



SENIOR PASTOR

Opportunity Profile

RIVERSIDE CHURCH |
Big Lake, Buffalo & Sauk Rapids |
Minnesota

Overview

Riverside Church in Big Lake, Buffalo and Sauk Rapids, Minnesota is a vibrant, multi-campus church with a powerful legacy of evangelism, compassion, and transformational ministry. With nearly 2,000 weekly attenders, a deeply engaged congregation, and a clear mission *to help people become fully devoted followers of Jesus*, Riverside is experiencing remarkable growth and spiritual momentum.

After 22 years of faithful service, the church is preparing for the transition of Senior Pastor Tom Lundeen. They are prayerfully seeking a dynamic, outwardly focused, biblically grounded pastor and leader to shepherd the church to the next season with refreshed vision, vitality and Gospel impact. This is a rare opportunity to build on a strong foundation; to guide a healthy and outward-focused church family that is eager to help people say “YES!” to Jesus and be transformed as they grow in Him.

Quick Stats

- **Locations:** The locations include Big Lake (central campus/averaging around 1,300 attenders with three venues: the main Worship Center, the Family Room and the Café), Buffalo (launched 2024/averaging around 400 in attendance with two venues: the main Worship Center and the Family Room) and Sauk Rapids (launched 2018/averaging 300 in attendance in one venue).
- **Worship Services:** At Big Lake/Online three identical services are offered at 8:45 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 12:05 p.m.; At Buffalo and Sauk Rapids services are offered at 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. Each location offers live worship with the sermon message streamed from the Big Lake location.
- **Governance:** Riverside operates under a governance model that is best described as elder-directed and staff-led, with pastor and elders working together to set and steward the church's direction. Currently comprised of seven members, who serve three-year terms with the option for a second consecutive term, followed by a mandatory one-year break.
- **Staff:** The church is served by a dedicated ministry staff of 38, including 29 full-time equivalents. The team is led by the Senior Pastor who works shoulder to shoulder with a very gifted Executive Pastor whose strategic presence allows the Senior Pastor to stay in a posture of leadership without needing to default into management.
- **Budget:** The church has a unified budget of \$5.5MM (2025-2026) and zero debt. This includes a healthy \$4.4MM ministry budget, \$166,000 that has been earmarked for capital improvements, and \$1MM added in preparation for a future campus expansion.
- **Affiliation:** Riverside Church is affiliated and active with the [Christian and Missionary Alliance](#).

The Location

Nestled between the Twin Cities and the beauty of greater Minnesota, Big Lake offers the best of both worlds—a peaceful, family-friendly community with easy access to the amenities of the Minneapolis–St. Paul metro area. With beautiful lakes, scenic parks, and a strong sense of community, it's an ideal place to raise a family, build meaningful relationships, and enjoy the outdoors year-round. The area is marked by a welcoming, down-to-earth community culture and a slower pace of life, while still providing excellent schools, a growing community and strong local economy. For a pastor and family, Big Lake offers a relationally warm environment where ministry and everyday life can flourish side by side.

The Opportunity

From its foundation, Riverside has been built on a legacy of evangelism and compassion. The church was founded in 1931 when a Christian and Missionary Alliance pastor came into the Big Lake area with the dream to plant a church and reach people for Jesus. Walking by a cemetery, he found a young father digging a grave for his child who had just passed away. As that pastor paused to help the grieving father with this painful task, he was able to share the hope and love of Jesus. The father and his whole family responded in faith and Riverside Church was born. To this day, Riverside is a place where searching and hurting people discover there is a God who loves them and can change their life.

Riverside Church offers a rare opportunity for a gifted and godly pastor to step into a healthy and mission-driven ministry poised for even greater impact in the region. Riverside is not just a church where you go, it is a family where you belong. The congregation reflects a compelling blend of strong biblically-focused teaching, relational warmth, and a very clear evangelistic heartbeat. It is a place where people of all ages are growing in their faith, serving their communities, and actively inviting others to encounter the life-changing love of Jesus.

Pastor Tom Lundeen is a gifted communicator who consistently and passionately proclaims and models the value, which is shared with the C&MA, that lost people matter to God, and God wants them found. He preaches each Sunday from the Bible, including the hard parts which are handled with compassion and conviction. Messages are grounded in biblical truth and applicable in everyday life. He has a special ability to appropriately weave the Gospel message into every sermon and many congregants appreciate knowing that if they invite a friend, co-worker or neighbor to Riverside, they will definitely hear the good news.

