



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

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## **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December Fourth Sunday of Advent**

### **Services in The Alde Sandlings Benefice this Sunday**

Aldeburgh	8.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Celia Cook
	11.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Sarah du Boulay
	6.00pm	Carol Service	Revd Sarah & Revd Mary
Aldringham	11.00am	Carol Service	Revd Mary Brown
Friston	9.30am	Service of the Word	Led by Elder Marie Szpak
Knodishall	<u>3.00pm</u>	Carol Service	Knodishall Village Hall

### **A Message from, Revd Mary Brown**

Dear Friends,

I am writing this introduction on one of those foggy winter mornings, the trees on the other side of the garden are barely visible. I love these sorts of mornings, I find that there is something comforting in it, like being wrapped in a blanket and shielded from all the busy noise of the world.

Advent can feel like a busy and noisy season, one in which we barely find time to pray or read scripture, where contemplating Jesus is the last thing on our to do list. We need to buy presents, plan meals, prepare food, make beds... Sometimes we need a sort of spiritual sea fret to roll in and dampen the demand of all of these things, to give us the gift of a protected pocket of time with Jesus.

What one thing could you do today to bring your focus back to Jesus as we enter the last days of Advent? Perhaps lighting a candle and sitting quietly with it for five minutes. Perhaps reading a favourite Psalm, or could you sing or listen to that wonderful Advent carol O Come O Come Emmanuel?

Traditionally the last seven days of Advent (which begin on the day I am writing this) are a time to reflect on the seven O Antiphons, ancient names for Christ on which that hymn is based. If you would like a resource to guide you through these, do send me an email and I will send you a resource for reflection. For now, here are those seven titles for Christ:

*O Wisdom of God,  
O Lord,  
O Root of Jesse,  
O Key of David,  
O Dayspring,  
O King of the nations,  
O Emmanuel.*

With love and prayers, and a Merry Christmas, and with hopes to see you at one or more of our carol services tomorrow, our crib service on Wednesday, or one of our Christmas Day services.

If you find yourself alone for Christmas Day, the Baptist Church is holding a lunch and would love to welcome you. See the poster in this newsletter for more information.

Mary

### **Collect**

God our redeemer,  
who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary  
to be the mother of your Son:  
grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour,  
so we may be ready to greet him  
when he comes again as our judge;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

## **First Reading**

### **Isaiah 7.10-16**

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

## **Second Reading**

### **Romans 1.1-7**

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Gospel Reading**

### **Matthew 1.18-end**

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

## **Sermon by Revd Nichola Winter**

### **14<sup>th</sup> December – Third Sunday of Advent**

Some years ago I had the privilege of talking with a gentleman who had served in the western desert in the army. He spoke of the blistering heat, the sandstorms and the wild bleakness of the surroundings. But he also spoke of the transformation when the flash floods came, the sudden and exhilarating blossoming of the desert so that it looked like a 'field of corn and flowers', to use his description.

Deserts can bloom; a wilderness can become a place of habitation; fertility can spring from barrenness. And this is the image that Isaiah uses in his poetic description of an almost chaotic and riotous abundance in a land otherwise dry and empty. In this third week of Advent we think about preparing the way. With the threats of strike action, power shortages as a result of chaotic energy policy and limited financial budgets - personal, national and for our hard-pressed small (and not so small) businesses, preparations as such might be proving more problematic than ever. The media would always be telling us how to have the perfect, or most novel, Christmas but perhaps a more modest Christmas might better be in keeping with the original mood of the season. In some ways we live parallel lives – the life where we try to be just that step ahead with Christmas preparations, and the life where we try to hang on to the season of Advent so that the full effect of the arrival of Christmas will be all the greater.

John had a similar problem. He knew that the Messiah would be coming soon but he didn't know the exact time or place. From the depths and despair of prison he received news about Jesus and what he was doing. But imagine how difficult it must have been for him to decide exactly what to believe about Jesus. One commentator has written: 'it may seem odd that John wondered about Jesus – but John was in prison. Pressure, tiredness and fear do hard things to the human spirit. If we are severely pressed by life, our faith too may get knocked out of shape. We may need to be reassured about things we once knew well. This... does not criticize John. It invites him to grasp afresh what God is doing and, although he cannot share in it, to rejoice and give praise.'

Advent is a time for grasping afresh. The familiar story of the Nativity is about to come round again. We may think we know it all too well. But each one of us is at a different stage in our life to where we were last time we heard the story. Each of us has new things to deal with – different family situations, perhaps a different job (or no job at all), a new house, a

new state of health. Life never stays the same – something will have changed. We too may be asking, 'are you really the one who is to come?' Life events can cloud our judgement, can disable us from seeing clearly, from seeing the truth. One of the Advent responsories, sung since medieval times, puts it beautifully:

I look from afar: and lo, I see the pow'r of God coming,  
and a cloud covering the whole earth.

