The Chaplaincy of Aquitaine is situated in Southwest France and covers an area about the size of Wales, taking in three Departments, Gironde, Dordogne and Lot & Garonne. It is part of the Archdeaconry of France in the Diocese in Europe, the 44th Diocese in the Church of England. The rural character of Aquitaine is reflected in the low population density. Bordeaux, the regional capital, is the largest conurbation with a population of approximately 700,000. Other sizeable towns include Agen, Bergerac, Libourne and Périgueux.

The Chaplaincy was founded in Bordeaux in 1825 and has been under the Patronage of the Intercontinental Church Society (ICS) since 1874. Outreach and new church plants during the 20th century led to the creation of our neighbouring Chaplaincies: Midi-Pyrénées & Aude and Poitou-Charentes. It was only in the 1960s that worship centres began to be set up in rural areas to the east of Bordeaux. Since then, expansion has been significant and we now meet to worship in a dozen venues, grouped into five sectors: 1) Bordeaux, 2) Chancelade and Sorges, 3) the Dordogne Valley, 4) Dronne Valley and 5) Lot & Garonne. The Chaplaincy does not own any buildings and uses Catholic churches and chapels. There are around 25 services each month. Further details on each sector and the history of the Chaplaincy, including photos, can be found on our website www.chapaq.org.

The Chaplaincy’s mission and constituency

The Chaplaincy’s mission statement is:

“To worship God and to contribute to the fulfilment of Christ’s mission on earth by ministering to the spiritual needs of the English-speaking people in Aquitaine”.

The Chaplaincy of Aquitaine sees its role as serving English-speaking Christians from every part of the world, Anglicans and those from other denominations, and engaging in mission to all English speakers in the area. There is a very large resident English-speaking population in Aquitaine and, as more Anglophone families choose to work or to retire in southwest France, so the average size of congregations has risen. However, with a dispersed population, our various churches have families travelling up to 1 1/2 hours to attend services. With the exception of Bordeaux, many of the
congregation’s members are of retirement age but we are seeing an increasing number of young families coming to live here. British and American Consulates are based in Bordeaux where there is also a small international school. The University in Bordeaux, as well as the Bordeaux School of Management, welcome students from different countries, many involved in the ERASMUS programme.

The patron of the Chaplaincy is the ICS, which since 1874 has provided moral, spiritual and financial support. Since 1998, the Chaplaincy has been self-supporting financially and is in a position to initiate more outreach work. Our current expenditure is around 90,000 € sourced from regular giving schemes, offertories and fundraising.

Congregations include people from many different denominations and traditions and from a variety of countries. At present there are 321 names on the electoral roll, which is the largest of any Chaplaincy in the Diocese in Europe.

The Chaplaincy has a charitable association, Chap-Aid, to channel funds to those in need. (Such an association is required under French law.) Fundraising events are carried out regularly to help those in need both in France and abroad, and the Chaplaincy has taken on a three-year commitment with Christian Aid for a project in Armenia. Our target is to raise the equivalent of 10% of our income to be donated to charity.

In the management of the Chaplaincy, the Chaplain is assisted by two Chaplaincy Wardens and the Chaplaincy Council, which has representatives from each of the five local sectors and meets five times per year. Each sector has a locally elected committee since this has been found to be the most effective way of running a Chaplaincy of this size and diversity. The committees are responsible for the day-to-day running of the churches in their sector, but have no official status in the Chaplaincy, and are accountable directly to the Chaplain.

There is a considerable Ministry Team, which includes an Assistant Chaplain (Revd Caroline Gordon-Walker), a Curate (Revd Gillian Strachan), 5 clergy with permission to officiate, 5 Readers and 7 Lay Assistants, plus some visiting ministers. As well as taking services and occasional offices, they are involved in pastoral care and planning of all aspects of worship. In a Chaplaincy as large as ours and with its potential for growth, there has been some discussion in recent years on the possibility of adding a second stipendiary post or creating a house-for-duty post to ease the management and enable further ministry in the respective regions. No firm decisions have been taken on these or other models for the future but it is hoped that we shall move forward on these matters within the next five years. It is expected that the new Chaplain will play a full part in planning and implementing any changes for growth.

Bringing the churches together
Because of distances, there are few opportunities for the different congregations to meet. An important occasion is the Chaplaincy Annual General Meeting, with its Eucharist celebration, which rotates from one sector to another, enabling Chaplaincy members to discover their sister churches which are sometimes more than a two hour drive away. About 50 people drawn from the different sectors meet for yearly retreats lasting four days, with teaching or reflection sessions, which have been held for more than 14 years at a French Monastery in the Basque country. There is a current search for a second retreat venue, which would be more central to all sectors.

