

Review of the Year from the Rector

God's church does not run by virtue of individuals, nor by luck or by throwing money at any problems. God's church runs because of a whole team of people who generously give their time, expertise, money (yes), kindness, faith, goodwill, and hope. We pray faithfully and we try to tread where God is already at work, bringing His love and His mission into our community.

As always, I must start by thanking all our wonderful volunteers, without whom the church wouldn't function - either as a worshipping body, or as a building. Our team of Sacristans, Cleaners, Sides people, Flower Team, PCC, Coffee Team, Choir, Rota Organisers, Readers, Organists, Friends, Sanctuary Guild, people who pray so faithfully, and many others who give of themselves, their time and their resources so freely. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

Thank you also to our dedicated ministry team, both lay and ordained. Revds. Mary and Nicky, our retired priests and Lay Elders are all so generous with their time and themselves, and it is a continued pleasure to minister alongside you.

This year we have welcomed Elly to our team of employees as our Interim Fairfield Centre Manager, and she has already made a huge difference to its running and engagement with the community. We have also said goodbye to Robert as our Treasurer and Claire as our Benefice Administrator. We will miss them both and greatly appreciate all their hard work and support as members of the team. At the time of writing, I cannot name their replacements, but by the time you read this report, both will be in place and I'm sure already settling in to the rhythms of benefice life.

My not-so-secret prayer of doubling the number of baptisms we hold each year is still being honoured by God, and it is really exciting that this ministry is growing across the whole benefice. We have also held a large number of funerals, weddings and wedding blessings, and it is such a privilege to be part of people's lives at these important times.

In 2025 we welcomed Bishop Joanne to preach at the Festival Service (before we knew she would be moving to Suffolk as our Diocesan Bishop!), and had wonderful celebrations throughout the year during Advent, Lent, Carnival weekend and other festival times. Over Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, we also welcomed nearly 1,000 people into Aldeburgh church, which was a phenomenal occasion.

We are readvertising for the post of Children and Families Worker and pray that the right candidate will step forward and join us here in Aldeburgh. In the meantime, we are still enjoying great relationships with our ecumenical friends in the Baptist and Catholic churches. The full-time ministers meet every month for breakfast, to pray for Aldeburgh together and share plans (as well as our usual planning meetings), and this practice has really strengthened the mission we do together in the town.

Much has changed in the nearly 4 years since I have joined you as your Rector, and although not all of it has been easy, it is a real joy to look back and see how far we have come together. I feel as though God has really honoured our prayers, faithfulness and passion for Him, for each other and for the Good News of the Gospel, and I am excited to see what He has in store for us over the next season.

As last year, I would like to invite you to please join me in praying for our church, and our parish of Aldeburgh; that over the next year we can continue to prayerfully discern God's calling to us, and continue to spread the Good News of the Gospel throughout His kingdom, joyfully loving God and loving each other as He would have us do

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Matthew 22:36-40

Revd. Sarah DuBoulay
Rector