

Oh come, all ye faithful!



Picture:
The Astwell
Nativity
in the Barn
2014



THE NATIVITY IN THE BARN

Saturday
December 12th
at 3pm

NEW
VENUE
new time

Manor Farm Barn
Lois Weedon Road,
Wappenham
NN12 8PH

The story of the nativity told with real animals,
mulled wine, mince pies
Wrap up warm and bring a torch!

**Come dressed as a Shepherd,
Angel or Soldier
at 2pm to be part of the cast*

St John the Evangelist

St Mary & St Peter

James the Great,

Whitfield

Lois Weedon with Weston

Syresham



News from The Astwell Benefice



St Mary Magdalene
Hemldon
Wappenham



St Lawrence
Radstone



St Mary the Virgin

Did you know your Parish Church was one of six?

All the above churches are part of "The Astwell Benefice".

A "Benefice" is a group of parishes, under the care of a single priest, in this case our Rector: The Reverend Carole Peters-King.

It takes two days to walk the whole boundary of our Benefice which includes: 5 villages, 7 hamlets, 40 farms, three schools, 3 pubs and one village shop. In all Rev'd Carole looks after over 3,000 people here in the Astwell Benefice.

This means we can't always offer you a service every week in your own Parish Church and as a Benefice we sometimes worship together, moving around our churches.

You are welcome to worship with us at any and all of our wonderful churches,
lifts are always available, so read on...

CANDLELIT CAROLS

With Nativity



Start your Christmas celebrations off
with our Traditional Christmas Eve Service

Sing Carols by candlelight and find yourself taking part in our
Christmas Eve Nativity.

Join us as we bless the Crib for Christmas

See our Christmas Services in this magazine for details



"Carols By Candlelight"

Christmas words &
music

7.30pm

Friday December

18th

St Mary

Magdalene, Helmdon



Messy Christingle

Come along and make your own
Christingle Oranges

Then join in this special Children's Society Service!

Sunday December 6th

5.30pm St John the Evangelist, Whitfield

Sunday December 13th

3.30pm St Mary the Virgin, Wappenham

5.00pm St James the Great, Syresham

Sunday December 20th

3.30pm St Mary & St Peter, Lois Weedon

5.00pm St Mary Magdalene, Helmdon

*The Christingle Service starts half an hour
after Messy Christingle.*

All ages welcome
proceeds go to the Children's Society

Christmas Greetings from your Rector



CHRISTMAS IS THE CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS, THE SAVIOUR OF MANKIND

I overheard someone mutter the other day as they stood in a long queue listening to ever repeating Christmas musak, while watching a young mother struggle with two tired and fractious toddlers:

“tis the season to be grumpy!”.

And it does seem with every TV advert or shop offer driving us to buy more and more and the impossible expectations from family and friends that this season can bring out the “grumpy” in all of us.

So this year, why not get back to what Christmas should really be all about. Make it “the season to be thankful and jolly” - come along and share Christmas with us as we journey through our many and varied services, to where it all began.

Celebrate the birth of a baby that would change the world! We hope that over the past few years we have brought some of the magic back to Christmas with our Nativity in the Barn, our Carols by Candlelight and our special Christmas Eve services that allow everyone to be part of the greatest story ever told.

Details of all our Christmas services can be found inside this magazine, which by the way is a new venture.

As a Benefice we have been joining together for a whole host of events and services and so we thought we’d mark this by combining our parish newsletters into one big Benefice-wide magazine.

As well as the services at your church over the next couple of months, you can see what’s going on at other churches in our Benefice.

This is because all our churches are offering you an invitation to visit them anytime. Come and join us for a service, or simply visit

us for quiet prayer time. You will be most welcome!

To paraphrase a well known slogan - "*A Church isn't just for Christmas*"- We are open all year round and as well as our regular services and special events, we are also there for the happiest of times - Weddings and Baptisms and of course for the saddest of times- Funerals. Whatever the occasion we go out of our way to make these as personal and as special as we can for you. If you need us we are always there for you.

