

# Why the Churches in Renewal Network?

It's common for a church to stall out in the shallows of discipleship, for pastors and leaders to feel lonely or stuck, for local congregations—even those with a solid grounding and clear mission—to become divided or distracted by secondary things.

It happens to the best.

What these churches and pastors and leaders need isn't a new program or a perfect five-year plan.

They need real ties to other Christians who gently call one another back to Jesus, their First Love, and remind one another why local church is worth the work. They need a human connection to the capital-C Church that transcends denomination and renews Kingdom imagination. They need a forum where they can ask hard questions, hear wise perspectives, and discern Spirit-led strategies in the company of peers and mentors.

Renovaré's **Churches in Renewal Network** seeks to meet this need.

The Network will *connect, guide, and resource* churches that long to be healthy communities of people who are learning to do the things Jesus told us to do.

Our vision is that, together and individually, these churches will become vibrant, *embodied ecosystems of renewal*, growing in Christlikeness for the sake of the world.



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*Director of Church Engagement*

## CHURCHES IN RENEWAL NETWORK

# Registration Process

### Step 1. Review Network Materials

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### Step 2. Discern Fit and Financial Contribution for Your Church

- Pray about bringing the Network to your leadership team
- Bring the Network to your leadership team for discussion, prayer, and discernment
- Reflect on whether it seems good to your leadership team and the Holy Spirit for your church to join the Churches in Renewal Network this year

### Step 3. Prepare Registration Responses

### Step 4. Submit Registration Form

Visit [renovare.org/jointhenetwork](https://renovare.org/jointhenetwork) to complete the Churches in Renewal Network Registration Form.

## CHURCHES IN RENEWAL NETWORK

# Participation

## What Benefits and Opportunities Does a Network Church Receive?

- **Connection to like-hearted churches.** Through virtual and in-person events and a shared directory, you'll be connected to other churches that prioritize spiritual formation in the way of Jesus.
- **Guidance** from Renovaré's team and a peer group rich in experience as we move from asking "how would Jesus do my life" to asking "how would Jesus do our church?"
- **Practical resources** for guiding communities into the with-God life.
- **Discoverability** through our public directory of churches (coming in phase two).

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR PASTORS

- **Pastor Roundtables.** Eight times a year, Renovaré will host a virtual roundtable for pastors with short teaching, shared spiritual practice, and breakouts for guided reflection (grouped regionally, when possible).
- **Listening Groups.** A congregation's integrity depends on the renewal of its leaders, yet many lack a safe space to process how God is at work in their lives. Pastors from network congregations have the opportunity to participate—with peers from other congregations—in a proven model for learning to listen to God, each other, and themselves.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS (PASTORAL AND LAY)

- **Wisdom Workshops.** Some things you can't learn from a book. Four times each year, we offer interactive virtual workshops where practitioners share approaches to common challenges to leading a community into deeper, more vibrant discipleship. Participants benefit from the wisdom of practitioners and each other.
- **From the Inside Out for Congregational Leaders.** Leaders often ask where to start when guiding their congregations deeper into the with-God life. *From the Inside Out*, Renovaré's flagship online course, helps leaders address six foundational questions about growth into Christlikeness. The companion guide helps church leaders think with God about where their community is on this journey and how to take next steps.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS

- **Renovaré Book Club Membership.** Member churches receive a group license to the current season of the Renovaré Book Club—a curated, guided experience through four books chosen for their formational value. Group-ready resources include a weekly reading guide, podcasts with authors/expert guides, and Q&A webinars.

## How Does a Network Church Participate?

The benefits and opportunities above are possible and valuable because of our **shared commitment to Christ-centered renewal and engagement.**

A member church **stands within historical Christian orthodoxy as expressed in the Nicene Creed, resonates with the Renovaré Vision** (*visit [renovare.org/about/vision](http://renovare.org/about/vision)*), and **seeks to live into the Renovaré Covenant**—*In utter dependence on Jesus Christ as our ever-living Savior, Teacher, Lord, and Friend, we will seek continual renewal through Spiritual Exercises, Spiritual Gifts, and Acts of Service.*

### **A member church aligns with the following values...**

- We value a high Christology regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- We value Scripture as a sure guide for growth into Christlikeness.
- We value worship and prayer as central in our lives.
- We value people as God's image bearers.
- We value hospitality of heart, seeking to learn from our differences with humility and loving respect.

