

The English-Speaking Church of Andorra, St. George's Baptisms, Blessings of Marriages, Funerals and Memorial Services

Introduction:

St. George's does not have a resident chaplain or its own church building. Our ability to offer these services is dependent on the willingness and availability of chaplains in the Church of England's Diocese of Gibraltar in Europe to come to Andorra to officiate at services. It is also dependent on the continued willingness of local parish priests to offer us the use of their churches.

Inevitably, our circumstances require that we have adequate advance warning and sufficient advance information for us to be able to organize these services. Sadly, this also means that we may be unable to organize a funeral service with a chaplain within the short period of time that is customary here in Andorra between the death and the funeral.

As we have no resident chaplain, it is the Churchwardens of St. George's who need to be given details of the service requested. A Churchwarden will then contact a chaplain of the Diocese to perform the service and the local parish priest to arrange for the use of a church. The chaplain will generally need to talk directly to the person requesting the service before confirming that he will hold the service.

A Church Warden or an experienced member of the chaplaincy council will be available to help organize the service, especially with the choice of hymns, prayers and readings for the service, and with the drawing-up of a special church service sheet.

The Dean and Archdeacon of Gibraltar have approved the attached table of fees for services. The suggested donations are additional to our fees and donations are, naturally, at the discretion of the person requesting the service. Fees and donations will be received by the Treasurer who will issue receipts for all amounts involved.

Baptisms:

We hold a service at which a visiting chaplain officiates on the second weekend of each month. In the winter our services are generally on the Saturday and in the summer, on the Sunday. Occasionally we are unable to obtain a chaplain. The arrangements for monthly services are always known at least three months in advance.

We regret that, as Canon law does not allow us to charge for baptisms and arranging a special service would require us to incur in significant costs to bring a chaplain to Andorra specifically for that service, we are unable to offer baptisms at other times than our regular services where we have a chaplain available. Should there be special needs, however, please do contact one of the church wardens to enable us to seek a compromise solution.

Marriages:

The only Church licensed to perform valid marriages in Andorra is the Roman Catholic Church. That is why we, as a church, are only able to provide the service of Blessing of a Marriage (which is, in most respects, identical to the marriage service).

We do require that evidence is provided of a valid civil marriage having been contracted, whether in Andorra or another country, before the service of Blessing of a Marriage is performed. We generally accept that the parties who have contracted the civil marriage are then eligible for the service of Blessing of a Marriage.

However, the chaplain performing the service will wish to speak with the couple before agreeing to conduct the service and will request information as to whether the couple are in communion with the Church. It is the chaplain who decides whether he will then perform the service.

Funerals:

In Andorra it is customary for the funeral to be held very soon after the death (within 48 hours is common). For this reason, it may not be possible for St George's to arrange for the services of a chaplain in this time. However, St. George's is willing to help all those in need at such a time of stress and can help contact with a local parish priest who would perform the service in a format which is essentially non denominational and usually bilingual. We have considerable experience in working with families and the local parish priests to arrange such services.

We would advise that a fee for a funeral would be payable wherever the Church Wardens or experienced members of the chaplaincy council are involved in arranging a funeral.

Please also note that local undertakers do not include our fees (or the fee it is customary to pay to a local parish priest) as part of their services.

Memorial Services:

We would suggest that in many instances a Memorial Service could be appropriate, and we do have experience of these being successfully organized here in Andorra.

Other Matters:

Please do not hesitate to contact us in any circumstances for more information and advice based on our experience as a Church in the English-Speaking Community in Andorra.

As we do not have a resident chaplain, and are dependent on the goodwill and willingness to help of both active chaplains in the diocese and retired chaplains, who have to travel to reach us, the average cost to us of a full church service with a visiting chaplain is currently between €400 and €500. The most significant part of this is the cost of travel and accommodation for the chaplain. We are very willing to work to facilitate a special service taking place to coincide with a pre arranged visit by a chaplain so as to help reduce the costs of providing such services.

Contacts – the Church Wardens:

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