



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 22nd February First Sunday of Lent

Services in The Alde Sandlings Benefice this Sunday

Aldeburgh	11.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Sarah du Boulay
Aldringham	11.00am	Family Service	Led by the Elders
Friston	9.30am	Holy Communion	Very Revd Christopher Lewis
Knodishall	9.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Sarah du Boulay

A message from our Rector, Revd Sarah du Boulay

Dear friends,

I've been thinking a lot about Mary's idea of using time to 'mulch' our souls, and it occurs to me that this is a super description of Lent. This is the time when we attend to ourselves, adding a "protective layer", to "retain moisture, suppress weeds, improve soil health and insulate roots" (thanks Google!). What a great way to describe what we do during Lent, all the while looking forward to the events of Easter.

Recently I have found myself becoming far too reactive to things, people and the world around me. My first thoughts when I wake up and my last thoughts before I go to sleep are often based around my job (and not in a spiritual way, but a much more practical, literal way). And this is not good for me – for my mental, spiritual and physical health. So this Lent I am concentrating on starting and finishing each day with God. Beginning and ending with

prayer and scripture. It's a practice that I have let slip recently, but this is my opportunity to mulch – to protect, retain what is good, suppress 'weeds' and improve both health and look after the very roots of my faith.

I wonder what you are all doing to focus your lives and thoughts on God during this season?

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

Sarah

Collect

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:
give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit;
and, as you know our weakness,
so may we know your power to save;
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

Genesis 2.15-17, 3:1-7

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.'

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die."' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Second Reading

Romans 5.12-19

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned- sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgement following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 4.1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' But he answered, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."' Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."' Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."' Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! for it is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."' Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

**Sermon by Revd Martin Percival,
15th February – Sunday next before Lent**

The Old Testament lesson for today is quite short and probably very familiar.

‘The Lord said to Abram, “Leave your country, your family and your father’s house, for the land I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name so famous that it will be used as a blessing. I will bless those who bless you: I will curse those who slight you. All the tribes of the earth shall bless themselves by you.”

So Abram went as the Lord told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.

I imagine that Abram was already quite set in his ways. You have to understand that to grasp the significance of what is transpiring here between God and Abram. Abram was already 75 years old. They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks. Abram was definitely old in both dog and human years. He had lived in Haran most of his life. His family was there and his friends. The High School he graduated from and the barber shop where he always got his beard trimmed were there. Even his parents were buried there. A person doesn't just start all over from the beginning at 75. Most people have settled down at that age. They are not contemplating starting a new career. Oh, there are a few notable exceptions like Winston Churchill, who became Prime Minister at 67, and Grandma Moses who didn't start painting until she was 80. 75 is generally not considered the age to forge new paths in life.

But that is exactly what God asked Abram and Sarai to do. God said, "Abram, leave your hometown and your friends and family and go to a place that I will show you." God didn't say, "Go to Canaan or the Promised Land." God didn't tell them where they were going. Just that they would be shown the place. And why should they go! Because, "I, God, will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing." That was an attractive promise to an old man with no children.

So Abram went as God had told him. He stepped out. Out of his comfortable peaceful life in Haran. Out of the rocking chair on the front porch of the old home place. And into the road ahead of him to spend his retirement years following a God with no name. No longer would he be Abram of Haran, but he would be Abram of some place that God would show him.

Now that is faith! God said, “Jump” and Abram didn't even ask in which direction he just let God guide him. God said, "Step out old man," and in faith Abram did it.

God is always asking people to step out in faith. Just look through the Scriptures. Consider Noah who was asked to build an ark just because God said there would be a flood. Or Moses, who was asked to go to Pharaoh and demand the release of the slaves, just because God told him to. Or the Prophets who were asked to prophesy all kinds of unbelievable things just because God said they would be so.

