



2023

Vision Report

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VISION UPDATE

Advancing Together

By God's grace, Converge Heartland is advancing. Three years ago, the District Board of Overseers prayerfully put together a district ministry plan that sought district-wide advancement in several areas including church planting, ministry residencies, conversion growth, ethnic ministries, reaching unreached people groups, and district financial strength. Though there is much to do, fiscal year 2023 saw significant advancement in several of these areas.

Our district has a heart for church planting, and under the direction of Pastor Steve Krier, our district church planting efforts have gained new momentum. Steve has worked hard to recruit a fresh pipeline of potential church planters, fundraise for church planting, and follow through on assessing potential church planters. Together with district LEAD Teams, Steve has identified several metropolitan and micropolitan areas that are prime for church planting. Over the past few years, we have laid the groundwork for church-based residencies throughout our district. We see the spiritual maturity in many Heartland churches as fertile soil for developing new ministers. A residency culture is developing in our district with a total of nine ministry residents serving in our churches. Currently, we have at least ten more churches desiring to bring on a ministry resident!

When it comes to cross-cultural ministry, more and more of our churches are expressing a heart to reach the nations at their doorstep. Some churches are intentionally seeking bi-lingual ministers to aid in reaching the nations at home. Beyond our borders, we are also seeing churches strategically set aside

mission funds for reaching unengaged and unreached peoples. Besides these components of local church missions, we praise God that Converge Heartland has receipted more than \$315,000 for Ukraine Relief efforts. Through 2024, our churches will continue to monthly support 19 Ukrainian pastoral families. We have also sent aid to 20 pastoral families affected by the bombing of the Dnipro River dam.

Finally, we praise God for his provision through your generosity! Ten years ago, our district was in an exceptionally challenging financial position and in jeopardy of being split up into neighboring districts. That did not happen, Converge Heartland has recovered, and to the praise of God's provisions, this year we receipted over \$1.5 million for gospel ministry. That is a first in the history of our district!

We are advancing! God is granting us a collective drive to develop laborers for His harvest in the Heartland. God has granted us financial reserves for both starting and strengthening churches. God has granted our pastors a heart to see our churches strengthen in their efforts toward evangelism and conversion growth. Besides this, God has granted our district a growing team of 13 people committed to strengthening churches, starting churches, leading incarcerated ministries, and serving as residents in local churches. It's a new day in Converge Heartland and we are glad to be advancing, by faith, together with you!



Jim Capaldo
Regional President
Converge Heartland



Risen Hope
BAPTIST CHURCH

“

Our vision is to see a gospel centered church bringing transformation to every Heartland community.



8 Donor-Supported Staff Members

13 Church Planters in the Pipeline

58 Converge Heartland Churches

13 District Staff Members (5 FT and 8 PT)

7 Converge National Board and Ministry Trips

Our Budget

\$116K Starting New Churches 12%
\$332K Strengthening Church 33%
\$399K Sending Ministers 40%
\$148K Administration 15%

578 Unique Donors in FY23
74 Churches Giving
503 Individual Donors

48,000 District Ministry Miles Driven

68 Visits To Churches

218 SD Camp Participants in 2023

2 Church Planting Candidates Assessed

\$

\$315k given for Ukraine relief
\$1.5 million received for ministry in FY23
\$264,000 available for church planting efforts

CONVERGENCE BY THE NUMBERS HEARTLAND



STARTING NEW CHURCHES

STEVE KRIER, DIRECTOR OF CHURCH PLANTING

As I reflect on this past year, the word that comes to mind is “establish.” We spent a lot of time and energy helping to establish our youngest church plants and building out our systems to help launch our future church plants to launch strong. Here are a few highlights.

- We received a \$67,000 grant from the Wesleyan Investment Foundation for accelerating church planting for the district. These funds will help fund staffing expenses, demographic analysis, recruitment trips, and marketing.
- We were able to represent Converge Heartland Church Planting by having a booth at the Bethlehem Conference for Pastors. We connected with Heartland pastors and established new relationships during the event.
- Chase Hill will be joining our staff as a church planting catalyst. He will give one day a week to develop relationships with potential church planters in the southern tier of our district.
- I visited our church plants on my annual road tour throughout the Heartland. They are making great strides in evangelizing their communities and discipling their churches!
- We brought two candidates to Church Planting Assessment Center.
- Our three youngest churches have combined to give over \$11,000 this past year to the region, demonstrating their commitment to the vision and mission of Converge Heartland.
- We developed staffing and recruiting strategies for college visits, marketing, and hosting events.

