



A PLACE FOR MINISTRY RENEWAL

The Refuge Church Program

A Resource Guide for Churches





Anchor Ministries
International

Helping Pastors Find Hope · Clarity · Renewal

Our Mission

We partner with God and the Church in the work of pastoral renewal and restoration — cultivating new hope for healthy ministry lives.

Our Core Values

The Gospel

Only God renews and restores tired, wounded hearts.

Hope

“God is not done with you yet” — hope is at the heart of all we do.

Renewal

Mending what's wounded, rebuilding what's broken, for the health of God's shepherds.

The Redemptive Quality of Pain

In God's hands, pain becomes a means of deeper growth and greater ministry.

Relationship

We're in the encouragement business — committed to each other's health as a team.

Safety

Sacred spaces for honest conversation, healing, and being heard.

Local Church

Healthy pastors lead healthy churches engaged in God's mission.

Biblical Community

Serving pastors and families of every race, ethnicity, and gender — equally made in God's image.

We are especially focused on the needs of leaders of small, ordinary churches and their congregations.

Why Refuge Churches Matter

Something is quietly happening in the Church. Every year, thousands of pastors leave ministry — not because they stopped loving God or the Church, but because they have been burned out, blindsided, or broken by the weight of what they carry. They exit wounded, their families shaken, their sense of calling confused.

Anchor Ministries International exists to help those pastors find their way back. But we cannot do it alone. The most powerful resource we have is not a program or an assessment — it is the local church.

That is what a Refuge Church is: a church that opens its doors to a wounded pastor and family, walks alongside them in their healing, and helps them rediscover hope, clarity, and renewed calling.

A Biblical Precedent

In the Old Testament, God established “cities of refuge” — safe places where a person in danger could find protection, rest, and a path forward (Numbers 35:6–34). Scattered throughout the land, they were not institutions but communities — real people, real welcome, real care.

A Refuge Church is that kind of community for exited pastors today.

It's Already in Your DNA

People already find your church a safe place — where grace, encouragement, and hope are alive. Regardless of its size, your church is already demonstrating what we all long for: people who will walk with us when the wheels fall off in life. Your leadership and your people have a vision for restoration.

Pastors and ministry leaders need that same safe place — among people just like that — when their ministry life has been turned upside down. A terminated pastor and spouse need a place where they feel the freedom to be vulnerable and honest while working through the issues of their exit.

“After being trained as a Refuge Church, I assumed that our church would work primarily as a place for our PIR family to heal during one of the most difficult and vulnerable times in their lives. The unexpected joy was watching how the process enabled them to experience a renewed sense of call to gospel ministry. Their God-given gifts and talents significantly contributed to the life and work of our church, and our congregation was blessed by their time with us.”

— D. Walker, Pastor

The Impact on Your Church

When your church becomes a Refuge Church, the pastoral family is not the only one who is transformed. Here is what churches consistently experience:

- Your church participates in an uncommon ministry — addressing an epidemic problem in the Body of Christ and contributing to the health of the church globally by reversing the trend of those leaving ministry permanently.
- Your church assists a pastor working through questions of calling and effectiveness — helping them resolve confusion, recover drained energy, and rebuild confidence.
- Your church guides a family through financial uncertainty, and supports children who may have lost friends, changed schools, and moved to a new community.
- Your church experiences the joy of witnessing restoration firsthand — bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2) in the most concrete of ways.
- Your church may see the restoration of a pastor become a springboard to greater care for one another, creating a corporate memory of grace extended to those in need.
- Your leadership team develops a deeper understanding of the stresses those in ministry face — and healthier ways to support staff and navigate conflict.

What Is the Refuge Church Program?

The Refuge Church Program is a church-based restoration process for pastors and ministry leaders who have experienced an involuntary exit from ministry. Supported by Anchor Ministries International, it is an individually tailored process designed to help the exited pastor and family find hope and begin discovering the next steps God might have for them.

What the Program Provides

- Regular meetings with a trained Support Team — for encouragement and to work through carefully designed studies that help the pastor and family safely address the issues that led to their exit, including isolation, bitterness, and loss
- A professional PRO-D Assessment of individual passions, skills, and leadership styles — for both the pastor and spouse
- Accountability through mentoring relationships
- Engagement in selected ministry opportunities as determined by church leadership
- Connection with the local church body for fellowship and participation in the normal rhythms of its life

Duration

The program is six months long and can be extended for an additional six months if needed. The Refuge Church and Support Team commit to this timeframe knowing that healing takes time.

The Heart of the Process: The Support Team

At the center of the Refuge Church Program is a Support Team — two to three couples from within the Refuge Church who meet regularly with the Pastor-in-Residence and family. Think of it as a small group with a purpose: to walk alongside a wounded pastor and family with prayer, hospitality, honest listening, and steady care.

