



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 12th January First Sunday of Epiphany/ Baptism of Christ

Services in The Alde Sandlings Benefice this Sunday

Aldeburgh	11.00am	Holy Communion	Revd Nichola Winter
	11.00am	Family Service	In the Church Hall
Aldringham	11.00am	Holy Communion	Very Revd Christopher Lewis
Friston	9.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Mary Brown
Knodishall	9.30am	Holy Communion	Revd Sarah du Boulay

A message from Revd Mary Brown

Dear Friends,

Happy Epiphany! During the season of Epiphany we join those who first encountered Jesus, as they see reality clearly for the first time - realising that Jesus is the promised and long awaited saviour - the one who will be the perfect priest, the perfect prophet, the perfect king. The one who has come to set people free and to shine in the darkness.

I pray that at the beginning of this new year, we would each receive our own epiphany - seeing either for the first time, or in a new and fresh way, just who Jesus is - and joining with the wise men as they

experienced overwhelming joy in the presence of Christ. May 2025 be a year of coming to know Jesus more clearly, follow Jesus more nearly, and love Jesus more dearly, day by day. (Words borrowed from the prayer of St Richard).

If you're wondering how you might grow in these things this year, we are running the Alpha course in Aldringham starting on 4th February, all are welcome, please get in touch with me for more details.

With love and prayers,

Mary

The Alde Sandlings Saturday Gratitude

A recap for all the positive news and love that God has shown us in the benefice this week. We have much to be grateful for.

- Aldeburgh** for those who have committed their time and energy to make the new weekly family services possible, including our creative members of the team, who create and design wonderful collage displays in the children's area.
- Aldringham** for those who have gone first in adding their names to the new intercessions rota.
- Friston** for a joyful start to the new year in the form of a baptism last Sunday. And for all those who helped in any way making that service happen.
- Knodishall** for the various Christmas services, for those who hosted, handed out invitations, read readings, sang, and in any other way made the services what they were, and that through those services we are able to welcome and bless so many visitors.
- Pilgrims** are giving thanks for the insights of God at work in our local communities and the beauty of simple conversation gifted during prayer walks around our locality.

Collect

Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; 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 43.1-7

But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; I will say to the north, 'Give them up', and to the south, 'Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth-everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.'

Second Reading

Acts 8.14-17

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Gospel Reading

Luke 3.15-17, 21-22

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.' Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Alde Sandlings NEW Service Times from January 5th

We have new service times for Aldeburgh and Friston Churches.

Aldeburgh will be 11.00am EVERY Sunday from the 5th January

Friston will be 9.30am EVERY Sunday from the 5th January

Aldringham and Knodishall services remain at the same times

Sermon by Revd Mary Brown at Aldringham & Knodishall, 5th January

‘They were overwhelmed with joy’. I wonder how much joy we each felt this Christmas? I imagine that for most of us Christmas was a mixed bag - joy and sadness bundled together, as much of our human experience is. But today we meet wise men, who came from distant lands, found Jesus, and were **OVERWHELMED WITH JOY**.

Today is the last day of the Christmas season, the twelfth day of Christmas, and tomorrow the season of Epiphany begins with the feast of Epiphany. In our churches we are marking epiphany today, making sure this important moment is not overlooked.

So before we dive into our readings let’s take a moment to consider the season of Epiphany as a whole, and what there is in store for us between now and Candlemas on 2nd February.

The word epiphany means to suddenly see reality clearly. In every day conversation the statement ‘I’ve had an epiphany’ means that we have suddenly understood something we hadn’t understood before. The Christian meaning of Epiphany is very similar - it’s about humanity suddenly being shown the reality of Jesus Christ as the long awaited saviour sent from God. Humanity suddenly realising that in Jesus, God had come down to dwell among his people and be the light dispelling their darkness.

In the season of Epiphany we get a whistle stop tour of Jesus’ life and some key moments that show us the reality of who he is.

