



Alde Sandlings Benefice

Aldeburgh, St Peter & St Paul's Parish Church,
Aldringham, St Andrew's Parish Church,
Friston, St Mary's Parish Church
Knodishall, St Lawrence's Parish Church

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Sunday 24th December Christmas Eve

Services in The Alde Sandlings Benefice this Sunday

Aldeburgh	10.30am	Holy Communion
	3.30pm	Crib Service
	11.30pm	First Communion of Christmas
Aldringham	11.00am	Morning Prayer
Friston	10.00am	Service of the Word
Knodishall	11.30pm	First Communion of Christmas

A message from Revd Sarah du Boulay

Dear Friends,

I want to take this opportunity to say a huge 'Thank You' to everybody in the benefice who works so hard and gives so much throughout the year. We are very blessed to have many talented and generous people and it is a pleasure to be your vicar and to live and worship alongside you all.

We have just received some good news. The Diocese will be lifting the suspension on our benefice, so in the new year, I will stop being your Priest-in-Charge, and instead become your Rector. This is a recognition of all the good work we have done over the last year, and gives us a stable and secure

identity as a benefice of 4 parishes. Archdeacon Rich will be visiting us for a special service and celebration, and we'll let you know as soon as this is arranged. Well done everybody!

Just a reminder that this is a two-week newsletter, so you won't hear from us next Saturday. In the meantime, wishing you all a very blessed and happy Christmas, and a peaceful new year.

With prayers,

Sarah

Collect

God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

First Reading

2 Samuel 7.1-11,16

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.' But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the

Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

Second Reading

Romans 16.25-end

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever! Amen.

Gospel Reading

Luke 1.26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

Sermon by The Very Revd Christopher Lewis

Third Sunday of Advent 17th December at Friston

What is it that actually moves things, makes things happen, changes history or you or me? In the West, we have got used to identifying great forces of economics or politics: credit crunches, wars, free markets, multi-nationals. As a consequence, ideas/hopes and visions, indeed matters of the spirit have been edged out into corners. Maybe it's not like that; some analysts reckon we have just shifted from greed to fear. Well, at least those emotions sound human.

Now is the time – Advent - that we may see that our take on life has become boring and that great ideas and loves and hopes are what change things and people. Maybe we can say it without being told to 'get real', for Advent and Christmas are real.

Enough theory. Take a symbol, a sign. In Poland, in the Vistula River basin, is flat land which has provided a route for invaders and marauders through the centuries. Across it, men of power have ridden on horses or tanks, back and forth. But underneath all this, is an ancient salt mine, within which unexpectedly is a chapel, the St Kinga chapel, created by the salt miners. Deep in the earth, full of light where you would expect darkness. Where is the reality - the heart of Poland – in the battles and camps, or deep down in the mine? It is certainly worth going to the mine if you want an answer: where to look for hope: there and in, well...Polish treatment of Ukrainian refugees.

Or take another picture: a symbol or sign - what I might call a peak experience of my own life – perhaps one shouldn't share those around much, for they might get damaged. Anyway, here it is. It was in a cathedral – Canterbury – during the Canterbury festival, and the Glinka Choir (Leningrad/ St Petersburg) had come to sing Rachmaninov's Vespers. Everyone knew at the time – it was 1993 (10th October) - what the situation was in Russia: un-governed total chaos, not long after the collapse of the Russian empire. We had some Russians to stay in our house and they showed a child-like wonder at things like cereal and cheese. Yet out of that nation – which one could easily argue suffered beyond imagination – came the most beautiful music and the most wonderful singing that we had ever heard. The soul of Russia. And the normally rather poised people of Canterbury – a thousand of them – didn't know what to do with themselves; we were on our feet and in tears, clapping and cheering. It is not that the political commentaries were froth – the pundits were doing their stuff on economic forces and the like – a bit like today. It was just that there, deep down with the basses, was the spirit, working in the Russian people and in

Russia: hope welling up. It will be somewhere there still, but certainly not visible in 'Putin's Russia'.

My text is from the first chapter of John's Gospel and refers to John the Baptist and then to Jesus, the light of the world. He, Jesus, the light (I quote because it is oddly left out of today's Gospel) 'was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him'. What happens at Christmas is, in a sense, the revelation of something already there, deep down in people and in things. That is why John's Gospel and indeed other parts of the bible like the letter to the Hebrews, talk about Jesus in connection with the creation of everything that is. So the baby is not someone parachuting in. The baby reveals what is already there, deep down like chapel or the music... life with God.

You can imagine God the Father thinking 'What If?' (this bit is from the Iona community) 'I've given people freedom and a world to live in, but what if I choose my time to come to earth; what if I am born of a humble family; what if I gather some followers at random; what if I teach and risk being killed; what if?' It's a thought.

Perhaps the strangest Christmas card our family has ever had, came from someone who is a kind of visionary as well as an artist. The picture on the front is of 4 whales visiting the manger, the year 3001, when as you will know of course, the Holy Land will all be different. So we can revise our crib. It is not just chickens and cattle, gathered round the manger, but whales. All creation is there.

