



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

Rector: The Revd Sarah du Boulay

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Sunday 15th December Third Sunday of Advent

Services in The Alde Sandlings Benefice this Sunday

Aldeburgh	8.00am	Holy Communion	Prebendary Derek Johnson
	10.30am	Morning Prayer	Led by Elder Fran Smith
Aldringham	11.00am	Carol Service	Revd Mary Brown
Friston	10.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Sarah du Boulay
Knodishall	9.30am	Service of the Word	Led by Elder Ros Macallister
	6.00pm	Knodishall Village Hall Carol Service	Revd Sarah du Boulay & Revd Mary Brown

A Message from Rev'd Mary Brown

Dear Friends,

We are now well and truly into Advent, we've passed the half way mark, and tomorrow we will light the third candles in our Advent wreathes. The candles and fairy lights and sparkles of Christmas can all serve to remind us that Christmas is about celebrating Jesus, the Light of the World. 'A light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.'

At the Christingle service last Saturday we read Matthew 5.14-16, where Jesus tells us that we are the light of the world! We talked about how

Jesus takes our ordinary earthiness and transforms us into bright shining lights through his love. I pray that you would each shine brightly in Christ's love this week!

If you don't yet feel you've entered into the joy of Christmas, two of our churches have their carol services tomorrow, why not come along to join with others and belt out some carols, remembering why this season leads us to 'repeat the sounding joy'. (I'll leave you to work out which carol that line is from, with the hint that it's my absolute favourite, and I have chosen it for every Christmas service I'm leading!)

With love and prayers,

Mary

The Alde Sandlings Saturday Gratitude

A recap for all the positive news and love that God has shown us in the benefice this week. We have much to be grateful for.

- Aldeburgh** For a wonderful Christingle service, for all those who came, and for the team who worked so hard to make it possible, the team who put together the Christingles, those who set the church up, those who provided music, those who welcomed and hosted, and everyone else involved in any way.
- Aldringham** For carols on the green. This was a joyful time of singing carols with the local community and remembering what Christmas is about. It was great to meet families who live in Aldringham and to have the chance to invite people to the carol service in church.
- Friston** For the dedicated PCC who work so hard to make St Mary's a place of blessing, community and outreach. Lately this has included finding ways to make young people welcome on a Sunday, what a joy!
- Knodishall** For the positive relationships the church has with those across the village, this will be on full display on Sunday evening at the carol service which is run in partnership with the Methodist church in Knodishall, and which will involve people from across the community.
- Pilgrims** Pilgrims are giving thanks for the joy of our Parrot Community Breakfast Gatherings: for loving, gracious relationships; time to be together and offer ourselves in prayer.

Collect

O Lord Jesus Christ,
who at your first coming sent your messenger
to prepare your way before you:
grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries
may likewise so prepare and make ready your way
by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,
that at your second coming to judge the world
we may be found an acceptable people in your sight;
for you are alive and reign with the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading

Zephaniah 3.14-end

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgements against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

Second Reading

Philippians 4.4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Gospel Reading

Luke 3.7-18

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.' And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, 'Teacher, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.' Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.' As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.' So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

† 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

** Weather permitting, we are prayer walking around Friston and Knodishall. Please speak to Revd Sarah and Revd Mary for more info.

Sermon by Revd Nichola Winter at Aldeburgh 8th December

We have to dig deep in Advent. With all the colourful noisy razzamatazz that surrounds us - the almost over-anticipation of Christmas itself - it can be hard to find that quiet space for reflection that will then enable us to celebrate the glorious light and hope that comes with the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Traditionally Advent was a time when Christians meditated on the four last things - death, judgement, heaven and hell. Today the focus has shifted to the forefathers, the prophets, the Virgin Mary, and John the Baptist. In this second week we think about the prophets. In many ways we approach the very heart of Advent. It is a dark time; the days are still shortening. the solstice has not yet been reached, and the light of the world is yet to come. Gardeners know that there has to be this time of stillness and darkness when the soil has chilled and the seed lies dormant before life can spring forth again, grow and flourish.

As we view everything that goes on around us at this time of the year we might feel that there can be an almost insidious influence that demands our society and culture - wittingly or unwittingly - mask the Christian message of the season. In certain spheres we're not allowed to talk about 'Christmas' - it has to be 'the festive season'. We're encouraged to participate in a general noisy and over-stimulated 'feel-good' atmosphere of glitter and flashing lights that threatens nobody - but challenges no-one either.

