



ECHO

24TH JUNE 2021

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
ECUMENICAL CHURCH OF OCCITANIE

IT'S OFFICIAL - ECO IS AN ASSOCIATION CULTUELLE



On 23rd June, ECO held its first General Meeting and is now officially an Association Cultuelle.

Under French laws relating to churches, in order to become an officially registered Church, one has to form an "Association Cultuelle". These are regulated by the French Laws of 1901 and 1905.

On 23rd June, the founding members of ECO held their first General Meeting at which they undertook the legal steps necessary to receive official recognition as an "Association Cultuelle".

Although some paperwork must be performed with the French Prefecture, this is purely confirmatory and will be completed during the next few weeks.

Thanks to the advice and support received from the French Protestant Churches and their ministers in the Ariège and Aude, as well as specialist guidance from a religious advisory service Actes 6 (which is named after the story in Chapter 6 of how the Disciples set out to organise themselves after Jesus' Ascension), ECO has been able to quickly create a Constitution (or Statuts) which is fully compliant with French Law and also provides various protections for its members in relation to Safeguarding and Data Protection.

The Annual Meeting was preceded by an act of worship, and was followed by the first official meeting of the Association's now-appointed Management Team and Committee.

Full details will be published on our website shortly, but in the meantime, please pray for us as we continue to seek to share the Good News of the Gospel of Christ in the Occitanie.



See page 3 for more information about What Is An Association Cultuelle



NEXT WEEK'S WORSHIP AT

ECO

We have set out below our programme of worship for next week. For all details of our latest worship, always go to the Home Page of our website:

www.ourchurch.fr

Sunday June 27th - Trinity 3 - Proper 7

10:30 am Online Sunday Worship live on ZOOM

Our Service this week will be broadcast live on Zoom but will also be watchable on YouTube and, all being well, also on Facebook Live. All the words of the service will appear on-screen but we will also place a copy of the Order of Service on our website. After the service, you are cordially invited to come and join us in our Virtual Zoom Coffee Bar. Zoom details will appear on our website from 09:00 on Sunday morning.

Tuesday June 29th

19:00 - An Iona Service of Evening Prayer

This is a short service of prayer and readings from the Bible which is available as a video and also as a Podcast to download and listen to at the close of the day. We also provide the order of service in .PDF for you to download and keep so that you can follow it on your smartphone, tablet or computer if you wish.

Thursday July 1st

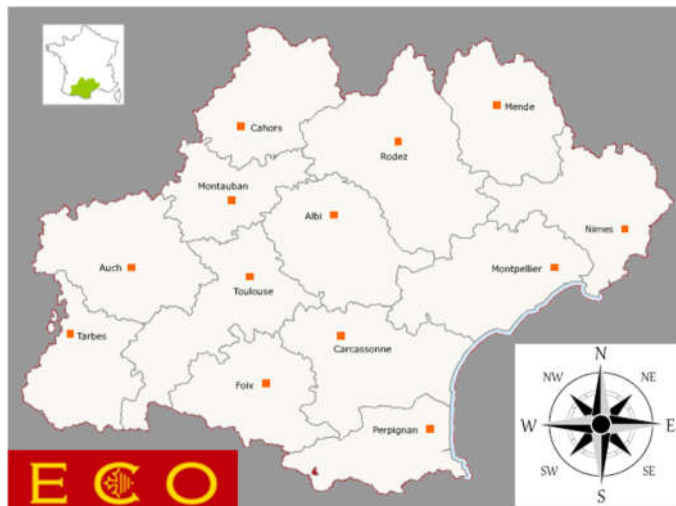
19:00 - A Service of Prayer for Healing

Each week, we come together to pray by name for God's healing touch for those who are in special need at this time. We are happy to include anyone known to you in our prayers (we only refer to people by their first names)

Please send any names of people whom you would like to be included to

healing@ourchurch.fr

by Wednesday evening.



Would you like to be kept informed about our future services and events ?

If you go to our website

www.ourchurch.fr

You can find details of all our forthcoming services, copies of the orders of service which we will be using (where the words of the service will not be appearing on screen) and the readings

You can also subscribe to this newsletter, which will be sent to you via e-mail. You can, of course, unsubscribe at any time that you wish. Just follow the link on the front page of our website to subscribe, or send an e-mail to

echo@ourchurch.fr



Follow us on Facebook

Look up:

[@Ourchurchinfrance](https://www.facebook.com/Ourchurchinfrance)

Watch us on Facebook Live next Sunday

Did you know that over 60 people watched last Sunday's Service on Facebook ? Thank you for your support! When you watch on Facebook, you remain completely anonymous and we are not given any of your details.



WHAT IS AN ASSOCIATION CULTUELLE ?

We are grateful to the Council for the English-Speaking Community for the helpful background to this explanation

History of the 1901 and 1905 laws

The legislation regarding non-profit organizations, known in France as “associations”, is a direct result of the separation of the church and state at the beginning of the 20th century. Prior to that time, it was virtually impossible to create any temporary or structured group of people. On the one side, there was the Catholic Church. On the other, there were political parties and there were professional groups in the form of trade unions, craft and trade guilds, or syndicates for the liberal professions. The idea during the 19th century was that private interests would necessarily be opposed to the interests of the nation and therefore there was no way that an organization could help the state do a better job.

At the turn of the 20th century a liberal government was elected which analyzed the issue very differently. The new government still did not believe that private groups would improve people’s lives in any way. But for the first time in years the government was made up of anti-clerical atheists. The goal was to separate the state and the church. The idea behind the new legislation was that by making the creation of associations easy, the power and influence of the Catholic Church and clergy would be reduced, while the French population would be able to express their interests and concerns outside the political spectrum.

The law of 1901 enables two people or more to create an association, a non-profit organization called an Association cultuelle. The law was followed by a complementary law of 1905 which enables at least two people to create a church, which is, among other things, a non-profit organization called an Association cultuelle, much more regulated than the first type.

The two types of associations are grounded on very different concepts.

First of all, the association must be structured by a stated goal, a mission statement, and a project that attracts people and, in any case, goes beyond the personal interests of the few (as few as two) that originally started the association. This is why the by-laws are such an important part of the creation of the association and, within this document, the provision called *Objet social*, i.e. the goal. By definition, the association cannot engage in any activity that does not correspond to the goal declared in the by-laws. Second, the association must be a democracy where people give to the association in order for it to reach

its goal. No one should receive any sort of personal and private compensation or preferential treatment. At first, the Government somewhat overlooked this aspect, assuming that only good people would be interested in creating such an association. Over the years, this attitude has changed, and now there is, from a legal as well as a fiscal point of view, a major difference between a charitable association and a professional association.

As an Association Cultuelle, ECO is designed to be a non-profit making organisation and its purposes are solely religious. ECO has expanded on the basic principles that no member should personally benefit disproportionately financially from the Association Cultuelle by setting as one of its rules that no member may receive any payment for any work they do on behalf of the Association, other than the reimbursement of actual expenditure with limits which follow the published rules of the French Government.

ECO has further set a principle that those who attend our worship but are not ‘members’ may **not** contribute financially to the costs of ECO, but are asked instead to make a donation to a charity of their choosing (which might include another church if they wish).

Similarly, the ECO Ministry Team charge no fees for conducting funerals or blessings of marriages other than any actual expenses incurred.

Instead, the (relatively low) costs of our operation are borne by the donations of our members who have committed to supporting ECO as part of their charitable giving.