



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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Services in The Alde Sandlings Benefice – Sunday 3rd May

Aldeburgh	8am 11am	Holy Communion CW2 Family Service of the Word	Prebendary Derek Johnson Led by Elder Fran Smith
Aldringham	11am	Holy Communion	Revd Martin Percival
Friston	9.30am	Holy Communion CW	Revd Sarah du Boulay
Knodishall	9.30am	Service of the Word & Baptism	Revd Mary Brown

Dear Friends,

I hope you have been enjoying this glorious sunshine, and the bluebells which seem to be particularly abundant this year. I don't know about you, but this year has passed incredibly quickly so far for me. I am hoping that May will feel a little slower, with more time to 'stop and smell the roses' as it were!

Last Sunday at Knodishall and Aldringham we focused on the gospel reading, alongside Psalm 23, thinking about Jesus as our good shepherd, and the gate to the sheepfold. The sheep in Psalm 23 and in John 10 enjoy green pastures and still waters, they are well cared for and attended too. My prayer for all of us as we move towards the summer season is that we would know ourselves to be shepherded by the Good Shepherd. That we would know ourselves to be well cared for and attended to. That whether we feel that we are in green pastures or in dark valleys, we would know ourselves to be led and guided by God. And that we could allow ourselves to travel at the pace he is setting - not at the pace that is set by culture or expected of us.

Why not take a moment today, whatever your day holds, to go outside, or sit by a window looking out, to feel the sun on your face, and to experience it as a sign of God's great and never-ending love for you.

With love and prayers,

Mary

Readings for Sunday 3rd May 2026

Collect

Almighty God,
who through your only–begotten Son Jesus Christ
have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life:
grant that, as by your grace going before us
you put into our minds good desires,
so by your continual help
we may bring them to good effect;
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Genesis 8:1-19

8 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided; ²the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, ³and the waters gradually receded from the earth. At the end of one hundred and fifty days the waters had abated; ⁴and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵The waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared.

6 At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made ⁷and sent out the raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent out the dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; ⁹but the dove found no place to set its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took it and brought it into the ark with him. ¹⁰He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; ¹¹and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹²Then he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove; and it did not return to him any more.

13 In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark,

and looked, and saw that the face of the ground was drying. ¹⁴In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. ¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶'Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.' ¹⁸So Noah went out with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. ¹⁹And every animal, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out of the ark by families.

Acts 7:55-end

⁵⁵Filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶'Look,' he said, 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!' ⁵⁷But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. ⁵⁸Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' ⁶⁰Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he died.

John 14:1-14

14 Jesus said to his disciples, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going.' ⁵Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' ⁶Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'

8 Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' ⁹Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. ¹²Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.'

† 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>

Family Service Talk by Revd Mary Brown at Aldringham and Knodishall 26th April – Fourth Sunday of Easter

Who can think of a word to describe sheep?

Actually, sheep are very relational and can be very clever. When the Bible says, 'all we like sheep have gone our own way', it's not because sheep are stupid that they go their own way, but because they are clever enough to know what they want and to try and get it...

Sometimes we get offended when the Bible describes us as sheep - but actually that description 'clever enough to know what they want and to try and get it' is a pretty good description of humans. And I think that is why the Bible often uses this metaphor, of God as the shepherd and we as the sheep.

At Theological College I did a summer placement with a Christian community based on a farm. On the farm there was a shepherd with a flock of about 80 sheep. One day I went with the shepherd to check the herd and was astounded as he called forward the different sheep by name, the sheep he had called would answer and bring her lambs over to see him. Though I grew up with a few sheep, I had never imagined that a shepherd of a large herd might be able to remember every individual and their name. But here was a shepherd who knew his sheep and his sheep knew him. They recognised his voice as he called them by name.

Throughout the Old Testament God describes himself as the shepherd of his people. Psalm 23, which we heard earlier, is probably familiar to all of us. In it the Psalmist declares that God is our shepherd, the one who provides what we need, and the one who walks beside us in even the hardest of situations.

In our gospel reading Jesus claims this metaphor and says that it is about him. 'That good shepherd you heard about in Psalm 23 - it's me' says Jesus. 'I am the one who leads you to green pastures and still waters, making sure you have all that you need, I am the one who keeps you safe even when you walk through dark and stormy valleys, I am the one who brings you home, and covers you with goodness and loving kindness - it's me.'

