



## **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

The Revd James Marston

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

Tel: 01728 688451

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)

## **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December Third Sunday of Advent**

### **Message from our Curate in Charge, The Revd James Marston**

At this time of year, we remember the coming of Christ among us, the revelation of the incarnate God. And this year, perhaps with a little extra enthusiasm following forced separation and restrictions to our lives, we give thanks.

Thanks to our loved ones and our families, thanks to our communities for seeing us through, and thanks to God for being with us in our lives in good times and in bad.

Alongside the watching and waiting of advent, we begin our community celebrations with Carol services - there's plenty to choose from - with the added bonus of the benefice choir enhancing our worship.

Though we return to mandatory mask wearing in our churches I, and all the clergy of the benefice, are especially looking forward to being among you on as we celebrate God's presence among us in the bread and wine of communion.

And one more thing, after Christmas it's usually a quieter time of year. With this in mind, I will be taking some time off, or at least trying to, and our administrator Claire will be moving house - as a result we'll take a short break from the newsletter resuming once again in early 2022.

God be with you this Christmas and always.

James

### **Funeral arrangements for Anne Surfing RIP**

Following the sad news of Anne's death on the 4th of December, I can confirm that Anne's funeral service will take place at St.Peter & St.Paul's on Monday 20th December at 12.30pm. This will be followed by the committal and burial at the Greenwood Burial Ground at Farnham.

Pam has indicated all are welcome to attend both.

Anne was a great supporter and servant of St.Peter and St.Paul's church.

Thoughts and prayers are with Pam at this time.

May Anne rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.

Revd.Jo Mabey

### **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**

### **Zephaniah 3.14-end**

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!

The Lord has taken away the judgements against you,  
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;  
you shall fear disaster no more.

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.

I will deal with all your oppressors at that time.

And I will save the lame and gather the outcast,  
and I will change their shame into praise

and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home,  
at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised  
among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes  
before your eyes, says the Lord.

## **Second Reading**

### **Philippians 4.4-7**

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

## **Gospel Reading**

### **Luke 3.7-18**

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.' And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we

do?’ In reply he said to them, ‘Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.’ Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, ‘Teacher, what should we do?’ He said to them, ‘Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.’ Soldiers also asked him, ‘And we, what should we do?’ He said to them, ‘Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.’ 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.’ So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

### **Sermon by The Reverend Mark Booth Preached on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

During this season of Advent, the church recalls key witnesses to God's preparation for the incarnation – His divine entrance into our human condition.

On each of these 4 Sundays, we focus (more or less) on one of 4 themes from the Bible which gradually unfold overlapping aspects of the story of our creation, our fall from grace, our wandering in the wilderness and God's loving, saving response to our human predicament.

In the movements and struggles of **Patriarchs** and Matriarchs like Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, Joseph and his brothers and eventually Moses, together with their rather dysfunctional family lives; through the problems and plagues they brought upon themselves, and the promises which God nevertheless bestowed upon them, we can see the birth and growth of longing and hope which pushed and pulled God's people through their history of trouble and torment.

In the words and actions of so many **Prophets** recorded and treasured in Old Testament Scriptures, we can hear and see God shaping and forming that hope into the expectation of a coming King who would deliver and lead his people into a better life.

In the ministry of **John the Baptist**, we meet the messenger, the proclaimer, the announcer, the forerunner, the herald of the far greater one than he who was making his way into the lives of the people: a way prepared for him by John, not only through the people's physical and moral landscape, but also through their hearts and minds to the very centre of their beings.

In blessed **Mother Mary** we find the one in whom God's plan is brought to fruition, the young woman through whose initial trouble and fear God's word brought forth that willing acceptance which helped realise hope for all people, light in our darkness, justice, joy, and peace for all the world, all from a borrowed womb.

So, in our advent candles we can see flickers of hope for all humanity, the word of God speaking through every darkness, prophets contemplating mystery, waiting done with, making-ready underway, favour found in rejoicing.

And in the central, white candle burning bright on Christmas day we will see souls magnifying the Lord, and spirits rejoicing in God our Saviour . . . but that is another sermon, for another day . . . . .

. . . In my retirement, I preach less often, which can lead to problems for me, if not for you: lack of momentum, trying to cram too much in, and hankering after that other, easier sermon, rather than the one I struggle with.

~ Today, for instance, I was tempted to do a John the Baptist on Waitrose and their Christmas t.v. advert proclaiming, "THE BEST BIT OF CHRISTMAS IS THE FOOD" and, wait for it, "YOU CAN TASTE WHEN IT'S A WAITROSE CHRISTMAS" . . . (Not if you can't afford it!)

~ Then there was the one about Covid precautions and the doors left open for ventilation purposes, the paradox of freezing to death or falling victim to infection, but also the prospect of God's Holy Spirit

blowing in the wind, opening our eyes to see and ears to hear, hearts to feel and brains to think . . .

~ Then again, I was quite seduced by the fact that there are, of course, several different and sometimes conflicting traditions about colours and meanings of the Advent candles; the orders in which we deal with their themes and the practices surrounding them.