Communications and Outreach
Communications across our vast Chaplaincy are vital. The Chaplaincy website, currently being completely renewed, (www.chapaq.org) provides much useful data about worship services and events. These are also publicized monthly in the English-language newspapers The French News
and The Connexion as well as in local newsheets. The monthly Chaplaincy newsletter distributed to more than 200 people provides a more complete picture of events at all levels of the Chaplaincy, with details of coming events in each sector. E-mail is increasingly used for communication and most congregation members are computer literate.

A relatively new Chaplaincy endeavour is English broadcasts on a local radio station. Over the years Alpha courses have been run in different sectors for new and old Christians alike.

All sectors organise social and fundraising events throughout the year which act as an important outreach and weddings, funerals and baptisms provide good opportunities to reach people with whom we are not usually in touch. We are exploring different ways of addressing the challenge of bringing people through our doors.

Training and spiritual development
A variety of training sessions have been held, led by the Chaplain and members of the Ministry team on prayer and prayer ministry. Christian listening and bereavement counseling. There is an Introductory course to the Christian Faith, for those who want to deepen their knowledge and who might be potential worship leaders.

A rich part of our congregational life is the number of House Groups which meet across the various sectors for prayer and/or Bible Study. In Advent and Lent, many of these groups use the same Chaplaincy-wide courses.

We are aware of the necessity of providing Christian Education for young people particularly in the light of new families moving into the area. In the Lot & Garonne a Youth Group, called “the Couch Potatoes”, meets once a month. There are Sunday Schools and All Age Worship in most of the sectors.

Prayer Ministry and Pastoral Work
Our ministry of prayer includes an active prayer chain and prayer diary. Prayer Ministry Teams are being developed to offer prayer ministry after services. In all sectors Pastoral Care is a strong point. Visits are made by both clergy and lay people to those in need (hospital visiting, bereavement, contact with the isolated).

Ecumenical relations
The Anglican spirit of balance and inclusiveness has, we believe, something distinctive to offer in ecumenical dialogue. There are excellent relations with Roman Catholic and Reformed churches, and friendly contact with the RC Cardinal Archbishop in Bordeaux and the Bishops of Périgueux and Agen. The regular use of Roman Catholic churches is one measure of this co-operation and means that at local level there is frequent contact between Anglican congregations and French parish priests. Ecumenical services are held in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and for the Women’s World Day of Prayer, and Roman Catholic priests, ecumenical officers and pastors are honoured guests at Carol Services.

Music
Each sector has a choir for all festivals and some for all their regular services. We are fortunate to have a number of very good organists and pianists to accompany our singing throughout the Chaplaincy.
Regular Sunday Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bordeaux &amp; Sorges</th>
<th>Dronne Valley</th>
<th>Dordogne Valley</th>
<th>Lot &amp; Garonne</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Sunday</td>
<td>10.30 Holy Communion</td>
<td>10.30 Service of the Word - Bertric Burée</td>
<td>10.30 Service of the Word - Bertric Burée</td>
<td>11.00 HC - Doudrac</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Sunday</td>
<td>10.30 Morning Prayer</td>
<td>16.00 Holy Communion</td>
<td>10.30 Holy Communion - Bertric Burée</td>
<td>10.30 Morning Prayer - Monteton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Sunday</td>
<td>10.30 Holy Communion</td>
<td>10.30 All Age Worship - Bertric Burée</td>
<td>9.00 BCP Limeuil 10.30 Morning Prayer - Limeuil 11.00 Service of the Word - Ste Nathalène</td>
<td>10.30 All Age Worship - Monteton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Sunday</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.00 Holy Communion - Bertric Burée</td>
<td>10.30 Holy Communion - Limeuil</td>
<td>10.30 Holy Communion - Monteton</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th Sunday</td>
<td>10.30 Holy Communion or Morning Prayer</td>
<td>10.30 Special Service - Bertric Burée</td>
<td>10.30 Morning Prayer - Limeuil</td>
<td>10.30 Holy Communion - Dondas 16.00 Evening Prayer - Monteton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Mid-week services are held each month at:
- Sorges on the 4th Tuesday at 11.00
- Dronne Valley on 2nd Wednesday at 11.00
- Bordeaux on the eve of the 4th Sunday at 18.00

Also in Lot & Garonne there are services at Allez on 1st Tuesday of each quarter, and at Envals on Tuesday once a quarter.

In all sectors a variety of worship is available to meet different spiritual needs.

Across the Chaplaincy there are special services for Christmas and Holy Week.

**Our Chaplain has been with us for 7 years and has been appointed to a new position in the United Kingdom. We are a dynamic and enthusiastic parish and, in the light of the Chaplaincy’s mission statement, we are seeking a person with the following skills and characteristics.**

**We would like our new Chaplain to be:**

- One whose faith and love of Christ is demonstrated in his/her prayer life, personal life and ministry
- Able to convey the Gospel both in written and spoken word and bring faith in God alive to those both inside and outside the church
- A person who is able to identify gifts in others, and train and nurture their development
- An inspirational motivator of others, able to express contagious enthusiasm and joy in the Lord
- A team leader, who is able to work co-operatively with and manage a large ministry team and voluntary workers and delegate responsibility to them
At home in a variety of traditional and contemporary styles of worship and sympathetic to those from non-Anglican backgrounds

Able to undertake pastoral work with warmth, friendliness and approachability, and be able to handle any cross-cultural or cross-traditional conflicts.

