



# LAKES FREE CHURCH

In Search of an Executive Pastor

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## Grounded, Growing, and Going

### Identity

Lakes Free Church is “a growing community of family, friends, and neighbors walking the journey of life and faith together” ([lakesfree.org](http://lakesfree.org)). Our identity is grounded in faith in Jesus, the one and only Son of God. He is the source and giver of life, and we place our hope in the promise of His redemption and return.

Lakes Free Church was founded 35 years ago by a small group of visionaries from a neighboring Evangelical Free church. Lakes Free has exceeded those founders’ dreams; they have seen God at work multiplying disciples who believe “that God has placed [them] in the Chisago Lakes area to be a loving, Biblical, and relevant witness to the grace and truth of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Lakes Free Vision Statement). Lakes Free Church is a member of the Evangelical Free Church of America ([efca.org](http://efca.org)).

Lakes Free Church serves the Lakes Area of east-central Minnesota, a thriving cluster of towns surrounded by scenic waters. The area includes Chisago City, Lindström, Center City, Shafer, and Taylors Falls. Founded by Scandinavians in the 1850s on lands occupied by native Ojibwa long before, these towns form a vibrant, welcoming community. Together, they boast 20,000 people and are located 35-45 miles northeast of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area. The Lakes Area has a vibrant retail, restaurant, medical, and professional services base. It is also home to many people whose employers are in the Twin Cities. The Lakes Free campus is located near the local high school and community center on the south edge of Lindström.

### Mission

The stated mission of Lakes Free Church is “to glorify God by making healthy multiplying disciples who will work together to reach the world for Jesus Christ” (Matthew 28:18-20). That mission is further defined in the trio of adjectives first outlined by Senior Pastor Jason Carlson in 2017: Lakes Free is *Grounded* in the truth of God’s Word, *Growing* in grace and obedience, and *Going* into the world in faith to make disciples.

## **Growth & Assimilation**

Lakes Free Church is a flourishing body of believers that reaches thousands of people in our community. Pre-pandemic Sunday attendance was growing, averaging about 600 between two worship services (including children). Under the state's 2020 pandemic guidelines, in-person attendance was limited to 50% of building capacity and attendance dropped roughly 60%; however, online viewing of live streamed services (website, Facebook, and YouTube) continued to grow with upwards of 180 unique views each week (as of Dec. 2020). People continued to be drawn together for worship, preaching, and encouragement during the pandemic, both in person and online. As of February 2021 in-house ministries are increasingly reopening and more people return to in person worship each week.

Lakes Free Church uses an adult ministry and discipleship model that includes Adult Bible Fellowships (ABFs) and small groups. The ABFs typically meet weekly, on Sunday mornings, and are designed for Bible teaching, fellowship, service, care, and prayer, and as the primary means of assimilating people into the life of the church. ABFs range from 20 to 70 people. Small groups of three to 20 people typically meet weekly, at varying times and locations throughout the week. These groups provide opportunities for in-depth Bible study, spiritual growth, and friendship; their activity has been limited and/or modified by the pandemic.

The church also offers vibrant AWANA, BLAST, and youth programming to teach and disciple children and students as they grow. These ministries are prioritized by Lakes Free and have a significant and well-known outreach in the community. Each of these programs has been modified in numerous ways during the pandemic.

## **Outreach**

In addition to local ministry, Lakes Free Church has consistently sent and/or supported missionaries around the world. From day one the church allotted at least 10 percent of its annual income to the work of individuals and families doing God's work globally, on six continents. The church currently supports over 30 individuals, couples, or families working with a variety of mission organizations. The church regularly sends out short-term mission groups to meet diverse needs (e.g., hurricane relief, housing, medical projects, pastoral training, evangelism, etc.). While some of the short-term efforts have been hindered by the pandemic, others have found innovative ways to move forward.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s Lakes Free Church planted two sister Evangelical Free churches in the nearby communities of Wyoming, MN, and Osceola, WI. These two congregations continue to grow and reach beyond the Lakes Area.

## **Pastors & Staff**

Lakes Free Church ministers to people of all ages, from babies to seniors. Church staffing reflects a commitment to serving the multigenerational body of Christ, and staffing decisions have been historically based on both current ministry needs and the future vision of the church. Eight pastors and/or directors currently lead the following ministries: children, student, adult, worship, and care. The church also employs another 13 staff members (full- and/or part-time) for technology, building administration, finance, communication, and office services. Additionally, laity-led, volunteer ministries serve people both within and outside the congregation (e.g., missions, Stephen Ministry, Grief Share, Sharing [clothing] Shop, Hope [adoption] Ministries, prison outreach, etc.).

## **Campus & Facilities**

The people of Lakes Free are dedicated to intentional discipleship and outreach. The church's desire is for its campus to be seen as a hub of life and activity for the community. To support that commitment, the church invests in facilities designed for multi-faceted ministry, which include the following: administrative offices; a recently updated foyer, café, and worship center with seating capacity for nearly 500; a fellowship hall and education center for children's ministry (infant through grade 5) and adult discipleship groups and classes; and a youth center and gymnasium for student ministry and outreach (grades 6-12). The church facilities are debt free and the campus includes ample room for future expansion.