The church's mission is to not only to see people receive Jesus, but to help them move forward in their walk of faith, embracing disciplines that transform and affect everything they do: how they think, make decisions and relate with others. Rather than create a highly programmatic ministry, leadership has chosen to simplify the offerings. Their simple yet strategic approach, called the 'BIG 3' - Come Every Sunday, Be Part of a Group, Serve on a Team, has kept the ministry aligned and focused on mission. It also reflects the church's core values: Experience Grace (from God and others), Grow in Love (with God and others), and Give of Yourself (to God and others).

Riverside does not operate with a formal strategic plan but relies on mission-driven decision-making and a results-oriented evaluation framework built around six key goals: conversions, spiritual growth, small group engagement, serving, generosity and attendance. They measure everything to ensure efforts are hitting the mark. It all appears to be working as worship attendance is growing (up 10% this past year), more than 90 percent of average worship attenders are engaged in a small group, people say 'YES!' to Jesus weekly, and generous financial support has positioned Riverside as a debt-free, forward-looking church that is ready for more.

The new Senior Pastor will step into a dynamic leadership culture anchored by a capable and experienced Executive Pastor and a collaborative staff team. Staff love to work here and most cross-function in some way, wearing multiple hats and engaging in multiple areas of ministry. While this can feel stretching, it also breaks down silos and allows for a greater sense of understanding and support to develop throughout the team and organization. The church's governance model is elder-directed and staff-led, creating a healthy environment of accountability and shared spiritual leadership. A strong, unified Elder Board provides spiritual covering and strategic oversight, while the staff culture is marked by collaboration, innovation, and an all-in commitment to excellence as they effectively pursue the mission.

Riverside is a church in motion. Yet even with all its strengths, the transition of a long-tenured pastor is a significant moment for any church. Pastor Tom will leave a legacy of humility, Gospel clarity and faithful

service. The next Senior Pastor will be stepping into big shoes and must do so with thoughtfulness, humility and wisdom. Honoring the past while pointing the church toward the future will require patience, discernment, and the ability to lead at the “speed of trust.” Solid biblical teaching, listening well, building relationships and earning trust will be critical in the early months of ministry.

This congregation thrives when it has a goal to pursue together and the level of congregational engagement is high. Whether serving on a ministry team, investing “sweat equity” in the preparation of a new campus, providing gift cards to families in need through the police department and local schools, or participating in a special event such as Car Care Saturday (where widows and single women can bring their car in for routine maintenance for free) or the annual Christmas outreach (which saw roughly 4,000 people come into the church this past December), Riverside is not a spectator church. Looking ahead, the church expresses a sense of readiness and expectancy for “what’s next.” Whether through the launch of a new campus, deeper contextualization at existing locations, expanded outreach to young adults, or creative digital discipleship strategies, there is a clear invitation for a visionary pastor to cast compelling direction and help the church lean forward in faith. Riverside is not looking for a manager, but a builder—someone who will carefully and lovingly shepherd spiritual momentum with integrity, insight and collaboration.

This opportunity is not without challenges. Riverside’s multi-site model, multi-generational community, growing online presence, and dynamic staff structure require a leader who can lead and thrive in complexity, and empower leadership and decision-making throughout the organization. Each campus has its own unique context, and ministry strategies must be adapted without compromising mission alignment. The church’s pace is purposeful and the bar for excellence is high. The right candidate will need to be both spiritually grounded and comfortable navigating scale and complexity while remaining faithful to the simple call to make disciples.

Ultimately, Riverside Church is looking for a Senior Pastor who shares its passion for the lost, values its culture of grace and simplicity, and can inspire people toward deeper devotion and greater Kingdom impact. For the leader God is preparing, this is a joyful and significant calling—to shepherd a church family that is healthy, hungry, and hopeful, and to help write the next chapter in a story that continues to be marked by transformation, multiplication, and the unmistakable presence of God.

The Candidate

The ideal candidate for Senior Pastor at Riverside Church is, first and foremost, a man of deep personal faith who embodies a humble and vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ. He is spiritually mature, marked by integrity, warmth, and an evident passion to know Jesus and make Him known. This pastor walks closely with the Holy Spirit and lives a life shaped by Scripture and prayer. He is approachable and sincere, engaging people from all walks of life with the heart of a shepherd and the mission of an evangelist. His leadership flows out of his character, and his authenticity and care will be the foundation for building trust across the church family.

