Cedar
Retirement Solution

Powered by Envoy Financial

The **Nicene Network 403(b)(9) Retirement Plan** provides churches with an institutional-quality, professionally governed retirement program. By uniting congregations under a single Multiple Employer Plan (MEP), partner churches gain access to top-tier administrative technology, fiduciary oversight, and competitive pricing — all while retaining 100% of their local church autonomy and leadership.

Why Join the Cedar Retirement Solution?

Independent and non-denominational churches often face significant hurdles when offering retirement benefits:

- **Eliminate Fiduciary Burden:** Standalone church boards often shoulder complex regulatory and investment liabilities. Under this plan, professional fiduciaries manage investment selection, monitoring, and administration.
- **Institutional Pricing & Access:** Pooled assets across member churches grant access to lower fees, faith-based investment models, and technology usually reserved for large institutions.
- **Seamless Benefit Continuity:** Pastors and ministry staff can move between Nicene Network partner churches without losing plan continuity or forfeiting retirement savings.
- **Preserve Full Autonomy:** Joining the plan does **not** surrender any aspect of church self-governance, spiritual authority, or operational independence. Each church remains the legal employer of its staff.

Dedicated Retirement Partners

The Cedar Retirement Solution operates under a clear division of responsibilities to ensure compliance, fiduciary protection, and smooth day-to-day operations:

Entity	Role & Responsibility
Nicene Network	**Plan Sponsor & Lead Employer:** Provides overall governance, mission alignment, and plan adoption oversight. Holds zero

	governance authority over local church ministry or operations.
Envoy Financial	**TPA, Recordkeeper & Discretionary Investment Fiduciary:** Handles plan administration, compliance testing, participant portal access, and full discretionary fiduciary oversight of investment options.
Matrix Trust Company	**Plan Custodian:** Holds and safeguards plan assets.
Partner Church	**Employer of Record:** Maintains complete local leadership, remits payroll contributions, and updates local employee census data.

Key Plan Features at a Glance

Feature	Plan Design Details
Plan Type	403(b)(9) Multiple Employer Plan (MEP); Non-electing Church Plan.
Effective Date	September 1, 2026.
Eligibility	Age 18 minimum; **no service requirement**; immediate entry on date of hire.
Vesting	**100% full and immediate vesting** on all employer match and discretionary contributions.
Contribution Options	Pre-tax salary deferrals, Roth (after-tax) deferrals, and in-service Roth conversions.
Employer Contributions	Discretionary matching and non-elective (basic) contributions, tailored by each church.

Catch-Up Contributions	Both Age 50+ catch-up and 15-years-of-service catch-up contributions are permitted.
Minister Housing Allowance	Eligible ministers may receive tax-free retirement distributions under IRC §107 when properly designated in advance.
Loans & Distributions	In-service withdrawals permitted at age 59½, hardship, disability, or QBAD. Participant loans permitted up to 50% of balance (max $50,000).
Rollovers	Accepted from eligible 403(b), 401(k), 401(a), and traditional IRA accounts.

Investment Options Built for Faithful Stewardship

Envoy Advisory acts as the Discretionary Investment Fiduciary, selecting and monitoring options according to a formal Investment Policy Statement (IPS). Participants can customize their portfolios using:

- **Faith-Based Portfolios:** Biblically screened investments avoiding companies involved in abortion, pornography, gambling, alcohol, tobacco, and military weapons.
- **Target-Date & Risk-Based Models:** Professionally managed, age-adjusted portfolios serving as the Qualified Default Investment Alternative (QDIA), including faith-based target-date options.
- **Index & Actively Managed Funds:** Broad-market passive funds and actively managed strategies from top-tier institutional providers.

How to Get Started: 4-Step Church Onboarding

1. **Execute the Joinder Agreement:** Church leadership reviews and signs the Church Partnership & Joinder Agreement provided by the Nicene Network.
2. **Setup Payroll & Census:** Complete the EFT authorization form and submit your current employee census data to Envoy Financial.
3. **Enroll Staff:** Envoy Financial leads virtual or on-site enrollment and educational sessions for church staff and pastors.
4. **Fund First Payroll:** Process payroll deductions and remit contributions through Envoy's secure recordkeeping platform.

Transparent Fee Structure

Plan administration fees consist of base plan management, per-participant administration fees, standard transaction fees, and asset-based fees. Asset-based fees are calculated across the aggregated total assets of all partner churches, lowering expenses for every congregation as the network grows.

Full Fee Disclosure: Under a separate agreement, Envoy Financial remits 0.05% (5 basis points) of plan assets from its advisory fee to the Nicene Network to support network plan governance.