Speaking of Weddings – if you got married in one of our churches or had your bands read there, or maybe you know someone who did, then come along and bring them with you as we hold our special Valentine Day "Celebration of Marriage".

The services are open to everyone, and we will be offering special blessing for those who down the years have said their vows here in our Churches. It promises to be a special day – so do join us. Details can be found towards the back of this magazine

I know for some Church and church services can seem strange and at times inaccessible, so in 2016 will be offering some "taster evenings" for the curious. It will be a chance for you to come along and learn more about Christianity and what goes on in our services. And for those of you who are already part of our growing congregations, we are offering a Lent Course that will help you grow in your discipleship. Check out our church noticeboards and our website www.astwellparishes.org.uk for more information.

Finally I end where I started with rushing around – during Christmas week I shall be taking around 15 services across the Benefice and while this makes me busy, it certainly doesn't make me grumpy. I love sharing Christmas with all of you. I hope therefore to wish you a Merry Christmas in person, but if I don't see you there, have a very happy and holy Christmas and many blessings for 2016!

Rev'd Carole



Christmas
Events
in the Astwell
Benefice

THE CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Saturday November 29th

*Santa's Grotto, stalls, tombola,
Stars for Loved Ones,
Christmas Raffle and lots more*

2-4pm

The Reading Room, Helmdon



**Syresham's
"St Nicholas" Fair
Saturday December 5th
2-4pm in Church**

**Craft and Charity Stalls, Children's Activities,
Santa's Grotto, Tombola, Raffle,
Stars for loved ones and much more**

**Non alcoholic mulled wine,
mince pies, teas and cakes
served all afternoon.**

Extra parking available at The Priory

What Can your Church Do for You?

We really do want to know what you think, so please do fill in and tear out this questionnaire with or without the pledge on the reverse side.

Return it to the Rectory, address on inside back page or leave it in an envelope in Church marked "questionnaire".

Please let us know the Parish you live in.....

Circle the appropriate answers you can circle more than one if you wish:

I come to Church:

Never

Less than 4 times a year

Once a month

Once a week

More than once a week

I attend another denomination/church outside the Benefice

I come to Church to attend:

Regular Services

Only a specific service

Please say what it is.....

At Christmas or on Remembrance Sunday or for another specific service

For a Baptism, Wedding or Funeral.

What prevents you from coming to Church?

Too busy

Doesn't offer what I want

I don't know when services are happening

Non or lapsed believer

Do you find your Church?

Welcoming Yes/No

Child friendly Yes/No

Has disabled accessibility Yes/No

What more could the Church do for you:

Please write below

Do you know it can cost up to £600 a week to keep your Parish Church open?

As well as heating, lighting, insurance and our mission costs, we, like all Church of England Parishes, need to pay a “Parish Share” to the Diocese. Here in the Astwell Benefice between us our churches need to find £56,000 to the Diocese each year.

This is huge amount of money, but if we don't or can't pay it then the Diocese may well decide we cannot have a full time priest here in the Benefice.

The result would be some church closures like elsewhere in the country, less services and little or no pastoral care, and we don't want that!

Here our congregations are growing, but despite doing a huge amount of fund raising, we are struggling. Last year only 2 of our parishes raised enough money to meet all their bills, with rising costs this year they may not, the rest find themselves short each year - some to the sum of £9,000!

This sounds a lot and you may be wondering what you can do to help us? Well, if every household in the parishes gave £1 a week to the church (on top of any regular giving) regardless of whether they came regularly to church, we would be able to pay all our bills!

Would you be willing to give us £1 a week to keep your church open, to keep it as an active place of worship and at the centre of your community?

If so please fill in the pledge form below and return it (with the questionnaire on the other side) and we will send you a standing order form.

While you may not go to church every week, I am sure you will agree the Church is a integral part of the community it serves and no one wants to see it close.

I pledge £1 a week to my Parish church

Name:.....

Address with postcode

.....

Parish church.....

