

FUTURE SERVICES

www.astwellparishes.org.uk

MARCH 2026

Sunday 15th March – Mothering Sunday

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

Sunday 22nd March – Fifth 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

Sunday 29th March – Palm Sunday

10.30am	Syresham	Palm Sunday Benefice Holy Communion
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HOLY WEEK

Monday 30th March

7pm	Whitfield	Compline
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Tuesday 31st March

5.30pm	Syresham	Compline
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Wednesday 1st April

7pm	Lois Weedon	Compline
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Maundy Thursday 2nd April

6.30pm	Helmdon	Passover Meal & Holy Communion
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Good Friday 3rd April

9.30am	Lois Weedon	Meditation
10.30am	Syresham	Procession Church to Chapel (inc service)
11.15am	Wappenham	Meditation
2.30pm	Helmdon	Procession & Holy Communion

Easter Saturday 4th April

9.00pm	Plumpton	Easter Vigil & First Communion of Easter
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Easter Sunday 5th April

6.15am	Radstone	Dawn Fire
9.00am	Whitfield	Holy Communion
9.30am	Lois Weedon	Holy Communion
10.15am	Helmdon	Holy Communion & Baptism
11.15am	Syresham	Holy Communion
11.30am	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 8th March 2026

Third Sunday of 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 Reading Room on Mondays from
23rd February till 30th March, at 11am

and

at Syresham Chapel Schoolroom
on Tuesdays from 24th February
until 24th March, at 7.40pm

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

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 March 2026

One of the people the Church of England celebrates on 8th March is Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy aka 'Woodbine Willie', a nickname given to him by the soldiers he ministered to during the First World War, that ministry including the sharing with them his Woodbine cigarettes (he was a chain smoker, which didn't do the asthma that eventually killed him any good).

Studdert Kennedy wrote poetry and prose. One his great themes was the appallingness of war, to the full risks and rigours of which, in solidarity with the fighting men, he exposed himself (he won the MC); another, related to this, was the problem of evil. How can a good God permit the evil we see around us? Studdert Kennedy writes:

The brutality of war is literally unutterable. There are no words foul and filthy enough to describe it. Yet I would remind you that this indescribably filthy thing is the commonest thing in history, and that if we believe in a God of love at all, then we must believe in the face of war and all it means. The supreme strength of the Christian faith is that it faces the foulest and filthiest of life's facts in the crude brutality of the cross, and through them sees the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ...

He had a strong social conscience and writes of how

the vision of the suffering God, and the necessary truth of it first began to dawn on me in the narrow streets and shadowed homes of an English slum [in Worcester]. All that war has done is to batter the essential truth of it deeper in, and cast a fiercer light on the cross. A battlefield is more striking but scarcely more really crude and brutal than a slum

In Christ, he writes, I find the truth that human sin and sorrow matter to God, indeed, are matter of life and death to God, as they must be to me. In him I find the truth that the moral struggle of man is a real struggle because God is in it, in it and beyond it too, for in the risen Christ who conquered death and rose again I find the promise and the guarantee that the moral struggle of our race will issue in victory.

Of course, one can choose not to take part in the struggle. Here's Studdert Kennedy's poem *Indifference*:

When Jesus came to Golgotha, they hanged Him on a tree,
They drove great nails through hands and feet, and made a Calvary;
They crowned Him with a crown of thorns, red were His wounds and deep,
For those were crude and cruel days, and human flesh was cheap.

When Jesus came to Birmingham, they simply passed Him by.
They would not hurt a hair of Him, they only let Him die;
For men had grown more tender, and they would not give Him pain,
They only just passed down the street, and left Him in the rain.

Still Jesus cried, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do,"
And still it rained the winter rain that drenched Him through and through;
The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see,
And Jesus crouched against a wall, and cried for Calvary.

Hugh