Go ye out to meet him and say:

Tell us, art thou he that should come to reign o'er thy people Israel?

Like John our Advent cry goes up – is it you, Lord?

And an answer comes back...

Tell them – tell them what is happening. Tell them what you see. The blind are seeing, the lame are walking. Let what you see and hear give the answer. And for us today, we may look for miracles, for proof, for evidence that the kingdom of God is on the way...

We need to start from where we are, to look and to engage with our community, our culture and our surroundings to see the fresh green shoots of a riotous blossoming of the desert. When we are tired, when the pressures of life seem to become a bit much, our personal prayer life can suffer and we might feel we're simply not getting through to God - or He's not getting through to us. But if we can persevere, if we can hang on in there, God can take the paltry offering we bring and make it shine. God takes our impoverished words and thoughts and breathes life into them. The desert that is sometimes our prayer life can bloom. When all seems dark and hopeless, light can shine. At this dark time of year, when the sun rises the sky can be even more beautiful than at the height of summer (and there have been some incredibly beautiful sunrises - and sunsets - just lately.)

It was Oscar Niemeyer, the architect who designed some of the striking buildings that seemed to make Brazil's new capital spring out of the desert in the 1960s, who said:

'Life is very fleeting. It's important to be gentle and optimistic. We look behind and think what we've done in this life has been good. It was simple; it was modest. Everyone creates their own story and moves on.'

We may not all have the experience and gifts of Oscar Niemeyer but his words are true for all of us. Whatever we do, life is fleeting. It is important to be gentle and optimistic. If we, too, can share his vision of life springing from the desert, if we can look from afar and see the power of God coming, then like John in prison we will be invited to grasp afresh what God is doing - even if the shoots are only tiny just now - in our lives, in our communities and our culture. If we can grasp these afresh, then we can also rejoice and give praise.

### **Post Communion**

Heavenly Father,  
who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary  
to be the mother of the promised saviour:  
fill us your servants with your grace,  
that in all things we may embrace your holy will  
and with her rejoice in your salvation;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **† 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/UCLecK8GovYoaYzlgyOEIKZg>

St Edmundsbury Cathedral Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/stedscathedral>

## **Alde Sandlings at Christmas**

Friston kicked off the Carol Services last Sunday (14<sup>th</sup>). The spirit of Christmas was ever present. The service was led by Revd Nichola Winter, with the communal joy and celebration and singing carols. Followed by mulled wine and a mince pie or two. £420 was raised for the charity EACH. Do join us this Sunday as the rest of the Benefice hold their carol services, and throughout this Christmas Season. All churches within the Alde Sandlings have been beautifully decorated. A **HUGE** thank you must go to all the talented teams that make our churches look so welcoming. Do pop by and take a look!



### ***Friston Parish Church***







***Knodishall Parish Church***







## ***Aldeburgh Parish Church***





### ***Aldringham Parish Church***



### **Christmas Eve Services**

Aldeburgh	10.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Nichola Winter
	3.30pm	Crib Service	Revd Sarah & Revd Mary
	11.30pm	First Communion of Christmas	Revd Sarah du Boulay

## **Christmas Day**

Aldeburgh	11.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Mary Brown
Aldringham	11.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Martin Percival
Friston	9.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Nichola Winter
Knodishall	9.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Sarah du Boulay

## **Christmas Day Readings**

### **Collect**

Eternal God, who made this most holy night  
to shine with the brightness of your one true light:  
bring us, who have known the revelation of that light on earth,  
to see the radiance of 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**

#### **Isaiah 52.7-10**

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.' Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

### **Second Reading**

#### **Hebrews 1.1-4 [5-12]**

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. [For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you'? Or again, 'I will be his Father, and he will be my Son'? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him.' Of the angels



he says, 'He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire.' But of the Son he says, 'Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever, and the righteous sceptre is the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.' And, 'In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end.']

## **Gospel Reading**

### **John 1.1 - 14**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

## **Post Communion**

God our Father,  
in this night you have made known to us again  
the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:  
confirm our faith and fix our eyes on him  
until the day dawns and Christ the Morning Star rises in our hearts.  
To him be glory both now and for ever.

