asking that there will be a growing desire to get together. We give you thanks for those who come up with fresh ways of making your name known to the wider community. We remember all those who work so hard to make important and sometimes difficult decisions regarding the everyday running of the Church of England.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Creator God, thank you for our world and the places where we live. Help us all to be mindful that we are all created equal in your sight and accept our deep regret that despite this there is still so much inequality to be found. Help us to remember that you want us to be good stewards of your creation, living responsibly in the lands and seas of the earth. May all future growth be sustainable and may we ensure that its abundance is fairly shared for the good of all.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Father God, we thank you for the joy of human love, and for all those among whom we live and work. We pray particularly for loved ones who worry us with their health, or circumstances, or life direction. We pray for those among our friends and families who do not know you, or whose faith has been shaken.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Loving God, we pray for all who bear the burdens of pain, bereavement, worry and depression. We pray for those whose illness stems from anxiety. We pray that they may have an awareness of your presence and an understanding that you are bearing those burdens with them and always working towards their healing and wholeness.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Merciful God, through your love and mercy you turn the darkness of death into the dawn of new life. Comfort those who grieve in their sorrow and those who are worried about how they will cope on their own and reassure them that you will never leave them to carry the burdens of life unaided.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Everlasting God, we ask you to lead us into the coming week, Help us to believe that you are close by us, keep us from making mistakes and help us never to disappoint you through our words and actions. 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:

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.

2026 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

FEBRUARY

Wed 11th A Tea and Bingo afternoon will be held at the Reading Room, Helmdon at 2.00 pm. Modest charge in aid of church funds.

Tues 17th The Friends of St James are hosting a pancake lunch in the Chapel Schoolroom, Syresham, 12-2pm.

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

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fomason@hotmail.com Tel: 01280 850439

Sheena Warren: Chair of Social & Fundraising

Committee sheena@bellplantation.co.uk,

Tel: 01327 860230

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

frank.hunter@btinternet.com

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

Regular events held in the Benefice:

- **Helmdon Coffee Morning** is held each Tuesday, 10 am-12 noon in the Reading Room
- **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 – 8th February 2026

Candlemas having come and gone, I have symbolically eaten the last Christmas mince pie. The great festal season of Christmas and Epiphany is over and, as the Candlemas liturgy invites us to do, we turn towards Lent and Easter. The turn is there in what Simeon says to Mary in the Candlemas Gospel about how Jesus 'is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too'. This looks towards the Cross. And indeed, the act of redeeming Jesus from God, as Jewish law requires for a first-born son, can be seen as pointing to our redemption by Jesus, with a ransom paid to the devil, the ransom of Jesus' life. This is beautifully put in John Ellerton's great hymn 'Hail to the Lord who comes' with its play on Jesus' first-born-ness both as the eternal Son of God the Father and as the child of human Mary present in historical time.

Hail to the great First-born,
Whose ransom-price they pay,
The Son before all worlds,
The Child of man today,
That he may ransom us
Who still in bondage lay.

So we now look forward to the crucifixion and on to Easter as people delivered from the bondage of sin. That deliverance doesn't mean we cease to sin, as we all know; now, though, it is in principle possible for us not to sin, given our faith in Christ, the availability of grace and the presence of the Holy Spirit with us. Lent is the season in which we are particularly encouraged to reflect on our abiding tendency to sin and to pursue a spiritual growth that will diminish that tendency. During Lent we shall be reading and discussing David Ford's 'Meeting God in John'. The sessions will run in Helmdon on Mondays from 23rd February till 30th March (11.am) and in Syresham at the Chapel Schoolroom on Wednesday 25th February and then Tuesdays till 24th March (7.30pm). Please let me know if you would like to come so that we can order an appropriate number of books.

Blessings,

Hugh

