

Chaplaincy Profile for St John's Anglican Church, St Raphaël, France



Where we are

The church of St. John the Evangelist is situated in St. Raphaël, on the South East coast of France (between Nice and St Tropez) which, with adjoined town Fréjus, is the largest urban centre in the Eastern Var.



The Var, postal code 83000, is a fairly large department in France and is also the most visited one from the point of view of tourism. Both towns are seaside resorts, bringing with this large numbers of tourists of all nationalities.

The region is well served by the local buses and SNCF (French state railways). Paris is five hours away by TGV - the French fast train. The road network is good with a motorway, the A8, from Aix en Provence to Monaco - and onwards towards Italy. The old main road from Paris to this area, the route Nationale 7 still exists and adds to the pleasure of discovering the area. The hinterland is truly remarkable - in winter one can travel from the beach to snow-covered valleys in the pre-Alps in just over two hours.

It is a popular retirement area. Tourism is the strongest financial support for this department, although there are centres of light industry in every area, plus agriculture and viniculture. The Mediterranean is ever present. Fréjus was a Roman port and there are still many vestiges of the Roman occupation of this area. There are safe beaches, sandy or pebbles, and there are many delightful small creeks.

The biggest city in the area is Toulon, a principal naval port, situated to the west of the department. The local tourist office information describes the Var as a land of blue, green and gold, which sums it up very well.

St Raphaël has an excellent cultural programme throughout the year, augmented in the summer months by an *Estivale* Programme. Events include music to suit all tastes including a Jazz festival in July, regular exhibitions of Art and Photography, a Garden Festival and Theatre week in nearby Fréjus which has a theatre and serves the whole community. There are English speaking groups such as the British Association of the Var, the American Association of the French Riviera, VIAC (Var International Apéritif Club) and the International Women's Club of the Var which offer many activities and support. The Chaplain's participation in at least some of them helps to maintain a good relationship with the Chaplaincy.

The town's railway station offers national and local services. There is a bus station with various routes and there are links with the three nearest airports at Nice, Toulon/Hyères and Marseille.

The local area provides adequate facilities for the disabled and is striving to improve awareness. St. Raphaël has a population of 36,000 which is almost doubled in the summer months. Its population is made up of working families and retired people from all over the world. There is a British Consulate at Marseille with a branch in Nice.

Who we are



St. John's was originally built as a wooden chapel in 1900, and part of the current building was consecrated in 1907, with the church being extended in 1927. We are an inclusive Christian community that welcomes people of every nationality and denomination to its services, activities and community events. We are a lively church, with a warm and welcoming atmosphere for the English-speaking people of the region. The church congregation is made up of both residents living permanently and semi-permanently in the area, and visitors who are usually on holiday.

During the winter our congregation is made up of approximately 22-25 people and expands to around 40-50 in the high season. There are 32 people on the electoral role. The vast majority of our congregation is an active group of retired people over the age of 60 years, however, in recent years we have had continued attendance by a small group of young children and their parents. Currently, we have one child and her British and French parents. We are always prepared for children's attendance at our services and there is a dedicated properly supervised crèche area.

The church building is in a reasonable state of repair for its age. Each year a team of church members, led by the churchwardens, tackle annual repairs and maintenance issues with a working party day. There is also an in-house team that maintains the church building in good order.

What we are



There is a weekly sung Holy Communion Service on Sundays at St John's commencing at 10.30 a.m. This Liturgy is an Order from Common Worship. A video is made and uploaded to YouTube for those of our congregation who cannot get to church. Everyone is encouraged to stay for refreshments after the service and there is a fund- raising luncheon once a month prepared by our excellent catering team.

Every Tuesday and Thursday mornings St John's hosts the English Library located in the Vestry. However it is seeing less usage than in the past, both because of Brexit, but also the advent of digital reading devices.



St John's is a musical church and the congregation and choir like to sing. We are affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music, based in the UK. We have made great progress over the last few years and the congregation is very appreciative of the music in church. There is sung Eucharist most Sunday mornings with 4 hymns (a mixture of traditional and modern) chosen from "Anglican Hymns Old and New". The 4-part choir comprises a nucleus of residents, augmented by visiting choristers as and when they are available. They lead worship every week, sing anthems on special Sundays, and twice a year give concerts/themed musical services. We are blessed with a conductor, an organist/keyboard player, a violinist, a guitar player and a bass player. The music group is involved in services a few times a year at present. There is a music leader who coordinates all the rotas, chooses the music for the choir, and chooses the hymns using the RSCM "Sunday

by Sunday" resource, liaising with the Chaplain. New hymns and songs are introduced on a gradual basis. We hope that the progress being made will continue.

