



## 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 Mark Lowther

Email: [mark@thelowthers.com](mailto:mark@thelowthers.com)

Tel: 01728 452807

The Revd Nichola Winter

Email: [njwinter@whd.co.uk](mailto:njwinter@whd.co.uk)

The Revd Sheila Hart

Email: [sheila.hart49@gmail.com](mailto:sheila.hart49@gmail.com)

The Revd Johanna Mabey

Email: [rev.johannamabey@gmail.com](mailto:rev.johannamabey@gmail.com)

The Revd James Marston

Email: [marstonjames@hotmail.com](mailto:marstonjames@hotmail.com)

Tel: 01728 688451

## **Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July** **Eighth Sunday after Trinity**

### **Message from our Rector, The Revd Mark Lowther**

Last week I said that any changes that we made to our ways of 'being church' on a Sunday morning might well be cautious to begin with. We have now received guidance from the national church which you can read here by copying and pasting into a web browser or click on the link in the covering email (the link most probably won't work on this document). Or please email [admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk) for the link.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/COVID%2019%20Guidance%20from%20the%2019th%20July%202021%20v1.0.pdf>

It is a long document but contains much useful information, but it makes clear that final decisions lie with incumbents. I met with clergy colleagues this week and we will be meeting frequently in the weeks to come. We think that we should begin our relaxation of rules gently, listen to what members of the congregations say to us (particularly after a service) and then take appropriate action. We will try our best to accommodate a range of views – because we believe that there is a range of views in our church communities. I have heard from people who would like to be able to sing lustily and never wear a face-mask and I have also heard from those who would be very frightened by that prospect. I have to take decisions

for the general good and they will not, I fear, please everyone. Please do be patient and hopefully it will not be too long before we can return to something much more like the old days.

This week, at the usual times, there will be indoor services in Aldeburgh and Friston and (hopefully) an outdoor one in Aldringham. Our Thorpeness Summer Services begin too – at 9.30am by The Meare. At each service we will sing. The indoor services will have a single hymn at the very end, meaning that if anyone feels uncomfortable they can leave without missing any of the liturgy. This will allow us to discover what it feels like to sing and how happy we are doing it. For the celebration of Holy Communion in Aldeburgh this week I have asked that we stick to the way that we have been receiving communion in recent weeks, distributing only bread. I would really like to know your views on how comfortable you would be sharing a chalice. As I am sure you are aware, when we distribute the wine at Holy Communion, we both rotate the chalice, to mean that no-one drinks from the same part of the cup as the previous communicant, and we wipe the rim of the chalice with a freshly laundered cloth (a ‘purificator’) which should minimise the possibility of anything nasty being transferred from person to person. Please do feel free to let me, or whoever is leading the service that you attend on Sunday, know what you think.

May I also draw your attention to the notice about Duke Dobing and Alan Bullard’s short flute and piano recital in Friston church in Sunday afternoon and also the notice about the service in Aldeburgh on August 29<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, a note about sermons in these online pew-sheets. Those of us who preach have discovered that, because people are able to read our sermons before we preach them, we are sometimes thanked (or criticised!) for something we have preached before we have preached it – which is, to say the least, a little odd! So, as an experiment, we will print the sermon in the pew-sheet the week after it has been preached, allowing it to be re-read rather than read in advance. This week we have left my sermon from last week on the sheet and next week there will be one from this week – and so on. One snag is that the sermon will then often refer to the previous week’s readings but if we put the appropriate scripture references with the sermon you should be able to look them up if necessary. Once again, please do let me know what you think.

With my love and prayers, as ever

Mark

## **Collect**

Almighty Lord and everlasting God,  
we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies  
in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments;  
that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever,  
we may be preserved in body and soul;  
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

## **First Reading**

### **2 Kings 4.42-end**

A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing food from the first fruits to the man of God: twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. Elisha said, 'Give it to the people and let them eat.' But his servant said, 'How can I set this before a hundred people?' So he repeated, 'Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus says the Lord, "They shall eat and have some left."' He set it before them, they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the Lord.