We look to this next year with excitement. I will dedicate two full days a week to Heartland work (reflected in the budget proposal). Chase Hill will work with me to amplify our efforts in Kansas and Oklahoma. We are building a robust recruiting effort for Heartland residencies and church planting by visiting Bible colleges throughout the region.

With multiplying our efforts, we hope to see more healthy church plants bringing Gospel transformation to every Heartland community.



CONVERGE HEARTLAND CHURCH PLANTS

Risen Hope Baptist Church

Pastor Jayson Wittrup
Sioux Falls, SD

Sent out from the congregation of Faith Baptist Fellowship to spread the gospel in the greater Sioux Falls area, this church has grown rapidly in the past 5 years! At Easter they rebranded with their new name. They have welcomed Jimmy Hoang as Associate Pastor and celebrated installing their own board of elders. By the end of 2023 they will be their own autonomous church. Let's celebrate what the Lord is doing through this thriving congregation!

Harvest Plains Church

Pastor Cody Weckerly
Mapleton, ND

Four years ago, Cody Weckerly and a group of people began Harvest Plains Church. As they grew, they rented space to meet, but now they have moved a few miles down the road into their very own space. Their first Sunday service saw a record attendance of 220 people! Praise God for the work he is doing through this faithful body of believers!

Arrows Church

Pastor Robert Conn
Papillion, NE

Arrows Church celebrated their first anniversary on April 16, 2023! During their first year they enjoyed an average attendance of 130 people each week. They've rejoiced at having the honor of baptizing more than 14 people. This body of believers continues to thrive and grow and reach their community for Jesus!

CHURCH STRENGTHENING

JIM CAPALDO, REGIONAL PRESIDENT

Church Strengthening efforts have had multiple emphases throughout the last year. Beyond ongoing church visits and pastoral Lead Team meetings, these emphases primarily included evangelism training, residency program, and pastoral placement.

Converge President, Pastor John Jenkins, is working with Regional Presidents to strengthen local church evangelism and discipleship efforts throughout our movement. These are two areas that resonate deeply with Converge Heartland churches. During most ministry planning retreats church leaders identify evangelism and outreach as a core issue for growth. Though our churches often experience nursery and transfer growth, our pastors and congregations sincerely desire to see conversion growth. As such, Converge Heartland leads our 10-district movement with six pastors participating in a monthly evangelism cohort facilitated by the Billy Graham Center for Evangelism. We are just beginning, but developing a culture of active evangelism in our churches will be a multi-year emphasis.

Over the past year, we have seen significant momentum in ministry residencies. Ministry

residencies are an intentional two-to-three-year effort aimed at developing future local church ministers for our district and beyond.

Currently, there are nine residents serving in Converge Heartland churches. Many churches cannot afford to fully fund a full-time ministry resident and so our district acts as a clearing house allowing the resident to raise donor support from the host church and others while receiving consistent employment services. Currently, we employ two residents with ten district churches looking to host a future district ministry resident.

We are in a season where several of our seasoned pastors are passing the pastoral baton. Working with churches to ensure that fitting and qualified pastors are placed is an ongoing district effort. Our pastoral search services are sought by district churches as well as other theologically compatible churches throughout the region. This year alone, we have facilitated ten pastoral transitions, prompting us to hire Danny Fergen from Central Church in Sioux Falls, as part-time assistant in this critical church strengthening effort.

5 SABBATICAL GRANTS GIVEN

10 LOCAL CHURCH MINISTERS PLACED IN FY23

9 MINISTRY RESIDENTS SERVING

6 ACTIVE LEAD TEAMS

3 NEW CHURCHES SINCE 2020



UKRAINE PARTNERSHIPS

JIM CAPALDO, REGIONAL PRESIDENT

Since the beginning of 2022, Converge Heartland has received more than \$315,000 in Ukraine relief with over \$200,000 of that being given over this past fiscal year. To date, we have distributed \$218,000 with the remaining funds committed to the monthly support of 19 Ukrainian pastoral families in the Odesa Oblast (province) through December of 2024.

