



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

Email: revd.sarah@btinternet.com

Tel: 01728 582213

The Revd Nichola Winter

Email: njwinter@whd.co.uk

The Revd Johanna Mabey

Email: rev.johannamabey@gmail.com

Sunday 25th December Christmas Day

It's Christmas – Services on Christmas Eve

24 th December	3.30pm	Aldeburgh	Benefice Crib Service
24 th December	11.30pm	Aldeburgh	Midnight Communion
24 th December	11.30pm	Friston	Midnight Communion

YOU ARE ALL MOST WELCOME

Services in The Alde Sandlings Benefice this Christmas Day

Aldeburgh	10.30am	Holy Communion
Aldringham	9.30am	Holy Communion
Knodishall	9.30am	Holy Communion

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

Dear Friends,

I have some good news to share with you all. Starting in July 2023, Alde Sandlings will once again become a training post for a curate. I can't share any more details yet, but I have met them several times, and am really excited about their ministry here. So watch this space!

We have a double issue today, as Claire takes a well-earned break after Christmas. Services will still be happening across the benefice, and we are all looking forward to the New Year together. 2023 is already looking to be a God-filled and God-shaped year for us.

I'd just like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your welcome, your support, your prayers, and your generosity in the 6 months since I began as your Priest in Charge. Alde Sandling is a truly special benefice, and we have already journeyed a long way together – through joy and grief, health and sickness, summer and winter, easy and challenging times, and we have plenty more adventures to come.

Wishing you all a blessed and peaceful Christmas and New Year,

With love,

Sarah

Collect

Eternal God, who made this most holy night
to shine with the brightness of your one true light:
bring us, who have known the revelation of that light on earth,
to see the radiance of your heavenly glory;
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 9.2-7

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. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments
rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been
born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is
named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of

Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Second Reading

Titus 2.11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2.1-14 [15-20]

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!' [When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem

and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.]

Or if no Midnight Service

John 1.1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Sermon preached by The Very Rev'd Christopher Lewis at Knodishall, on the Fourth Sunday of Advent

Many of us have been taught that God is powerful and great...although, not like a dictator, but more like a benevolent monarch, presiding over the world as it were from the clouds on high, like a William Blake picture. God is seen as having a kingdom, in a bit of which we live: thy kingdom come, thy will be done. If that is so, it is fair to ask (and 2022 is a pretty good year for asking) 'Why is the kingdom – the world – in such a mess?' Why does God allow Covid; why have we got through quite so many prime ministers; why allow the Ukraine war to happen? Just as we often reply to people who moan about things 'Well, why don't you do something about it?' we might ask the same thing of God, who cannot be pleased about the way the world is. 'Oh God, why can't you sort it out?' Indeed, while God is at it, stopping Russians sending missiles to destroy power stations and people, couldn't he clear up a few more personal things: fix John's marriage, find food for the poor?

It is a tempting view. Wouldn't it make the world a better place? If God is so wonderful, why does he sit 'enthroned in heavenly splendour' while not, it seems, doing much?

Now, with some questions about God, the answer is full of mystery, but with this question, I believe the answer is pretty clear. And it is that God has chosen to limit the way he works in the world, making a clear rule for himself expressed in the life and the death of Jesus Christ. He works in an unexpected and quiet way by inviting people to follow the path of his Son Jesus; and He promises to be alongside everyone as they respond, alongside in the form of the Holy Spirit, giving life and strength. From the point of view of today's Gospel, he works through the response of people like Mary and Joseph.

But why does he appear to have made this rule for himself and for us? It must be because we are fully human and genuinely free. If he were to squash Putin's plans, he should also do a few other things: stop me overeating at Christmas and while he is at it, clear my overdraft or find me a parking place.

Let's have a short break for a Wendy Cope poem:

When I went out shopping, I said a little prayer:
'Jesus, help me park the car for you are everywhere'
Jesus in His goodness and grace,
Jesus found me a parking space
In a very convenient place.
Sound the horn and praise him!

What is more, the poem goes on to think of a parking place in the sky:

His eternal car-park
Is hidden from our eyes
Trust in Him and you will have
A space beyond the skies.

Wendy Cope is wonderful and knows that won't do, hence the poem; instead, we are worryingly free: a frightening thought but an exciting one. God's activity is in his forgiveness and his love. These are his gifts as shown in Jesus. We are forgiven and loved by God and we are invited to respond by following Jesus' life in our own lives. We are free to reply 'yes' to God's invitations and to do his will in the world, as countless people do.

We can, of course, refuse: if we can't be bothered ...or are too much tied up in a world which works differently from what God wishes.

It is time to give an example and today's theme provides one. God did not come among us with enormous power and strength. He came first in the New Testament account to Mary, and she responded in faith, as did Joseph; no avoidance, no excuses. Mary's response in faith gave her strength not only through preparation for the birth of Jesus, but also through a hard life as a mother.