In Bethlehem, in Manger Square, you go down deep to see where it all happened. But sometimes you don't, for the people are fighting for their lives. But whatever is going on, there is still Christmas in Bethlehem. For Jesus grew up and healed people and suffered and died and rose again: the very same one. Birth and death and resurrection are needed as ever in Bethlehem today and he is there.

There is the idea abroad in every age that God is a kind of errand-boy, who looks after his own, finding them parking places, soothing their troubled brows and saving them from getting onto aeroplanes which may subsequently crash. That is the God whose actions are mocked/sent up by W.H. Auden pretending to be Herod listening to people's prayers: 'O God, put away justice and truth, for we cannot understand them.....Become our uncle...amuse Grandfather...help Willy with his homework...introduce Muriel to a handsome naval officer' (Collected Poems p 392). There is, by the way, a cruel God, for if you buy this picture of him ..just looking after his own, God treats lots of other people to no parking places, no love and no hope when the aeroplane crashes.

So I don't believe God works like that. First he made us free, from the beginning of time. Yet Christmas shows that he does not just leave us be.

For he is here with us all the time: inviting, prompting, eliciting longing deep down: for lives made new and a world made new; God is as he is in Jesus and through the work of the Holy Spirit, he is giving us the strength to oppose suffering and to follow his way of love.

So we might remember the chapel in the salt mine in Poland, the St Petersburg Glinka choir, the manger visited by the whales. Advent and Christmas are about the way God is with us and with his world, longing for new life and always risking himself as he did in the person of Jesus. Advent is about us and our world. It brings comfort and joy, deep down. The incarnation is part of the way things are in each of us and in the whole of God's creation. For here is God showing us what has always been – will always be – the very nature of things. I wish you the deep down comfort and joy of Advent and Christmas.

Post Communion

Eternal God, for whom we wait,
you have fed us with the bread of eternal life:
keep us ever watchful, that we may be ready to
stand before the Son of man,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christmas Day Readings

Collect

Almighty God, you have given us your only-begotten Son
to take our nature upon him and as at this time to be born
of a pure virgin: grant that we, who have been born again
and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be
renewed by your Holy Spirit; 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.

First Reading

Isaiah 9.2-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness- on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice
before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of
their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots
of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be

burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Second Reading

Titus 2.11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2.1-14 15-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see-I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

[When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the

manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.]

Post Communion

God our Father, whose Word has come among us
in the Holy Child of Bethlehem: may the light of faith
illumine our hearts and shine in our words and deeds;
through him who is Christ the Lord.

£££ Ways to donate to our churches within the £££

Alde Sandlings Benefice

Your donations REALLY mean so much to us. If you would like to
donate this Christmas, please click on the link below.

No matter how small your donation is, it helps us keep our doors open,
support our ministry and mission, and to help preserve our church
buildings. THANK YOU SO MUCH

Just click on the link to support any of our churches -

<https://www.aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk/ways-to-donate-to-the-churches-within-the-alde-sandlings-benefice/>

Food Banks at the East of England Co-op

Foodbanks provide a valuable service to those in need in our
communities. The Aldeburgh Co-op and Solar in Leiston are doing a
grand job in collecting food donations, which are collected regularly and
distributed. So please look out for the various collection baskets.

<https://www.eastofengland.coop/community/foodpoverty/foodbank-support>

The Alde Sandlings Benefice at Christmas

All the creative friends of the four churches have been very busy decorating spectacular displays to welcome all of our visitors over Christmas.

Here are just a few photos from each church.

Do go along and visit if you can.

St Mary's Friston



St Andrew's, Aldringham



St Lawrence's, Knodishall



St Peter and St Paul's, Aldeburgh



Next Sunday, 31st December
Christmas Season – Benefice Service at Aldringham at 11am

Weekly Benefice Newsletter

If you would like something added to the weekly newsletter that is relevant to the Benefice, please do let Claire know and we will do our best to include it the following week.

All requests by 4pm on Thursday please

† Church of England and Diocese Online Worship †

There are many online services you can view from the Church of England and our cathedral. Here are some links below.

Church of England website

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/church-online/weekly-online-services>

Church of England Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/thechurchofengland/>

Church of England YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLeck8GovYoaYzIgyOEIKZg>

St Edmundsbury Cathedral Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/stedscathedral>

† Fairfield Centre Prayers - Café Church †

Every third Sunday of the month at **4pm**.

Relaxed and informal with tea, toast, activities, chat and worship.

All ages very welcome

† Morning Prayer across the Benefice †

Revd Sarah is bringing the benefice together in prayer each morning from 9-9.30am. People are very welcome to join, no regular commitment required, just pop along when you wish.

Monday – Aldeburgh & Friston

Tuesday - Knodishall

Wednesday – Aldeburgh

Thursday – Aldringham

Friday - Aldeburgh

Aldeburgh Choir

Do you like to sing? Come and join our church choir. Our services are every Sunday at 10.30am. We also hold special extra services at Christmas and other events in the church calendar. The choir plays an essential role to our worship. So, the more the merrier, even if you are just visiting us. Want to give it a go? Contact: admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk For more information.

