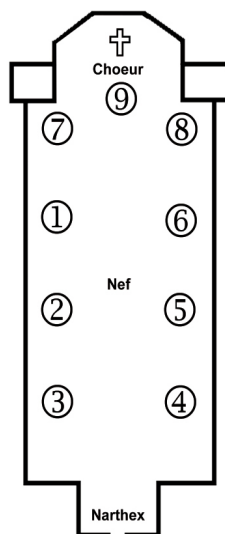


ST-JOSEPH CHURCH IN CHEDDE

St Francis of Assisi parish in the Arve valley
(No visits during the services)



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A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

In the 1920s, Chedde had about one thousand five hundred inhabitants. They attended the church in Passy, a half-hour walk away. This distance put a brake on religious observance and the people of Chedde wanted a church of their own. At the end of the First World War, a temporary chapel was set up in a **shed** that belonged to the factory. In **1929**, Chedde became a parish in its own right but did not yet have a place of worship. In 1932, thanks to the priest Francis Berger, it was decided to build a little church. It was funded by a public subscription and aid from the factory (Alais, Froges et Camargue). Founded for the working-class population, the church was logically dedicated to **Saint Joseph**, patron saint of craftspeople and workers. On a plot donated by the factory, it was built with **reinforced concrete** by the Clément **Ratel** company from Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne, under the supervision of the architect Georges **Benezech**. The church was consecrated on **22 April 1934** by the Bishop of Annecy, Monseigneur Florent du Bois de la Villerabel.



PLAN - ELEVATION

Chedde church has a **basilica layout** with a single volume and **three bays**. The **narthex** houses the access to the font and the staircase leading to the gallery, shut off by some lovely railings made of wrought iron and duralumin (Ateliers Graneris & Ratel). The church does not have a transept.

The small **chancel** with three sides and no windows, has pointed arch vaulting. The ceiling consists of a two-tone **roof timbers**, made by the brothers Louis and Hector Cerutti, craftsmen in Chedde. The utilisation of straining beams resting on curved load struts, makes it possible to free up space and strengthen the structure. The square-based tower with elongated bays bears a **cross** taken from the Collège Chappuisien in Annecy, whose most illustrious pupil was Saint François de Sales. The porch on the façade adds to the church's massive and powerful appearance.

The **high altar** is carved from a block of grey stone from La Praz (Maurienne). The **tabernacle**, made from the same stone, supports a copper door, representing the Alpha and the Omega – the beginning and the end. The triangular **reredos**, is covered with a gold mosaic from Venice. Red rays spread out from the centre of the altar of sacrifice. A **cross** made of the same materials bears an evocation of the Haloed Christ with blood flowing from his open wounds.

The design of the six **stained-glass windows** (treated in the mediaeval fashion) and all the mosaics are the work of Raphaël Lardeur, one of the most representative master glass-makers in the Art Deco movement. The **theme** of the stained-glass windows is linked to the Holy Family. And more particularly to Saint Joseph: he is the workman in all his vigour and is depicted as the model head of the working-class family. His mission in Chedde is to lead us to Christ the workman, spouse and father, and to lead us there through the characteristics of a life similar to his own.

The **Way of the Cross** is treated soberly: the little mosaics merge into the walls between the consoles supporting the roof timbers, also decorated with crosses marking the location of the consecration anointment oils.



Symbol of modernity,
Chedde was the first reinforced concrete church in the diocese of Annecy.

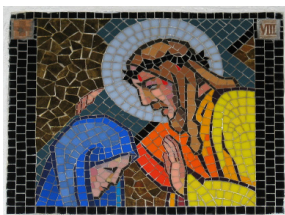
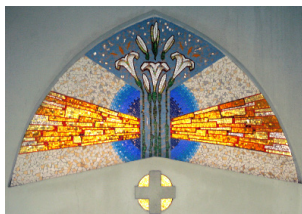


THE STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS ARE THE WORK OF RAPHAËL LARDEUR

- **1. The Nativity:** Mary, kneeling before her son wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger, and Joseph hands clasped, surrounded by shepherds and the Three Wise Men, all depicted as very old men.
- **2. The Presentation at the Temple:** In the middle of a flight of doves, Joseph accompanied by Mary, presents Jesus to the High Priest.
- **3. The Flight into Egypt:** Mary, seated on a donkey led by Joseph, holds Jesus in her arms. The Holy Family is protected by angels.
- **4. The Childhood of Jesus:** Jesus working alongside Joseph, and showing him the objects he makes.
- **5. "Go to Joseph":** The patron saint of workers places a hand on the shoulder of a young man representing Raymond Hamel, an eighteen-year-old worker who lost his life in an accident at the factory on 18 November 1932.
- **6. He was a righteous man:** Joseph, old and bedridden, receives the blessing from Christ, with Mary at his side.

There is a frieze under each window resuming a theme taken from the main scene. Tools (axe, hammer and scythe in a bundle of hay) can be seen in the fifth window. Two crests/coats of arms can also be seen: Savoy and Marseille (?)

There is a **mosaic** on the church's tympanum, representing a bunch of white lilies radiating golden rays. The font, made of grey stone from La Praz, is adorned with the portrait of the Archangel Gabriel. The stoups bear a mosaic representing a fish leaping up in front of a cross. The ambos, octagonal lecterns, are decorated with a mosaic representing some drapery.



THE SCULPTURES (NO 7 & 8)

There are two sculptures on either side of the entrance to the chancel depicting the Holy Family. On the northern side, a powerfully built Saint Joseph with virile features, is a work by the sculptor Martinet. His left hand is holding a carpenter's axe, whereas his right hand is resting protectively on the child's shoulder. On the southern side, the Virgin and Child is a work by Roger de Villiers.

The free-standing altar (No 9), made of walnut by Michel Bresson, was sculpted by Joseph Flaven. The bas-relief presents the **Last Supper**, Christ's last meal.

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