



Chaplaincy of All Saints' Marseille with Aix-en-Provence and the Luberon Stewardship Renewal – October 2022

Introduction

The last time that we wrote to chaplaincy members, asking them to consider the level of financial support they were able to give to the chaplaincy, was at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020. Since then we have lived through a time of disruption and change, followed by an outbreak of war on the edge of Europe, a cost of living crisis (particularly regarding energy costs) and increasing economic uncertainty.

Through all this the chaplaincy has continued its work, yet its ability to do so continues to depend on the generosity of its members. We are grateful for all that you have given and continue to give.

What the chaplaincy costs

For those unfamiliar with how our finances work, there are significant differences from a standard Church of England parish.

Unlike churches in other dioceses, chaplaincies in the Diocese in Europe receive no direct financial support from the Church of England.

In a typical parish in England, clergy are paid a stipend and occupy rent free accommodation owned by their diocese, in return for which the parish makes a payment to the diocese based on (among other things) the number of its worshippers. By contrast, chaplaincies in the Diocese in Europe such as ours have to be self-funding, so all expenses related to our four churches have to be met by our members.

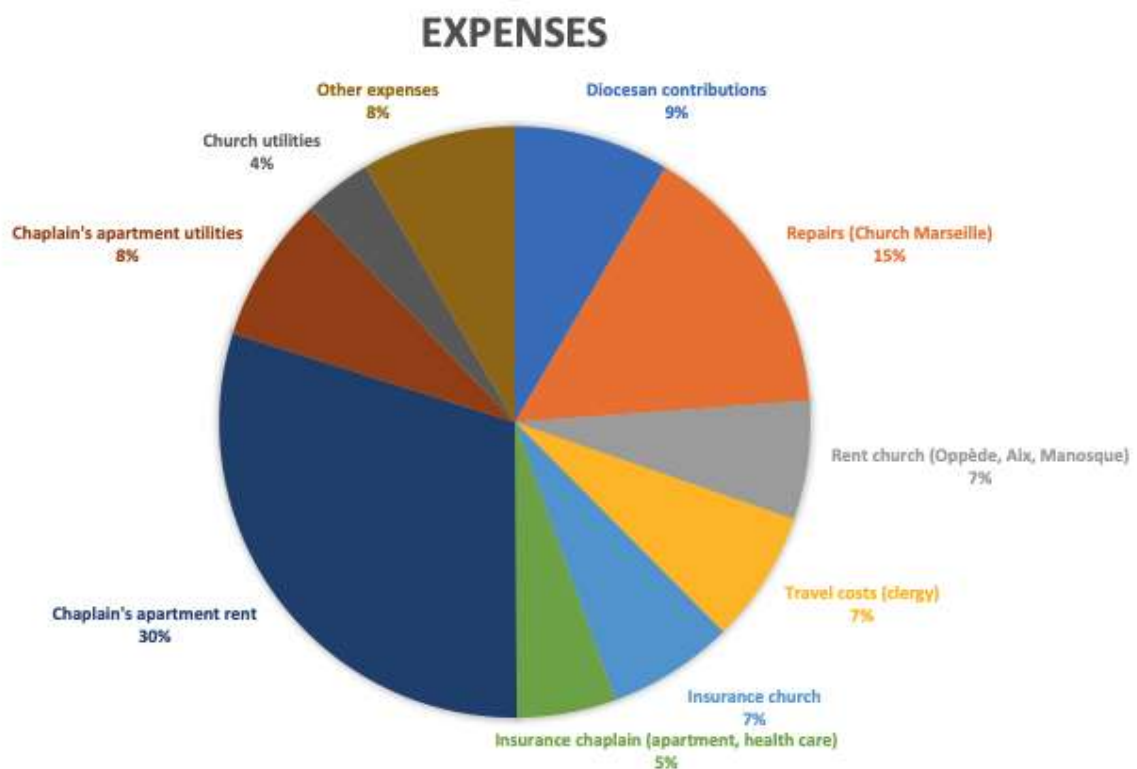
In our chaplaincy, no one on the ministry team is currently paid for their work and no accommodation is provided by the Diocese. When a chaplain is appointed, a small apartment is rented by the chaplaincy for them to occupy.

