

FUTURE SERVICES

www.astwellparishes.org.uk

FEBRUARY 2026

Wednesday 4th February

10am	Helmdon	Midweek Holy Communion
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Sunday 8th February - Second Sunday before Lent

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

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

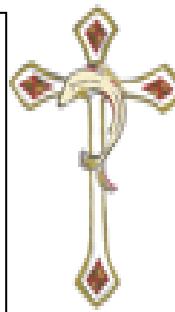
10.30am	Helmdon	Benefice Holy Communion with speaker Jill Lammond from DAWN (Dignity for all Women now)
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Sunday 8th March - Third Sunday of Lent

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

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 1st February 2026

Candlemas

(The Presentation of Christ in the Temple)

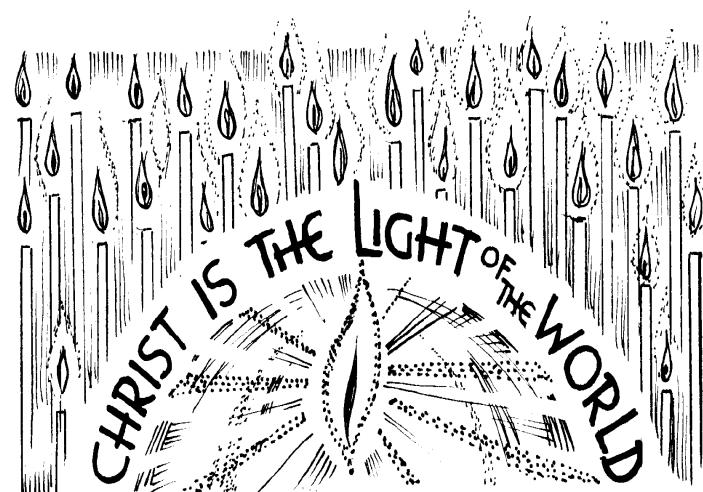
Services in the Benefice:

Benefice Holy Communion for Candlemas with a speaker from William Blake House

10.30am

at

Lois Weedon



Collects & Readings for Candlemas

Collect:

Almighty and ever-living God,
clothed in majesty,
whose beloved Son was this day presented in the
Temple,
in substance of our flesh:
grant that we may be presented to you
with pure and clean hearts,
by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Old Testament Reading: Malachi 3:1-5

¹ See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years. ⁵ Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

New Testament Reading: Hebrews 2. 14 – end

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters^[a] in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:22-40

²² When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), ²⁴ and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,

according to your word;

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.'

³³ And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

Post Communion Collect:

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna, who lived to welcome the Messiah:
may we, who have received these gifts beyond words, prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes to bring us to eternal life;
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.



Prayers for Candlemas

Almighty God, as we celebrate the feast of Candlemas today, we give thanks for your son Jesus who is the Light of the World and for your call to us to share in that light. We pray that our Church may be a light to those who live in the darkness of unbelief and reveal to them his love. Hear our prayers of intercession and thanksgiving and show your presence in our daily lives as you make the ordinary very special and the special, extraordinary.

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

Creator God, you gave us this world and made us stewards of it. We are a world family who we should care about, despite our differences of race, colour, creed or gender. Too often we are selfish only thinking of ourselves and so we ask you to forgive our selfishness, widen our vision and help us to be the caring people we ought to be.

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

Father God, we thank you for all who take risks and make sacrifices for others in their daily work, and especially for the men and women who work in our emergency services. Help us to respect and appreciate our fire-service, police and paramedics and bless them with the support of the communities that depend so heavily on them in times of crisis.

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

Loving God, we pray for all those who are suffering physical, emotional or mental illness. Help them to keep their eyes fixed on you, and give them the courage to face the trials and temptations that may come.

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

Merciful God, give rest to the souls of those who have gone from our lives to meet with you. May they now, released from pain or sorrow, find life eternal at rest in your presence. Help those of us who are saddened by such earthly loss, with the reassurance that one day we too will share the feast with them too.

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

Gracious God, we thank you for this time together in prayer and as we look forward to the week to come, help us to be an example to others and show us the practical steps we need to take to develop consistency and integrity in all that we do in our lives.

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, 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:

Alan Jones, Revd 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.

TEA AND BINGO AFTERNOON AT HELMDON

A Tea and Bingo afternoon will be held at the Reading Room, Helmdon, on Wednesday 11th February at 2:00 pm.

Modest charge in aid of church funds.

All Welcome!

BENEFICE CONTACTS

Reverend Hugh White (Rector):

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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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Churchwardens /Representatives (for individual church matters):

Helmdon: Cliff Netten, apnetten@hotmail.com
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Syresham: Alice Palmer
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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.

Benefice Bulletin - 1st February 2026

In this Sunday's Gospel, Simeon and his *Nunc Dimittis* figure large.

Nearly a hundred years ago now, T.S. Eliot, forty years old, recently baptised into the Church of England, unhappily married, laid Simeon and his words under contribution to produce 'A Song for Simeon'. Note that it's a song for Simeon, which rather suggests that the voice we hear in the poem isn't to be straightforwardly identified with Simeon in Luke. I think it's a fine poem but its atmosphere seems to me very different from the passage in Luke. See what you think.

*Lord, the Roman hyacinths are blooming in bowls and
The winter sun creeps by the snow hills;
The stubborn season has made stand.
My life is light, waiting for the death wind,
Like a feather on the back of my hand.
Dust in sunlight and memory in corners
Wait for the wind that chills towards the dead land.*

Grant us thy peace.

*I have walked many years in this city,
Kept faith and fast, provided for the poor,
Have taken and given honour and ease.
There went never any rejected from my door.
Who shall remember my house, where shall live my
children's children
When the time of sorrow is come?
They will take to the goat's path, and the fox's home,
Fleeing from the foreign faces and the foreign swords.*

*Before the time of cords and scourges and lamentation
Grant us thy peace.*

*Before the stations of the mountain of desolation,
Before the certain hour of maternal sorrow,
Now at this birth season of decease,
Let the Infant, the still unspeaking and unspoken Word,
Grant Israel's consolation
To one who has eighty years and no to-morrow.*

*According to thy word,
They shall praise Thee and suffer in every generation
With glory and derision,
Light upon light, mounting the saints' stair.
Not for me the martyrdom, the ecstasy of thought and
prayer,
Not for me the ultimate vision.
Grant me thy peace.*

*(And a sword shall pierce thy heart,
Thine also).
I am tired with my own life and the lives of those after me,
I am dying in my own death and the deaths of those after
me.*

*Let thy servant depart,
Having seen thy salvation.*

Fine poem though it is, I rather want to kick the (to my mind) self-pitying speaker! There's no self-pity in Luke's Simeon.

Blessings,

Hugh