Throughout this war, great needs and opportunities are being revealed. Many needs have resulted from the bombing of critical infrastructure such as the dam on the Dnipro River near Nova Kahovka. Your responses enabled us to send sizeable support to 20 pastoral families serving in the flood regions of the Kherson Oblast, many of whom are serving in Russian-occupied communities. Other needs have resulted in the aftermath of economic hardship and war-related deaths. With your support, Ukrainian churches are taking in, feeding, and serving an increasing number of widows and often their children as well. Like the first century church, the Baptist union churches in

Ukraine are marked by how they are caring for people in their communities.

Last summer, when I visited a district-supported church in Sanzheika, Ukraine, I met with Dima Pishala, a deacon from a nearby church who stepped into this once thriving but now war-abandoned church. When I showed up, they had only five members remaining. Supported by Converge Heartland generosity, Dima and his family began faithfully ministering to the hurting, scared, angry, and broken community. By Christmas, the congregation had grown to 150 people, mostly new converts. Now, they have launched a thriving church plant in a nearby town. Just a few weeks ago, Odesa Oblast Regional Presbyter, Alexander Dimov, and Vyacheslav Sherbikov, Dima's home church pastor, laid hands on Dima, and prayed over him, as he was publicly ordained to serve as the Senior Pastor of the Baptist Church in Sanzheika. Converge Heartland family, this is but one example of the incredible fruit that abounds to your account!

UKRAINIAN PASTORS PARTNERED WITH CONVERGE HEARTLAND

ALEKSANDER DIMOV
ANATOLY EVGRAFOV
MAXIM FTOMOVICH
VASILY GALUSHKO
ALEKSANDER GANYEV
VICTOR KISTOL

PLATON KOLOSOV
VLADIMIR KORBUT
ALEKSEI KRASKO
PETER NAKONYECHNI
DIMITRY PISHALA
VLADIMIR PAMOZKOV

SERGEI ROSHIOR
VECHYESLAV SCHERBIKOV
VITALY STAWNKEVICH
VICTOR TIMOFEYEV
SASHA YAKOMENKO
OLEG ZADORIN

"WE PRAISE OUR MERCIFUL GOD FOR YOUR STRONG SUPPORT OF OUR CHURCH AND FAMILY. WE DON'T HAVE WORDS FOR OUR GRATITUDE, WE SIMPLY HAVE TEARS IN OUR EYES."

PASTOR ALEKSEI PASKO, SHABO, UKRAINE

ODESSA OBLAST 19	FUNDS RAISED \$315,000	DONATIONS MADE 413
KHERSON OBLAST 20	SITE VISITS 2	MISSIONARIES SENT ABROAD 5

INCARCERATED MINISTRIES

Greg Friesner, DIRECTOR OF INCARCERATED MINISTRIES

Converge Heartland Incarcerated Ministries continues to be a light in dark places. We regularly navigate changes and challenges within the South Dakota Department of Corrections. The lack of staffing within the prison system affects the morale not only of inmates, but also of staff. But God remains faithful, as we offer the hope of the gospel.

We are currently in seven facilities. Our three pastors and numerous volunteers give their time and spiritual gifts to serve those incarcerated. We minister through multiple worship services, Bible studies, and pastoral care encounters.

We are praying for favor with the prison administration to approve a Christian education program in the prison. This education program would be made possible through partnership with Kairos University and Prison Seminaries.

Lives are being changed on a regular basis! We work with a lot of brokenness but fortunately Jesus is the healer of the broken. God loves those who are incarcerated!

Our chaplains and volunteers minister to an estimated 200 inmates each week at various institutions, including:

**Sioux Falls-Minnehaha
County Jail
Jameson Annex
The Hill**

**Unit C
Mike Durfee State Prison
Elk Point-Union County Jail
Yankton- Federal Prison Camp**

Incarcerated Ministries Team



Greg Friesner
DIRECTOR OF
INCARCERATED MINISTRIES



Harlan Moss
INCARCERATED
MINISTRIES CHAPLAIN



John Morrison
INCARCERATED
MINISTRIES CHAPLAIN



SUPPORTING PASTORS

Over the past year, Converge Heartland has primarily supported pastors through compensation reviews, sabbatical grants, pastoral care, coaching, and our ongoing pastoral LEAD Team structure.

