



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

Priest in charge: The Revd Sarah du Boulay

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Sunday 7th January Epiphany/Baptism of Christ

Services in The Alde Sandlings Benefice this Sunday

Aldeburgh	8.00am	Holy Communion
	10.30am	Family Service
Aldringham	11.00am	Holy Communion
	5.30pm	Evening Prayer
Friston	10.00am	Holy Communion
Knodishall	9.30am	Morning Prayer

A message from Revd Sarah du Boulay

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year!

Our end of year benefice service at Aldringham last Sunday was a glorious, joyful and God-filled time together – it was so good to see so many people there. We were reminded of our call to be the people who God has made us to be, both individually and corporately, and certainly started as we mean to go on for 2024.

This next year promises to be a very exciting one for the Alde Sandlings benefice. Our service celebrating the lifting of the suspension on our

benefice will happen in early February (we'll let you know when as soon as possible), our Rev'd Mary will be priested at Bury St Edmunds Cathedral at the end of June, we will be holding confirmation services, Alpha courses, bible studies, morning coffee, and a wealth of other events, as well as our usual services and events. We have been praying for revival to start here, and it feels as though we're on the starting blocks!

So keep praying for us all, watch this space, and if you feel God calling you to anything, please do be in touch. I can't wait to see where we are this time next year – and all for the Glory of God.

With prayers,

Sarah

Collect

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face; 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 60.1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord .

Second Reading

Ephesians 3.1 - 12

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—for surely you have already heard of the commission of God’s grace that was given to me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God’s grace that was given to me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 2.1 - 12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, ‘Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.’ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: “And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.”’ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, ‘Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.’ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they

knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Sermon by The Revd Sarah du Boulay - First Sunday of Christmas 31st December at Aldringham

Those of you who came to any midnight or Christmas Day service I preached at last week will have heard my Christmas message this year as being: 'Life: The best gift ever. Now, go and make the most of it!'

I think this is a message which has been buzzing around my head for a while, because a few weeks ago I was considering possible New Year's resolutions. Now I don't usually make resolutions, because I know that by about January 13th, I'll have forgotten about them, only to remember sometime in July in a flurry of guilt and shame, and decide that it's too late to do anything about it, so I may as well wait for the next new year. Sound familiar?

But for some reason, this year, I'm inspired. Anybody else make any resolutions this year (that they're willing to share?). These are mine:

- Improve my skincare routine – I'm nearly 42, I feel I need to do this!
- Up the number of steps I walk every day – most of my job involves sitting down, so this just makes sense.
- Complete Couch to 5K – a friend and I did this during lockdown, and I loved it.
- Read 52 books – this is something I aim to do every year.
- Have 3 books on the go at anyone time – I always have several on the go at any one time, but somebody recently said that you should always have one fiction, one biography and one theology book on the go at any one time, so I want to be more strategic about the books I'm reading.
- Have at least 3 retreat days this year – I should be doing this anyway, and usually manage it, but I need to be more strategic again with this.
- Tidy my garage – it hasn't been touched since I moved in, and I know that there are still boxes left to unpack!
- Continue with my gardening and vegetable growing.

And there are about 10 other things on my list, which you don't need to know about right now. I told you I was inspired! I am determined to grab life in 2024, and live it for all it's worth. Pray for me...

I'm still planning on doing some of these things, but last week I had a conversation which changed my view on this list of resolutions. I was chatting to somebody about how God refines us – increases the good in us, and diminishes the less good aspects of our selves. We ended up talking about how as we grow in our faith, and our knowledge of God, our confidence changes. We become less concerned with the minutia, with how fit we are, what we look like, what we can do; the worldly things if you will.

The longer we spend with God, the less confident we become in our worldly selves, and the more confident we become in the person that God has made us – our holistic selves if you will. God has given us all gifts and talents and bodies and minds and souls, and each one is different. Each one is just perfect and each one balances and enhances those around us. We are created perfectly and absolutely and exactly, and out of the love of the one who made the whole world, of which we are part.

I've been thinking a lot about Mary this Christmas, and how she became the person that God created her to be by saying 'yes'. A loud, unequivocal, worshipful, 'yes'. The annunciation was the beginning for her – it was when her life changed forever. And if my own experience is anything to go by, she kept saying 'yes' throughout the rest of her life as God called her to other things. And with each 'yes', she became more fully Mary. More fully her created self.

Tomorrow is the day in the church diary when we celebrate the naming and circumcision of Jesus. There is great power in naming things and people – in allowing them and recognising them as fully themselves. It's the reason why traditionally Jewish people waited until the eighth day after birth before naming their child – so that the soul was fully present. The very essence of the child was present. Our old testament reading talks about the importance of naming, and it's part in the fulfilment of God's creation. You may have heard me say that when Bishop Martin ordained me Priest, and said my name, it was the first time I had felt fully me – that I was doing exactly what I had been created to do.

The point is, that like so many other things in our faith, it is really very simple. We are created by God and for God. As soon as we realise this – we fully realise and accept this, then life becomes much easier. Decisions become easier. Direction of life becomes easier. Of course there will still be troubles and strife along the way. Pain and suffering is part of this earthly life.

When we fully give ourselves to God – when we are stripped of our own ego, then we become more fully the people we were created to be. This is what it means by living life in all its fullness. It's not about the miles we can run, or the musical instruments we can play, or how many degrees we have (although these things are to be celebrated, and definitely play a significant part in our lives). But they are outworkings of the main point. They are things that we do because of who we are. They do not make us who we are. That is God, and God alone.

So in this new year, in 2024, let's make a collective resolution. To search out who God has created us to be – individually and corporately. Lets pray for each other and support each other, and make a promise to grab life with both hands, saying 'yes' to God, and being confident in the people that God has made us to be – God, our Creator and our Redeemer.

Post Communion

Lord God, the bright splendour whom the nations seek:
may we who with the wise men have been drawn by your light
discern the glory of your presence in your Son,
the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our 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>

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 link.

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.

Dates for your Diaries

Saturday 13th January from 7pm Pilgrim Zoom Quiz

Please email Richard Bodek if you are able to supply a round for the zoom quiz night: pilgrimstogether473@gmail.com

Saturday 27th January - Pilgrim Local History Story Telling Ceilidh

Saturday 10th February - Pilgrim Quiz

Saturday 24th February - Pilgrim Local History Story Telling Ceilidh

More details to follow!

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.

**Next Sunday, 14th January
Second Sunday of Epiphany**



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>

Or buy your tickets on the door.

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