Jesus also says that he is the gate for the sheep.

We're going to spend a few minutes thinking about what this might mean...

At this point we did an activity as a congregation, where we read through the two readings, John 10:1-14 and Psalm 23, picking out everything these readings tell us about Jesus as the shepherd, Jesus as the gate, and us as the sheep. Below is a summary of some of the responses which were given:

Jesus is the good shepherd:

- The sheep hear his voice
- He calls his sheep by name
- He leads his sheep
- He goes ahead of his sheep
- His sheep follow him
- He knows his sheep
- His sheep know him
- He lays down his life for his sheep

Jesus is the gate for the sheep:

- He invites us in (to salvation)
- He keeps us safe
- He is the way to good pasture
- He brings life in all its fullness

We are the sheep:

- We are safe
- We are known
- We have access to go pasture
- We follow

- We hear and recognise Jesus' voice

There are some other characters in these stories. Jesus contrasts himself and the way that sheep behave around the true shepherd with the way that they respond to others. 'They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' 'The sheep did not listen to them.' I've seen this in action. I grew up with a small herd of sheep. Mum was their shepherd, and they knew that. They recognised the sound of her car and would run to the gate when they heard it coming, other cars would pass and they would ignore them. When she called them, they would run across, when I called them, they couldn't care less. They knew Mum, they knew that she was the one who fed them, who broke the ice off the water in the winter, who moved them to new lush pastures, who made them feel better when they were injured. They knew their shepherd.

Now, when my sister and I helped with the sheep, we weren't like the strangers and thieves and bandits that Jesus talks about - we weren't out to harm the sheep - but they still knew that we weren't Mum.

Jesus also makes the contrast between the true shepherd and the hired hands. The difference is that the hired hand will put their own life above the life of the sheep, running away from the wolves. Not so with Jesus, he says this: 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.' Jesus faced the 'wolf' on our behalf, dying for us, so that he could make a way for us to enter through the gate (which is also him) into abundant life - or life in all its fullness. And this abundant life is not just a future thing, but what Jesus offers us now, today.

So, what does all of this mean for us today?

Maybe you are going through a dark valley at the moment, may today's readings be a reminder that Jesus is with you, walking with you through it, you are never alone.

Maybe you don't know what Jesus' voice sounds like, you don't think you would recognise it if he called to you. I'd suggest that you try praying! Ask Jesus to speak to you and see what happens. Remember that Jesus is gentle and kind, if the voice you hear isn't speaking to you kindly, it's not Jesus

Let's leave here today, remembering that we are Jesus' sheep, he loves us, he has given his life for us, he calls us each by name, he keeps us safe, and he gives us life in all its fullness.

£££ 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 & Leiston Co-op supermarkets 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.
- 3rd May - Friston APCM (10.30am)
- 10th May - Knodishall APCM (10.30am)
- 14th May - 7am Benefice Ascension Day Service and breakfast at Friston
7.30pm Deanery Ascension Day Service at St Margaret's Church, Leiston
- 17th May - Aldringham APCM (Midday)
- 6.30pm Aldeburgh Churches United Service at St Peter & St Paul's Church, Aldeburgh
- 24th May - Pentecost – a celebration of the birthday of the church! Service details and events to follow – Save The Date!
- 4th June - 7.30pm Archdeacon's Visitation Service at St John's Church, Saxmundham

† Pilgrims Together †

Pilgrims Online Wednesdays

Wednesday Gathering to Worship, Reflect and Pray

6.30pm (open from 6.10) - Zoom link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/376110700?pwd=Q0Q3TUNya08zVGNoUkl2aUc5a0hVZz09>

All are welcome to any of the Pilgrim's events.

Safeguarding at The Alde Sandlings Benefice

The care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in church activities is the responsibility of everyone who participates in the life of the Church. If you are concerned that someone you know is at risk of, or is being abused, or presents a risk to others, please seek advice from a Safeguarding Adviser or if necessary, report the matter to the Local Authority Social Care Services or the Police without delay.
The Alde Sandlings Safeguarding Officer: Mrs Fran Smith-
safeguarding.aldesandlings@outlook.com

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