Another example. What is it that we pray for in the Ukrainian war? It is not that God will suddenly cause Russian rockets to alter course or Putin to get ill. Rather it is that people in their strength, aided by God, will find a way to end the war. For those who are suffering in dire situations, God is present (as Jesus was) waiting to work through all of us. He invites repentance and gives strength and love; God works through everyone who responds to his call.

When invited to a party, we respond. In Advent, quite rightly, the Church stresses the urgency of the response we make to God's invitation. That is for two reasons. First, it is urgent because ours are the hands with which God works in the world. He has given us freedom. And it is urgent also because, on our response depends our readiness to meet God. The invitations are from Him; do we feel ready to meet him? How about a dream that a friend of mine had – of being met by Peter at the gates of heaven and asking to be shown round, only to see that the place was empty. 'Where are they all?'. Answer 'Oh I should have said; they are all out helping people in the other place'. Only a dream!

The urgency of Advent is often obscured by the Christmas season. Mary responded and is rightly held up as an example. And in Jesus, we see God's action in his world: loving activity, prayer, teaching, prepared to suffer that others may live. Respond to God's invitations. I like the story of an elderly Quaker woman who volunteered to go abroad and help refugees. Her friends said 'What... at your age?' To which the answer was 'At my age, I can do what I like'. That may sound a bit extreme. But it is freedom... and a response.

Post Communion

God our Father,
in this night you have made known to us again
the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:
confirm our faith and fix our eyes on him
until the day dawns and Christ the Morning Star
rises in our hearts. To him be glory both now and for ever.

Services for 1st January – Second Sunday of Christmas

Aldeburgh	8.00am	Holy Communion
	10.30am	Family Service
Aldringham	11.00am	Morning Prayer
Knodishall	9.30am	Morning Prayer

First Reading

Numbers 6.22-end

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the Israelites: You shall say to them, The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. So they shall put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.

Second Reading

Galatians 4.4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2.15-21

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Collect

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was circumcised in obedience to the law for our sake and given the Name that is above every name: give us grace faithfully to bear his Name, to worship him in the freedom of the Spirit, and to proclaim him as the Saviour of the world; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Post Communion

Eternal God, whose incarnate Son was given the Name of Saviour: grant that we who have shared in this sacrament of our salvation may live out our years in the power of the Name above all other names, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Sunday 8th January – Epiphany/Baptism of Christ
Benefice Holy Communion service at Aldeburgh
for the Commissioning of the Elders
All very welcome**

**The Alde Sandlings Benefice Newsletter
will return on the 7th January**

A New Series – Our unsung Heroes by Jenny Digby – Aldeburgh

Meet The People

Recently when I couldn't sleep, I lay there thinking about the church and the importance of the church within the community. Currently I take Morning Prayer at Aldeburgh one or two mornings each week and gradually, I have started getting a little more involved, so I began to think about all those volunteers within the church, the people behind the scenes who make things happen.

Behind our ministers is a team of resolute volunteers, people who are dedicated in diverse ways. Some of the roles require only a few hours each month others, depending on one's availability and the role they play, require a weekly commitment, but each volunteer makes such a difference to the church.

The next question rattling around in my head was, do I know who these people are, and the answer was sadly, NO and who does?

Whilst talking with the Revd' Sarah a few days later, I spoke about my thoughts and I could see her eyes light up immediately, "wouldn't it be a wonderful gesture to give some credit to the remarkable team of volunteers, not just in Aldeburgh, but within the Alde Sandling Benefice including Aldringham, Friston & Knodishall". I knew then that I had talked myself into a job.

Our Unsung Heroes

You may already be familiar with the faces of those involved in our church services, you see them on a regular basis, but even they do so much more than devotionally dress up and attend, to find out more, I'd like you to **Meet The People, our Unsung Heroes.**

Over a period of time, we will publish articles on our much needed and appreciated heroes, you will be very surprised to find out what goes on behind the scenes and how much effort our volunteers put in to make a difference.

Within this remit starting at St Peter's & St. Paul's church, Aldeburgh, the first bunch of people who sprung to mind immediately and who are very pertinent to this time of year, we could even describe them as being the 'loud voice' of the church, is our Bell Ringers.

Our Bell Ringers

Who honestly knows who they are? They could even be described as 'faceless people'. They arrive at church before a service commences, with around half of them having already rung elsewhere, (Theberton, Yoxford or

Campsea Ashe), climb the spiral staircase to the ringing chamber, do their bit and then leave quietly as the service starts, until the next time. They don't appear to need to be acknowledged, they just love what they do.

So, on a cold misty November evening I set off keen to meet this important team. I spoke with Richard Rapior the Tower Captain in advance, to ask if I could join them one Monday evening during their practice session, and as I left home armed with my notepad, I told my husband John that I would probably only be half an hour. However, I must confess they are such a lovely group of people and keen to tell me so much about their subject, that I was drawn in, I ended up staying the duration and loved it.

