



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 1st February Fourth Sunday of Epiphany/ Candlemas

Services in The Alde Sandlings Benefice this Sunday

Aldeburgh	8.00am	Holy Communion	Prebendary Derek Johnson
	11.00am	Family Communion	Revd Sarah du Boulay
Aldringham	11.00am	Christingle Service	Revd Mary Brown
Friston	9.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Sarah du Boulay
Knodishall	9.30am	Morning Prayer	Revd Mary Brown

Dear friends,

Excitingly this weekend we celebrate the Presentation of Christ – the time when Mary and Joseph did their Jewish duty by their firstborn son, but also received a few surprises along the way in the form of Simeon and Anna.

One of the reasons I love this story so much is it reminds me of the importance of intergenerational ministry and relationship. Simeon and Anna were both old, even by today's standards. They were unable to do much physically in the temple but were so faithful and prayerful and joyful. They both recognised Jesus for who he was, both spoke to his parents about him and then told other people about the Christ-child, praising God and spreading the Good News. What an incredible ministry they both had, and how much we can all learn from their examples.

In a world which we might argue needs the good news of Jesus more than ever – let's all try to take a leaf out of Simeon and Anna's books.

With my prayers as always, for our community here and for the wider world,

Sarah

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.

† 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/UCLeCk8GovYzIgyOEIKZg>

St Edmundsbury Cathedral Facebook Page

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

Sermon by Revd Sarah du Boulay, 25th January – Third Sunday of Epiphany

Does anybody know the play ‘Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead’, by Tom Stoppard? It’s one of my favourites. It’s a ‘behind the scenes’ look at what happened to the two gravediggers – R and G, during Hamlet. All the things which are imagined to happened offstage. It’s very, very funny, and also relies on the philosophical.

In one scene, the Players (also seen in Hamlet) are speaking to R and G. The Player tells them to close their eyes, and to think of something they had done. Something so incredibly secret, that they had only done it because they know nobody would ever find out. Something they were so ashamed of, they would never want anybody to know about it. Something so wrong, or so depraved, or private, that they live with it as their guilty secret.

Then he strikes – ‘I saw you do it!’. Of course, he hadn’t, and we never find out what this deed is for either character, but can you imagine how they would have felt?

We all have things we are ashamed of. Times we have acted badly or selfishly. Occasions where we have said the wrong thing or been purposely cruel. Where we haven’t considered another’s feelings or assumed the worst of them. I bet, if we are honest, we can all think of several examples in our past (or our present) where we have not acted well. Have we always apologised for these things? Or have we simply let some slide, hoping nobody would notice. Or else, working ourselves up so much that we somehow justify our own behaviour to ourselves, feeling completely vilified in our actions and words, even when we have that nagging feeling that all may not be well...

Now imagine that somebody has seen and heard all of these things. Seen and heard us at our absolute worst. How does that make you feel? I know how it makes me feel. Now imagine that the someone who has seen and heard, is also the someone who loves you more than you can ever imagine. Who not only created you, and gave you life, but was also willing to die for you, so that you may live in glory for all of eternity. How does that make you feel?

Now imagine that all this person wants from you is that you love them. That you recognise them as they are – your Creator and your Redeemer, and that you live your life full of love – that you love them, and that you love other people. That's all.

In verse 17 (Matthew 4:12-23) we see Jesus preaching the most simple of messages 'repent'. This is at the heart of the gospel. We recognise that although we try our hardest, we will always fall short because we are human. But that that is ok. That all we need to do is honestly and openly recognise our wrongdoings and our shortcomings, and repent of them. Praying to God for his forgiveness, secure in the knowledge it is freely given.

John Pritchard, the retired bishop of Oxford also reminds us of this message, and says that the reason we need to repent is because the kingdom of heaven has come near. The heart of the gospel, he says, is to turn around, to see things differently and to watch the kingdom come. That's why the story of Andrew and Simon Peter is so drastic. They completely changed the way they looked at the world. Completely changed their focus. They recognised and started to watch Jesus. And in recognising him, they not only watched him, they left their nets and they lived differently.

Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near.

In a Baptism service we ask those to be baptised, or the parents and godparents a series of questions. They are:

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light.
To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him.
Therefore I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

I reject them.

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

I renounce them.

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

I repent of them.

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

I turn to Christ.

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

I submit to Christ.

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

I come to Christ.

I argue (and this is a sermon for another time), that sin, or sinning, is turning away from Christ. Turning away from God and rejecting him. Even for a split second. Therefore, turning to Christ, submitting to Christ and coming to Christ is what we are called to do. Focussing on Christ is the most important thing we can do in our lives. If we focus on Christ, in every decision we make, we will choose the most loving thing. And what is more Christ-like than that?

God loves me. God loves you. He sees the very best of us and he sees the very worst of us. And still he loves us. Immeasurably. Unconditionally. Enough to die for us.

the people who sat in darkness

have seen a great light,

and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death

light has dawned.'

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to proclaim, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'

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.

**Next Week – Sunday 8th February
Second Sunday before Lent**

**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 **ALL WELCOME**

**FFF Ways to donate to our churches within the FFF
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 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.
- Benefice Ash Wednesday Service – 18th February at 6pm at Knodishall
- Riverside Centre Alpha Course – 18th February 6.30-9pm. See Poster below
- Deanery Lent Courses – Starting 22nd February at Darsham Village Hall 4pm – See poster below. Please email Claire admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk if you are planning to go and can offer a car share.
- World Prayer Day – Friday 6th March at 11am at the Fairfield Centre. See notice below for more information.
- Mothering Sunday Services throughout the Benefice - Sunday 15th March
- Palm Sunday Services throughout the Benefice – Sunday 29th March

† Pilgrims Together † Pilgrims Online Wednesdays

Wednesday Gathering to Worship, Reflect and Pray
6.30pm (open from 6.10)

All are welcome to any of the Pilgrims events.



World Day of Prayer

Please join the United Churches of Aldeburgh on Friday 6th March, 11.00am at the Fairfield Centre, to celebrate the World Day of Prayer. This year we will be praying for Nigeria. The country where you are most likely to lose your life for your faith, if you are Christian. There will be a morning service at 11.00am followed by free lunch of soup and bread.

ALL WELCOME

Explore life, *faith* & meaning

Try Alpha.

Alpha begins with introductory video and meal
18th February 2026 6.30 – 9.00pm
Riverside Centre, Stratford St Andrew, IP17 1LL
For more info contact Revd Rob
rob@alderiverchurch.org

Alpha

Practising the Love of Jesus

LENT COURSE

Using the structure of the Five Marks of Mission
Each Sunday of Lent from 22nd February to 29th March 2026

22nd February
1st March
8th March
15th March
22nd March
29th March

Telling the Good News
Teaching Jesus' Way
Tending to the Needs of the World
Transforming Injustice
Treasuring God's creation
Total love

Darsham Village Hall, IP17 3FA
4pm – 5:30pm

what3words: taller.brilliant.educated

Refreshments will be served
No cost, but donations toward expenses welcome