Like many others I was drawn to CS Lewis' Narnia chronicles as a child - and indeed, they can be returned to at any stage in life. Lewis himself described them as 'stories for children of any age' - and, as I have said elsewhere, if we lose the capacity for childlike wonder in later life we do ourselves a dis-service. The books have an almost timeless quality; they have triggered the imagination of many writers - Rowan Williams' *The Lion's World* and Jem Bloomfield's *Footprints in the Snow* to name but two. One of the most familiar themes of *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* is when Narnia is described as a land where it is always winter but never Christmas until Aslan, the god-like figure returns. In a subsequent story, *Prince Caspian*, we hear how a different regime of fear has taken hold - old tales about the happy times in Narnia are forbidden and even the memory of them is not allowed. His tutor tells the young Prince Caspian, 'my old heart has carried these secret memories so long that it aches with them and would burst if I did not whisper them to you.' Thankfully the Christian faith in this country has not yet reached that horrific stage but these examples from Narnia highlight the need for us, as Christians, to tell out our faith in ways

appropriate to those we encounter. We are called to be 21st Century prophets...

The Old Testament prophet Malachi warns us that 'the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come into his temple... he will purify and he will refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness.' So often we're told to look out for the signs - remember Jesus' words about the fig tree - we need to read those signs and to be ready because when the Lord does come the tests are going to be pretty tough - like refining gold and fuller's soap. These are both violent processes; were they to be applied to humans they'd be pretty painful. Eventually they produce something valuable and beautiful but not before a lot of effort has been expended. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, affirms his belief that 'the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.' We don't arrive in this world perfect and fully formed. We are all works in progress and the process of growing and becoming the person God wants us to be isn't always without obstacles.

As Christians we are called to be that prophetic voice - we are the ones crying out, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. The gospel tells us how John flags all this up - when the Lord comes, the paths will be made straight; the mountains and hills will be levelled. Some people have criticised this prophecy as a sign that everything will become uniform, mediocre and boring. But it is much more likely that, although Creation is incredibly complex - and indeed, our understanding and appreciation of it equally convoluted - in order to appreciate, worship and adore our Creator we need simplicity. We need to enter the kingdom as children. Advent is a good time to remind ourselves that amongst all the busy-ness of modern secular life, the insistent noise of mobile phones and constant chatter, the demands for instant responses to questions that few people ever bother to actually listen to, we need those times of quiet and simplicity when we can be alone with God, through prayer, through quiet reading and thought; through meditation. We need those flat deserts of calm in the midst of our mountainous schedules to make visible to ourselves - and to others - the presence of our gracious Lord.

So let us reflect on how we can really love as God wants us to. Turning and repenting - getting rid of all that makes us impure - the unkind acts, the careless words, the thoughtless actions. It can be a tough process - it's hard to admit that we're not as perfect as we'd like to believe we are. But we can work on removing the impurities and focus on righting wrongs, on treating each other gently - on loving as God has loved us.

As I said earlier, we are called to be 21st Century prophets - and we are fortunate in this benefice to have different ways in which we can enrich our faith and learn to speak out. Alpha, Prayer Warriors, bible study, 'Growing Leaders' sessions... there are numerous resources and if you'd like to know more speak to one of the clergy.

In closing, the Collect today reminds us that we are unable to do all this on our own – we need the bountiful grace and mercy of God. And God sends that to us in the form of a tiny baby, born into a troubled world and yet growing up and preaching and living out a wonderful gospel of love and forgiveness. Let us prepare to receive this amazing gift with love and thanksgiving, putting the darkness behind us and looking forward to the light.

Post Communion

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts;
kindle in us the fire of your Spirit
that when your Christ comes again
we may shine as lights before his face;
who is alive and reigns now and for ever.

† 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>

£££ 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/>



Growing Leaders 2025 Aldeburgh

Session Dates

Thur 28 Nov 24	7-8pm	Information Evening on Zoom
Thur 9 Jan	6-9pm	with a meal
Thur 23 Jan	7-9pm	
Thur 27 Feb	7-9pm	
Thur 27 March	7-9pm	
Thur 24 April	7-9pm	
Thur 15 May	6-9pm	with a meal
Thur 19 June	7-9pm	
Thur 17 July	7-9pm	
Thur 11 Sept	7-9pm	
Thur 16 Oct	7-9pm	
Thur 13 Nov	7-9pm	
Thur 11 Dec	7-9pm	

BOOK NOW > email Rev. Sarah du Boulay revd.sarah@btinternet.com



Growing Leaders 2025

"At St Thomas' everyone who has attended Growing Leaders has come to know their vocation better and as a result the church has become a more vibrant place. They have grown in confidence, in love of God, of neighbour and themselves."
Reverend Rachel Revely

"A challenging and transformational course which has led to me knowing whose I am, understanding my identity as a child of God, choosing to remain in him and offering my ordinary life for him to use as he guides... being obedient to my call to encourage others."

