



## **SENIOR PASTOR(S) RIVERLIFE CHURCH, BERN, SWITZERLAND**

### **Church and Job description**

RiverLife Church is looking for a shepherd leader, who can take a diverse congregation and lead them together in Christ.

This job calls for a senior pastor or pastors (married couple) to lead an English-speaking, international evangelical church in the centre of Bern.

### **The Church**

**RiverLife** (also known as Bern International Evangelical Church, BIEC; [www.riverlifebe.ch](http://www.riverlifebe.ch)) is currently under the pastoral leadership of part-time associate pastors, and the Elders. As an English-speaking church we have had more than 30 nationalities worshipping with us at any one time, many of whom are only with us for a few months or years. The congregation is from a wide range of situations – ranging from embassy staff to refugees. People are also from very diverse church backgrounds. This means that a focus on the core things that unite us is very important.

The Church started in 1998 in a private home, and as it grew we moved into the Hotel Kreuz in Bern and finally, rented the Chapel in Zeughausgasse, owned by the FEG German Church and also used by them, the French Church and the Arabic speaking Church at different times on a Sunday. This building is a few hundred metres from the Swiss Parliament building.

RiverLife meets at 5 pm on Sundays. The children's ministry comprises a Nursery for the under-3's, K4G (Kids for God) for 3 -11's, and Wildfire for 11-15's.

Numbers fluctuate due to the nature of our Church, with the average attendance being around 80 adults plus children and youth. Our services are also live-streamed on YouTube for those who are unable to attend in person or people wanting to learn more about our church services.



Although there are many passing through an international church, which can make continuity a challenge, we now have around half our number who are long-term attendees. This has meant we could move from being primarily an English-speaking stopover, which simply blessed people as they passed through, to building a church family with a strong emphasis on 'Loving the Lord our God with all our heart (in **Worship**) all our soul (expecting his **Wonders** among us) with all our mind (through studying his **Word**) and all our strength'(in doing his **Works** of mercy & mission). This is reflected in our vision taken from Mark 12:30.

We have several Life Group meetings in different areas, a ladies' weekly Bible Study, a monthly men's group (Bible & Brew), a father's group (Dad's Life), and also a monthly Worship meeting and more. The number of young adults involved has significantly risen in recent years and a Young Adult's Group has been formed. We see prayer as a priority in the Church and meet weekly to pray either online or at the church.

With a scattered population, some meetings (such as staff meetings and some prayer meetings) are held on Zoom as a convenient and efficient way of enabling people to connect during the week.

The Church organises a weekend away once per year, where we have more time together to fellowship and enjoy worship and the Word of God together. Alternatively, we have enjoyed a church day out on the local mountain called the Gurten, where we can enjoy a picnic, some open-air worship and some games together.

**Baptism:** At least once a year on a Sunday we go to a nearby river to celebrate Baptism, followed by a barbecue, fellowship, swimming and fun together.

We have all the usual teams that you would expect from a lively church: worship, preaching, cleaning, refreshments, children and youth work, sound, beamer, live streaming, welcome, and more.

We also have some wonderful missionaries. We have a very close and living link with six different individuals or couples who we seek to support very actively, with ideally three mission-focused services each year and provide an opportunity for them to address the



congregation whenever they are visiting. Our aim for many years has been to donate 20% of our budget to support these missionaries.

### **The Job**

We are looking for a Shepherd leader who will lead our Church in unity on the path that Christ leads us. He/she should have a deep love for God and people of all nations and ethnicities, excellently communicate the Word of God, and bring both leadership and vision, tempered with humility and grace.

The pastor(s) have responsibility for the spiritual leadership of the Church - for pastoral care for the church family and outreach to believers and non-believers. This job calls for joy, humour, and the standards Paul set out in 1 Timothy 3. It is important to us that your spouse also loves Jesus, is in support of your calling, and is excited to be a part of our church family.

### **The Specifics**

The pastor will have a passion for community and will be accessible to members, living in Bern city or surrounding areas. Apart from Sunday services, the workplace will be an office in the pastor's home.

He/she will be a member of the elders' team with whom they will meet regularly. He/she will be reporting to the elders and the Administrative Board, as stated in our constitution. He/she will attend the monthly meetings of the Administrative Board, which is responsible for legally running RiverLife, and deals with the financial and administrative aspects of RiverLife. From a legal standpoint, RiverLife is an association and is the legal employer.

He/she will also be responsible for leading a staff team currently consisting of two part-time associate pastors and a part-time worship leader, as well as having oversight of the leaders of other groups within the Church.

The position is 100% paid post (whether shared between husband and wife or a sole pastor) and time worked will be based on the standard 42-hour working week over a five-day period, the pastor's contractual weekly working hour rate is spread over 5 days over seven days. Any further hours worked are on a voluntary, non-stipendiary basis. The annual salary will be CHF 65,000.-



The committee may consider applicants whose situation means that they can only work 80%.

Other things:

- Some initial assistance to learn German may be offered, if required for the visa application (see last paragraph). The working language is English.
- An additional tax-free sum of CHF 200.- is paid to the pastor(s) for hospitality expenses.
- Transportation:
  - Travel by car: CHF 0.60/km, or
  - Travel by public transport: Train/Tram/Bus/Parking receipts, including for a SBB Half-tax card (Halbtax), purchased yearly.
- Vacation - 5 weeks per year in total (including up to 5 Sundays).
- Study leave is available up to 1 week per year (including a Sunday).
- Finance for subscriptions, periodicals, courses or books related to the continuing education and information of the pastor are allowed up to CHF 250.- per year.
- All Bern-Cantonal public holidays or time in lieu if worked.
- The employer insures its employees with non-obligatory Company Sickness Insurance 'Krankentaggeldversicherung' (KKV), which provides a continuation of income. The KKV does not involve a deduction from the employee's salary.
- The employer and the employees share 50:50 in the obligatory State Invalidity-insurance payments 'Invalidenrente' (IV), the employee's portion through deduction from the salary.
- The employer insures its employee for accident insurance according to the 'Bundesgesetz Unfallversicherungs' (UVG), which covers insurance for accidents occurring during work 'Betriebsunfall' (BU) and accidents outside of work 'Nichtbetriebsunfall' (NBU). The employee follows the common practice that the employee contributes 50% of the NBU payment through salary deduction.
- The State Pension 'Die Alters- und Hinterlassenenversicherung' (AHV) payments are shared 50:50 between employer and employee. The employee portion is deducted from the salary.
- The employer and employees share contributions 50:50 towards unemployment insurance 'Arbeitslosenversicherung' (ALV). The employee portion is deducted from the salary.



**Note:** Basic Health Insurance 'Krankenkassen/Krankenversicherung' is compulsory for anyone living and working in Switzerland, and is covered by the employee and/or family members. The employer does not contribute towards this. More information can be found under: <https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/versicherungen/krankenversicherung.html>

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you are applying from *outside* Switzerland, the European Union or the European Free Trade Association, because of Swiss regulations, unless you are married to a Swiss citizen, you must be able to speak German at B1 level and write at A1 level and you must also have a theological degree.

More information about language requirements can be found under:

<https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/integration-einbuengerung/mein-beitrag/zugewandert/sprache.html>