



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

Priest in charge: The Revd Sarah du Boulay

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Sunday 11th December Third Sunday of Advent

Services in The Alde Sandlings Benefice this Sunday

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|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Aldeburgh | 10.30am | Holy Communion |
| Aldringham | 11.00am | Holy Communion |
| Friston | 6.00pm | Carol Service |
| Knodishall | 6.00pm | Carol Service |

A message from our priest in charge, Rev'd Sarah du Boulay

Dear Friends,

I have just realised that I worked about 77 hours last week. I'm not telling you this for sympathy, or to worry anybody, or to show off. It's just a fact. It's about 30 odd hours more than stipendiary priests are supposed to work, and is a lot by most standards. This week is shaping up to look the same, and the week after that as well.

It's a busy time of year. We are ramping up for Christmas, carrying on with our usual life activities, and dealing with the curveballs which get thrown our way. I know that the rest of the benefice team (wardens, ministry team, clerks, flower arrangers, musicians, cleaners, PCCs, bell ringers, administrator, volunteers, and others) are also working extremely hard. My plea is to look after yourselves. It's wonderful that we are making the most of the season, and looking out to our communities, welcoming them into

our churches, and making and developing relationships, but please don't neglect yourselves in doing so.

(I was made to promise the Bishop last night that I am not, in fact, living entirely on sandwiches at the moment). Nutrition and rest is important. Both physical, and spiritual. So feed yourselves. Rest. Pray. Include God in everything you do. And be encouraged.

God is doing wonderful things here in our benefice. Alleluia!

With every blessing,

Sarah

**It's Christmas
The Week Ahead at The Alde Sandlings Benefice**

**11th December
3-5pm**

**The Parrot at
Aldringham**

**Festive Afternoon
with The Pilgrims**

11th December 6pm

Friston

Carol Service

11th December 6pm

Knodishall

Carol Service

YOU ARE ALL MOST WELCOME

Collect

O Lord Jesus Christ,
who at your first coming sent your messenger
to prepare your way before you:
grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries
may likewise so prepare and make ready your way
by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,
that at your second coming to judge the world
we may be found an acceptable people in your sight;
for you are alive and reign with the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

First Reading

Isaiah 35.1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.' Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Second Reading

James 5.7-10

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 11.2-11

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.' As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you." Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Sermon preached by Rev'd Sarah du Boulay at Aldringham, on the Second Sunday of Advent

What is a prophet? I wonder what your definition is?

The internet gave me the following suggestions:

A person regarded as an inspired teacher or proclaimer of the will of God.

A person who is regarded as being in contact with a divine being and is said to speak on behalf of that being, serving as an intermediary with humanity delivering messages from the supernatural source to other people.

A person who speaks for God or a deity, or by divine inspiration.

A person who receives messages from God, mainly concerning events that will take place in the future, and conveys them to certain other groups of people.

A person who receives messages from God and delivers them to other people.

A man called by God to be his representative on earth.

A person who speaks God's truth to others.

Which is your favourite, and why?

Just as a bit of Bible knowledge, let's remind ourselves of the Major and Minor prophets in the Old Testament (a distinction made purely on the length of the book they wrote!)

Major – Isaiah, Jeremiah (+ Lamentations), Daniel and Ezekiel

Minor – Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obediah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

In many ways, Christians are called to unique in God's world. Specifically in a secular age. We are called to acknowledge things visible and invisible. To understand good from evil. To be in the world, but not of it. We are called to transcend popular culture and politics. To speak God's truth into the world, to help bring about the kingdom of God here on earth, and to prepare the world for Christ's second coming.

This is not a new calling. The prophets in the Old Testament were also called to all these things. They were called to speak his word to his people. Sometimes these words were of admonishment, correction or warning. Other times they were words of encouragement, of blessing and of hope. Occasionally, they were a foretelling of the future – specifically of the coming of the Messiah.

It seems then, that prophets are called to listen to God. To see the world, to expose reality and to speak the truth at all times. To speak God's truth at all times. Prophets are called to be a light and a source of clarity and hope in a world which is often in darkness. It's one reason why God has raised up prophets – to be seen and to be heard. Prophets are the megaphones of God, if you will.

For some people, this is part of their calling – part of their ministry as a Christian. For others, it is the entirety of it. A speciality. I would argue strongly that all Christians are called to be prophets. To listen intently to God's word, and to proclaim it to the world. For those of us who have been baptised, proclaiming, by word and example, to Good News of God in Christ is specifically mentioned.