"For me, Growing Leaders has been enlightening, encouraging and empowering. I was challenged in a positive way: my faith has deepened & my self-confidence has increased."

BOOK NOW > email Rev. Sarah du Boulay revd.sarah@btinternet.com

The Alde Sandlings, Dates for your Diary

- Prayer Warriors' Group – Last Tuesdays of the month, starting 24th September 6-7pm in Aldeburgh Church – All welcome
- Benefice Bible Studies Group I – Sunday 6th October 3-4.30pm, then every first Sunday of the month at The Rectory, Friston
- Benefice Service at Aldringham on Sunday 29th December at 11.00am.
- Growing Leaders 2025 – See notice for dates. More info to follow

AND..... All Christmas Dates – See Christmas Poster below in this newsletter.



**CHRISTMAS DATES AT THE
CHURCHES OF
THE ALDE SANDLINGS BENEFICE**

ALDEBURGH PARISH CHURCH

Saturday 7 th December	4.00pm	Benefice Christingle Service
Saturday 14 th December	10.00am	Christmas Messy Church
Sunday 22 nd December	6.00pm	Christmas Carol Service
Christmas Eve	3.30pm	Crib Service
	11.30pm	First Communion of Christmas
Christmas Day	10.30am	Christmas Holy Communion Service

ALDRINGHAM PARISH CHURCH

Sunday 1 st December	6.00pm	Advent Carol Service by Candlelight
Wednesday 11 th	6.00pm	Carols on the Green
Sunday 15 th December	11.00am	Christmas Carol Service
Christmas Eve	11.30pm	First Communion of Christmas
Christmas Day	11.00am	Christmas Morning Family Service

FRISTON PARISH CHURCH

Sunday 22 nd December	6.00pm	Christmas Carol Service
Christmas Day	10.00am	Christmas Holy Communion Service

KNODISHALL PARISH CHURCH

Sunday 15 th December	6.00pm	Village Carol Service at Knodishall Village Hall
Christmas Day	9.30am	Christmas Holy Communion Service

WE WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS
Please visit Alde Sandlings Website -
www.aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk for all other service times



Alde Sandlings Benefice

Prayer Groups

There will be two **benefice monthly Bible Studies Group**. One group will have its first session on Sunday 6th October, and will run every first Sunday of the month from 3-4.30pm. This will be hosted by Revd Mary at the Friston Rectory.

Prayer Warriors Group

We will meet monthly on the last Tuesday of the month from 6-7pm in Aldeburgh Church, beginning on 24th September. You are all most welcome. If you would like to join either, please contact Revd Mary to be added to the list.

† Home Visits †

Not everyone can get to church as they were once able to, due to an illness or reduced mobility. We fully understand that this can be incredibly isolating for some. If you, or you know of someone that would like a home visit from one of our Elders, please do let us know. Or if you would like home communion, please do let a member of clergy know. Please contact them directly or email admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk and we will do our utmost to arrange a visit.

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>

† 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.

This Saturday 21st December Encounter, Pilgrims' Faith Cafe @ The Outside Inn, Parrot Pub 9.30 - 10.30

Come and join us for coffee, tea & croissants; chance to explore questions about faith, chance to reflect, to listen & share thoughts. All are welcome.

Pilgrim Christmas Pop-Up @ Aldeburgh Prom by Moot Hall - Saturday 21st December 3pm Come and join us to sing carols and celebrate with all who gather and pass by.

Pilgrims @ Thorpeness - Sunday 22nd December 4pm

Carols round the Tree by the Meare. Come and join us to sing carols, hear the Christmas story and celebrate together.

Sunday 12th January starting late afternoon (time to be confirmed) @ Ogilvie Pavilion

New Pilgrims face to face gathering. Cafe style: praise, prayer, exploring the Bible together, refreshment. Opportunity to be together. More details to follow in the new year.



Alde Sandlings NEW Service Times from January 5th

We have new service times for Aldeburgh and Friston Churches. Aldeburgh will be 11.00am EVERY Sunday from the 5th January
Friston will be 9.30am EVERY Sunday from the 5th January
Aldringham and Knodishall services remain at the same times

**Sunday 22nd December
Fourth Sunday of Advent**