



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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The Revd Johanna Mabey

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Sunday 26th January Third Sunday of Epiphany

Services in The Alde Sandlings Benefice this Sunday

Aldeburgh	11.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Sarah du Boulay
	11.00am	Family Service	In the Church Hall
	6.00pm	Evening Prayer	Led by Elders
Aldringham	11.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Mary Brown
Friston	9.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Nichola Winter
Knodishall	9.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Mary Brown

A message from Revd Mary Brown

Dear Friends,

I had the great joy of taking assembly at Aldeburgh Primary this week. My theme was Anna and Simeon meeting Jesus in the temple, which is one of my favourite bits of Luke's account of Jesus' early years. Anna and Simeon both waited for decades for God to show them his chosen one. They worshiped in the temple day and night, patiently waiting for God to move. Then, one day, in walked a young couple with their newborn baby in their arms, and in that moment Simeon and Anna both knew that this was it - God had done what he had promised to do - Jesus was the light of the world, who had come to drive out all of the darkness.

It can be easy to feel low in these grey January days, so today I encourage you to think about what it means for Jesus to be the light of the world. In assembly we talked about Jesus as the light that helps us to see (like a candle or a torch), the light that helps others to see us (like a bike light), the light that brings us comfort and tells us that we are not alone (like a child's night light), and we could have added that he is the light that finds us however lost we are (like the searchlights we use on the Lifeboat). What sort of light do you need from Jesus this week? Can you come to him in prayer with your need, and like Anna and Simeon, wait expectantly for his answer?

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, Aldringham and Friston - thanks to God for all those who faithfully serve on our PCCs, for their time, energy and commitment, and for the productive PCC meetings we have had this week.

Knodishall - for the funeral that was held last week, which enables the church to be a place of welcome and comfort to those who are grieving, and for all our volunteers who make the church that place of welcome.

Pilgrims - Pilgrims are giving thanks for the blessing and joy of worship with residents, staff and families at Aldringham Court.

Collect

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles
the wonder of your saving presence:
renew your people with your heavenly grace,
and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power;
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

Nehemiah 8.1-3, 5-6, 8-10

All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel. Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen', lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.'

Second Reading

I Corinthians 12.12-31a

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On

the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Gospel Reading

Luke 4.14-21

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

Sermon by Revd Mary Brown at Aldeburgh, 19th January

As we know, epiphany is all about the ah-ha moment when the people around Jesus realised who he was. So far we have heard from the wise men that this baby was the messiah - the promised one sent by God to save his people, and then last week at Jesus' baptism we heard as a voice came from heaven saying 'this is my Son, the beloved, with him I am well pleased', and we watched as the Holy Spirit landed on him in the form of a dove.

The question we will ask today is what Jesus' first sign, of turning water into wine at a wedding in Cana, adds to the picture that is forming of who Jesus is, and of his glory.

Our gospel reading from John is very rich, full of symbolism, and cross links to other parts of the Bible - there is so much we could say about it. So what I am going to say will be necessarily selective. We'll use the question of who it tells us Jesus is to help narrow our focus.

In the passage we see Jesus at a wedding where the wine has run out. Asked by his mother to help, he has the servants fill jars, usually used for ritual washing, with water, and then he turns this water into approximately 120 gallons, or 3600 glasses, of the best wine. In doing this Jesus provides for the people at the wedding, and specifically for the bridegroom who would have been dishonoured by his failure to buy enough wine. In doing this Jesus did not provide enough wine, he provided abundantly and extravagantly more than enough, of much better quality than was needed.

How does this sign add to our understanding of who Jesus is? How does it add to the 'ah-ha' moment of epiphany by revealing his glory?

By providing wine at this wedding, Jesus was taking on a role that should have been filled by the bridegroom. It was the bridegroom's job to provide the wine. Through this sign Jesus showed himself to be the ultimate bridegroom. The bridegroom who was prophesied in our reading from Isaiah, the bridegroom who was prophesied throughout the Old Testament, and on into the New.

Let's turn to Isaiah to help us understand this - Isaiah tells us about a promised future wedding. The wedding of God to his people. God uses this metaphor of a wedding throughout scripture to illustrate his love for us, and the union with God which is promised to his people.

We see this metaphor again and again: in Isaiah and his fellow prophets; in the Song of Songs; in Revelation where John describes the end of time as a great wedding feast; and in Paul's letters where he refers to the Church as the bride of Christ.

In this morning's reading from Isaiah we heard God promise a new name to his people - instead of Desolate and Forsaken, God's people will be called 'My Delight Is In Her' and 'Married'. God - the builder - will 'marry' his people as a young man marries a young woman. God will rejoice over his people as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride. In the light of his love for them, God's people will become a crown of beauty and royalty. This morning's passage comes after a few chapters of Isaiah detailing the ways in which God's love will redeem Israel, bringing her out of her shame and sadness into joy and beauty - into the presence of her divine groom.