On the heels of the pandemic and ongoing inflation, it has been necessary to proactively emphasize pastoral compensation and benefits. Besides many meetings with church finance committees, multiple articles and resources have been shared to help churches understand, review, and update their pastor's compensation and benefits package. Sustaining healthy and resourced pastoral staff is an important church-strengthening activity.

Converge Heartland has many pastors who have faithfully served without a sabbatical. Beyond standard vacation benefits and depending on the ministry context, churches do well to afford their pastors a one-to-three-month sabbatical every five to seven years. Many churches have been reluctant to afford their pastor this necessary rest due to financial constraints. Converge Heartland offers Sabbatical Grants to remove financial barriers for this necessary break. We gave five Sabbatical Grants in 2023.

At our 2022 Cultivate Conference, we highlighted the pastoral care ministry of the Full-Strength Network. This network of credentialed Christian counselors is serving our district pastors and pastoral couples well, and especially those serving in regions where such assistance is not readily available.

Converge Heartland offers an array of coaching opportunities. This year, we provided scholarships for several district pastors to participate in the Rural Shepherdology coaching cohort led by veteran small-town pastor, Jerry Troyer of Converge MidAmerica. This year, four of our church revitalization coaching efforts began with a district-led ministry planning retreat. With evangelism and outreach regularly topping the list of improvement areas in our district churches, we are excited to see six pastors stepping into a church-mobilizing evangelism cohort through the Billy Graham Center for Evangelism.

Perhaps the greatest support that we provide to pastors is through the ongoing structure of pastoral LEAD Teams. It is through our six regional LEAD Teams that pastors monthly gather to learn from one another, encourage one another, and advance church multiplication efforts together.

40

PASTORS PARTICIPATING IN REGIONAL LEAD TEAMS

5

SABBATICAL GRANTS GIVEN

18

18 PASTORS IN COACHING RELATIONSHIPS



HOLDING FAST

We enjoyed hosting the 2023 Pastors Renewal Retreat in Lincoln, NE. More than 20 of our ministry couples joined us for a time of fellowship, refreshment, and renewal of spirit. Two of our pastors who have faithfully served in the Heartland district for many years shared their hearts with us about faithful ministry. Throughout the weekend pastors and their wives had time to rest and spend time with other ministry couples in worship, with good food, and plenty of laughter as well!

Next year the retreat gets a new name! Renew 2024 will be in Lincoln, NE, April 5-7. Please encourage your pastor to join us!

JOIN US

APRIL 5-7, 2024 - LINCOLN, NE



YOUTH CAMPS



HIGH SCHOOL - CAMP JUDSON KEYSTONE, SOUTH DAKOTA

Camp Judson is in the middle of a building project to replace the chapel, so this year chapel took place in the basement of the current dining hall. Even with this change, campers were excited to be there! Students had the opportunity to visit the Keystone Project in Keystone, giving them a new opportunity to see how God works around the world through this ministry. Our students shared how camp brought clarity for their daily lives, convicted them of sin, and filled them with confident hope as they continue their journey with the Lord.

Speaker: Ben Larson - Battling the Lies of Satan, Hearing God's Call on Your Life



MIDDLE SCHOOL - SWAN LAKE VIBORG, SOUTH DAKOTA

God continues to bless middle school camp with more and more middle schoolers taking time out of their summers to grow their relationship with Christ. Some are choosing to follow Christ for the first time! Praise God as he continues to grow our middle school camp! Words cannot express how God showed up during this week of camp – to Him be the glory! On the way home, one student shared with his grandpa about the activities and fun he had, then said, "I now have a relationship with God." That is why we do camp!

Speaker: Nick Morton - Hearing God and How He Gives Meaning to our Lives



SUMMER CAMPS BY THE NUMBERS

- 179** Campers
- 218** Volunteer Counselors & Staff
- 2** Engaging Speakers
- Many Hearts changed for God

CONVERGE HEARTLAND RESIDENCIES

Gaining intentional, hands-on local church ministry experience is critical for cultivating new ministers. Converge Heartland provides this necessary experience by facilitating vocational ministry agreements between developing ministers and host churches to create mutually beneficial two to three-year residencies.

