



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 25th January Third Sunday of Epiphany

Services in The Alde Sandlings Benefice this Sunday

Aldeburgh	11.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Sarah du Boulay
Aldringham	11.00am	Family Service	Revd Mary Brown
Friston	9.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Mary Brown
Knodishall	9.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Sarah du Boulay

Dear Friends,

Last Sunday I opened my sermon at Aldeburgh (published below) with a warning that it would be unavoidably political in the face of that morning's news. At that point I had yet to read last Saturday's newsletter, which opened with Sarah explaining the choice to publish another political sermon.

Though the current affairs references in my sermon may well be out of date by the time you read it, the theological principles remain.

God declares again and again in the Old Testament that true worship means doing justice for the most vulnerable in society; the gospels show Jesus taking action to defend the least powerful. Across history many empires have been built in the name of God, in the name of Christ; but Jesus came to defeat the strong and powerful and to uphold the weak and

vulnerable. Empire building is not a Christian endeavour. As Mary sang in the Magnificat (Luke 1:52-53) 'He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.' This is the kind of King that Jesus is; this is how his Kingdom economy works.

Many in our immediate community are currently vulnerable as Thorpeness faces further losses. If you are impacted by what is happening in Thorpeness, please do reach out to Sarah or myself. We are here to support you in any way we can. If you are not personally impacted, please join us in holding the residents of Thorpeness, and all those working to support them, in your prayers.

With love and prayers,

Mary

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

Isaiah 9.1-4

But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

Second Reading

I Corinthians 1.10-18

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you should be in agreement and that there should be no divisions among you, but that you should be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, 'I belong to Paul', or 'I belong to Apollos', or 'I belong to Cephas', or 'I belong to Christ.' Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power. For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 4.12-23

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: 'Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles-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.' From that time Jesus began to proclaim, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake-for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

† 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 Mary Brown, 18th January – Second Sunday of Epiphany

Having previously been a history teacher, I often find myself reacting to people saying things like ‘there has never been a time like this before’ by replying that people across history have probably thought the same thing, each generation seems to face its own crisis of some variety.

And yet, as I have watched the news unfolding over the last few months, I have begun to realise that my usual answer, though I do think it is true, can lead to complacency and cynicism.

And these are not the qualities of the people of God. God asks us to be, and gives us in his Holy Spirit the gift of being, people of Hope and Peace, Joy and Light.

So what are we to do in these dark days? What are we to do in the face of Trump’s threats against Greenland? His desire to build his empire? In the face of Putin’s ongoing war in the name of expansion? In the face of the many other examples of these things across the world?

Our readings today, and the theme of the season of Epiphany speak directly to this question.

Epiphany is the season when we see Jesus as he is: the light of the world come to bring salvation to all peoples.

Epiphany is the season that asks us how we will respond to Jesus

- like the wise men and the disciples, laying down all we have and all we are at his feet,

- or like Herod, clinging tight to our own power no matter the cost to ourselves and those around us?

Our reading from Isaiah today is the second of the ‘servant songs’, the first of which we read last Sunday. The four servant songs describe a coming saviour, anointed by God, the Messiah, the Christ. They have been read by the church since New Testament times as prophesies of Jesus. In this second song, the future mission of the servant is clarified:

‘It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.’ (Isaiah 49:6)

The Messiah of God is sent for all the people of the world, whatever their nationality or country of origin, to bring salvation, complete renewal, true wellbeing.

In our gospel reading John the disciple records the words of John the Baptist: *‘Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world’*.

With this statement from John, we see, as we did last week, how Jesus fulfils the calling and purpose of the prophesied suffering servant. Jesus is the one who will bring light and salvation by offering himself as the Lamb of God, the one final sacrifice, which takes away ‘the sin of the world’.

(It is worth noting here that sin is collective not individual - we cannot escape this with the defence of being a ‘good person’ - it is human kind that has sinned and goes on sinning, we are all implicated.)

In verse seven of our Isaiah reading, the Lord’s suffering servant is described as *‘one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations, the slave of rulers’*.

We are in a historical moment when Kings and Princes, national and political leaders, are claiming to be followers of Christ, yet are using their power to oppress the poor and the needy, to persecute the vulnerable. They are using their power to directly counter God’s repeated command that his people care for the orphan, the widow, and the stranger in the land. In doing so they treat Christ as a slave, someone who they assume will do their bidding.

Thanks be to God that verse seven doesn’t end there. The second half reads: *‘Kings shall see and stand up, princes, and they shall prostrate themselves, because of the Lord, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.’*

Here we have the hopeful declaration that these same national and political leaders will recognise who Christ is and will bow down to worship him. They will lay their power at his feet.

The season of Epiphany reminds us that where Kings and Princes come in force, with weapons drawn, taking what they want - Jesus the King of Kings comes in vulnerability, wielding the strange weapons of humility and selflessness to turn the world upside down.

Epiphany reminds us that Jesus Christ is the light of the world. As we follow him, he equips us to continue his mission, telling us (Matthew 5:14) that in him we become 'the light of the world' ourselves.

In the face of Trump's acquisition and desired acquisition of territory, do we sit back and say there is nothing that we can do?

How are we, the light of the world, sent out by The True Light of the World, to respond?

Not with complacency,

Not with cynicism,

but with care, with compassion, with a longing for justice.

It is unlikely that we are able to defend Greenland against hostile military or economic takeover ourselves. But there are things we can do.

We can pray. We can write to our MPs. We can follow Christ's mandate of care for the vulnerable in our own communities.

We can choose to think beyond ourselves, to care for the well-being of the whole world and all peoples.

Our mission is that of God's suffering servant Jesus Christ - that God's salvation would reach to the ends of the earth.

Epiphany presents us with a choice:

- Will we come like the wise men and lay all we have at the feet of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, joining in his mission, bringing hope to all peoples,
- or will we refuse to acknowledge him, using all our strength to cling to what we believe we already have, following those whose goal is the increase of power and wealth?

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 Week – Sunday 1st February
Fourth Sunday of Epiphany/Candlemas**

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 Ash Wednesday Service – 18th February at 7pm 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.

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.



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