



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 28th January Fourth Sunday of Epiphany/Candlemas

Services in The Alde Sandlings Benefice this Sunday

Aldeburgh	10.30am	Holy Communion
	6.00pm	Evening Prayer
Aldringham	11.00am	Morning Prayer
Friston	10.00am	Service of the Word
Knodishall	9.30am	Holy Communion

A message from Revd Sarah du Boulay

Dear Friends,

I have booked a Bishop! We are looking forward to welcoming the bishop of Dunwich, Bishop Mike, to our benefice on 26th May 2024 for a Confirmation Service.

Many of us will have been baptised as a baby, when our parents and godparents made promises on our behalf to raise us as Christians, and to pray for us throughout our lives. Confirmation is the chance for us to make our own promises when we are old enough to understand exactly what we

are agreeing to, and to understand our own faith. If we are baptised as an adult, we are expected to then be confirmed so that we can receive communion on a regular basis.

If you, or anybody you know, is interested in being confirmed, please do let me know asap. I'd love to have a chat about what it entails. Once our group is established, we will begin running preparation sessions.

Confirmation is a real celebration, and a wonderful chance to affirm our belief in God, and to support those who are making these promises in public. It is open to all ages, so please do explore it if you think it might be for you – everybody welcome!

With prayers,

Sarah

Revd Sarah's Benefice Licensing Service

Sunday 11th February, 3pm- St, Andrew's, Aldringham

Archdeacon Rich will be leading this service to license Revd Sarah as our Rector of The Alde Sandlings Benefice. The service will be held at Aldringham church at 3pm on Sunday 11th February.

Everybody is most welcome to come to support Sarah.

There will also be an opportunity to meet the Archdeacon and to enjoy some convivial après-licensing refreshments in or around St. Andrew's church. It will be wonderful to have a packed church for this significant event. So see you there.

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.

First Reading

Malachi 3.1-5

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. 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; 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. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years. 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.

Second Reading

Hebrews 2.14-end

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, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters 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. 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

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 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), 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.' 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. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 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, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.' And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. 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. so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed-and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

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

Sermon by Revd Sarah du Boulay Third Sunday of Epiphany at Aldringham 21st January

Throughout Epiphanytide, we learn more every week about the person of Jesus. The wedding at Cana marks the first of his miracles, and is well known reading – referenced at church weddings as a blessing for the couple – if Jesus went to a wedding, and blessed it not only with his presence, but with his first miracle, then a wedding must be God-approved.

There are lots of other references to weddings in the Bible, from the story of the wise and foolish virgins, to the story of the king who gave a wedding fest and nobody came, to the story of the guests who chose whether to sit at the higher or lower end of the table. And of course, the piece of scripture we have just heard from Revelation, where heaven itself is described as a wedding feast of the Lamb and the ultimate union of Christ and his Church.

The thing is that in ALL of these cases the wedding is a symbol for the kingdom of God. In the gospel of John, St John says that this miracle is the first of Jesus' signs – the signs being revelations of Jesus as Messiah. So the wedding at Cana has to be understood in a symbolic way. And there is plenty of symbolism...

Did anybody notice the first sentence of this story? On the third day there was a wedding in Cana. The third day. We've definitely heard that somewhere before! The resurrection happened on the third day – the fulfilment of God's covenant itself. Could this be a clue as to the deeper meanings of the miracle at Cana?

The main action of the story is the changing of water into wine. The stone jars into which the water was poured were used for Jewish purification rites. That's significant. One might say that the resurrection was the ultimate purification. The act of a loving God to redeem his creation. In the Bible the number 7 is significant – it is the number of perfection. Of God himself. Did anybody notice how many stone jars there were? 6. That's one short of 7. One short of perfection. Deficiency. The need to be made whole again.

The jars themselves held 20 – 30 gallons of water. That's 684 litres. That's 1,203.67 pints. That's roughly 7,884.04 glasses of wine. At the end of a wedding feast. When people had already been drinking for a good while. That's 7,884 glasses of the best wine. The very best wine. That's 7,884 glasses of Domaine Leroy Richebourg Grand Cru 1949 (coming in at roughly £6,000 per bottle – I've been doing some research!). What symbolism is this? Well, it clearly symbolises the sheer abundance of God's love. The abundance of the spirit on the last day when joy will be unconfined. The Holy Spirit will not be carefully handed out – it is abundant and it is joyful and it is rich and it is generous and it is beyond our wildest dreams.