We are pleased to have matched 2 residents with churches this year!



CAIDEN CAPALDO
SUN PRAIRIE BAPTIST CHURCH
SALEM, SOUTH DAKOTA



PHILLIP REAVES
HARVEST PLAINS CHURCH
MAPLETON, NORTH DAKOTA



FINANCIAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) began on September 1, 2022, and ended on August 31, 2023. This was a historic year for us as we surpassed \$1 million in district revenues for the first time. We praise God that we were entrusted to steward a total FY23 income of \$1,493,032.08. Our FY23 expenses totaled \$994,915.83, giving us a net revenue of \$498,116.25. Though monthly church contributions were strong, the following were exceptional giving occurrences.

- \$200,000 in FY23 for Ukraine relief giving (\$315K since Jan. 1, 2022)
- The “Mission House” property (\$300,000) asset gifted by Central Church
- \$100,000 ministry grant from Wesleyan Investment Foundation
- \$67,000 church planting ministry grant from Converge Worldwide

We steward ministry resources entrusted to us through a budget that has both a general fund budget for undesignated funds, and a temporary reserve funds budget for designated funds. Our FY23 general fund budget had surplus of \$55,257.08 in undesignated funds.

As we begin a new fiscal year, our total district assets are \$1,159,658.64, a significant increase over the beginning of FY23. Our total cash assets are \$754,585.52. Of these cash assets, \$409,478.40 are designated for specific ministry uses such as church planting, donor-supported staff, or Ukraine relief, and \$345,107.12 are undesignated funds available for general ministry use.

Praise God for our district’s financial health!



FISCAL BUDGET

WHO IS CONVERGE HEARTLAND?

Converge is a missional network of gospel driven churches, and we at Converge Heartland are one of 10 regional missional arms of our partner churches. For 149 years, we have served as ‘state missionaries’ who coordinated regional church planting and ethnic work. Today we are not only active in starting new churches, but are fully engaged in strengthening our partner churches through consulting, training and coaching. We are committed to starting and strengthening churches that will impact the world with the message of Jesus. We are fully engaged in supporting pastors’ families as well as facilitating mission efforts to help our churches touch the world.

HOW DOES FUNDING WORK?

We live at the will and the funding of our partner churches, making us financially dependent on our churches to assist with the staffing and ministry programs we provide. Because of this, we recommend the following funding structures for our churches:

- 2% of church budget for Converge Heartland
- 1% of church budget for Converge Heartland Church Planting
- 1% of church budget supporting Converge National and/or International Ministries

The rationale for these percentages is that Converge National has access to all of the churches in Converge, while Converge Heartland only has access to the churches in our region. It is our hope that our churches will also generously support regional church planters, international missionaries, benevolence and world relief projects.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONVERGE NATIONAL AND CONVERGE HEARTLAND?

Converge National provides international and national disaster relief programs, national chaplaincy program, Converge Retirement Plan and Wesleyan Investment Foundation for church loans and investments.

Converge Heartland has a local and regional focus, deploying regional missionaries and church planters and establishing regional partnerships. Converge Heartland provides pastoral care, regional fundraising, pastoral placement and interim services, local church consulting and coaching and global vision trips for pastors and key leaders.