That is what faith is. Faith is stepping out of our present patterns only because God is calling us to. It means trusting God's promises and God's word even though we don't understand or can't see how they are true. Faith means taking a chance on a promise we don't fully understand. The opposite of faith is not doubt. The opposite of faith is certainty. For some it may mean changing even though they are 75 and set in their ways.

The Bible tells us it is through faith that we are saved. Abram couldn't make himself a great nation, but God did because Abram trusted God's promise. Likewise we can't save ourselves. We can't find happiness and peace and joy on our own. But God can give us all those things. If only we trust the Almighty to guide us.

The truth about us as human beings is that we are involved in a journey, but it is a journey which has two directions. There is an outward journey which we make through our involvement in the world and we find our role there. The second is the inward journey, the search for ourselves and ultimately the search for God.

Life's journey is truly a journey of faith because we do not know where it will take us. Faith begins with a call from God in some shape or form. It is a call to embark upon a journey. God calls us forward, away from idols, from where we are now, not necessarily to a new location, but into a new vision, new values, a new way of living. We may draw inspiration from the examples of those who have gone before us in faith.

That life is a journey is a powerful metaphor. But we must not understand it in what I would like to call too linear a fashion. It's not that simple. Every stage of the road is different. Even with the best faith in the world, we may still end up on dark roads we never imagined or wanted for ourselves. To have faith is not to have all the answers. Rather, it is to have bearings. Direction. There are times in our lives when we will have to go forward only with our courage and our faith.

Even for our Lord life was a journey. On the Mount of Transfiguration he had a wonderful experience of the closeness of God his Father. That strengthened him for the journey on which he was about to embark - the journey to Jerusalem where a violent death awaited him.

We too can experience rare moments of light and joy. We get glimpses of the promised land towards which we are travelling in faith. In his love for us, God allows us to taste on earth the joys of the world to

come. These moments are given to us so that we can remember them when God seems far away and everything seems dark and empty.

Faith is stepping out in trust. It is trusting God's word and God's promises enough to take a chance. Abraham took a chance on leaving home at 75 to start a new life. He didn't do it because he had a plan or an idea. He did it because God said, "Do this and I will bless you."

And God calls all humanity to step out in faith. When we first turn to Christ we step out and take a chance. We place our trust in Christ and his promise of salvation. And God blesses us with the fruits of salvation: Peace, Love, Joy. And as we grow in Christ, God is always calling us to step out.

Step out with faith in God! Trust God's unfailing love. God blessed Abram and Sarai and made them a great nation. No matter what your situation is in life today, God wants to bless you in some way. God wants you to have happiness and peace and joy in your life. Just let the Almighty guide you, and if you don't know how to do that, then just ask and God can be trusted to show you. The record is clear: God blesses those who place their trust in him, and God will bless us if we do the same.

Post Communion

Lord God,
you have renewed us with the living bread from heaven;
by it you nourish our faith, increase our hope,
and strengthen our love: teach us always to hunger for
him who is the true and living bread,
and enable us to live by every word that proceeds from
out of your mouth; 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/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/>

† 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

aldesandlingsbenefice@outlook.com 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>

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**

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.
- 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.
- World Prayer Day – Friday 6th March at 11am at the Fairfield Centre. See notice below for more information.
- Celebration Service for the volunteers of Aldeburgh Town Council – Aldeburgh – Saturday 14th March at 12 noon.
- Mothering Sunday Services throughout the Benefice - Sunday 15th March
- Easter Messy Church – Aldeburgh Parish Church – Saturday 21st March – 10-12 noon
- 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)

Pilgrims Prayer Walk

Saturday 7th March starting at the Heritage Hut

Thorpeness at 10am

We'll find a place for coffee together after!

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

22 nd February	Telling the Good News
1 st March	Teaching Jesus' Way
8 th March	Tending to the Needs of the World
15 th March	Transforming Injustice
22 nd March	Treasuring God's creation
29 th March	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

**Next Week – Sunday 1st March
Second Sunday of Lent**