Other annual expenses include the following:

- rent for the church buildings which we use (other than All Saints' Marseille, which is owned by the Diocese);
- insurance, including third party cover for our use of the other church buildings;
- electricity, heating and telephone/internet costs for the church and the apartment;
- travel costs - the chaplaincy covers around 200 square kilometres; when ministering to the different congregations, ministers either travel by public transport or use their own cars, for which they are paid an allowance per kilometre;
- repairs to the church building in Marseille (for which the chaplaincy is responsible) – we are facing a potentially significant cost for repairing the roof to the church cellar; in addition, the interior of the church needs repainting;
- stationery, office supplies, cleaning equipment, etc.
- an annual contribution towards the Diocese's central costs (staff, administration etc).

In 2022, the total amount budgeted for these costs amounts to over €30,000. Like every other organisation, the chaplaincy currently faces increases in all of these costs except the contribution to the Diocese, which (exceptionally for this year) has been held at the previous year's level. We have succeeded in trimming some expenses over the last two years – for example, all ministry and council meetings now take place online, which has eliminated the associated travel costs while improving our carbon footprint.

A chart showing a breakdown of our budgeted expenses for 2022 is shown below.



In the last two years, the chaplaincy has additionally raised separate funds at Harvest time and Christmas to make specific donations to other charities for those in need. (These funds do not form part of our annual budget.)

The ministry of the chaplaincy

Despite the challenges of the last two years, the ministry of the chaplaincy has grown steadily:

- in 2019 we were offering six services a month; we now offer fourteen, including midweek services online;
- in 2019 we had three congregations in Marseille, Aix and the Luberon; to this we have added new congregations in Manosque and online;
- we have increased our ministry of baptisms, weddings and funerals across the chaplaincy area;
- we have strengthened our ecumenical partnerships;
- we have increased our ministry to seafarers (which is currently funded separately).

There is also a ministry of which fewer people are aware. We regularly offer visits or telephone calls to people facing difficulty in their lives, including visits to hospitals and care homes. We help them with practical solutions where we can. Sometimes circumstances require a special church service. At other times it is a ministry of listening, of presence in a world where many feel isolated or alone. Recent examples include taking the funeral of a holidaymaker from Australia who had died while visiting Provence, attending the bedside of an American visitor who was terminally ill and unable to return home, and taking a funeral of the young child of a migrant who was alone in Marseille and spoke no French.

It is all this ministry which our members' donations assist in making possible, in addition to running the chaplaincy, its four churches and the services held there.

Stewardship renewal

Harvest is a good time of year for us both to recall the gifts we have received and to consider the gifts we give.

There are many ways in which people support the chaplaincy, offering their time, skills, involvement in services, membership of the chaplaincy council, help with the church building, assistance with the website, responding to requests for help with specific projects – the list is a long one, and we are grateful for all the ways in which so many people contribute to our work. However, without your financial contributions, we simply could not survive.

We are therefore asking you to consider whether this year you might be able to increase the amount of financial support you give to the chaplaincy. The single most helpful thing would be if everyone who gives to us could do so by standing order through their bank. This not only enables us to have an idea of what our income will be, enabling us to plan our ministry, but it also offers financial benefits to donors.

Tax relief

For French and UK tax residents, generous tax relief is available to those who make gifts to charitable organisations in a form that is recorded (as opposed to placing cash in a collection plate, for which a tax receipt cannot be given). Tax relief in France is available on donations made to us by French taxpayers because our legal status is that of an *association cultuelle* under the 1905 Law. Tax relief in the UK is available to UK taxpayers by virtue of the fact that the Diocese in Europe Fund (through which donations can be made to us in the UK) is a UK registered charity.

If you would like more information about how to benefit from the tax relief described above, please contact our Treasurer, Dr Michael Annett.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we are conscious that some of you have difficulty in making any financial contribution to our work, let alone increasing the amount. It is important to restate that everyone is welcome in our chaplaincy whether or not they can afford to give, or to increase their giving. But to those who are able to do so, thank you for responding to this appeal.

Enclosed with this letter are two forms by which a standing order may be set up, or an existing one increased, to make regular donations to the chaplaincy:

- one for French tax residents – please send this to your bank along with up-to-date ID;
- one for UK tax residents – please send this to the Diocese in Europe office in London (the address is on the form), accompanied by a Gift Aid form if you are eligible for Gift Aid. Please also specify in your covering letter that your donations are ‘for the Marseille chaplaincy’, so that they allocate them to us.

If anyone would like more information about our finances, or a copy of the accounts we circulate each year at our annual general meeting, please let me know.

Thank you for your support.

The Revd James Johnston, Chaplain
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1st October 2022

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