Please return to:

Miss Alice Palmer, Atswell Benefice Treasurer, Vine Cottage, Broad Street, Syresham NN13 5HS

Christmas Services Across the Astwell Benefice





Christmas Eve

Parish Join In Nativity and Candlelit Carols

1.30pm

St Mary & St Peter, Lois Weedon & Weston

3.00pm

St Mary Magdalene, Helmdon

4.30pm

St James the Great, Syresham

6.00pm

St John the Evangelist, Whitfield

Carols by Candlelight for Christmas Eve

7.30pm

St Mary the Virgin, Wappenham

Candlelit Communion for Christmas Eve in the Benefice

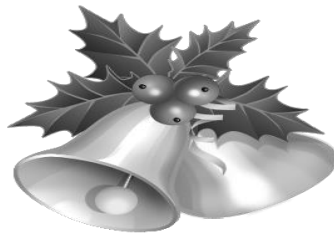
9.00pm

St Mary Magdalene, Helmdon

Midnight Mass for Christmas In the Benefice

11.30pm

St James the Great, Syresham



Christmas Day

Traditional Communion for Christmas Morning

9.00am

St John the Evangelist, Whitfield

Christmas Morning Parish Communion for All the Family

9.30am

St Mary & St Peter, Lois Weedon

10.00am

St Mary Magdalene, Helmdon

11.15 am

St Mary the Virgin, Wappenham

Family Service for Christmas Morning

10.30am

St James the Great, Syresham

Chapel Services:

Syresham

4.00pm Christmas Eve

10.00am Christmas Day Service

Weston:

Carols by Candlelight 6.30pm December 22nd

SANTA IS COMING TO BELL PLANTATION



This Christmas we've invited a very special guest to our Garden Centre. Santa Claus himself will be visiting the Centre, giving you a chance to come and meet him for yourself.

Bring the kids down to see Santa who will be strolling around the centre looking for smiling faces to talk to and hand out some small Christmas treats. We're letting Santa free from his normal cooped up grotto so everyone can enjoy Santa without having to wait.

- **No booking required**
- **No charges**
- **No waiting time**

Santa will be here for the 3 weekends running up to Christmas, dates of which are as follows:

5th & 6th December
12th & 13th December
19th & 20th December
between 12 noon-4.00pm

Come down and visit!



BELL PLANTATION

Watling Street Towcester NN12 6GX

Tel: 01327 354126

FREE PARKING

www.bellplantation.co.uk



For the love of the great outdoors ...

Bluffers Guide to Services - all you wanted to know but were afraid to ask...



Parish and Holy Communion

At our Communion or “Eucharistic” service we sing hymns, listen to God’s word and our preacher. We also have gathered to share bread and wine at the altar remembering that Jesus told us that we are doing this not only to remember him, but also so we can be filled with the gift of his Spirit for the week ahead. If you don’t take communion you are welcome to come to the altar for a blessing to receive that same spirit.

Our Parish Communion lasts about 35 to 40 minutes and our Holy Communion 40 to 50 minutes.

Said Communion

Our said communion does all the above but without hymns and often the language used comes from the time of Shakespear and is so very beautiful. The service lasts around 30 minutes.

Mattins

This is a service that follows the Prayerbook, written in 1662. Parts of the service are sung, as are some traditional hymns and there is also a short talk, the service last around 25 minutes.



Village Praise and Prayer

This less formal service is made up of hymns, songs, music and readings chosen by you. Often thought provoking, always friendly! It lasts around 35 to 40 minutes



Messy Church

This service is for the whole family. An hour of various craft activities based around a bible theme are followed by a bible story, songs and prayers. We end with a shared party tea.

Most of our services end with coffee and biscuits do stay and have a chat!

Meet our Worshipping Communities

All our churches remain open during daylight hours for quiet prayer

St Mary & St Peter

Lois Weedon with Weston & Plumpton .

This ancient church at the heart of one of the two villages it serves has its Sunday service at 9.30am.