## **Second Reading**

### **Ephesians 3.14-end**

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **Gospel Reading**

### **John 6.1-21**

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.' When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself. When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, got into a boat, and started across the lake to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The lake became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the lake and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.' Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land towards which they were going.

**Sermon for 25<sup>th</sup> July – Eighth Sunday after Trinity,  
by our Rector, The Revd Mark Lowther**

JEREMIAH 23: 1-6  
MARK 6: 30-34, 53-END

Good shepherds versus bad shepherds – and some disobedient sheep. That's a linking theme between our Old Testament and Gospel readings. We know, don't we, that sheep aren't the brightest of animals and, as Dr Cally Hammond reminds us in her piece about today's readings in the *Church Times*, they can eat themselves to death, they can walk in front of cars when roaming free, they startle at the slightest thing – and they follow a leader unthinkingly, which is a behaviour no human being wants to be charged with. A good shepherd knows about all of these faults and cares for his or her sheep anyway. But a bad shepherd .... Well, look what the prophet Ezekiel thinks of them.

'Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the Lord. .... It is you who have scattered my flock and driven them away ....' A bad shepherd can, out of either ignorance or malice, cause chaos.

Question. So how do we know who the good shepherds are? We all know of stories about charismatic shepherds of one kind or another who lead their faithful flocks astray. Or who simply don't know how to do their job properly and the sheep just wander off.

In our gospel reading Jesus is followed – pursued even – by a great crowd who want him to do stuff for them – to take care of them and their sick loved-ones. And Jesus, the writer of Mark's gospel tells us, had compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

And, Good Shepherd that he was, Jesus was there for them. And he fed them – literally. The verses that today's reading skips over are Mark's version of the feeding of the five thousand with five loaves and two fish. And then he healed them too.

That question again. How do we know who the good shepherds are?

Well, elsewhere in the gospels Jesus warns 'beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits.' That's the point, isn't it? It's what the

shepherds actually do rather than what they promise that counts – and I'd like to site a recent, and I think relevant, example.

Last Sunday night, when England came so close to winning the European Cup, did you see what manager Gareth Southgate did at the end of the game? He must have been so disappointed that the team lost that penalty shoot-out but his first reaction was to console the young players who'd failed to net their penalties – the picture of him hugging a distraught Bukayo Saka was deeply moving. Southgate knew what it felt like. 25 years ago he'd missed a rather important one himself. And then, when he was interviewed and was given the opportunity to blame Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka for failing to score, he took the blame on himself. He'd chosen them to take the penalties, he said, so it was his fault, not theirs. And that's a good shepherd. Oh and, by the way, during the Covid-10 epidemic, Southgate agreed to take a 30% pay cut.

A good shepherd delivers. Jesus, tired and suggesting that he and his disciples rest a while, still heals the sick. And that crowd, once 'like sheep without a shepherd', had found theirs.

So, in this world of clamour and conflicting demands and leaders and would-be leaders that would have us believe that they have the answers, we need to look very carefully at what is actually happening in the world and try our best to follow those who are making a positive difference. Not always easy to recognise, sometimes requiring us to change some old habits too, but vitally necessary, nonetheless. And, of course, there is one shepherd who will never let us down as long as we continue to listen to what he is saying to us. I don't think I need to say any more, do I?

Amen

### **Post Communion**

Strengthen for service, Lord,  
the hands that have taken holy things;  
may the ears which have heard your word be deaf to clamour and dispute;  
may the tongues which have sung your praise be free from deceit;  
may the eyes which have seen the tokens of your love shine with  
the light of hope; and may the bodies which have been fed with your body  
be refreshed with the fullness of your life;  
glory to you for ever.