In Methodism, for instance, it is common to sing songs and hymns whose different verses speak to the different candles and their themes, and our reflections on them . . .

~ More important than all those, I suppose, is that tense relationship between the promise of salvation and the warning of judgement . . .

Rest assured, I shall spare you such manifestations of my righteous indignation, liturgical uncertainty, theological confusion and general clever-Dickery . . .

However, I cannot hide my bewilderment at what some of you may have already noticed from our readings, which is that **John the Baptist**, for whom the Church of England traditionally lights its third Advent Candle, nevertheless also gets a look in today, when the second candle is usually lit for the **Prophets**.

It is as if the Baptist has a dual role to play in the Advent drama:

On the one hand, he is **Civil Engineer**, road-maker, road-mender, even road-sweeper; creating and keeping a highway or pathway through our wasteland.

He finds the right direction; levels-out the peaks and troughs which make journeys so hard; straightens-out those long and winding roads which sometimes lead us back on ourselves. He deals with all the wearisome changes and chances met on our travels. He opens up new viewpoints and vistas on our Damascus Road experiences. He calms the traffic so that we can hear ourselves think, notice the kindness of strangers and make new friends on our Roads to Emmaus.

On the other hand, he is **Broadcaster**.

He announces what's happening; gives details; compares conflicting reports. He warns of spoil, waste and void. He brings good news for many, and bad news for some.

At the same time, he remains **Prophet**, by whose words and sacramental actions he both challenges and invites people to get themselves ready for God who is coming in Christ.

John as **Prophet** and **Preacher** deals in expectation and apprehension.

As **Baptiser** he deals in preparation and reception, initiation and welcome.

In his various roles, John the Baptist presents **challenge** to the people of his day, our day, and every day:

- ? Will we listen and hear ?
- ? Will we watch and wait ?
- ? What and whom will we **choose** ?

? Which **voice** will we listen to: those loud, hectoring voices peddling fake news and false truth; publishing irrationality, agitation, and futility? Or those still small voices of calm, offering reason, respect, and hope?

? Which **way** will we follow: the path of peace in Christ? - Or the highway and handcart to hell without him? God's way of truth and life leading to healing and peace? - Or that desolation row leading to sickness, chaos and disaster?

? **Who** will we want for our companion, our friend; our guide, our teacher; our comfort, our consolation; our courage and our hope?

? Will we **ask** about ourselves: 'what's occurring'? What's going to happen? What will become of us? Or will we ask about God: what is God doing? What is God's word for us? What does God want for us?

May God open our eyes to see and ears to hear.

May God's Spirit blow open our hearts and minds to feel and think.

May God be a guide to our feet and a lamp to our path.

May God keep us loved and saved on the way of truth and life,  
through Jesus Christ our Saviour and our Lord. Amen.

## **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 19<sup>th</sup> December**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

## **NOTICES**

### **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.

### **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/>



## **Christingle 2021**

On a very blustery evening on Tuesday the 7th December, we held our Benefice Christingle service, in aid of the Children's Society. We would like to thank all our team, who created a Christingle workshop of making the Christingles ready for the service. We are blessed to have such dedicated helpers in our Benefice. Thank you to all that came to join us for this service and donated. We raised in total £324.95 for the Children's Society. Please see our website to view the photos.

<https://www.aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk/christingle-2021/>

## **Christmas Service Dates at Aldeburgh Parish Church**

To make sure everyone feels safe in church this Christmas, we are offering you the chance to reserve your seats for selected services. Due to the popularity of the Crib Service (Christmas Eve) we have decided the safest option is to have two services, one at 2pm and one at 3.30pm. You can reserve seats for the following services:

- Crib Service 24<sup>th</sup> December – 2.00pm
- Crib Service 24<sup>th</sup> December – 3.30pm
- First Communion of Christmas 24<sup>th</sup> 11.15pm – Socially Distanced
- First Communion of Christmas 24<sup>th</sup> 11.15pm – Non Socially Distanced
- Christmas Day 10.30am Service – Socially Distanced
- Christmas Day 10.30am Service – Non Socially Distanced

**Please do let Ken Smith, or Claire at [admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:admin@aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk) know of your wishes. These dates will be published in the local papers and available to book online from the 1<sup>st</sup> December.**

**You can reserve your seat online here**

<https://www.aldeburghparishchurch.org.uk/christmas-services-booking-links-eventbrite/>

**Pilgrims Together  
Carols around the Christmas Tree at Thorpeness  
Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> December from 4pm.  
All welcome to come and join us**

### **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. People are welcome to email [pilgrimstogether473@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimstogether473@gmail.com) to receive a copy or be added to our mailing list.

**Zoom Bible study** meets on Thursdays. Please email [pilgrimstogether473@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimstogether473@gmail.com) for the links. You don't need to have attended previous sessions.

### **Dates for your diary**

Next Wednesday (15th) will be our online Christingle service.

Sunday 19th December 3pm - 5pm, a group of us will be singing carols at the Parrot.

### **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**