

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
---------	----------	-------------------------------------

HOLY WEEK

Monday 30th March

7pm	Whitfield	Compline
-----	-----------	----------

Tuesday 31st March

5.30pm	Syresham	Compline
--------	----------	----------

Wednesday 1st April

7pm	Lois Weedon	Compline
-----	-------------	----------

Maundy Thursday 2nd April

6.30pm	Helmdon	Passover Meal & Holy Communion
--------	---------	--------------------------------

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
--------	----------	--

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

Collects & Readings for Third Sunday of Lent

Collect:

Almighty God,
whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he
suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was
crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way
of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life
and peace;
through Jesus Christ your Son 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: Exodus 17:1-7
(please see your bible/lectionary for the full reading)

New Testament Reading: Romans 5:1-11

¹ Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³ And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. ⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. ⁸ But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. ¹¹ But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Gospel Reading: John 4:5-42

⁵ So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. ⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. ⁸ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' ¹¹ The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?' ¹² Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' ¹³ Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal

life.' ¹⁵ The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' ¹⁷ The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' ¹⁹ The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' ²¹ Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' ²⁵ The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' ²⁶ Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.' ²⁷ Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?' ²⁸ Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ²⁹ 'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?' ³⁰ They left the city and were on their way to him.

³¹ Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' ³² But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' ³³ So the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' ³⁴ Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. ³⁵ Do you not say, "Four months more, then comes the harvest"? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. ³⁶ The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷ For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." ³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.'

³⁹ Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. ⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word. ⁴² They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.'

Post Communion Collect:

Merciful Lord,
grant your people grace to withstand the temptations
of the world, the flesh and the devil,
and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only
God;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayers for Third Sunday of Lent

Loving God, you created us and gave us imaginations as well as free will, hear the prayers that we offer to you today, listen to our thanksgiving for the love you show us and help us with those things that bring worry and concern.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Holy God, give us eyes to recognise, as Jesus did at Jacob's Well, the true spiritual thirst in the people around us. Help us all in our Benefice to respond to those spiritual needs through our worship, our outreach and our social activities.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Creator God, your son Jesus crossed territorial boundaries and ignored social taboos throughout his ministry. Give us the courage to make a stand in situations where women in particular have suffered because what should be uncovered is covered up, where they have been humiliated and downtrodden and dare not tell, and where they have been physically mistreated, and cannot tell.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Father God, we see in the Samaritan woman someone who has experienced more than one partner. We pray for those we know, within our families or communities who are coping with difficult or changing marital relationships. We pray for children caught in a family breakdown with all the worry and upset that it might bring to young and unprepared lives, and for their parents who are struggling to make the right choices for those they love.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Heavenly Father and Lord of life, we pray for the gift of courage to face up to and cope with illness. We pray for it for ourselves, and for those we know.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Merciful God, we commend into your hands those who have departed this life. You gave them breath and loved them through their journey of life. Receive them now at the end of that journey into your eternal presence and may they rest in everlasting peace.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Everlasting God, in so many ways you have taught us that you alone can be trusted, even when it might seem that you are far away from us. Help us to remember this fact and feel your loving presence as we go from this time of worship and return to our everyday lives, walking obediently in the light of your truth in all that we do this and every day.

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.

Dates for your Diary

MARCH

Fri 6th 'An Evening for Ukraine', Tingewick Village Hall, 7 for 7.30pm' Tickets £10. Contact Malcolm Orr Ewing on 07734 166648 for tickets

Sat 28th The Friends of St Mary Magdalene are holding a Music and Food quiz at Helmdon Reading Room, at 7:30pm

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