† Pilgrims Together on Wednesdays on Zoom †

The worship starts at 6.30pm (Zoom call opens from 6.10pm) and the call is then left open after the worship time for people to catch up. People are welcome to email pilgrimstogether473@gmail.com to receive a copy, be added to our mailing list or for the Zoom links.

Pop up carols Saturday 23rd December around 2pm by the Meare Cafe / Boat House

Saturday 6th January Community Breakfast and Local Ramble starting 9.30 @ The Parrot

As before, a delicious breakfast bap and coffee / tea combo for £6.50 is on offer at the Parrot, before we head out to explore local paths.

Come just for breakfast and a catch-up with folk, come for just the ramble or come and enjoy both. (You don't need to book in advance, you can decide on the morning.). To help with timing, if coming only to ramble then we generally head from The Parrot around 10.30am. Please do invite friends along.

Saturday 20th January Community Good News Faith Cafe @ The Outside Inn, Parrot Pub 9.30 - 10.30

A time for conversation, a hot drink and a croissant. A time to share and offer our thoughts and stories. Acts of kindness and good news within the Outside Inn and taken out into the outside world.

Welcome Committee at Aldeburgh Church

As we all know the winter months can be very difficult with moral and general wellbeing. Sometimes you just need to get out of the house, but where can I go? We are offering a hot drink and a warm welcome every Saturday between 10-12 noon, from 13th January to 30th March. Whether you live on your own or are just missing better weather catch ups and a good natter with old friends and meeting new ones, do come along. People with young children are also more than welcome to come and enjoy time playing, reading, and drawing in the children's corner. Your church doors are open and welcome you to spend some time with company and a cuppa.

Can you help? We are asking for volunteers to meet and greet every Saturday from 13th January until 30th March from 10am – 12 Noon for 2hr slots. Please do sign the rota on the notice board in the church if you would like to be part of this, or contact Claire admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk

We also need mugs, teaspoons, side plates, and any storage boxes for biscuits and cakes. So if it's time to sort out those kitchen cupboards, please think of this project.



CHRISTMAS DATES AT THE CHURCHES OF THE ALDE SANDLINGS BENEFICE

ALDEBURGH PARISH CHURCH

Tuesday 5 th December	6.30pm	Benefice Christingle Service
Sunday 17 th December	6.00pm	Christmas Carol Service
Christmas Eve Sunday 24 th December	10.30am	Holy Communion Service
	3.30pm	Crib Service
	11.30pm	First Communion of Christmas
Christmas Day Monday 25 th December	10.30am	Christmas Day Holy Communion Service

ALDRINGHAM PARISH CHURCH

Sunday 3 rd December	11.00am	Service of the Word
	6.00pm	Advent Carol Service by Candlelight
Thursday 14 th December	6.00pm	Carols on the Green
Sunday 17 th December	11.00am	Christmas Carol Service
Christmas Eve Sunday 24 th December	11.00am	Morning Prayer
Christmas Day Monday 25 th December	9.30am	Christmas Day Holy Communion Service

FRISTON PARISH CHURCH

Sunday 10 th December	6.00pm	Christmas Carol Service
Christmas Eve Sunday 24 th December	10.00am	Service of the Word
Christmas Day Monday 25 th December	10.00am	Christmas Day Holy Communion Service

KNODISHALL PARISH CHURCH

Tuesday 19 th December	7.00pm	Village Carol Service at Knodishall Village Hall
Christmas Eve Sunday 24 th December	11.30pm	First Communion of Christmas

WE WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS

Alde Sandlings Website - www.aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL



ALDEBURGH PARISH CHURCH

Presents

“From Ukraine with Love”

with

**Tatiana Belousova, Natalia Stepanova,
Andrii Stepanov, and Birgitta Kenyon**

Two Ukrainian opera singers, an 8-year-old Ukrainian pianist, and a native Brit will be performing in a concert to raise funds for a group of volunteers called “On the Shield”. This small group collects the fallen from both sides of the conflict, to ensure they have a proper burial.

Do come along and show your support for this truly remarkable group. You will be treated to an hour of opera and classical piano favourites, with lighter numbers from the musical theatre and popular music genres!



SUNDAY 21ST JANUARY 2024
2.30pm – 3.30pm

Tickets £10 adults, £8 Under 14's

Tickets – Please scan or visit:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/voicesquad/t-avdepal>

Safeguarding at The Alde Sandlings Benefice

The care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in church activities is the responsibility of everyone who participates in the life of the Church. If you are concerned that someone you know is at risk of, or is being abused, or presents a risk to others, please seek advice from a Safeguarding Adviser or if necessary, report the matter to the Local Authority Social Care Services or the Police without delay.

The Alde Sandlings Safeguarding Officer: Mrs Fran Smith – admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk