

Volunteers: Serving and Sharing in Norway

We are the Dove family: Zack, Jenn, William & Daniel. From 2013-2021 we lived in Sandefjord, 50 miles south of Oslo. Since December 2021 we have been living and serving in the capital city of Oslo. We work as Church Planting Catalysts with the IMB.



We coach pastors and connect with those interested in faith and spiritual topics. We are connected with a Baptist church in Oslo that meets in home groups bi-weekly, and collectively as a church on the alternating weeks. We also lead IMB workers located in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Netherlands and Dutch-speaking Belgium.

We are looking for volunteers who will essentially act as 'filters.' Ideal team members are willing to go and hang out where locals hang out (coffee shops, pubs, parks, bars), in order to gauge spiritual interest and identify individuals who want to have further spiritual conversations. They should be willing and able to start conversations easily and naturally.

What does ministry look like here? We'll give you a few examples: (please don't share any of the photos!)

Home Church

This is the church in Oslo where we are members. This church is bi-lingual (Norwegian and English). Sunday services are every other Sunday. The average Sunday attendance is 50-70. On the opposite weeks, members meet in small groups ("House Church") for deeper Bible study, prayer, and fellowship.

Teams can help by preparing food, leading worship, and simply being present and having conversations with church members.



Coffee Bike

In June 2021, a local partner cast a vision of serving coffee to the people of Oslo, praying for them, caring for them and sharing the gospel with them. In May 2022, that vision became a reality when we were able to purchase the Home Church Coffee Bike (@homechurchkaffesykkel on Instagram).

This serves as a natural way for teams and churches to partner with us on the streets and take the good news to where they are. Church can also support this financially. It costs about \$50 each time we take out



the bike, covering the coffee and other supplies.

University Student Dinner

Every second Thursday, we host student dinner in our home. This is an evening where university students and other young adults come for a free dinner and fun activities. Many Home Church students also use this as a ‘first step’ where they can invite their friends who aren’t quite ready to attend church.

Teams can help by preparing food and participating in games and activities at the dinners. Teams and churches can partner financially to cover the cost of food and activities.



Language Café

Home Church hosts a weekly Norwegian language café. Each Wednesday, a group of volunteers gather and offer café-style language groups. While the gospel is not shared in the language groups, we make it clear that we are a church, and we always invite participants to our next Sunday Service or other special gatherings.

Connect Sandefjord

This is the church plant in our previous city. They meet every other Sunday for Sunday Service (opposite weeks from Home Church). This church is about half European and half the rest of the world. The services are primarily in English.

Like Home Church, teams can help by preparing food, leading worship, and having conversations with church members.



Ideal team size:

- 4 to 6 adults, maximum team size of 8

Ideal team members:

- Above-average physical condition, able to walk long distances (5+ miles a day)
- It would be ideal for at least part of the team to be in their 20's - 40's, as many of our friends/acquaintances are in this age range
- Speak English clearly and plainly, without a heavy accent – most Norwegians can speak English, but they struggle with those who speak too fast, with a heavy accent, and/or use too many expressions, colloquialisms or contractions

- Outgoing, energetic, talkative – willing to initiate conversations but also able to ask thoughtful questions & LISTEN!
- Able to share the Gospel & personal story clearly and concisely – avoiding too much ‘church talk’ (people who have not grown up in church and/or don’t speak English as their first language don’t typically understand things like *saved, salvation, repentance, born again, lost, and even sin*)
 - Able to share testimony in 2-3 mins
 - Proficient & natural in at least one Gospel presentation tool (3 Circles works well here)
- A good understanding of the secular/post-modern/millennial mindset; aware of how post-modernism affects every aspect of life among Europeans, not just religion
- Self-motivated, able to take initiative, to survey a situation & discern what needs to be done without constant direction
- While all spiritual gifts are important within the church as the Body of Christ, there are certain that are more suited to team members serving on a short-term trip among Scandinavians. Those include
 - **Evangelism** - to listen to others’ stories, share their own story, and weave in God’s story
 - **Discernment** – to know when to speak and when to listen, to recognize when and where God is already at work
 - **Exhortation/Encouragement** - to strengthen and encourage those who may be wavering in their faith, to challenge and to build up those who are already believers
 - **Mercy** - to love and assist those who are suffering, to walk with them until God allows their burden to be lifted
 - **Serving/Ministering** – while a team member in Norway/Scandinavia will not be serving in manual labor roles of some other mission trips, it is important to look for ways to fill in the gaps and provide for the needs of the team, the local workers, local believers, and those who are not yet believers
 - **Love** – not a spiritual gift, but an essential characteristic of a disciple!



Tasks may include:

- 2-by-2 Evangelism: going to parks, pubs, cafes, etc.; meeting people & identifying those interested in spiritual talks & in being connected with local believers – we love to see this happen in pairs of folks from your team, or even better when each of you invites a local church member to go out with you
- Prayer walking/City mapping
- Evangelism & discipleship training with local congregations
- Assist local churches with events or worship gatherings (cooking, cleaning, games, crafts, activities, music)
- Spend time (in small groups or one-on-one) with local believers to reinforce discipleship & Bible study practices



- Mini-concerts/garden parties: we have used this as an outreach event in the past, playing some music and having a cook-out as a way for church families to invite their not-yet-Christian families into fellowship

Ideal times for a team to come to Norway:

- **May/June:** Norway's constitution day is May 17. We had a team come during that time and it was a great start to their trip, allowing them to learn a bit about the people & culture. Schools are not out for summer break until mid June, so anytime in May or the first week of June could work.
- **September/October:** this is a good time because the weather is still fairly cooperative and it's not overly dark yet. The only time that wouldn't work is during fall break week, which is either the last week of September or the first week of October (many people travel that week).
- **Thanksgiving Week:** we usually host at least 2 Thanksgiving dinners. One is focused mainly on our neighbors and friends who are not Christians. The other is co-hosted by the Baptist church and Connect (English Bible study), and is an opportunity for members to invite their unchurched friends. A small team could help prepare food, invite people, serve meals, have spiritual conversations, and have follow-up meetings.

Other ways to be a part of the work in Norway:

If you don't see an in-person trip as the 'perfect fit' for you or your group, there are a number of other ways you can be a part of what's happening in Norway!

- **Prayer Partners:** sign up to receive our email newsletters. You'll receive updates on ministry and to know specific ways to pray for the work in Norway.
- **Partnership Point Person:** serve as our representative in your area to advocate for the work in Norway. Share prayer needs and the ministry focus to your church or class/group in an effort to have more people praying for the people of Norway. You may choose to do this at your home church, in your Sunday class or small group, or to a number of SBC churches in your geographic area.
- **Stateside Host Homes:** sometimes we have groups from Norway who travel to the states to attend conferences (Orange Conference, Catalyst, etc.). We like to get them paired up with local church families to house them and give them a more 'local' experience while they are in town. Normally, the teams rent cars to get themselves around. You would provide a bedroom for them, as well as breakfast each morning during their visit. You may also want to schedule one afternoon/evening to show them around your area and have a meal together.



Suggested Reading:

- **Foreign to Familiar, Sarah A. Lanier** (<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0040JHQVS/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?encoding=UTF8&btkr=1>)
- **Society Without God, Phil Zuckerman** (<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0029VCUVK/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?encoding=UTF8&btkr=1>) – this is NOT a Christian book/author, but provides a very good insight into how the “happiest people in the world” are living without religion