

Pastor for IBC Sofia



The International Baptist Church of Sofia is seeking a Senior pastor to shepherd our multicultural flock in Sofia, Bulgaria. The position is fulltime and requires living in Sofia.

The International Baptist Church of Sofia is a gathering of evangelical believers in Sofia, Bulgaria. It is our desire to see our church not only as a spiritual home for expatriates while they are in Sofia, but a church that receives believers, disciples them, and then sends them onto their next destination, better prepared to be salt and light in that place.

2 Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. 3 Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. 4 And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honour. 1 Peter 5:2-4

When we consider the type of pastor we want for IBC Sofia, we are guided by the verse above and the idea of 'shepherd leadership'.

We want a shepherd pastor who will lead us.

We need a goal or vision. We need to know where we are going and why we are going there. We need help to develop this vision, to get everybody on the same page and for the church members to all own and be motivated towards achieving this vision. We then need the process to be managed along the way so that we stay on track.

We want a shepherd pastor who will develop us.

We want a pastor who will help us to discern where we are lacking and then to help develop us towards becoming more Christ-like. We want someone who can teach and preach God's word powerfully and faithfully so that we know what God wants of us. We want a shepherd who will model a godly lifestyle and show us what Christlikeness looks like. We want a shepherd who will coach us - encourage us, cheer us on and correct errors so that we become all that God would have us be.

We want a shepherd pastor who will care for us.

We want a shepherd who will seek to know us and connect with us. We want a shepherd who will provide for us and protect us. We know that this doesn't mean that our shepherd pastor will do all of this himself, although he will model healthy discipleship, but rather put into place processes to ensure that we, as a church, are caring well for one another.

Information about IBC Sofia



The International Baptist Church of Sofia is a congregation located in the historic city of Sofia, Bulgaria. We lie at the threshold of the Middle East and Europe, border the Black Sea, and are within easy driving to Biblical sites of Philippi and Thessaloniki.

The congregation is like a slice of heaven! We have 50-70 people who worship regularly, with frequent visitors. There are at least 20 nationalities representing even more language groups, but we all worship in English each week. Many from this truly international group enjoy living in Sofia, coming as students and teachers, diplomatic staff, business people and ministry personnel. Most of our people are under 45 years of age.

IBC Sofia is part of the International Baptist Convention headquartered in Frankfurt, Germany. It is a fellowship of over 60 international English-language churches. Our church is founded on traditional Baptist principles and doctrine and yet is a hospitable home for many from different Christian traditions.

As a church aligned with the International Baptist Convention we celebrate and affirm our unity in diversity as part of the worldwide body of Christ. We seek no uniformity in worship or service but are "many faces, many places, one message" not restricted by national or cultural bounds. We live and serve together here on earth in anticipation of our future celebration and service of God in Glory with the redeemed of every nation and generation.

The church owns space for worship in an office building and hosts a Bulgarian congregation who meet there as well. Traditionally we have a weekly program of worship, children's' church, groups for men and women, and youth, with music and activities for all. However, Covid had a significant impact on the church, and although we are rebuilding, not all of these activities have started up again yet. Usually, the facility is used for these events and social events and occasionally we host other community groups.

The Role of the Pastor of IBC Sofia

The pastor of IBC Sofia is the responsible shepherd, and overseer of the church. The role is primarily to provide encouragement to the growing faith of individuals, couples and families within an ever changing, multicultural congregation. This means people come from different ethnic backgrounds and Christian traditions, and English may not be their first or second language. They may be in Sofia as students from Africa or Europe for one year or several years. They may be diplomatic personnel assigned to Sofia for 2-3 years, or business personnel for an undetermined amount of time. We also have missionaries and Bulgarian nationals who call Bulgaria home, long term.