I'd like to share with you a section from the ordination service, where priests are given the following instructions by the Bishop:

Priests are called to be servants and shepherds 8 among the people to whom they are sent. With their Bishop and fellow ministers, they are to proclaim the word of the Lord and to watch for the signs of God's new creation 9 They are to be messengers, watchmen 10 and stewards 11 of the Lord; they are to teach and to admonish, 12 to feed and provide for his family, to search for his children in the wilderness of this world's temptations, and to guide them through its confusions, that they may be saved through Christ for ever. **Formed by the word, they are to call their hearers to repentance and to declare in Christ's name the absolution and forgiveness of their sins.**

With all God's people, they are to tell the story of God's love. **They are to baptize new disciples in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, 13** and to walk with them in the way of Christ, nurturing them in the faith. They are to unfold the Scriptures, **14** to preach the word in season and out of season, **15** and to declare the mighty acts of God. **16 They are to preside at the Lord's table** and lead his people in worship, offering with them a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. **17 They are to bless the people in God's name.** **18** They are to resist evil, support the weak, defend the poor, and intercede for all in need. **19** They are to minister to the sick **20** and prepare the dying for their death. Guided by the Spirit, they are to discern and foster the gifts of all God's people, **21** that the whole Church may be built up in unity and faith. **22**

Now, I believe in the priesthood of all believers. There are only some things in this last list which are only to be undertaken by somebody holding the office of priest. In fact, if we re-read this charge, but replace the word 'priest' with 'Christians' or 'believers', I wonder if it strikes a chord with anyone here? (the only ordained Priest-specific parts are highlighted in red).

It's a heavy charge, but one which we don't seek to undertake alone.

We have heard three examples of prophecy and prophets in our scripture readings today – Isaiah and John the Baptist perhaps being two of our most well-known biblical prophets. But prophets are alive and well and living here among us. You are a prophet. And you. And you. That is your calling.

So I ask again, what is a prophet? A prophet is somebody who listens intently to God, discerns his word, and communicates that word to the world. A prophet is me. A prophet is you. We are prophets. Together. Preparing the world for the second coming of Christ the King. Bringing about the kingdom of God on earth. Shouting out 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make straight his paths.'

I wonder what this looks like?

Post Communion

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts;
kindle in us the fire of your Spirit
that when your Christ comes again
we may shine as lights before his face;
who is alive and reigns now and for ever.

**Next week - Sunday 18th December
Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Update from Rev'd Jo Mabey

My darling husband Rob and his mates are bravely sea swimming every day during December (without wetsuits!!) to raise funds for The Blossom Appeal. This appeal is helping to fund a dedicated breast cancer care centre at Ipswich hospital. It was instigated by Miss Mortimer who is the surgeon caring for me. Indeed, I may be one of the first patients to benefit from the new centre when it's completed next year. I know times are tough for many, but if you would like to make a donation to the Blossom Appeal, please use the link below.

Even the smallest amount will make a huge difference.

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/blossom-fund-raiser>

Thank you so much for your support, prayers and love.

Love and Peace,
Jo



Jo's operation went well, and she is now recovering.

NOTICES

† In Memory of Canon John Tipping †

It has been agreed by all the treasurers of the Alde Sandlings Benefice that all Christmas Day collections will be given to the Children's Society, a charity that John and Elizabeth hugely supported

Sunday 18th December Services Aldeburgh

There will be coffee and croissants served after the 8am Holy Communion. You are most welcome to join us for a catch up and breakfast. **The 6pm Carol service** – There will be refreshments after the carol service. If any of you could bring some mince pies along to either this service or the 10.30am service on the 18th that would be wonderful. Thank you so much.

Team Christingle 2022

A huge thank you to the Christingle team for their organisation and contribution for this service. We have had very positive feedback to say how much people enjoyed it. AND..... we raised £270.33 to be given to the Children's Society

† Wednesday Holy Communion at Aldeburgh †

Change of time

As you are aware, we now have fewer practising clergy available to take services of Holy Communion. As a result, I will be celebrating Wednesday morning BCP more often at Aldeburgh, which is a complete joy for me, but has necessitated in needing to change the time of this service, so that I can be there after Morning Prayer at Aldringham. In consultation with the regular congregation, this service will now start at **10.30am**, with immediate effect. Hopefully it won't make too much difference to people attending, but it will make life much easier for the person celebrating. Rev'd Sarah

† Morning Prayer across the Benefice †

Revd Sarah is bringing the benefice together in prayer each morning from 9-9.30am. People are very welcome to join, no regular commitment required, just pop along when you wish.

Monday – Friston

Tuesday - Knodishall

Wednesday - Aldringham

Daily at Aldeburgh, Monday to Saturday

† 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>

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.

Youth Club – We need your help!

The Youth Club is back! 7pm to 9pm on Monday evenings during term time for 10–14-year-olds. We are thankful that the Youth Club is as popular as ever. We **really need** some more volunteers to help on these evenings. There is a rota in the west porch that you can add your name to, if you can help (after the summer holidays) or you can contact Fran Smith at admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk

Weekly Benefice Newsletter

If you would like something added to the weekly newsletter that is relevant to the Benefice, please do let Claire know and we will do our best to include it the following week.

All requests by 4pm on Thursday please

† Pilgrims Together on Wednesdays on Zoom †

The worship starts at 6.30pm (Zoom call opens from 6.10pm) and the call is then left open after the worship time for people to catch up. People are welcome to email pilgrimstogether473@gmail.com to receive a copy, be added to our mailing list or for the Zoom links.

Sunday 11th December Pilgrims leading Carol Singing @ Chris' festive afternoon at the Parrot from 3pm-5pm

Mince Pies and roast chestnuts too!

Saturday 17th December Community Good News Faith Cafe @ The Outside Inn, Parrot Pub 9.30 - 10.30

A time for conversation, a hot drink and a croissant. A time to share and offer our thoughts and stories.

Sunday 18th December, by the Meare, Thorpeness,
Carols round the Tree 4pm onwards