

General note about ministry in Permanent Chaplaincies



If you are not familiar with ICS

ICS is a Church of England patronage society (nominating clergy and owning church buildings). Primarily, though, we are a mission agency. Since 1823 ICS has conducted mission and ministry to English-speaking people living in countries where English is not the first language, through church planting, church growth and outreach to tourists. We help our mission partners (of which the appointed chaplain will be one), their churches and the dioceses in which they serve spread the good news. Our outreach to tourists involves many volunteer clergy and readers in major European resorts. ICS has played a significant role in the planting of new churches and the formation of Anglican dioceses both in Europe and other parts of the world. ICS is a member of the Church of England's Partnership for World Mission (PWM) and Global Connections.

Chaplains and chaplaincies benefit, too, from the prayers of ICS supporters worldwide, know how, advice and assistance, personal contact, the continuing interest of the Society in the chaplain's and their families' welfare, and the opportunity to attend and benefit from events such as the Chaplains and Families' Conference, held annually in either the UK or mainland Europe. This latter event is an important resource, especially for clergy in isolated contexts, and is a source of relaxation for the whole family with Biblical exposition and fellowship with those serving in similar contexts.

ICS has amongst its foundational principles the encouragement of faithful and informed teaching of orthodox Biblical truth. The supremacy of Scripture in all matters of faith and practice controls its ethos. It therefore seeks to encourage mission and ministry that enables people to come to faith in Christ and be so nourished in Christian truth that they become effective disciples and witnesses. It is an expectation of ICS that the appointed chaplain will subscribe to the ICS Basis of Faith, maintain membership of the Society during the period of their appointment, be an ambassador for ICS (for example by speaking at supporting churches), and encourage the chaplaincy and others to support it. ICS's depends on the generosity and prayers of individuals, churches, chaplaincies and trusts to carry out its mission and ministry.

Life in chaplaincies outside the UK

The chaplains or priests-in-charge that ICS nominates are licensed by the Bishop of the Diocese in which they are working and they serve as full members of his Diocese, accountable to him.

International, English-language (or chaplaincy) ministry has particular stresses as well as joys and these should be seriously considered before applying. The main stresses are being far from home and family and this applies usually and particularly to the chaplain's spouse who, if he/she does not speak the language of the country, can feel very alone. Employment opportunities for the spouse may be limited. In most chaplaincies fellow Anglican clergy are far away and whilst the phone can be a help in a crisis, the sort of the fellowship enjoyed with other clergy in one's home country is far more difficult to come by.

Adaptation to a different culture and way of life, of food, temperature and shopping facilities, whilst a pleasure on holiday, can be quite testing when you live there. In most chaplaincies there is a rapid turnover of membership in the congregation as people's work moves them on to other

countries (in some, 25% may leave each year). There is usually a core of longer-term residents and nationals as well, but this is variable. For some in your congregation English will not be their first language, which poses particular challenges when preaching. Bishops are well attuned to the particular challenges, and support their clergy accordingly.

The variety of life with the congregation, the mixture of nationalities and cultures (some chaplaincies contain up to fifty nationalities) can be extremely stimulating. The congregation will include people from many denominational backgrounds and traditions and it is important for chaplains to be able to work with such a diversity of backgrounds and offer e.g. a variety of forms of service to enable a wide range of people to find something familiar in public worship.

Although chaplains will need to be flexible in their approach to the forms of service and ministry that will meet widely varied needs, there are particular opportunities for evangelism and pastoral care with people far from home. Many are more open to the gospel, many will come to church for the first time for whatever reason, and many do not have the ties of family, garden etc that keep them from church activities when they are back home.

In view of the above ICS seeks people of orthodox theology, evangelical conviction, having mature and steady faith, who preferably have already had experience of incumbent or similar level, and like change and challenge. Unless there is willingness for children to be educated within the local system, or the chaplain and spouse have private means that they are prepared to expend on education elsewhere, people with children who are still in mainstream education need to consider this matter particularly carefully.

The chaplain's standard of living in western Europe is usually (for a stipendiary appointment) equivalent to an incumbent's in England, if not in cash terms. In other contexts remuneration may be at much lower levels, comparable to those of national clergy and so affording a reasonable *local* standard of living. Furnished or unfurnished accommodation is provided in both stipendiary and 'house-for-duty' appointments. UK standards of accommodation are usually higher.

Working with ICS ought not to be seen as an offshore English parish – it can be a challenging, broadening and intensely enriching experience.