As I prepared last summer to be ordained priest, I was also preparing for my first few weddings (I couldn't take weddings for my first year of curacy, as only priests can take weddings, not deacons). I was quite apprehensive about taking weddings. I wasn't sure that I would be able to enter into the joy that the couple and their loved ones were feeling. I had been to more than my fair share of weddings in my twenties, and in all honesty I had become quite cynical about them.

I had heard other priests talk about how their favourite moment in a wedding was the moment when the groom first saw the bride coming towards him down the aisle, and as the priest, standing where we stand, they got to see first hand the utter delight on his face. I thought this sounded like a bit of a cliché and wasn't expecting much.

But as it turned out, it really is a special thing to be standing this side of a wedding couple and to see that delight on the groom's face. I'm much less cynical about weddings now than I was six months ago.

When I read this line in Isaiah 'she shall be called My Delight is In Her', I see those grooms in my mind's eye, their faces lit up with delight as they see their bride walking down the aisle towards them, in all her beauty.

In talking about his people as his bride God uses a powerful and emotive metaphor that many, if not most of us, can relate to in some way. God uses this metaphor to try and help us understand the mind-blowing extent to which he loves us.

But, being this side of the wedding couple, I also know that their love, though special, and worth celebrating, is very human. Like all human loves, the love a groom has for his bride will wax and wane, there will be days when loving his bride is easy and days when it is much much harder, there will be days when the wedding vows are the obvious way to live, and days when keeping them requires an active choice.

This is where the metaphor of God as our groom falls short, and why I said that in turning the water into wine Jesus was showing himself to be the ultimate groom. None of us, no matter how amazing our marriages are, or may have been, have experienced a human love that is anywhere close to the love that God has for us - that Jesus the bridegroom has for his bride - the church. The love experienced in the best marriage is but a poor shadow of God's love for us. The most joyful of weddings is a poor shadow of that final wedding feast when we will see Jesus' face as he looks in delight at us, his perfected bride.

So on this second Sunday of epiphany we are again given a choice. Will we choose to see Jesus' glory - to move towards him - towards the God who promises to love us with a love beyond any that we have witnessed or can imagine? Will we hear God calling us, in the words of our reading from Isaiah last week - precious, honoured, and loved? Will we accept Jesus' invitation, through his death and resurrection, to become part of his eternal bride? Will we drink the (metaphorical) wine he made for us?

Or will we ignore this best of wines, and keep drinking water, believing like Herod, that we have to earn our own glory?

Post Communion

Almighty Father, whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world: may your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of his glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

**Next Sunday – 2nd February,
Candlemas**

NEW ELECTORAL ROLL

The Electoral Roll is a list of names and addresses of every person who can vote in the annual parochial church meeting. It is revised annually but replaced in its entirety every six years. The current electoral-rolls (created in 2019) will be replaced with brand-new rolls this year (2025).

EVERYONE will need to fill out an application form (attached with this newsletter) whether you are already on the current roll or wish to be added.

Hard copies can also be found in the church you worship in.

Aldeburgh – Please put in the administrator's pigeonhole or send by email.
Aldringham, Friston and Knodishall please hand to an Elder or Church Warden, or you can scan or take a photograph of the form and send it to Claire at:

admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk

The forms need to be handed in at least 3 weeks before the Annual PCC meetings at the Church you worship in.
APCM's in the Alde Sandlings Benefice:

Aldeburgh – 6th April

Aldringham – 18th May

Friston – 4th May

Knodishall – 11th May

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

ALPHA AT ALDRINGHAM

11 weeks starting on 4th February - 6-8pm, including a light supper.

Alpha is for anyone who has questions about the Christian faith, whatever your background or beliefs, you are

ALL WELCOME

To sign up and for more details and the location, please contact Rev'd Mary revd@mary-brown.co.uk



† 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, 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/>

† 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.

The Alde Sandlings, Dates for your Diary

- Prayer Warriors' Group – Every last Tuesday of the month, 6-7pm in Aldeburgh Church – All welcome
- Benefice Bible Studies Group – First Sunday of the month, 3-4.30pm, at The Rectory, Friston
- Alpha at Aldringham – Starting from 4th February. See notice.
- APCM's in the Alde Sandlings Benefice
 - Aldeburgh – 6th April
 - Aldringham – 18th May
 - Friston – 4th May
 - Knodishall – 11th May

Prayer Groups

Benefice monthly Bible Studies Group.

Every first Sunday of the month from 3-4.30pm.

This will be hosted by Revd Mary at the Friston Rectory.

Prayer Warriors Group

Every last Tuesday of the month from 6-7pm in Aldeburgh Church.

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 or be added to our mailing list.

Saturday 1st February Community Breakfast 9.30 @ The Parrot date

A delicious breakfast bap and coffee / tea combo for £7.50 is on offer at the Parrot, chance to catch up with each other and community news, a 'Christmasy' feel! All are welcome. Catching up about local reflective ramble possibilities too.

Pilgrims @ Thorpeness Sunday 9th February 4pm @ Ogilvie Pavilion - Pilgrims Create

New Pilgrims face to face gathering. A time to share and explore. A time to be with each other and God.

Saturday 15th February 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.

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