For more information contact:

Frank Hunter on 01327 860597 or

frankhunter@btinternet.com



SERVICES DECEMBER 2015

Sunday 6 th December	9.30am Holy Communion
Sunday 13 th December	9.30am Village Praise & Prayer - Christmas Carol Service
Sunday 20 th December	9.30am Mattins 3.30pm Messy Christingle 4pm Christingle Service

***For Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Services
see the centre of this magazine***

Sunday 27 th December	11am BENEFICE SERVICE <i>Helmdon</i>
----------------------------------	--

SERVICES JANUARY 2016

Sunday 3 rd January	11am BENEFICE SERVICE for EPIPHANY <i>Helmdon</i>
Sunday 10 th January	9.30am Village Praise & Prayer,
Sunday 17 th January	9.30am Mattins 3.30pm Messy Church - Noah's Ark
Sunday 24 th January	9.30am Parish Communion
Sunday 31 st January	11am BENEFICE SERVICE for CANDLEMAS <i>Lois Weedon</i>

***Watch this Space!** Look out for a monthly end of school day Café Church in the New Year.*



St Mary Magdalene, Helmdon with Stuchbury

The ancient Church on the top of the hill, offers services and activities throughout the week as well as Sunday morning. There is also an active social calendar based around the church.

For more information try our noticeboards or contact: Bill Elkington on 01295 760438
bill.h.elkington@gmail.com

SERVICES FOR DECEMBER 2015

Wednesday 2 nd December	10am Midweek Communion,
Friday 4 th December	8am Time to Pray
Sunday 6 th December	8am Prayer Book said Communion 10am Village Praise & Prayer with Mums & Tots
Wednesday 9 th December	10am Midweek Communion
Sunday 13 th December	10 am Communion -with gifts & carols
Wednesday 16 th December	10am Midweek Communion
Sunday 20 th December	5.00pm Messy Christingle 5.30pm Christingle Service

*For Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Services
see the centre of this magazine*

Sunday 27th December **11am BENEFICE SERVICE**

SERVICES JANUARY 2016

Sunday 3 rd January	11am BENEFICE SERVICE for EPIPHANY
Wednesday 6 th January	10am Midweek Communion
Sunday 10 th January	10am Parish Communion,
Wednesday 13 th January	10am Midweek Communion
Sunday 17 th January	10am Family Service
Wednesday 20 th January	10am Midweek Communion
Sunday 24 th January	10am Holy Communion 3.30pm Messy Church – Noah’s Ark
Wednesday 27 th January	10am Midweek Communion
Sunday 31 st January	11am BENEFICE SERVICE for CANDLEMAS Lois Weedon Lois Weedon



St James the Great Syresham with Whitfield

This Norman church, has the remnants of some amazing wall paintings, an active youth group run with the village chapel and a busy social calendar.

For more information check out our noticeboards or contact: Malcolm Orr-Ewing on

01280 850218

info@thepriory&bsyresham.co.uk

SERVICES DECEMBER 2015

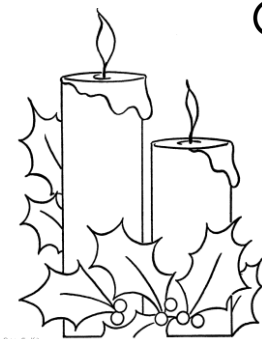
- Sunday 13th December **11.15am Parish Communion in Advent**
5.00pm Messy Christingle
5.30pm Christingle Service
- Sunday 20th December **6pm Carols with the Chapel**
Syresham Chapel

***For Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Services
see the centre of this magazine***

- Sunday 27th December **11am BENEFICE SERVICE,**
Helmdon

SERVICES JANUARY 2016

- Sunday 3rd January **11am BENEFICE SERVICE for EPIPHANY**
Helmdon
- Sunday 10th January **11.15am Parish Communion**
- Sunday 17th January **11.15am Village Praise & Prayer**
with Syresham School
- Sunday 24th January **11.15am Holy Communion**
- Sunday 31st January **11am BENEFICE SERVICE for CANDLEMAS**
Lois Weedon



Carols By Candlelight

7.30pm

Sunday December 20th

St Lawrence Church,
Radstone

*Join us for a candlelit
evening in this ancient Church*

*followed by
Mulled Wine and Mince Pies*

St Lawrence

Radstone

with Helmdon and Stuchbury.