## **NOTICES**

### **Mark's Retirement**

As we all know, we will be saying a very sad farewell to our Rector, The Revd Mark Lowther at the end of August, as he starts his retirement. All the churches in the Benefice are arranging last services etc for Mark, which I am sure the church you worship at has informed you. At

Aldeburgh we are *hoping* to have a

**Summer Suffolk Farewell Concert**, with Geoff Lavery, and friends performing on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August 3-4pm, followed by tea and cake in the Church Hall.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> August, we are *hoping* to have a Benefice Holy Communion Service. On how many we have depends on you really. We need your input. Are you happy to attend church with larger numbers, without social distancing, and happy to sing, or would you prefer to be seated socially distanced and NOT sing? Or are you happy to celebrate Mark's retirement at your preferred church you normally worship in? We really want this to work, but need an idea of your wishes, so we can plan. Your safety is our priority. So please let Claire know your thoughts at [admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk) or speak to one of the clergy or churchwardens at the next service you attend. Of course, all these celebrations can only go ahead if we are permitted to do so, and no restrictions return that could put people at risk.

### **Alde Sandlings Benefice Fun Days in August**

As many of you know August is the month for Aldeburgh Church to host their Friday Markets. Unfortunately, last year was cancelled due to Covid. This year things are hugely better, but we still need to approach with caution. So, this August we will have two Friday markets on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> 10am – 2pm. The proposed stalls are as follows:

BBQ, Vegetables, Plants, Fruit and Flowers, Cakes and Savouries, Jams etc, Craft Stalls, General Bric a Brac. Tombola and Games. All the churches in the Alde Sandlings are invited to have their chosen stalls to raise much depleted funds for the churches. Please contact

[admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk) if any church members of the Alde Sandlings Benefice would like to have a stall.

### **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.

## † Aldringham Outdoor Services †

The services start at 11am in the beautiful Aldringham churchyard. Weather permitting, these services will continue throughout July, August and September. August 8<sup>th</sup> will be the date for the annual **Animal Service, 3pm** in the churchyard. We can't guarantee that there will be no interruptions as the animals may have difficulty following the order of service but all animals, insects, etc. (and their owners)

### **ALL VERY WELCOME**

#### ***Also from Aldringham***

July 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> (Thursday and Friday) are the days when we will be cutting the long grass in the churchyard and we need as many people as possible to cut, rake and generally tidy up the churchyard now that most of the wildflowers we have seen have seeded. This is always a joyous occasion and there will be a splendid picnic lunch for everybody on the Friday. If you can come on both days, so much the better. Gloves, rakes, strimmers, barrows will all be useful if you can bring them.

## **Project 48 Concerts at Aldeburgh Church**

**1<sup>st</sup> August 2pm & 4pm**

We are delighted to announce that we will be joined by pianist Libby Burgess, who will be playing ***Bach's Well Tempered Klavier***. Tickets £10 on the door in aid of Help Musicians, Youth Music Future Talent and Live Music Now.

## **Tuesday Coffee Morning with Mark & Friends**

Our regular Zoom coffee morning will be from 10.30am – 11.30am every Tuesday. All are very welcome. Grab your favourite morning beverage and let's have a good ole chat.

Please contact [admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk) for more information

## **📣 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.

## **The Trussel Trust Organisation**

Food banks in our network have seen an increase in the number of food parcels given out over the last year due to Coronavirus, so any donations are much appreciated. You can find out which items your local food bank is most in need of by entering your postcode here - <https://www.trusselltrust.org/give-food/> By clicking on the food bank's name, you can also find out where to drop off your donations. If you would prefer to make a financial donation, then please visit the food bank's website (under 'Give help') or you can donate to the Trussell Trust centrally by contacting our Supporter Care team on 01722 580 178 or emailing [supportercare@trusselltrust.org](mailto:supportercare@trusselltrust.org)

## **† Friston Sunday Services on Zoom †**

Friston will be holding a live Zoom service for all those who wish to join on Sunday starting at 9.45am.  
It will be a Common Worship Morning Prayer. **All are welcome!**  
The meetings start from 9.40am every Sunday morning  
Please contact [admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk) for more information

## **† Pilgrims Together on Wednesdays †**

The Pilgrims worship together every Wednesday.  
You are all more than welcome to join them via 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. The worship is about 30 minutes long. We have a different worship sheet each week which goes out on a Monday ahead of the Wednesday.  
People are more than welcome to email [pilgrimstogether473@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimstogether473@gmail.com) to receive a copy or be added to our mailing list.  
Please contact [admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk) for more information