### **A member commits to...**

- **Engaging in online and in-person network opportunities**, as able and as it gives life.
- **Making connections with other Network churches** and leaders in your area for mutual encouragement and prayer support.
- **An annual financial contribution to the Network.** While we allow great freedom in the amount, we believe every church can and should be financially invested in this collective work. All churches are treated equally regardless of contribution. Suggested contributions are \$250, \$500, or \$1,000. Our budget is based on \$500/church.

*We encourage a prayerful discernment process each year before recommitting to membership engagement, financial contribution, and alignment.*

## CHURCHES IN RENEWAL NETWORK

# FAQs

### **Who is able to register our church for the Network?**

Anyone who is able to speak on behalf of your church regarding its participation can register. While the commitment is not overwhelming, in most churches this will be a staff member or lay leader in consultation with church leadership.

### **How do I register for the Network?**

You can see that we seek members who are eager—and even called by God—to be engaged with what God is doing in the CRN. To that end, we invite you into a process of discernment about your potential participation.

To assist that discernment process, we provide a set of materials and questions for you to review personally and with the appropriate church leaders. Throughout this process, we invite you to keep asking, “Does it seem right to me/us and to the Holy Spirit for our church to participate in the Churches in Renewal Network at this time?” We honor all answers to this question—whether it be yes, no, or not yet.

Once the answer to that question is “yes,” please complete and submit your Registration Packet, and discern together as a church what level of financial contribution is right for you at this time.

### **What if I’m not a formal church leader?**

#### **How can I help my church participate?**

The most important way to help influence your church is to be in renewal yourself and to let the goodness and greatness of God’s work in your life overflow naturally on all those around you.

Next, you can share information about the CRN with your church’s staff and lay leaders. The CRN Fact Sheet and these FAQs are a good start. Most people enter into the Renovaré community through a relationship and/or an experience. We regularly host open online and in-person events for pastors and church leaders.

### **How can we find other churches in the Network?**

While not immediately available, we plan to offer an opt-in public-facing directory of all member churches.

### **What if there aren't other churches near us in the Network?**

Pray! Yes, we know that is a Sunday School answer. But it's true. Pray that God will lead other churches to join this community.

Then ask God to open your eyes to who may be longing for a deeper communal life with God in your area. As God reveals who is stirring, feel free to invite leaders or congregants to open events so that they can explore what's happening. In the meantime, feel free to join other Network activities to get to know people from churches around the country.

### **What does Renovaré believe about (fill in your hot topic)?**

#### **Will you screen churches based on current cultural issues?**

At its core, Renovaré seeks to be an all-inclusive community of loving persons gathered in the power and fellowship of the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Renovaré stands within historic Christian orthodoxy and affirms The Apostles' Creed and The Nicene Creed. Renovaré is Christian in commitment, international in scope, and ecumenical in breadth. We offer ourselves as vessels whereby God brings light to overcome darkness, hope to transform despair, and peace to conquer the violence of our times.

Because Renovaré is not a church, Renovaré does not take a public stance regarding the myriad of societal and doctrinal issues that come and go as culture (including church culture) ebbs and flows. Issues move and change as culture shifts. And Renovaré is respectful of others regarding such matters.

While we welcome all churches to participate in the Churches in Renewal Network, we expect members to model generosity, respect, and humility with the Renovaré team and with their peers in the network as described in the Community Guidelines.

### **How does Renovaré foster a constructive environment in a group with different viewpoints?**

From its beginnings, Renovaré has had a value for healthy community at its heart. In fact, our aspiration is to mirror what we believe heaven will be like—an all-inclusive community with Jesus as its sustainer and most glorious inhabitant.

To make this real in everyday life, we have come to value certain patterns of interacting with each other such as:

- We value all people as **God's image-bearers**.
- We value **listening**.
- We value **honesty and openness**.
- We value **humility**.
- We value **loving respect**.
- We value **hospitality of heart**, seeking to learn from our differences.



You will hear us reference these values often, confess when we have not lived up to them, and when necessary, gently correcting each other when we see someone stray. We expect network members to do the same.

### **What oversight does Renovaré have over Network member churches?**

Renovaré is not a denomination, so we hold no particular authority over network churches. Instead we aim to be a catalytic connector and generous model for churches of all varieties. We are for the renewal of the Church of Jesus Christ in all of her multi-faceted expressions.