This is the oldest church in our Benefice and can only be reached by foot. Home to some of the rarest bats in the country, we are limited to the services we can hold here. For more information contact: Penny Bonner on 01280 850335

penny.bonner@btconnect.com



SERVICES DECEMBER 2015

Sunday 20th December 7.30pm Carols by Candlelight



**St John the Evangelist,
Whitfield
with Syresham**

This is the youngest Church in our Benefice, but is a beautiful Victorian church with some wonderful stained glass windows that are great example of the Victorian period. Whitfield shares some of it's services with

Syresham.

For more information check out our church noticeboards or contact: Claire Bonner on 01280 850684 or cbonner00@gmail.com
Sue Timmis on 01280 850113 or ian.timmis@btozpenworld.com

Watch this Space! Look out for a monthly weekday communion after the Coffee Morning in the New Year

SERVICES DECEMBER 2015

Sunday 6th December **5.30pm Messy Christingle
6pm Christingle**

Sunday 20th December **9am Said Communion
with traditional language**

***For Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Services
see the centre of this magazine***

SERVICES JANUARY 2016

Sunday 17th January **9am Said Communion
with traditional language.**



Join us on Sunday February 14th for a
A Celebration of Marriage

9.30am St Mary & St Peter, Lois Weedon
10am St Mary Magdalene, Helmdon
11.15am St James the Great Syresham
2pm St Mary the Virgin Wappenham
4pm St John the Evangelist, Whitfield

Celebrate your marriage in the church where you said your vows!
Come and re-new your vows or have your marriage blessed
or just come to give thanks to God for your life together.

Getting Married in the Astwell Benefice

Our ancient Churches can provide a beautiful and
deeply significant venue for your Wedding Day.

If you live in the parish or are willing to
worship with us in the months before & after your
big day

then we would be delighted to marry you.

Contact Reverend Carole Peters-King or go to our
website for more information

Contact details on inside back page of this newsletter

The Astwell Benefice

*St Mary and St Peter Lois Weedon
St Mary Magdalene Helmdon with Stuchbury and St Lawrence Radstone
St James the Great Syresham with St John the Evangelist Whitfield,
with Weston and Plumpton
and St Mary the Virgin Wappenham*

**For general parish enquiries, details of events, marriage banns
or to put a name on our weekly prayer list**

rectorastwellbenefice@aol.co.uk

For Weddings, Baptisms, Funerals & Any Other Matters:

The Reverend Carole Peters-King
Rector of the Astwell Benefice

The Rectory,
The Green, Lois Weedon
NN12 8PN
01327 860798
carolepeters@aol.com

And you can keep update with all we are doing at our website:

www.astwellparishes.org.uk

PHOTOS:

**Our cover picture and Christmas card picture are both from
last year's
"Nativity in the Barn"
our thanks to everyone who took part or came along and
enjoyed the story**

Our grateful thanks go to
The Bell Plantation
for sponsoring this magazine

BRITISH GROWN CHRISTMAS TREES

One of the most important parts of any great Christmas is the tree and we think there's nothing better than a fresh grown tree to bring the outside in. That's why we only buy the best quality trees grown in the hills of Scotland.

Because we want to make your experience as enjoyable as possible, when you buy your Christmas tree from Bell Plantation

we will:

- Help you find the best tree for you
- Cut the bottom off to keep it fresh
- Find the right stand for your tree.
- Net it and carry it to the car if you wish

Visit us today

Visit Santa on: 5th, 6th, 12th, 13th, 19th,
20th December between 12 noon & 4pm.



BELL PLANTATION



BELL PLANTATION

Watling Street Towcester NN12 6GX

Tel: 01327 354126

FREE PARKING

www.bellplantation.co.uk