Assuming they all lived just around the corner somewhere, I was most surprised to hear that three are residents of Aldeburgh, the remainder of the band of ten or so, travel in from the surrounding area. Leiston, Yoxford, Cratfield & Stradbroke. That is quite some distance to travel on a miserable Monday evening during the winter. The team is fluid, and they also have the help of ringers from Theberton and Blaxhall assisting on Sunday mornings.

To show you how dedicated ringers are, Richard has second homeowners and others staying on the caravan site, regularly join them on a Sunday morning and they have been made very welcome. This is one of the remarkable things about ringing, when away from home, one can generally be assured of a warm welcome at whichever tower they happen to visit.

Richard started learning to ring in 1982 and says that one of the joys of ringing is that he is still learning. It is very much an activity that one can always improve on and develop other aspects of.

You don't need to be a regular church goer, ringers are of all faiths and none, from all walks of life and ranges in age. One can start to learn to ring from around the age of ten and there are still ringers active in their nineties.

Ringing is very much a team activity and is both a physical and mental discipline with ringers coming from a very varied cross section of society.

St Peter & St Paul's church in Aldeburgh has eight bells and 6 bells at a minimum need to be used at one time. They vary in weight from eleven cwt., down to 3 cwt. We are lucky here in Aldeburgh to have such an active team of ringers, one of only two left in the Deanery.

It's not as easy as it looks, but like everything, the more you practice, the more competent you become. I did ask Richard how long it would take me to learn so that I would become a valuable member of the team, he suggested probably about a year.

Bell ringing is such a fascinating subject once you start to probe and the peals, which are attempted on the second Sunday afternoon of the month, could be described as the 'gold standard' whereby, the bells are rung continuously in over 5,000 different sequences, without visual aids, taking just under three hours to complete, the bell ringers equivalent of a

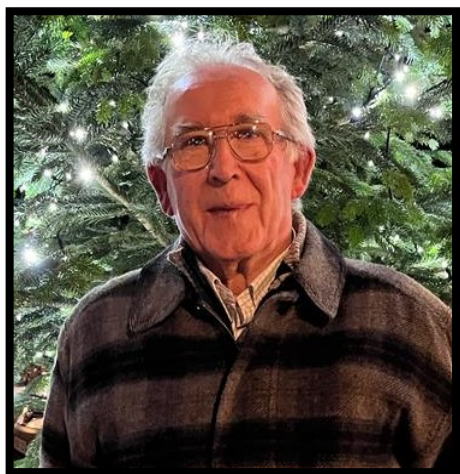
marathon and requires concentration and stamina. The peals can be included in special events locally and nationally.

There are various strands and levels of ringing undertaken at Aldeburgh and if anyone is interested in finding out more, they will be most welcome. Richard can be contacted on 01728 452261.

There will be some national publicity under the banner of "Ring for the King" to both encourage lapsed ringers to return and train new recruits for the Coronation and hopefully beyond.

Thank you, team, for being 'the loud voice' of our church. It was a pleasure to meet you.

Jenny Digby (December 2022)



Trevor (Stradbroke) has been Ringing for 64 years



Naomi (Cratfield) Richard (Tower Captain) & Julie (Aldeburgh) Michael (Sizewell) Hilary Cratfield, Julie (Stradbroke), Tim (Cratfield) & Max (front) Aldeburgh



Paul (Leiston) Julia (Theberton) Helen (Leiston) Emily & Richard (Tower Captain) both Aldeburgh & Mike (Blaxhall)

“What is a Church?” Our honest Sexton tells, “Tis a tall building, with tower and bells; Where priest and clerk with joint exertion strive To keep the ardour of their flock alive;” from ‘The Borough’ by George Crabbe

Who are your Unsung Heroes/Hero in your Church??
Please let Claire know

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

£££ Ways to donate to our churches within the £££ Alde Sandlings Benefice

Your donations REALLY mean so much to us at this challenging time. 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/>

Lunchtime Classical Concert Series returns in 2023

Monday 9th January at 12 noon.

Nadia Lasserson and musical friends return to Aldeburgh Parish Church.

The programme will consist of rarely heard repertoire for two violins and piano by Handel, Moszkowski, Martinu and Shostakovich.

Retiring Collection for Save the Children

† 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.

People need your donations more than ever this Christmas!

<https://www.eastofengland.coop/community/foodpoverty/foodbank-support>

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.

Pilgrims New Year's Eve Ramble

If you fancy a breath of fresh air and a walk on Saturday 31st January, we will be meeting by the Christmas tree at Thorpeness at 9.30am to go for a leisurely ramble. We will no doubt find somewhere for a coffee too!

**A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY,
HEALTHY, BLESSED
2023, TO YOU ALL**

***Lord Jesus Christ,
your birth at Bethlehem
draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth:
accept our heartfelt praise
as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God.
Amen.***