A facilitator from within the group is selected to report back to church leadership on the progress of the program. Once trained and ready, we strongly encourage the Support Team to be publicly commissioned in a service of consecration — inviting the entire congregation into the process from the

beginning.

Training and Materials

Anchor Ministries provides all training for the Support Team, conducted by a trained AMI representative. The training workshop runs approximately 3–4 hours and equips the team with everything they need to serve well.

Training Workshop

\$650.00

Includes all program materials and two PRO-D Assessments. Travel expenses for AMI staff are additional (invoiced in advance).

Three key resources are provided: Especially for Pastors (program overview), The General Guide (implementation reference), and Support Team Affirmations (workbooks for the Support Team and PIR).

The Pastor-in-Residence

Those in the program are called Pastors-in-Residence (PIR) — a designation that restores a sense of dignity and makes it possible to include this experience on a résumé.

Role Within the Church

The Pastor-in-Residence holds a quasi-staff position. Each church is free to define the parameters of their involvement in staff meetings, ministry activities, and roles — all outlined in a formal Covenant signed by both the PIR and the senior pastor.

We strongly encourage keeping ministry responsibilities to a minimum. The primary purpose of this experience is to bring healing and renewal to the wounded soul of a pastor and family. The program has a clear beginning and end — and is not a pathway to permanent staff. Maintaining that clarity protects both the church and the PIR.

Financial Arrangements

The Refuge Church does not pay a salary to the Pastor-in-Residence. The PIR's financial support is raised outside the church — through severance, part-time work, or personal support from family and friends. We ask the Refuge Church

to add a designated line item to its budget so that any donated funds for the PIR can be received and distributed through the church.

The PRO-D Assessment

Both the Pastor-in-Residence and spouse will take the PRO-D Assessment — a professional development instrument that reveals each person's unique leadership shape through their Motivations (Missions), Abilities (Competencies), and Behaviors (Styles). Completed online and followed by a personal 90-minute consultation, the PRO-D helps the PIR clarify their sense of calling and identify the shape of effective service going forward.

How to Become a Refuge Church

Becoming a Refuge Church is a straightforward process. Here are the three steps to get started:

1 **Contact Anchor Ministries International**

Reach out to our team to express your church's interest. We'll walk you through what the commitment involves and answer any questions your pastor or leadership team may have.

2 **Discuss with Your Leadership Team**

Pray together and discern whether this is the right season for your congregation. We'll provide resources to help guide those conversations.

3 **Sign on as a Refuge Church**

Once your leadership is in agreement, complete the Refuge Church Agreement. Support Team training will be scheduled and you will be ready to receive a pastoral family.

Common Questions

Does everyone complete the program and return to full-time ministry?

Not always — but that is not the measure of success. Those who complete the process gain a deeper understanding of God's work in their lives, clearer insight into the shape of their calling, and significant restoration in their relationship with the Church.

Does Anchor Ministries help with job placement?

We do not provide direct placement services. The PIR typically works with denominational or church placement services for next steps. However, a pastor who completes the Refuge Church Program will be far better equipped for whatever comes next.

What does it cost the church beyond the training?

Beyond the \$650 training fee and travel, the primary investment the Refuge Church makes is one of time and pastoral care. We also encourage the church to consider sponsoring clergy coaching for the PIR as they transition back into vocational ministry.

Is there an optional workshop during the program?

Yes. We suggest hosting a Conflict Resolution workshop during the program to help both the PIR and church leadership learn to navigate conflict redemptively — resulting in stronger relationships, improved team dynamics, and a more credible witness for Christ.

Ready to Become a Refuge Church?

We would love to talk with you. Contact us today.

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www.anchorministries.org

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Anchor Ministries International (Pastor in Residence Ministries, Inc.) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All gifts are tax-deductible as allowed by law. ECFA accredited.



Helping Pastors Find Hope · Clarity · Renewal

You're Invited to Partner With Us

Join a community standing with pastors in their hardest seasons

Every week, a pastor somewhere reaches the end of what they can carry alone.

Anchor Ministries International walks beside pastors and church leaders through burnout, conflict, and crisis — offering coaching, renewal, and restoration so they can keep leading with hope. None of this happens without people like you.

When you become a Sustaining Partner, you join a generous, faithful circle who make this care possible every month — and share in every renewed calling and every pastor who chooses to stay.

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Every Shepherd Needs a Shepherd

Coaching, renewal, and restoration for pastors and church leaders
who give everything.

HOW WE CAN HELP



Coaching

One-on-one ministry support



Renewal & Restoration

Plans for rest and recovery



Spiritual Direction

Ongoing spiritual guidance



Sabbatical Planning

Sabbaticals that restore



PRO-D Assessment

Find your leadership shape



Church Consulting

Support through transitions



Retreats

Getaways for rest & renewal



Soul Care Intensives

Focused, immersive soul care



Workshops

Hands-on training for leaders



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Training for your whole team

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We're here for the ones who care for everyone else.

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