Riverside Church is seeking a pastor who is a gifted and passionate communicator of God’s Word—someone who teaches with biblical conviction, clarity, and relevance. He will be known for sermons that are rooted in Scripture, infused with grace and truth, and consistently point people to Jesus. The church values practical, heartfelt messages that speak to everyday life and always include an invitation to say “YES!” to Jesus. The ideal candidate will model a lifestyle of evangelism, demonstrating the same outward focus and invitational ethos that has been a hallmark of Riverside’s culture for decades.

Leading a complex, multi-site church requires a leader who is both spiritually grounded and organizationally savvy. This Senior Pastor must be a collaborative and strategic thinker, able to discern what is needed in the moment while keeping an eye toward the future. With three campuses and a growing digital footprint, the new pastor will need to lead with clarity and confidence while fostering alignment across a diverse and expanding ministry landscape. He will empower leaders, equip staff, and make room for others to grow and lead, all while maintaining a steady, non-anxious presence that brings unity and strength.

Relational leadership is central to thriving at Riverside. The next Senior Pastor must invest intentionally in relationships—with staff, elders, volunteers, and the congregation. He will win people over with his warmth, humility, and presence across all campuses, especially in the early days of transition. A strong team player, he will work closely with the Executive Pastor to ensure organizational health and ministry excellence. His leadership will be marked by gratitude, collaboration, and care—creating a culture where staff are empowered, people feel seen and are thanked for their involvement, and the church family is unified in mission.

Culturally aware and community-minded, the ideal candidate will understand the unique setting of Central Minnesota and embrace its rhythms, relationships, and rich spiritual heritage. He will live locally and lead with understanding of the region's Lutheran and Catholic roots, with an ability to connect with the "religious lost." He will honor the legacy of Riverside's past while casting fresh vision for its future—building on a strong foundation to reach even more people with the transforming love of Jesus. In every setting, he will lead with humility, courage, and a contagious passion for God's mission to help lost people be found.

Preferred Candidate Qualifications

These descriptions represent preferred experience or background:

- Candidates must be in full agreement with [Riverside Church's beliefs](#).
- Ordination with the [Christian & Missionary Alliance](#) is required.
- A theological graduate degree is preferred, but not required.
- Fifteen or more years of pastoral experience, including healthy leadership in a large, complex church context that includes oversight and collaboration with paid staff and key volunteers.
- Evidence of building positive momentum, progress and follow through on mission.
- Theologically and biblically knowledgeable. Able to effectively communicate biblical truth in practical terms that includes application in everyday life.
- Preach and teach about 40 times per year. Be an experienced biblical communicator that is passionate, practical and clear. Regularly invite people to say 'YES!' to Jesus.
- High emotional and relational intelligence.
- Exhibit the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Lead with integrity, humility and love for people.

Inquiry Process

If after reading this description you have interest in this position, and you feel you meet the qualifications for the role, you are invited to submit the following information for consideration:

1. Your **resume** or CV (**in Word format only**).
2. The **results of any personal assessments** you have completed (StrengthsFinder; DiSC; Meyers-Briggs, Working Genius, Enneagram, etc.) in the last three years.
3. At least **three links to video of you teaching/preaching**. Please direct us to specific messages (dates and context) that you feel best represent your communication talent.
4. Provide **five references** (one supervisor, two peer, one subordinate, and one of your choice). These references will be contacted later in the process with your prior approval.
5. **Written responses to the following six questions** (prepared and attached in a Word document, not pdf).
 1. Describe your faith in Jesus Christ. Tell us how you came to personal faith as well as your journey into full-time ministry.
 2. What is it about the opportunity at Riverside Church that attracts you to this position and what, in your experience, has prepared you for this job?
 3. What are two or three of your core strengths that you have used to build the church or ministry you have led?
 4. How have you fostered and developed an outward focus in the church you have led?
 5. Describe your approach to lifestyle evangelism. How do you weave opportunities for people to say "YES!" to Jesus into your ministry?
 6. What are the key factors you believe should be present in your next ministry in order for you to be optimized?

Please submit your information to:

Kara Bubar, Search Associate
 NL Moore & Associates
 kara@nlmoore.com
 865-200-7983