At the end of the story, the steward says 'But you have kept the good wine until now'. In the other gospels, new wine symbolises the new life of the kingdom of God. This shows us clearly that the best is yet to come. The old ways, the old wine will not do. what we are called to follow is this man Jesus. Jesus the son of God. His teachings, his miracles, his story.

I went to the theatre in Ipswich on Friday to see Jesus Christ Superstar. It was a touring production of a version I first saw at the Barbican in 2019, and it was really good. Now, (it seems today is a day for numbers for me), the theatre holds 1,500 people. It was full most nights. The show happened 7 times during its run in Ipswich. So that's over 10,000 people who sat for a couple of hours to watch and learn about the story of the passion of Jesus, in a week, in Ipswich. Obviously, it's an interpretation, and the really sad thing is that it stops at the crucifixion – we don't see or get any hint of the resurrection. But it surprises me every time just how biblical the lyrics are. That's 10,000 people learning parts of scripture and choosing to spend time with Jesus.

I'm not suggesting that we stage a full scale production of a rock musical. But the opportunities are there. We have abundant opportunities to share the good news of the Gospel – to help people to see what the kingdom of God is like. To help them understand that we need Jesus – we need to know that where he is, the kingdom of God is near.

Over the past few weeks, I have preached the following as revelations of Jesus:

Epiphany – becoming more Christ-like (building the kingdom of God)

Epiphany 2 – where Jesus is, the kingdom of God is near

Epiphany 3 – what the kingdom is like. Let joy be unconfined! Abundant, unconditional, unimaginable love. This is what we learn from the story of the wedding of cana. Jesus' first miracle is as the kingdom – joyful, abundant, unconditional, generous.

And what an incredible message to understand, and then to share that is.

Post Communion

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.

Issues Receiving the Benefice Weekly Newsletter

Some of you have informed us that you haven't been receiving the weekly newsletter. This is only applying to BT and Gmail email users so far. This is frustrating, we know, but unfortunately there isn't a great deal we can do to rectify this issue from our end, as it is how your email providers spam filters class the email, ie spam or not spam.

Please do check you spam/junk folders. You can also view the newsletter every week on the benefice website too if the actual email doesn't find its way into your mailbox.

<https://www.aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk/news/>

£££ 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 27th January

Pilgrim Local History Story Telling Ceilidh from 6.45pm

Saturday 3rd February – Community Breakfast and local ramble starting at the Parrot at 9.30am. As before, a delicious breakfast bap and coffee / tea combo for £7 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.

Pilgrim Dates for your Diaries

Saturday 10th February - Pilgrim Quiz

Saturday 24th February - Pilgrim Local History Story Telling Ceilidh

More details to follow!

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>

Confirmation Service

Would you like to come forward for Confirmation?

We are planning for this service to happen on the 26th May. Confirmation is a special church service in which a person confirms the promises that were made when they were baptised. If you were baptised at a christening when you were a child, your parents and godparents made these promises on your behalf. As a young person or adult, you may be ready to affirm these promises for yourself and commit your life to following Jesus Christ. At a confirmation service, you make these promises for yourself. Your friends and family as well as the local Christian community will be there to promise to support and pray for you. There will be some confirmation meetings giving you the opportunity to discuss your lifetime journey of faith coming up in the benefice. **If you think this would be something that you wish to explore further, please speak to a member of clergy or contact admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk**

**Next Sunday, 4th February
Second Sunday before Lent**

Sponsored Tree Planting in the Aldeburgh Churchyard

We will be planting nine trees in the Aldeburgh Closed Churchyard. These will be a mixture of English Oak, Hornbeam and Wild Cherry given to us by Bishop Martin and the Suffolk Tree Warden Network. Sponsoring one of these trees involves caring for the young tree by making sure it is regularly watered and ensuring the area around the base of the tree is kept clear until the tree is established. We will be preparing the areas for tree planting starting at 11:00am on 12 March 2024, and we will be planting the trees starting at 11:00am on 20 March 2024. If you would like to help with preparing the areas, planting trees or sponsor one of these trees in memory of someone special or as a special celebration then please get in touch with Ken Smith as soon as possible by person in church or do contact

admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk

We are limited with the number of trees, so it will be on a first come first served basis.

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