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### **The Opportunity**

Lakes Free Church seeks to fill a new position: Executive Pastor. The one who fills this pastoral role will be a man of God who's committed to the vision and mission of Lakes Free Church. This commitment will be exercised by supporting the Senior Pastor in shepherding, providing leadership for the church staff, overseeing the administrative and operational functions of the church, and effectively implementing the church's ministry goals in an increasingly diverse, multigenerational setting.

This is a full-time position with benefits. Compensation is negotiable and commensurate with experience and qualifications.

### **Desired Characteristics & Qualifications**

The qualified candidate will:

- Be a mature Christian fulfilling the biblical character qualifications and duties of an Elder (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; and 1 Peter 5:2-4).
- Hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree, with a preference for a master's degree or higher in the areas of Christian ministry, business administration, or organizational leadership.
- Have a minimum of 5 years of progressively more responsible leadership experience in a large congregation as an Executive Pastor, Senior Pastor, the leader of a large ministry, or comparable administrative leadership experience.
- Possess a proven track record of skilled leadership; sound judgment; the ability to develop programs, projects, and ministries; improve organizational effectiveness.
- Have a love for and experience in developing, coaching, and managing people, both paid and volunteer.
- Be a strategic thinker and collaborator.
- Be a highly motivated self-starter.
- Demonstrate a heart for evangelism and missions and experience supporting effective outreach endeavors.
- Have successful experience developing and managing capital and operational budgets and finance.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Administrative**

- Staff – Assist the Senior Pastor in leading the church staff to effectively carry out the vision and mission of Lakes Free Church. This includes daily staff management, maintaining oversight and accountability for job performance, assuring alignment with church-wide goals and ministry activities, coaching and staff development, maintaining staff policies and job descriptions, and leading search committees (when necessary) or general staff hiring processes.
- Finance – Assist the Elder board and finance team in developing the church’s annual budget. Work with the treasurer and financial secretary to provide ongoing oversight of the church budget throughout the year. Evaluate current and future financial needs in light of the ministry goals of the church and assist in implementing strategies to meet those needs.
- Facilities – Support the Elder board in assessing and strategically planning for the future facility needs of Lakes Free Church. Supervise the building and grounds team, the Church Emergency Response Team (CERT), and the building administrator in the goals of maintaining an attractive, safe, and highly effective ministry environment on the Lakes Free Church campus.
- Communication – Assist the Senior Pastor and communications team in maintaining clear and consistent messaging in regard to the church’s future plans, ongoing ministry programming, special events, and unforeseen or emergency situations.

### **Pastoral**

- Serve as a confidant, advisor, and prayer partner to the Senior Pastor.
- Maintain strong, Christ-honoring relationships with the members of the Elder board, pastoral team, church staff, volunteers and congregation.
- Foster a healthy, encouraging, team culture amongst the church staff.
- Seek to know the people of Lakes Free Church and love them well.
- Assist the pastoral staff in shepherding the congregation. Serve on the preaching team, teach for the various ministry areas of the church (as available), assist the pastoral staff in counseling and visitation, and be willing to officiate weddings and funerals as needed.
- Support the Elder board and Senior Pastor in prayerfully developing, championing, and leading a bold vision of ongoing gospel impact for the future of Lakes Free Church.
- Support church outreach to the increasingly diverse physical and online communities Lakes Free serves.

## Organizational Relationships

- The Executive Pastor is ultimately responsible to the Elder board and is accountable to them through the Senior Pastor in the performance of his duties.
- The Executive Pastor will oversee the entire church staff under the authority of the Senior Pastor and Elder board. Pastors, ministry directors, and administrative staff will report directly to the Executive Pastor, with other staff members reporting directly to the supervisor of their particular area of ministry.
- The Executive Pastor will be a member of the Elder board and is expected to work with other ministry teams of the church as needed to carry out his responsibilities.
- The Executive Pastor will be responsible for developing and maintaining positive external relationships with community leaders, authorities, and denominational leaders.
- This position shall be reviewed annually by the Elder board and Senior Pastor.

## How to Apply

Submit the following application documents in MS Word or PDF file format.

- Letter of interest – Include the earliest date you would be available to start if selected.
- Current resume – Include the contact details that will allow us to contact you confidentially.
- Three references – Include at least one professional and one pastoral reference (required). References will only be contacted if a candidate is under continuing consideration at the conclusion of the application review and initial interview steps.

Send email to:

Richard Crombie, member  
Executive Pastor search committee

[search@lakesfree.org](mailto:search@lakesfree.org)

Applications will be accepted and reviewed until the position is filled. Early applications provide the search committee greater opportunity to get to know candidates. The desired start date is June 1, 2021, to support the start of the fall ministry season. The actual start date will be finalized in cooperation with the new Executive Pastor.

All applications will be handled with confidentiality by the Executive Pastor search committee.