- It begins today with the wise men arriving in Bethlehem and worshipping Jesus, more on that in a moment.
- Next week we see Jesus’ baptism, and his identity as the Son of God - we’ll hear the voice from heaven declaring over him ‘this is my son, with him I am well pleased’ as well as the Holy Spirit coming to rest on him - revealing Jesus as God.
- After that we’ll go with Jesus, his mother, and his disciples, to Cana to the wedding where he performed his first public miracle, turning

the waters of ritual and restriction in the wine of his abundant generosity.

- Then we'll see Jesus in a synagogue in Galilee reading from the prophet Isaiah, telling the people there that he is the one who has come to set prisoners free, heal the sick, feed the hungry.
- Finally we go with Jesus, Mary and Joseph to the temple where Simeon and Anna prophecy over Jesus - announcing him as the one who will die in order to defeat death and then reign as king forever.

Let's dive into today's readings. In Isaiah we see the promise of a coming light - the glory of the Lord arising and dispelling the darkness. The glory of the Lord shining as a beacon, that will draw in all the people's of the earth.

And then in our gospel reading we saw these wise men, coming from afar, from distant nations, following a light, and being led to Bethlehem, to an ordinary home, in an ordinary village, where they found an extraordinary child who reshaped their entire understanding of reality. The fulfilment of this prophecy from Isaiah - as the people of the earth gather around the light of God's glory.

But first, before the wise men got to Bethlehem they met someone else - another King - Herod. Herod also saw reality in a new way that day, but his reaction to this new reality could not have been more different. Where the wise men reacted in reverence - worshipping and paying homage. Herod reacted in fear.

When the wise men arrived at Herod's temple, they told him that they were looking for the child who was to be born King of the Jews - the Messiah, or saviour who had been prophesied throughout the scriptures.

Herod knew that it was not him they were seeking. Herod was a king by permission of the Roman Empire - he knew that he was not God's appointed king, in the Royal line of David. This epiphany, that the legitimate king had arrived shook him to the core. Here were wise, and wealthy visitors from a distant land, in his palace - carrying gifts - and not offering them to him. Here were men who he thought should have paid him homage, and they didn't, instead they asked him where the true king was.

Through the arrival of the wise men, Herod was given an opportunity - to lay down his own glory, for the better reality of Christ's glory. But instead he chose to try and protect his own power.

The wise men's reaction was radically different. They did not bow down to Herod's version of reality, but stuck to the truth - Herod was not who they were seeking. Herod's show of wealth and power, his palace and his riches, did not sway them. They did not stop to pay Herod homage but carried on on their journey seeking the Christ child.

And when they got to Bethlehem they were rewarded with overwhelming joy. They knelt down and worshipped, in an ordinary room, no royal courtiers, no nursery staff, no cooks or offers of food after their long journey. Here they paid the Christ child homage - Homage is not a phrase that we use very often these days but it refers to the act of submitting to a ruler, of presenting yourself and your 'gifts'.

The wise men submitted themselves and their riches to Jesus, laying at his feet all that they were and the gifts that they had prepared.

Let's pause for a moment to think about what these prophetic gifts tell us about who Jesus is:

- Gold is what you give to a King - these wise men, in all their wealth and power and social standing, knew that Jesus was the king of kings.
- Frankincense signifies a Priest - like we read last year in the Book of Hebrews - these wise men knew that Jesus would become our Great High Priest.
- Myrrh is used to prepare a body for burial. These wise men had read the scriptures - they knew that God's chosen one would be the suffering servant.

So if we think it is strange that these powerful men fell down on their knees to worship a baby - let's think about who that baby is - the one who came to reign over all the earth, the one who came to make a way for us to be in relationship with God, the one who would die and rise again, defeating death, sin, and all the brokenness of the world.

Our readings today present us with two options of how we will respond to the Epiphany - the new understanding of reality that Jesus ushered in.

We could react like Herod - react out of fear, making our own plans for self-preservation and the defence of our power, riches and status - seeking our own glory.

Or we could react like the wise men - in surrender and adoration - laying down at Jesus' feet all that we are. Knowing that when we do that we will find that Jesus reaches out his hand to us, invites us to stand, and declares over us, as we heard in Isaiah 'arise, shine, for your light has come.'