We support work in the Philippines where micro-loans and relief aid are given to under privileged people to start up their own businesses, or for emergency medical care and housing. We also support our Diocesan Bishop's Lent and Advent appeals. Locally, we raise money for Paola Solidarités, a local charity that each day of the year takes hot meals to those living rough in St Raphaël/Fréjus. They also provide a hot lunch at their headquarters in Fréjus for less fortunate people most days of the year, as well as shower and laundry facilities, access to medical care and practical advice.

There are some social events that take place throughout the year such as the Annual Quiz Lunch which is held on Shrove Tuesday with lunch followed by the obligatory pancakes, and also Christmas Lunch at a local hotel following the Christmas Day service..



The chaplain of St Raphaël also has ⅓ of the pastoral oversight of St François d'Assisi Church in Port Grimaud. This is shared with the local Roman Catholic priest in Grimaud village, and the Protestante-Unie minister, based in Saint-Raphaël. For St John's, St François is treated as a chapel of ease, and is used only for weddings and funerals, as there is not enough demand for a regular English service to be held there.

An active Chaplaincy Council supports the Chaplain. The council members take on many of the roles and jobs required in the church such as secretary, treasurer, publicity officer, Safeguarding officer, Synod representative, etc. We have four authorized Worship Leaders of Services of the Word, and one retired priest who lives in the Var and has permission to officiate at St John's. We have a good roster of Eucharistic Assistants. We also have an Altar/Flower Guild in the congregation.

St John's is part of the Church of England Diocese in Europe and the Archdeaconry of France. Based in the south east of France and on the coast, its location is part of the French Riviera which is part of PACA (*Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur*) and as such is also a member of the Anglican Chaplaincies of the Riviera which stretches from Marseille in the west to Menton near the Italian border in the east.

Due to the unique situation of the Church of England congregations in France and the particular situation of St John's, we are also a 1901 French Charity Association, and a 1905 Religious Charity Association. Normally our congregational Annual General Meeting is also the meetings of the 1901 and 1905 Charity Associations. Maintaining the 1901 French Charity Association is very important to the congregation of St John's, as it permits us to budget each year a certain amount of the funds raised by the congregation to be given away to both local and international charities. The French 1905 Charity Association laws do not allow this, so having both statuses at St John's is important.

St John's has placed importance on and succeeded in the development of good Ecumenical links in the surrounding area which includes supporting the Christian Unity Week service. This annual event has invitations extended to and received from local churches including French Roman Catholic, French Protestant-Unie and Russian Orthodox.

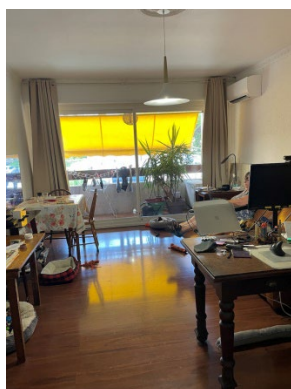
The church is financially viable thanks to the continued support from members both here and in the UK. Planned giving provides around 60% of the church income per year, with the rest raised by Sunday open collections, 2 gift days per year (Pentecost and Harvest Sunday), and our monthly church luncheons.

Although there are no parochial boundaries as in the UK, St John's chaplain has a pastoral oversight for the Var. This means that, as the occasion arises, our priest must be prepared to travel some distance in the exercise of their ministry. The priest may be requested to officiate at wedding blessings, both in Catholic Churches, and out of doors across the Var. It should be noted, official weddings in France must either take place at the local Mairie (Town Hall) or the legal wedding take place in another country. Church weddings in France are legally wedding blessings only. Very occasionally there are funerals at St John's, or even more occasionally in St François Church in Port Grimaud, and some occur at the local crematoriums in Vidauban and Saint-Raphaël.

Practicalities

A good knowledge of French would be an advantage. This appointment will be part-time for 3 days a week to include Sunday.

A partially furnished, elevated ground floor (called a rez-de-chaussée), two-bedroom apartment is owned by St John's in the adjoining town of Fréjus and is within walking distance of the historic town centre. This apartment is a 15 minute drive or about 5 kilometres from the church. It is situated in a quiet area with local shopping facilities, and within easy reach of a hypermarket, the beach and a large leisure area.



The church will cover French social charges (health care, etc) along with a stipend of €6000 per annum. Expenses, including for example, heating, electricity, water, gas and supplemental medical insurance are included in the overall package.

A telephone will be provided together with internet access. The successful candidate should be computer literate. Due to the nature of the large surrounding area that will need

to be covered, a full driving licence is essential. Own transport would be highly desirable, but alternatives can be discussed. Official mileage will be reimbursed.

There will be a leave entitlement of up to 5 weeks including Sundays, spread throughout the year.

The Church website <http://www.sjevar.com/> is updated regularly to show services, events and local information.