



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

### **Location, Church and Job description**

This job is calling for a Senior Pastor or Pastors (married couple) to lead an English speaking, international evangelical church in the centre of Bern.

#### **The Location**

Switzerland is in the centre of Europe and is famous for its spectacular mountain scenery, beautiful lakes and Alpine meadows. The Alps run along its southern border with Italy and France.

Bern is the Federal Capital and is built around a crook in the fast-flowing Aare River. It traces its origins back to the 12th century, with medieval architecture preserved in Old Town. The Swiss Parliament and diplomats meet in the Neo-Renaissance Bundeshaus (Federal Palace). The French Church and the nearby medieval tower known as the Zytglogge both date to the 13th century.

It is a university city with a population of around 135,000, a third of whom are foreign nationals. The city is very well served by rail and road links to other parts of the country and Europe. It is a short distance from the Bernese Alps and the famous mountains such as the Eiger and the Jungfrau and the country is famous for its ski resorts, hiking trails, banking, watches, cheese and chocolate!

#### **The Church**

RiverLife (also known as Bern International Evangelical Church) is currently under the Pastoral leadership of Senior Pastors Nick & Grace Turner who have ministered here since Autumn 2017 & will retire by Autumn 2022. As an English-speaking Church we often have 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, & as it grew we moved into the Hotel Kreuz in Bern, and finally, renting the Chapel in Zeughausgasse owned by the FEG German Church and also used by them, the French Church & 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 5pm on Sundays. The children's work comprises a Nursery for under-3s, K4G (Kids for God) for 3-11s, & Wildfire for 11s upwards.

Numbers fluctuate but prior to the pandemic, the average attendance was around 111 adults plus children and youth. At present, with the restrictions the numbers are slightly lower but more people follow online than previously.

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 means that we can bless people as they pass through us as an English-speaking church and also seek to build up the 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**) & all our strength'(in doing his **Works** of mercy & mission). In recent years there has been a joint emphasis on the *Word of God* and the *Spirit of God*.

We have a number of Life Groups meeting in different areas, a Ladies' weekly Bible Study, a monthly Men's Bible & Brew, and also a monthly Worship meeting. The number of young adults involved has significantly risen in recent years. We see prayer as a priority in the Church and meet weekly to pray either online or in the Pastors' house.

During lockdowns in the pandemic, we met online through Zoom and livestreaming onto YouTube. We had already started to livestream our services before the pandemic and have continued to do so subsequently. With a scattered population, some meetings (such as business meetings and some prayer meetings) have continued on Zoom as a convenient and efficient way of enabling people to connect during the week.

In past years, there has often been a weekend away where we have more time together to enjoy each other's company, the beautiful scenery and some great talks from a visiting speaker. More recently we have enjoyed church days out on the local mountain called the Gurten when we can enjoy a picnic, some open-air worship and maybe some games together.

Each year we have one Sunday, normally in June, where we go to a nearby river and celebrate some baptisms 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, livestreaming, welcome..

We also have some wonderful missionaries. We have a very close and living link with the five different individuals or couples who we seek to support very actively, with three mission-focused services each year and provide an opportunity for them to address the congregation whenever they are home. Our aim for many years has been to donate 20% of our budget to supporting these missionaries.

### **The Job**

The Pastor(s) have responsibility for the spiritual leadership of the Church - for pastoral care for the Church family and for outreach to believers and non-believers.

The position requires a number of skills - particularly: leadership and vision; preaching and teaching; an ability to get alongside people in pastoral care; efficient administration; an ability to release others into ministry; a willingness to work hard; a love for people of all nations, colours and races; a sense of humour!

The pastor(s) will need to live in the Bern area.

He/they will be the first among equals in an elders' team which they will lead and with whom they meet regularly and share pastoral responsibility.

He/they will also be responsible to lead a staff team currently comprising

- A part-time Associate pastor (responsible for Life Groups & Missionaries)
- A part-time Administrator
- A part-time Worship leader

as well as having oversight of the leaders of other groups within the Church.

They will take part in the monthly meetings of the Board which is responsible legally for the running of RiverLife, & deals with the financial and administrative aspects of the Church.



The workplace will probably be an office in the Pastor's home or in a rented room financed by the church.

The position is 60% 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 during a seven-day period. Any further hours worked are on a voluntary, non-stipendiary basis.

Remuneration - will be in the region of CHF 45,000 depending on age and experience

Other benefits of the package:

- Some initial assistance to learn German is offered, if required (although the job is in English and German speaking is not a requirement for the position).
- An additional tax free sum of Fr.200 per month is paid to the pastor(s) for hospitality expenses.
- Travel by car: Fr. 0.60/km
- Travel by public transport: Train/Tram/Bus/Parking receipts, including for a SBB Half-tax (Halbtax), purchased on a yearly basis.
- The employer insures its employees for the non-obligatory Company Sickness Insurance ('Krankentaggeldversicherung' KKV), which is for providing 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 the Accident insurance according to the Bundesgesetz Unfallversicherungs UVG, which covers insurance for accidents occurring during the course of work (Betriebsunfall BU) and accidents outside of work (Nichtbetriebsunfall NBU). The employee follows the common practice that the employee contributes to 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 the unemployment insurance ('Arbeitslosenversicherung' ALV). The employee portion is deducted from the salary.
- 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 periodicals, courses or books related to the continuing education and information of the Pastor are allowed up to Fr. 250 per year.
- The Pastors may take 2 or maximum 3 full seven-day periods per year for non-RiverLife ministry or for 'Other Occupation' work-related trips out of Switzerland, including Sundays.
- all public holidays or time in lieu if worked

Note: Health insurance in Switzerland is on a private insurance basis, which the employees must complete. The employer does not contribute towards this.