



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

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Sunday 4th January Epiphany

Services in The Alde Sandlings Benefice this Sunday

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

A Message from our Rector, Revd Sarah du Boulay

Dear friends,

Happy Epiphany everybody! I do hope that you all had a blessed and peaceful Christmas.

A lesson I learnt the hard way last year was that when Jesus tells us to 'love your neighbour as yourself', it rather implies that we do in fact, love ourselves. And this is hugely important for us all. As always at this time of year, I have been thinking about New Year's Resolutions. Mine are focussed on gardening, reading and seeing friends – all things which I hope will help

to keep me healthy and happy and more ready to serve and be part of God's mission.

I wonder if you still make any resolutions, and if so what your focus is for 2026?

With my prayers as always

Sarah

Collect

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face; 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 60.1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

Second Reading

Ephesians 3.1-12

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given to me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of

which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 2.1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel." 'Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Sermon by Revd Sarah du Boulay 28th December – Christmas Season

Today is a bit of a funny one in the liturgical calendar. We are still very much in the season of Christmas. Sherry is flowing, mince pies being eaten, the decorations are up and we're all just sitting around with our loved ones enjoying a sense of bonhomie – Jesus has been born and will come again, and all is right in our world. We are truly blessed.

So it comes as a bit of a shock when we check our readings for today and find that they are about lament, and the slaughter of who we now call the holy innocents. That bonhomie disappears rather quickly. The slightly tipsy, merry feeling we have been cultivating evaporates and suddenly we don't really fancy another mince pie.

Because whilst we personally are not living under a dictatorship where on a whim a whole generation of boys can be killed, we have to admit to ourselves that there are worrying similarities.

Abuse of power is massively prevalent today in the world. King Herod was paranoid and had a ruthless desire to maintain his own power base at any cost. Is this a reflection of any modern leaders we can think of? What other governments and systems exist today which sacrifice 'unimportant' or 'unnecessary' people for selfish interests, comfort or political gain?

In the Gospel story today we are told that the Holy Family – Mary, Joseph and Jesus had to flee for their lives. Their flight to Egypt as refugees provides a powerful link to the current plight of migrants and asylum seekers, particularly those whose children suffer or die due to systemic failures, detention conditions or political indifference.

We can see that in our modern world there is still plenty of violence and oppression, where violence is often used almost as standard against defenseless populations. We have all seen and heard stories of children suffering in war zones such as the Ukraine and the Middle East.

The narrative we have heard today reminds us all that the Christmas story is not just a sanitized, "romanticised" tale, but one that directly enters a world of real pain, suffering, and evil. It challenges us all to find God's presence in the most "unspeakable moments" and respond with action.

I'm going to revert now to some of the words from my Christmas sermon on Thursday, which reminded us that through Jesus, God becomes one of us, so that with us God can transform our world and our lives. God in Christ wants to transform the world, and God not only wants us to join with him

in that transformation, he wants that transformation to begin with you and me.

God wants us, like John the Baptist, to prepare people for the coming of Christ and the coming of God's kingdom; God wants us, like the prophets of old, to be passionate about justice and peace and truth; God wants us, like Mary, to say 'yes' to God's call, to God's offer of unconditional love; God wants us, like Jesus, to give ourselves utterly to God's work of reconciliation, healing and peace. And as we do these things, as we do them in the everyday ways in which we live our everyday lives, so the world can be transformed and God's kingdom will come.

That message of God's transforming love has never been more important or more urgent. We, as the church, are called to acknowledge and confront the suffering of the innocent, transforming grief into a commitment to defend human dignity and life. This baby, the Christ Child, is born so that God can work with us in the transformation of the world as one of us.

So we do enjoy the Christmas Season, it's absolutely right to celebrate the greatest gift we could ever be given. But let's do so knowingly, thoughtfully and insightfully, not keeping that good news for ourselves, but "shining the light of God's truth" into the dark places that still exist.

Post Communion

Lord God, the bright splendour whom the nations seek:
may we who with the wise men have been drawn by your light
discern the glory of your presence in your Son,
the Word made flesh, 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/UCLecK8GovYoaYzIgyOEIKZg>

St Edmundsbury Cathedral Facebook Page

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

ALDE SANDLINGS BENEFICE QUIZ NIGHT

Aldeburgh Church Hall
Saturday 24th 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 19th
January stating any dietary requirements.

Email:

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 **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 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 Quiz Evening – Saturday 24th January at 7pm in Aldeburgh Church Hall – See notice. Book your table now!!**
- Benefice Ash Wednesday Service – 18th February at 7pm at Knodishall
- Mothering Sunday Services throughout the Benefice - Sunday 15th March
- Palm Sunday Services throughout the Benefice – Sunday 29th March

Road Closures on The B1353 Thorpe Road affecting St Andrew's Church Aldringham

For those who aren't aware the road leading to St Andrew's Church will be closed for schedule works from the 5th January to the estimated 30th January. For further information please click on the link below.

<https://www.scottishpowerrenewables.com/offshore/east-anglia/east-anglia-two/east-anglia-two-and-one-north-project-activity>

Those heading from Aldringham and Leiston etc by car will need to use the alternative route through Aldeburgh during this time.