



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 14th January Second Sunday of Epiphany

Services in The Alde Sandlings Benefice this Sunday

Aldeburgh	10.30am	Holy Communion
Aldringham	11.00am	Service of the Word
Friston	10.00am	Service of the Word
Knodishall	9.30am	Holy Communion

A message from Revd Sarah du Boulay

Dear Friends,

Some joyful information this week:

Our first weekly coffee morning will be held today at Aldeburgh church from 10am until midday. We want to be a safe, warm, welcoming space for anybody who would like to join us for a chat and a cuppa – everybody is welcome, so please spread the word.

The Licensing service celebrating the lifting of the suspension on our benefice will be held at 3pm on 11th February at Aldringham Church. We will be welcoming Archdeacon Rich, and following the service will be having refreshments and a time for friendship and fellowship. Everybody from the benefice is welcome (we can fit 130 people in the church at a push), so please do come along and invite others you may think would like to come.

Looking forward to seeing you all soon,

With prayers,

Sarah

Collect

Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new:
transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace,
and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory;
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

1 Samuel 3.1-10 11-20

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' and he said, 'Here I am!' and ran to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call; lie down again.' So he went and lay down. The Lord called again, 'Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call, my son; lie down again.' Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."' So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

Second Reading

Revelation 5.1-10

Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals; and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?' And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. And I began to weep

bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.' Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. They sing a new song: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth.'

Gospel Reading

John 1.43-end

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

Sermon by The Very Revd Christopher Lewis – Epiphany/Baptism of Christ at Aldringham 7th January

Something strange has happened to the secular (and I guess to the Christian) timing of this part of the year. Perhaps it is to do with commercialising Christmas. Once upon a time, Advent - a solemn time - ended on Christmas eve, then there were celebrations (there was partying) right up to 12th Night, at which time the celebration was of the visit of the three wise men (the Magi) to the infant Jesus. That is where we are today, yet the pattern has been changed: excitement before Christmas and not so much after.

We are celebrating the visit of the Wise Men, knowledge of which visit doesn't come to us often. There are the lovely paintings reproduced on Christmas cards, where the picture illustrates a beautiful first Christmas, with the baby Jesus in Mary's arms and three intelligent/wise richly-dressed men gathered round with their symbolic gifts and often on their knees. The symbolism is... Gold for a king, Frankincense for worship, and Myrrh anticipating anointing at the time of Jesus' death.

So the visit has definitely been a stimulus to art. Then there is the fact that the Magi appealed greatly to hymn writers and we get the chance to sing 'As with gladness men of old..' and 'O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness' AND 'Brightest and best are the sons of the morning'....as we are doing this morning. Such is the hymn-writers' enthusiasm that we could have gone wild and added 'Songs of thankfulness and praise' and 'We three kings of orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar'. So Matthew's account is an inspiration to write songs, to compose music and to sing.

Also of interest is the fact that these days, this gospel-reading does not arrive frequently in church, and that is because the visit of the wise men is only mentioned in Matthew's Gospel and then quite briefly. So, beyond the beautiful pictures and the happy songs, we need to investigate what Matthew says and what the significance of the passage is. The Gospels of Mark, Luke and John and the various letters of St Paul and others, make no mention of the three wise men.

To consider Matthew, we could start with lessons from preachers and teachers. Take the two Archbishops who headed their teaching in the run-up to Christmas with the call 'Follow the Star', in other words, come to the manger to worship and to be reminded of the presence of God among us – God taking on our humanity in Jesus: born and then tracked down by the wise men, led by the star. We can also follow this route, for God is always present, but came in tangible human form in Jesus, so the

prayer which was chosen by the Archbishops summarises our hope: ‘as Jesus came to share in our humanity, so may we share in his divinity; who is alive and reigns with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen’

So the visit of the Magi with their following the light of a special star is an invitation to search for Jesus, and to kneel in prayer in recognition of him. The next point is that Jesus is for all – for the whole world and for every age. Matthew in his Gospel tells of the wise men coming from far away, from the east, which may have meant Arabia. They were plainly foreigners who did not know the geography of Israel nor the teaching of the prophets, so they came to Jerusalem asking ‘Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?’ That led to King Herod reckoning that a rival had arrived and enquiring where the Messiah, the Saviour, was to be born. He got the response ‘In Bethlehem of Judea’, which was a reference to Micah the prophet who had said that the Messiah would be born there, be great to the ends of the earth, and teach peace.

In reading the Gospels, it is fascinating to reflect on their different styles and to examine the diversity of messages which they bring. Matthew is profoundly steeped in the Jewish scriptures, the Old Testament, and in the way in which all kinds of different prophecy, like those of Micah, were being fulfilled in the arrival of Jesus, who is God’s presence as a human being among us, together with the Holy Spirit. It is Luke’s Gospel which tells of the visit of the shepherds. It is Mark’s which starts with John the Baptist and Jesus’ baptism. It is John’s Gospel which also reflects on the preparation for Jesus made by John the Baptist.

Yet here with Matthew there is a stress on Jesus being the fulfilment of the Old Testament and of the longings of the people of Israel, to whom Jesus came with his message of salvation for all the world. Matthew saw the world as the new Israel to whom Jesus had come: the message is universal. That makes the current time deeply distressing with Israelis and Palestinians all in chaos and with the role of Israel (the so-called Holy Land) in a state which nobody seems able to cure. I hope you saw the picture of Jesus not in the manger, but in the rubble of Gaza. That is where he is today. Of course one can point to the fact that Israel was in trouble also back in Herod’s time: part of the Roman Empire at the time of Jesus, with Herod as an evil client king. So we find that immediately after today’s Gospel reading, an angel appears to Joseph in a dream and the family flees to Egypt and stays there for some time, a fact about which today’s faithful Egyptian Coptic Christians are very proud. The family later came back and lived in Nazareth because it was safer than Bethlehem. So life may not have been so very different in the old days.