The ideal candidate for IBC Sofia will:

- “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbour as yourself.”
- Have Evangelical theological education of at least three years, or Masters level.
- Be ordained by a major Evangelical denomination, with at least three years experience as a Senior Pastor.
- Have relevant cross cultural living and ministry experience (not just short term ministry trips).
- Be able to verbally communicate very clearly in English.
- We are looking for a couple who are both looking to minister together. For a wife to join her husband in ministry but also be willing to exercise her own gifts.
- Be willing to make a minimum 3-5 year commitment (Long term preferred).
- Have an ability to appreciate the variety and richness that multiple cultures, denominational and political backgrounds bring to an international context without getting hung up on the small stuff.
- Serve as a shepherd to a passing parade of people from many different backgrounds who have been taught from different Christian traditions (where none are perfect).
- Major in expository preaching in simple clear English, with a firm grasp of the authority of Scripture, and good communication skills.
- Grasp the incredible potential of international churches like IBCS to equip and send maturing disciples of Jesus Christ to wherever God calls them next. Have a vision for IBCS as an equipping and sending church, and develop that vision within the congregation.
- See potential to grow disciples among church members, who will disciple others, to embrace all areas of life, since many will be going on to other locations before long.
- Develop disciples and a community of faith that is wholistic, promoting faith in Jesus Christ that affects all areas of life.
- Understand the impact of the challenges of culture and cultural adjustment and hold one’s personal cultural bias loosely; striving to preach in a relevant way to all, in order to build a unified body of Christ.
- Know and understand the joy and challenges of being a “solo pastor”, and manage your own schedule well.
- Be willing to seek out advice and assistance for yourself and others in issues related to living in Bulgaria such as the government bureaucracy, cultural adaptation and pastoral counselling resources.
- Be able to laugh at yourself, and with the people of your congregation enjoying this wonderful “slice of heaven”.
- Learn there is much more than this list can express.

Job Description

The Pastor Job Description includes pastor responsibilities and duties. The Pastor is responsible to the church for proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, making disciples, serving the community of faith, and to act as the chief administrator of the church.

Primary Responsibilities:

- Set as a guideline of personal behaviour the standard required in I Timothy 3:1-7 and I Peter 5:1-4.
- Maintain a regular program of study to enable himself to plan and conduct meaningful worship services.
- Maintain authentic and vibrant prayer life both personally and for the church.
- Prepare for and conduct regular worship services; lead in the observance of the ordinances; train and direct the church in living the Gospel among the church and community.
- Conduct pastoral counselling for those needing spiritual guidance, those with marriage and family concerns, with those struggling with cultural adjustment, etc. Advise other professional help when necessary.
- Perform wedding ceremonies and conduct funeral services.
- Appoint and supervise other members of the church staff according to staff organisation.
- Serve as chairman of the Church Leadership Team in planning, organizing, directing, coordinating the ministry and act as moderator for church business meetings.

Remuneration Package

Summary of the remuneration package:

- A gift from the congregation usually is received monthly and is based on contributions from offerings (about €900)
- A vehicle is also provided, including a monthly gift of €100 to cover transportation expenses (fuel, parking, etc).
- A fully furnished apartment owned by the church including utilities is provided.
- If the monthly gift/stipend is not enough support, additional support may be raised by the pastor from outside sources. That would need to be approved by the leadership team,
- Relocation expenses: Airline tickets and limited shipping expenses for original travel for the pastor and spouse will be reimbursed, as will final departure tickets and limited shipping.
- Costs of visas, work-permits, local health (major medical) insurance is paid by the church.
- Reimbursement for some expenses related to hospitality, IBC conferences and continuing education are negotiable.

Application Procedure

An Application Pack and an Application form can be downloaded through IBC Sofia's website by going to:

<https://www.ibcssofia.com/pastor-search>

Applications should be submitted via email, using the Application form downloaded from the website. Please email completed Application Forms to:

ibcssofiapastorsearch@gmail.com

If you should have any trouble downloading the Application Pack or the Application Form, please contact us using the above email address.

If interested persons would like a short (15 minute) conversation to determine if it is appropriate for them to apply, please email the above email address to request this. This is particularly important for those for whom English is not their first language, as clear verbal communication in English will be a key criteria.

Closing Date & Interviews

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is Friday 5th May 2023.

Shortlisted applicants will be notified by Friday 12th May 2023. At this time, they will be offered a Zoom call with one or two members of the IBCS pastor search committee to answer any questions they may have. This is not an interview but rather an opportunity for the applicant to receive answers to any questions they may have. They will also be asked for their references. All references will be checked prior to interview.

Interviews will be then arranged by the Pastor Search Committee with shortlisted applicants.

IBC Sofia will treat your application as private and confidential. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email.