**Next Week**  
**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Season**  
**Benefice Holy Communion Service at 11am at**  
**Aldeburgh Parish Church led by Revd Sarah du Boulay**

**Readings for the 28<sup>th</sup> December**

**Collect**

Almighty God,  
who wonderfully created us in your own image  
and yet more wonderfully restored us  
through your Son Jesus Christ:  
grant that, as he came to share in our humanity,  
so we may share the life of his divinity;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**First Reading**

**Isaiah 63:7-9**

I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us, and the great favour to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, 'Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely'; and he became their saviour in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

**Second Reading**

**Hebrews 2:10-18**

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying, 'I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.' And again, 'I will put my trust in him.' And again, 'Here am I and the children whom God has given me.' 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**

### **Matthew 2:13-23**

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.' When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.' When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, 'He will be called a Nazorean.'

## **Post Communion**

Heavenly Father,  
whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home:  
help your Church to live as one family,  
united in love and obedience,  
and bring us all at last to our home in heaven;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



# ALDE SANDLINGS BENEFICE QUIZ NIGHT

Aldeburgh Church Hall  
Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January 7pm



We welcome you all to join us for a  
light-hearted general knowledge fun quiz  
evening, to raise funds for

The Alde Sandlings Benefice  
Churches – Aldeburgh,  
Aldringham, Friston and  
Knodishall



£9.50 entry inc a hot supper!

Just bring a bottle.

A fun evening, and of course  
lots of laughter.

**YOU ARE ALL VERY WELCOME**  
Tell your friends & family!

If you would like to join us, please let us  
know for catering purposes by Monday 19<sup>th</sup>  
January stating any dietary requirements.

Email:

[admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk)

### **Always wanted to sing?**

#### **Why not join Friston Community Choir!**

Held fortnightly on Wednesdays 6.00pm – 7.30pm

Friston Village Hall, Church Path, Friston IP17 1PU

£5 per session. For more info email

Briony Sones: [fristonvillage@gmail.com](mailto:fristonvillage@gmail.com) **ALL WELCOME**

### **£££ 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/>

### **† Home Visits †**

Not everyone can get to church as they were once able to, due to an illness 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](mailto: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>

### **The Alde Sandlings, Dates for your Diary**

- Morning Prayer throughout The Alde Sandlings Benefice Weekly at 9am - Aldeburgh – Every Monday – Wednesday and Friday. Aldringham – Every Thursday – Friston – Every Monday Knodishall – Every Tuesday.
- **ALL CHRISTMAS DATES LISTED BELOW IN THIS NEWSLETTER**
- Benefice Quiz Evening – Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January at 7pm in Aldeburgh Church Hall – See notice.
- Benefice Ash Wednesday Service – 18<sup>th</sup> February at 7pm at Knodishall
- Mothering Sunday Services throughout the Benefice - Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March
- Palm Sunday Services throughout the Benefice – Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March

### **† Pilgrims Together †**

#### **Pilgrims Online Wednesdays**

Wednesday Gathering to Worship, Reflect and Pray

#### **Pilgrims @Thorpeness - Sunday 21st December 4pm**

Pilgrims will be leading Community Carols round the Christmas Tree in front of the boathouse.

**All are welcome to any of the Pilgrims events.**

### **Christmas Cards at Aldeburgh Church**

**Our selection of Christmas cards are now on sale in the card corner. These include some wonderful Christmassy designs by the children of Aldeburgh Primary School.**

**Alone on  
Christmas  
Day?**

**Thursday 25 December**



Aldeburgh Baptist Church  
invites you to join a small group  
for

## **Christmas Lunch**

For more information and to book your lunch  
Contact Terry Smith 01394 385052

**All Welcome**

**JOY**

**WE WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS  
& A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

**THE NEWSLETTER RETURNS ON JANUARY 3<sup>RD</sup>**





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

### ALDEBURGH PARISH CHURCH

Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> December	4.00pm	Benefice Christingle Service
Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> December	10.00am	Christmas Messy Church
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> December	6.00pm	Christmas Carol Service
Christmas Eve	10.00am	Holy Communion
	3.30pm	Crib Service
	11.30pm	First Communion of Christmas
Christmas Day	11.00am	Christmas Holy Communion Service

### ALDRINGHAM PARISH CHURCH

Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> November	6.00pm	Advent Carol Service by Candlelight
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	6.00pm	Carols on the Green
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> December	11.00am	Christmas Carol Service
Christmas Day	11.00am	Christmas Morning Family Service

### FRISTON PARISH CHURCH

Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> December	6.00pm	Christmas Carol Service
Christmas Day	9.30am	Christmas Holy Communion Service

### KNODISHALL PARISH CHURCH

Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> December	3.00pm	Village Carol Service at Knodishall Village Hall
Christmas Day	9.30am	Christmas Day Service

**WE WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS**  
**Please visit Alde Sandlings Website -**  
**[www.aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk) for all other service times**

