

# District Executive Minister's Annual Report

## September 21, 2018

### Open the Front Door

We are seeing new churches explore and come into our District through both church planting and the provision of value-added services. Even at only 8-10 hours per week, the addition of Jeff Gauss as the Church Planting Director has given our district solid experience and leadership in church planter coaching. The results are that we now have two new church plants in Wichita, Kansas, and are working to identify new church planting recruits. We are also offering compensated services such as pastoral search, strategic planning retreats (StratOp), payroll, and merger/consolidation services to non-District churches as a means of opening the front door of our District for new church affiliations and funding District ministry.

### Close the Back Door

Reducing pastoral turn-over and church closures is an ongoing task in our District. Though many churches and pastors are feeling encouraged, we also have discouraged pastors as well as several churches that are stagnated or in decline. Navigating these realities requires a trust-based pastor-to-pastor, pastor-to-District, and church-to-District relationships. Though our 2018 Pastor's Renewal Retreat was enjoyed by many pastoral couples, our monthly pastoral Lead Teams are our primary avenue of ongoing pastoral support and cooperation. Besides this, over 60 District church visits, in FY18, produced seven StratOp retreats, six regional workshops, three pastoral search efforts, two ordinations, speaking in 36 different venues, three church consolidation efforts, one merger, two interim pastorates, and one pastor's retreat. In all, this represents nearly 40,000 miles driven and over 90 district-work-related hotel stays.

### Tear Down the Walls

Currently, Converge Heartland has six churches reflecting their Non-Anglo senior leadership, making us 10% diverse. The addition of an Outreach Coordinator, Keith VenHuizen, gives us the capacity to explore and responsibly engage in ministry opportunities among our District's 25 Native American reservations. Furthermore, our four staff who are designated to jail and prison ministries are effectively reaching into two incarcerated communities of our District with an army of over 50 volunteers! 2018 also saw a District team of 35 go on a mission trip to Puerto Rico with trips to Ethiopia and Nordic-Baltic regions slated for FY19. We are excited to see many other District churches taking mission trips as well. Finally, we have the high privilege of sending three new missionaries from our District; Sara Adams is a Converge missionary heading to Thailand, Wayne Bangs is a resigning Converge Heartland pastor who is beginning to serve with our District as a missionary to refugees in East Africa, and the third missionary is a transitioning District employee heading to serve with Pioneers among an unengaged and unreached Muslim people group in a restricted access region of Central Asia.

### Build the House

Throughout our last fiscal year, we have continued to develop our District services and staff. We have geographically multiplied our strategic ministry planning capacity into four new areas and are positioned to serve both District churches and non-District churches with our services. Our budget is increasing year over year and FY18 was the highest in Converge Heartland's history, with over \$725,000 in revenues! Financially, our general fund is sound with \$130,000 in General Fund Reserves and \$60,000 in undesignated cash. Our Church Planting Funds must grow, as our opportunities and expenses are outpacing our designated funding. Besides this, our District team has developed new revenue streams, ensured cash flow, improved communications, upgraded systems, and grown forward toward our vision of seeing a gospel-centered church bringing transformation to every Heartland community.

It is an honor to serve our Converge Heartland District churches! Thank you for your faithful support of our District and for your commitment to starting and strengthening churches together worldwide!

Rev. Jim Capaldo  
Converge Heartland District Executive Minister