In the rare situation where a member church is not living up to the responsibilities of membership, Renovaré may ask them to leave the network.

### **Can I unsubscribe from the Network at any time?**

To cancel your membership at any time, simply email us at [thenetwork@renovare.org](mailto:thenetwork@renovare.org).

### **If we contribute at a certain level our first year, are we committed to that same level forever?**

Circumstances change and God's direction changes. Each year as part of your Membership Renewal process, you will have an opportunity to change your financial contribution.

### **Does my church have to participate in all the offerings, or do we get to choose what makes most sense for our schedule/need?**

We encourage you to listen to God's nudge and participate as you feel led.

### **What's the difference between Churches in Renewal Network and CIRCLE?**

CIRCLE is a facilitated cohort learning experience, with high touch over nine months, and takes place in a specific local region (like Atlanta, Denver). CRN is a self-directed network with a peer-to-peer structure and offerings that can be engaged throughout the year.

## CHURCHES IN RENEWAL NETWORK

# Community Guidelines

### A Commitment to “First Things”

While we expect member churches to have convictions on many important theological and social issues, member churches pledge to treat each other with love, honor, and respect, and to follow the guidelines of Renovaré’s “First Things Principle” on any potentially divisive matters (such as matters relating to politics, sexuality, and denominational doctrine).

### KEY EXCERPTS FROM RENOVARÉ’S FIRST THINGS DOCUMENT

At its core, Renovaré seeks to be an all-inclusive community of loving persons gathered in the power and fellowship of the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Renovaré stands within historic Christian orthodoxy and affirms The Apostles’ Creed and The Nicene Creed. Renovaré is Christian in commitment, international in scope, and ecumenical in breadth.

We offer ourselves as vessels whereby God brings light to overcome darkness, hope to transform despair, and peace to conquer the violence of our times. Because Renovaré is not a church, Renovaré does not take a public stance regarding the myriad of societal and doctrinal issues that come and go as culture (including church culture) ebbs and flows. Issues move and change as culture shifts. And Renovaré is respectful of others regarding such matters. Recognizing that each of us is likely wrong about something, we respect others, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, to discern what is appropriate at any particular time in their context.

## First Things

**To fulfill our purpose, Renovaré must keep first things first.**

**Renovaré's First Things include:**

- **High Christology** as best described in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.
- **The Renovaré Covenant**—*In utter dependence upon Jesus Christ as our ever-living Savior, Teacher, Lord, and Friend, we will seek continual renewal through Spiritual Exercises, Spiritual Gifts, and Acts of Service.*
- **Fostering an all-inclusive community** gathered in the power and fellowship of the Triune God so that we progressively become more like Jesus, who is our first love. We are constantly returning, learning to love him more deeply over and over and over again (Rev 2:4-5).
- **All persons are God's image-bearers**, designed to radiate the love and light of the Trinity. Yes, we are bent by sin but redeemable by the power of God's gracious activity in our lives.

## Second Things

**We live by the following principles as we engage with all other issues:**

- **We start with First Things.** We begin our consideration with the centrality of our commitments and work from there.
- **We are hospitable.** We are generous and open to each other when we differ on secondary issues.
- **We are curious.** We listen to each other lovingly and to God faithfully on all of these issues.
- **We are humble.** We defer to each other wherever possible, acknowledging our limitations and the possibility of being wrong even in matters where we have conviction.
- **We are constructive.** We actively seek ways to pursue the common good, even when we disagree on all the details.
- **We are wise.** We avoid using our involvement with Renovaré to advance our convictions on secondary issues. While those issues are often very important, we acknowledge that this community is not the place to advocate for them. In so doing, we keep the First Things first.

## CHURCHES IN RENEWAL NETWORK

# Discernment Guide

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of membership in the Churches in Renewal Network. This guide provides some gentle scaffolding to help you discern if God would have your church join the Network at this time. You will find sections for personal discernment as well as communal discernment by your church leadership team.

## Personal Discernment

**Core Question:** *Is God inviting me to share the opportunity to join the Churches in Renewal Network with my church leadership team?*

- Take time to quiet your spirit before the Lord and pray over the questions below. Enter in with an open handed posture, available for God to guide as he wills.