Able to work independently and accept the relative isolation of the post, compared to a Diocese in England

One who is forward looking and will strive to help the Chaplaincy function more effectively

One who is open to new ideas including his/her own self-development

Finally someone with a sense of humour and fun

Working with us our new Chaplain will help us build on the foundations laid in recent years and further:

- Enable us to enhance our vision for the work of the Gospel in the Chaplaincy and help us to reach out with God’s word to all those around us
- Enable us to develop a culture where every member of the congregation feels valued
- Encourage the contributions offered by our Assistant Chaplain, Curate, other clergy, and Readers and Lay Assistants in their various roles
- Encourage Christian teaching through home and study groups and offer opportunities for education and training of ministers in the Chaplaincy
- Enhance the development of our Healing Prayer ministry
- Develop our ability to work together as a united Chaplaincy
- Look into further outreach and development in presently untouched areas in the Chaplaincy.
- Help us to interact with the communities in which we live and enhance our ecumenical links with all churches.

At a practical level our new Chaplain should be a good team leader with strong management and organisational skills. He or she should feel comfortable in dealing with varied congregations and have effective communication skills and the ability to facilitate and negotiate where appropriate. Computer literacy, a working knowledge of the French language and a willingness to drive long distances between churches are essential.

**What We Can Offer**

The Chaplain will receive an attractive remuneration package and profit from the fine quality of life in France.

**Stipend & Conditions of Employment**

The total stipend (currently 29,097.84 € per annum) is reviewed annually, in accordance with current Archdiocesan rates in France. The Chaplain’s UK National Insurance Class II pension contributions will be paid by ICS. The Chaplaincy will meet the costs of local Social Security and medical insurance payments, including a “top-up” scheme for medical cover for the family. It will also pay the contributions to the Church of England Clergy Pension Scheme.
The Chaplain’s contract includes one return trip to the UK each year for the family and the cost of family attendance at the ICS Conference each year. There are 4 weeks of annual leave, plus holidays in each of the weeks following Christmas and Easter.

Residence
The present Presbytery (owned by ICS) is a one-storey house in the right bank suburbs of Bordeaux (Floirac) with easy access to the city centre by tram. The house comprises 3 bedrooms, a bathroom and separate toilet, a living/dining room and small kitchen leading to a large covered verandah. The Chaplain’s office has an independent entrance from the verandah, offering privacy to the family. There is an attached one-car garage and a good-sized garden with a tool shed. Whether the house will be provided furnished will depend on whether the appointee wishes to bring his/her own furniture. Reasonable removal costs are covered. A review of the accommodation is envisaged.

Aquitaine is well served with transport facilities: Bordeaux International Airport (30 minutes by car from the Presbytery) and a smaller airport in Bergerac, and TGV railway services in the Bordeaux area (15 minutes by car from the Presbytery), Libourne and Agen areas. Road and rail networks across the region are good but, with the exception of Bordeaux, public transport services are very limited.

With regards to travel to the various church sectors, the travel time ranges from 25 minutes (Bordeaux) to two hours (sectors to the east).

Depending on future Chaplaincy reorganisation, a more centrally placed Presbytery might be appropriate or alternatively the appointment of a further full-time non-stipendiary assistant house-for-duty chaplain living in an area to be determined.

Car and Accommodation costs
The Chaplaincy provides a fully expensed car, less a payment for private use at an agreed rate. All expenses for the office are covered by the Chaplaincy, including the provision of a computer and high-speed internet connection. The Chaplaincy will meet 100% of the cost of rent, rates, building insurance, maintenance and local property taxes, and 20% of water and utilities charges. The Chaplain will meet 80% of the cost of water and utilities charges, and 100% of the cost of heat, light, and telephone calls relating to his personal use.

Educational and social options for the family
French public and private schools are excellent and on a par with UK schools. There is a private International School in Bordeaux where a French/English bilingual programme is offered at the primary level. Secondary education is taught in English to the IGCSE and A Level. The cost of a private international school is expensive (approximately 5,000 € per year for primary school, 8,400 € for middle school, 10,780 € for IGCSE level, and 12,900 € for advanced level) and it is not anticipated that any direct financial assistance towards this cost would be available at this time. Bordeaux has an excellent University system which covers all fields. There is a full-time programme for foreigners learning French. Many private institutions also exist in the city for learning French at an intensive or less intensive rhythm.

An International Women’s Club offers a quick integration into French life for a female spouse. There is also a Bordeaux-British Club providing social functions for ex-pats and their families in the area.