

FUTURE SERVICES

www.astwellparishes.org.uk

MAY 2026

Thursday 14th May – Ascension Day

6.30pm Helmdon Benefice Ascension Day Service

Saturday 16th May

2pm Syresham Wedding Blessing

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

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

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.

NOTICE

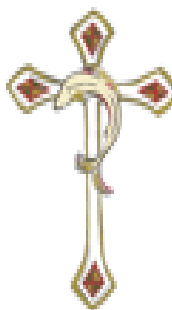
THE ANNUAL
PARIOSHIAL CHURCH MEETING
OF THE ASTWELL BENEFICE
WILL BE HELD ON
MONDAY 18TH MAY 2026

AT 7PM

AT WAPPENHAM VILLAGE HALL

All parishioners are welcome to attend!

(The 2025 APCM Report is now available on the Benefice website www.astwellparishes.org.uk)



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 10th May 2026

Rogation Sunday

and

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Services in the Benefice:

9.30am

BCP Holy Communion

at

Lois Weedon

11am

Benefice Rogation Service with
speaker Celia Parkes from RABI,
followed by roast pork lunch
at College Farm Buildings
Helmdon
NN13 5QB



Collects & Readings for Sixth Sunday of Easter

Collect:

O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

New Testament Reading: Acts 17:22-31

²² Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; ²³ for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: ²⁴ God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. ²⁵ Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. ²⁶ And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, ²⁷ so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' ²⁹ Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. ³⁰ Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, ³¹ because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 3:13-22

¹³ And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, *you are blessed*. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." ¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be ready to give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. ¹⁷ For *it is better*, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

¹⁹ by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the ark* was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. ²¹ There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

Gospel Reading: John 14:15-21

¹⁵ "If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."



Festival events
free of charge

Let's shine FESTIVAL

Building strong and kind communities

30 May - 7 June 2026

We are **delighted** to invite you to the Festival. From Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons tribute band, to drama, history, art & crafts, nature & sport. Over 9 days and 30 events the festival '**shines a light**' on what **connects** us and brings **joy** into our precious and beautifully diverse communities.

free of charge



Please take a look at the **Festival** events and activities, the Grand Draw and inspiring Community Fund:
<https://www.letsshinetogether.co.uk/>
If you are not online please call: **07398 045800**



Let's shine

With over 30 events to explore look, book and enjoy!

The Astwell Benefice. A group of six parish churches situated in South Northamptonshire, working as one, in mission and in ministry, to share the love of God.

Intercessions for Sixth Sunday of Easter

Gracious God, you are anything but unknown to us for you made us, our world and everything in it and so we pray with one voice, proclaiming your presence to all the earth.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Holy God, we pray for your church throughout the world, for sceptics and believers, for clergy high and low. For all those who seek God at home, at work, in the streets, and in the pews, for all who search for life. We pray for the stillness to listen to the voice of the Spirit and to recognise what our personal relationship with you has done for us.

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

Creator God, we pray for prime ministers and presidents, for leaders and trendsetters. For those who set the targets at home, at work, in the streets, and in the pews. For all who wield power, that they may be guided by the Spirit of Truth.

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

Father God, we pray for family and colleagues, for friends, 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.**

Loving God, we pray for the sick and troubled, for the fearful and alone, for those in pain at home, at work, in the streets, and in the pews. We pray that all who suffer, may feel the Spirit's healing presence.

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

Merciful God, we pray for those kept fresh in our memory and for those long forgotten, For all who ever took the breath of life at home, at work, in the streets, and in the pews. We pray for mercy and forgiveness for the dead and those who mourn them, may they find rest in the Spirit's embrace, and we commend them to your keeping for ever.

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

God of heaven and earth, companion in life, Spirit of truth, to you alone we turn our eyes and lift our hearts. Help us as we go out into the world to keep your commandments and to love one another as you love us.

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 and 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*

Sat 30th *2026 Let's Shine Together Festival to www.letsshinetogether.co.uk*

Sun 7th *or Tel: 07395 045800*

June

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

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

Benefice Bulletin – 10th May 2026

(Final images from Hugh's travels in Italy!)

The first of the images is apt for the week in which we celebrate Christ's Ascension. It's a 13th century mosaic on the facade of Lucca's Church of St. Frediano (great name! - Frediano was a sixth-century Irish prince who ended up as Bishop of Lucca).



(cont overleaf...)

Benefice Bulletin (cont...)

The top section shows Christ as Pantocrator, Ruler of All, but below him are the apostles, some gesturing heavenwards, and there are words (possibly not visible in the picture you have) about men of Galilee looking up to heaven, referencing Luke's account of the Ascension in Acts. (The words are another tricky elegiac couplet, as in the Cefalù picture a couple of weeks back, but we couldn't quite make out how to translate it.)

This is a fabulous work of art but it's not the best thing in Lucca. The city also has the Holy Face which dates to the 9th century.



It was very recently and very effectively restored. It's not a Pantocrator image like the St.Frediano and Cefalù ones, but it makes visible the early Christian idea that God reigns from the Tree (the restoration uncovered the Alpha and Omega which indicate Christ's power). Neither is it quite in tune with W.H. Vanstone's words on Christ's/God's suffering which I quoted in PN some weeks back

Drained is love in making full;
Bound in setting others free;
Poor in making many rich;
Weak in giving power to be.

Therefore He Who Thee reveals
Hangs, O Father, on that Tree
Helpless; and the nails and thorns
Tell of what thy love must be.

Thou art God; no monarch Thou
Throned in easy state to reign;
Thou art God, Whose arms of love
Aching, spent, the world sustain.

These are wonderful lines but they miss the serenity of Christ on the cross that the Holy Face presents (see close-up image). The figure's sense of serene power also has a lot to do with the mantle worn and the wonderful golden nimbus (though that seems likely to be a later addition). Christ's serene expression also discloses, I think, pity for us human sinners.

The next few weeks are liturgically very rich for us (Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday). And even before we get to the Ascension, we have our Rogationtide service and lunch. Many thanks to Penny and her team for all their hard work and to John and Jill Watson for hosting us. It's very good to be able to celebrate our farmers and to ask God's blessing on them and the work they do for us and very good to have an opportunity to support the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution.

Hugh