### QUESTIONS

- God, help me see through your eyes. Why am I interested in bringing the opportunity to be part of the Churches in Renewal Network to my church leadership? Purify my heart and thoughts.
- God, what do you see as the reasons for and against bringing this opportunity before our church leadership?
- Lord, please show me if I am the right person to present the opportunity. If I am, how can I join you in inviting my church leadership to consider membership?

## Church Leadership Communal Discernment

**Core Question:** *Does it seem right to your leadership team and to the Holy Spirit for your church to participate in the Churches in Renewal Network at this time?*

### PREPARATION BEFORE DISCERNMENT MEETING

- Allow the members of your church leadership to review the Churches in Renewal Network membership materials before a discernment meeting is scheduled. If questions arise about The Network contact Renovaré for clarification at [thenetwork@renovare.org](mailto:thenetwork@renovare.org).

## **COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT MEETING**

**Prayer.** Open a time of prayer for our hands to be open to God and his will to be done.

- Lord, how might participation in the Churches in Renewal Network positively impact what you are doing in and through our church?
- What might it cost us (time, energy, focus, money) to engage in the Network?
- How might engaging with Renovaré and other churches in the Network impact your work in our denomination, community, and/or the wider Kingdom?

**Discussion.** What do you hear God saying? What are your impressions from the Spirit?

- How do you respond to the Network's vision of helping churches become part of "vibrant, embodied ecosystems of renewal, growing into Christlikeness for the sake of the world"?
- How do you respond to our church affirming the Network's Community Guidelines?
- What time would we need to dedicate in order to engage as God would have us in the Network?
- Who would be our point person?
- What aspects of the Network would we engage in over the coming year? Why?

**Prayer.** Open another time of communal prayer and silent listening.

- Lord, would you have us join the Churches in Renewal Network? If so, is now the right time?

**Discussion.** What do you hear God saying? What are your impressions from the Spirit?

- Does it seem right to us and to the Holy Spirit for our church to participate in the Churches in Renewal Network at this time?

**Financial Contribution.** If you feel invited by God to join the Network, enter into a conversation and time of prayer over the financial contribution. While we allow great freedom in the amount, we believe every church can and should be financially invested in this collective work. All churches are treated equally regardless of contribution. Suggested contributions are \$250, \$500, or \$1,000. Our budget is based on \$500/church.

**Prayer.** God, you are our provider, the giver of all good gifts, generous to your people, and wise in all matters of life.

- How much would you have us contribute to the Network this year?
- From what budget line would you like to provide these funds?

**Discussion.** What do you hear God saying? What are your impressions from the Spirit?

- Determine contribution amount and any church logistics needed to complete the application

**Closing Prayer of Gratitude.** Conclude the time of discernment in gratitude for who God is, his leading and wisdom, for this group of people, the time to listen together, for what God is doing in the church, and in his Kingdom.

## CHURCHES IN RENEWAL NETWORK

# Registration Preparation

### The following questions will be asked on the Churches in Renewal Network Registration Form:

- Contact information for Individual completing application: name, email address, and phone number
- I affirm that I am authorized by our church leadership to enroll our church in the Churches in Renewal Network. *[check box to affirm]*
- Having read the Renovaré Vision and Community Guidelines, we affirm, with joy, our partnership with Renovaré. *[check box to affirm]*
- Having read the Churches in Renewal Fact Sheet, we affirm our willingness and delight to fulfill the responsibilities of membership according to our means and calling. *[check box to affirm]*
- Contact information for the church: church name, address, email address, website, and denomination/affiliation
- Contact information for the primary point of contact at your church: name, email, and phone number *(if different)*
- In what ways have members of your church engaged with Renovaré? *(please check all that apply)*
  - Book Club
  - Renovaré Institute
  - Online Course *From the Inside Out*
  - Online Workshops or Webinars
  - Listening Groups / Fellowship of the Burning Heart
  - First Love Pastor's Retreat
  - RēGathering
  - Churches in Renewal Learning Cohort Experience (CIRCLE)
  - Other
- Please provide a brief church profile of what your church does, or hopes to do, to engage in spiritual formation at a congregational level. *[short answer: structure, teaching, community rhythms, events]*
- In what ways do you hope the Renovaré Churches in Renewal Network will be helpful to your church? *[short answer]*
- Please select your annual financial contribution to the Network.
- Please make your annual financial contribution to the Network. *[credit card information needed]*