So today, what will we choose? Self-aggrandisement, seeking after our own power, status, wealth and reputation and rejecting the boundless riches of Christ?

Or self-surrender at Jesus' feet, so that he might rise us up bold, confident, and glorious in him.

Let's take a moment to reflect on what we have heard, to ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind those things we have yet to surrender to God, and to ask him to turn our hearts, our minds and our desires away from the things of the world towards Christ in all his glory.

Post Communion

Lord of all time and eternity,
you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father
in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son:
by the power of your Spirit
complete the heavenly work of our rebirth
through the waters of the new creation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Next Sunday - 19th January, Second Sunday of Epiphany

† 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/>

† 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 – Aldeburgh & **Friston

Tuesday – **Knodishall

Wednesday – Aldeburgh




Thursday – Aldringham

Friday – Aldeburgh

** Weather permitting, we are prayer walking around Friston and Knodishall. Please speak to Revd Sarah and Revd Mary for more info.

The Alde Sandlings, Dates for your Diary

- Prayer Warriors' Group – Last Tuesdays of the month, starting 24th September 6-7pm in Aldeburgh Church – All welcome
- Benefice Bible Studies Group I – Sunday 6th October 3-4.30pm, then every first Sunday of the month at The Rectory, Friston
- Growing Leaders 2025 – See notice for dates.
- Alpha at Aldringham – Starting from 4th February. More details to follow next week.








Growing Leaders 2025 Aldeburgh

Session Dates

Thur 28 Nov 24	7-8pm Information Evening on Zoom
Thur 9 Jan	6-9pm with a meal
Thur 23 Jan	7-9pm
Thur 27 Feb	7-9pm
Thur 27 March	7-9pm
Thur 24 April	7-9pm
Thur 15 May	6-9pm with a meal
Thur 19 June	7-9pm
Thur 17 July	7-9pm
Thur 11 Sept	7-9pm
Thur 16 Oct	7-9pm
Thur 13 Nov	7-9pm
Thur 11 Dec	7-9pm

BOOK NOW > email Rev. Sarah du Boulay revd.sarah@btinternet.com

Growing Leaders 2025

"At St Thomas' everyone who has attended Growing Leaders has come to know their vocation better and as a result the church has become a more vibrant place. They have grown in confidence, in love of God, of neighbour and themselves."
Reverend Rachel Revely

"A challenging and transformational course which has led to me knowing whose I am, understanding my identity as a child of God, choosing to remain in him and offering my ordinary life for him to use as he guides... being obedient to my call to encourage others."

"For me, Growing Leaders has been enlightening, encouraging and empowering. I was challenged in a positive way: my faith has deepened & my self-confidence has increased."

BOOK NOW > email Rev. Sarah du Boulay revd.sarah@btinternet.com

Prayer Groups

There will be two **benefice monthly Bible Studies Group**. One group will have its first session on Sunday 6th October, and will run every first Sunday of the month from 3-4.30pm.

This will be hosted by Revd Mary at the Friston Rectory.

Prayer Warriors Group

We will meet monthly on the last Tuesday of the month from 6-7pm in Aldeburgh Church, beginning on 24th September.

You are all most welcome. If you would like to join either, please contact Revd Mary to be added to the list.

† Home Visits †

Not everyone can get to church as they were once able to, due to an illness or 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>

† 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 or be added to our mailing list.

Sunday 12th January 4pm @ Ogilvie Pavilion

New Pilgrims Create - face to face gathering. Cafe style: praise, prayer, exploring the Bible together, refreshment. Opportunity to be together.

Saturday 1st February Community Breakfast 9.30 @ The Parrot date

A delicious breakfast bap and coffee / tea combo for £7.50 is on offer at the Parrot, chance to catch up with each other and community news, a 'Christmasy' feel! All are welcome. Catching up about local reflective ramble possibilities too.

Saturday 15th February Encounter, Pilgrims' Faith Cafe @ The Outside Inn, Parrot Pub 9.30 - 10.30

Come and join us for coffee, tea & croissants; chance to explore questions about faith, chance to reflect, to listen & share thoughts.

All are welcome.