Yet Matthew has a message which is of eternal significance, namely that Jesus' person and message are for every age and every place, because he embodied and embodies the love of God to all, and lived that love in a way which is not just for happy days but for every place and situation, including the worst. Matthew kept on pointing out that God, about whom the prophets had taught through the ages, had chosen to come and live among us. So we can be thankful that, at 12th Night, this passage of the bible is read, celebrating the presence of God, King of Kings, Light of the World, among us all, wherever we are.

Post Communion

God of glory, you nourish us with your Word
who is the bread of life: fill us with your Holy Spirit
that through us the light of your glory may shine in all the world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ukraine with Love Concert – CANCELLED

21st January at 2.30pm at Aldeburgh Parish Church

Unfortunately, due to personal reasons of the concert organisers, this concert has now been cancelled for the time being.

**Canon John Giles wanted to share this with us from a service that Jill and John attended over Christmas.
Thank you John.**

Christ the Load-Bearer. Talk at a village Carol Service In North Runcton, Norfolk. Christmas Eve. 2023.

Can we go back fifty years to a song-writer called Sydney Carter, who wrote "Lord of the Dance" and "One more Step along the World I go". Does anyone remember them? Maybe a quarter of those present put their hands up.

Sydney Carter wrote many other songs. He was one of Donald Swann's team – "mud, mud, glorious mud" and all that. He could be quite angry. He wrote a song about Peter waiting outside at the first trial of Jesus, and denying he knew him three times. "Bitter was the night".

Do you know “Every star shall sing a carol?” That’s the one we’ll sing tonight. Only a few knew this one.

Sidney Carter is asking could there be another Jesus on another life-supporting planet somewhere out there amongst the stars. Millions, billions of miles away. Thoughts of Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy.

Well, he says, We don’t know, but we can at least stick to whatever we do know, whatever is good and holy. Maybe he is also calling for a wider honesty about all the things to which we don’t know the answers, a lot of the big religious questions too. Stick to what we’re sure about. Don’t try and contradict Galileo as the religious tried to do. Listen to the facts.

Last year we said some words which ended: “Christmas is more than a story it’s true: my God is come to me – He comes to you”. The baby Jesus is born. He’s good and he’s holy – which means he is touched by God; set aside for God to use. He brought God to the shepherds. Maybe he can open our eyes as well. This at least we know: there is something good there, maybe something holy.

Then, in verse four Sydney Carter goes a big step further: “Who can count how many crosses, still to come or long ago, crucify the King of Heaven?” Can the story of Christ’s crucifixion be repeated in different ways, in distant parts of the universe? Can there be other times of innocent undeserved suffering like Jesus’ on the cross. - Times of injustice, cruelty? Yes, there could be and can be – it’s going on all the time.

Story of the Dean of students who lost the best part of his job at UEA in the troubles at UEA in 1971/2, a secular crucifixion by the students, who never realised how much he loved them.

What about the world we live in today: Look at the headlines. Gaza, Ukraine . .

Look more closely and you find other Christ-like things going on: Doctors staying on to help the wounded and dying; aid workers, ambulance drivers, masses of ordinary family members helping one another out, giving sharing, going without, maybe giving their lives for others. People like that, actions like that, load-bearing people, load-bearing actions.

Builders distinguish between partition walls and load-bearing walls. The load-bearing walls keep the house standing, keep the roof on. Muck around with them and houses can fall down. Beware the Kirstie Allsopp treatment in Love it/ List it.

Christ is a load-bearer: through forgiveness and love he shows us a better way of countering hatred and revenge – that terrible determination to retaliate, to exact vengeance, to kill all enemies. What is Jesus’ reply to all this, happening to him: “Father forgive them: they don’t know what they are doing.” And what is Jesus doing? He is alongside whoever is going through hard times, doing their best to make difficult situations better;

identifying with them and supporting them. A priest who spent the best years of his life on a huge northern housing estate said, talking of God's costly love: "Here is he, whose arms of love/ aching, spent, The world sustain."

Sometimes in Christianity we may talk too much about sin and forgiveness. We need to talk also about Christ coming alongside the great mass of humanity, and helping carry their loads.

We have to relearn his message today. Jesus is born in Bethlehem in an outhouse, a cattle-shed. Bethlehem today is overshadowed by a huge security wall. Yet the message of love and hope from that village can still win through.

Today let's keep on doing just that, with one beside us who willingly carries our load.

Can I leave you with a few words that say something very simple. Let's try and say it line after line. I know it's rather Primary School level, but it helps to remember the words:

"A tiny child/ that distant Christmas Day/ lit such a spark/ that through the dark/ of countless ages/ men might find their way." Happy Christmas all.

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>

£££ 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/>

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.

Saturday 13th January from 7pm Pilgrim Zoom Quiz

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

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.

Pilgrim Dates for your Diaries

Saturday 27th January - Pilgrim Local History Story Telling Ceilidh

Saturday 3rd February – Community Breakfast and local ramble starting at the Parrot at 9.30am

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

Next Sunday, 21st January - Third Sunday of Epiphany

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