CONVERGE HEARTLAND BOARD MEMBERS

Jim Capaldo - Converge Heartland Regional President

Pastor Jon Vinter - Board Chairman
Overland Hills Church Papillion, NE

Pastor Tim Buzan - Board Vice Chairman
Heartland Church, Blue Springs, MO

Brian Fite - Board Secretary
Calvary Baptist Church, Platte, SD

Pastor Curtis Tschetter
GracePoint Church, Ogallala, NE

Pastor Mark Dickson
Sun Prairie Baptist Church, Salem, SD

Fred Gackle
Kulm Baptist Church, Kulm, ND

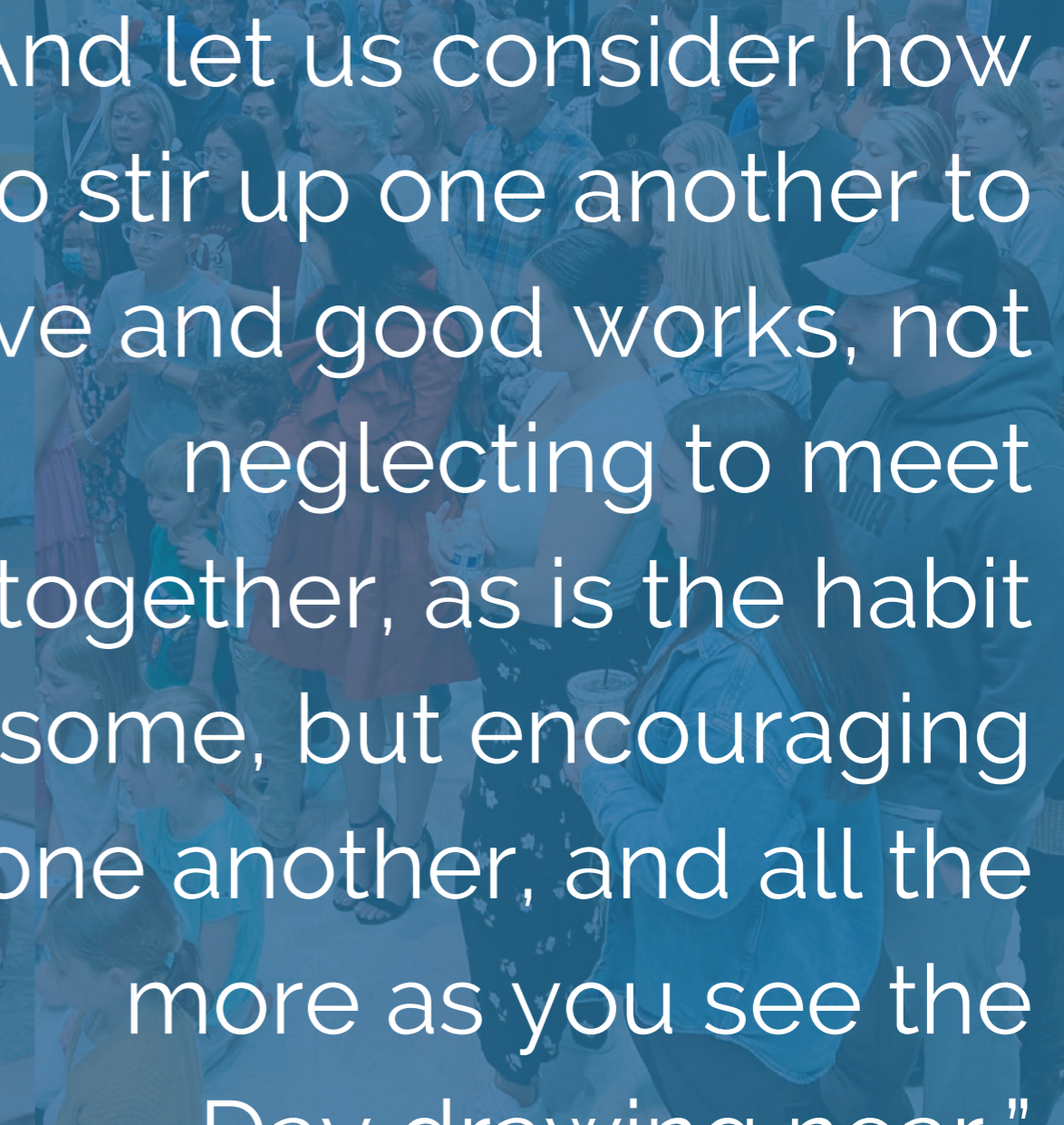


NEW BOARD NOMINEES

Dr. Bruce Wately - Faith Baptist Fellowship, Sioux Falls, SD

Jon Frick - River of Life Community Church, Canton, SD

District Treasurer - Molly Okerlund of ATY Solutions, Sioux Falls, SD



And let us consider how
to stir up one another to
love and good works, not
neglecting to meet
together, as is the habit
of some, but encouraging
one another, and all the
more as you see the
Day drawing near."

Hebrews 10:24-25





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