

**Dear friends of Vital Signs Ministries,**

**June 2020**

I begin with a thank-you for those of you who called or wrote about your appreciation of last month's letter, "You Are More Important Than You Can Imagine." Your encouragement means more than we can say. As you well know, I try to "mix it up" with these monthly letters. Sometimes they are a Bible study as much as anything. Other times they are an exhortational essay, a report of personal adventures, or even a bit of a history lesson. And, of course, we try to do enough genuinely "newsy" newsletters to keep you abreast (particularly those of you not regularly connected to the blogs or our Facebook pages) of the ongoing workings of the ministry. And this month is one of those "newsy" newsletters so let's get to it.

Where to start? Well, first of all, I'm pleased to say that, despite the shutdown of America these last 3 months (and counting), Vital Signs Ministries has kept remarkably busy in services of education, advocacy, intercession, mercy, and hospitality. I will begin with an update on our prayers and pro-life witness outside the abortion business in northwest Omaha. We have been continuing our regular ministry there throughout the "great hunkering down." Praying together; displaying our winsome signs to clients, workers, and drivers-by; and sidewalk counseling when possible – we keep doing what we can to stand against the lies, the perversion, and the lethal violence committed by the mega-abortion corporation that is Planned Parenthood. With the intense scrutiny that Christians have recently been giving to racial prejudice (and rightly so), we rather hoped that more Christians would get involved in the protest of Planned Parenthood with its longstanding (and well known) concentration on destroying minority babies. But alas, that hasn't been the case. Don't black lives matter in the womb too?



Please keep this crucial aspect of our pro-life witness in your prayers, asking the Lord to grace us with spiritual empowerment, provision, and protection. A couple of weeks ago some of the Christians who come all the way from Columbus to join us on the third Monday of every month were assaulted by egg-throwing abortion zealots. And given the new waves of barbaric violence being unleashed by the left, you can understand why we earnestly desire your prayers.

Of course, our opposition to Planned Parenthood doesn't just involve our physical presence at the abortion mill. No, we also write letters to political officials and others. We post articles on our social media platforms that tell the truth about this evil business, including one recently dealing with the TV program *The Price Is Right* shamelessly shilling for this wicked business. And we continue to promote our **3 for 5 Prayer Program Against Planned Parenthood** we started a few years ago. (To refresh your memories about this prayer plan, check out the article on our website.)

Okay, what's up next in this "newsy" letter? Let's go with our ministries to seniors. Because of the legitimate concerns over the spread of the China virus in senior centers, our "When Swing Was King" shows remain grounded. Indeed, we have not been allowed into any of the 12 facilities on our regular schedule for the last 3 months. Now June is closed too with the rest of the summer very much in question. We are really saddened by this.

However, we mentioned a couple of months ago that we had come up with the idea of "Anti-Boredom Packets" to send over to activity directors which they could copy and hand out to residents. Our purposes were to encourage, to lift spirits, to be winsome and useful in our Christian witness, and to give seniors some serious points to ponder along with a lot of fun stuff. And, in all of this, we hoped to show them that our love for them remains very much in place. Our activity packets are pretty neat. They generally consist of 9 pages which includes 60 or 70 pop culture quiz questions (and answers at the back), quotations and Scriptures, photos, and a personal note from Claire and me. They have won rave reviews from residents, activity directors, and others who have copied them from off our website. And, though it takes quite a bit of work to put each packet together, we are really thrilled and will keep them coming. As a matter of fact, yesterday we sent out our **16th** packet! And, as I mentioned, they are all available at our website so people from all over (including you!) can use them. Has it been a fruitful endeavor? Well, check out just a sampling of the responses.

*Denny & Claire, Just wanted to let you know how much appreciated the trivia packets you posted have been. I printed them off to send one a week to my 2 older sisters and mom. My sister's husband died last July, so she's home by herself and loves doing these. My mom just told me today how much she's enjoyed doing these with my sister's family. She says that she really appreciates all the work you two have put into this. Hope you both are doing well. You'll continue to be in our prayers.*

*Denny, Thank you and your wife for the [activity packets]. I have told you before that your “When Swing Was King” show is my favorite entertainment here. As a 93-year old WWII guy (my wife is 91) we related to the 40’s and 50’s songs. Thank you for your concern. Everyone has to “hang tough” and “stay positive!”*

*Dear Denny & Claire, Hello! We so enjoy your Vital Signs newsletter and hearing about your ministry and how God is using you. We are following your “3 for 5” prayer guide on helping to save babies’ lives. That is very helpful. We have also used some of your “activity packets” for my mom and to sharpen our own brains!*

*Thank you so much for all that you do to save babies’ lives and to love and honor our wise seniors. We continue to pray that God will have mercy on our nation and heal us so we can once again gather together!*

As great a blessing as the activity packets have been, however, we have decided to open a “second front” in our ministries to seniors. That may yet involve the Donut Dodge that we had been planning since last fall but, at least for now, our plan is to “get sweet” by assembling special packages for residents with different candies (sugar-free for diabetics), personal notes, and artwork provided by kids. We did a test run of this idea at Easter and everyone involved found it delightful. We will keep you informed of how it goes. And, if you have kids who can draw, color pages from a coloring book, and/or write notes of greeting, please connect with us soon because we’re already preparing our first 150 sweet packages.



**The Vital Signs Governing Board  
Patrick, Keith, Allen, John, Denny,  
Don, Matt, Quint, Karla, Claire,  
and Mary taking the photo.**

On to a few other matters. We have tried to take a reasonable approach to the virus threat but, as I said, we have also tried to stay effectively involved. This has included our hospitality and networking activities. For instance, our correspondence and social media activity have increased quite a bit in these months. In this last quarter alone, we have sent out more than 40 personal cards and letters PLUS another 20 letters which accompanied CD copies of Patrick Osborne’s marvelous song, “The Lion of Judah.” Also, we have organized more than a dozen different

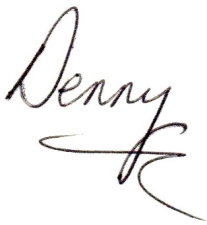
Zoom video calls, some with pro-life colleagues as far away as England. And there was an excellent VSM Governing Board meeting just last week.

We hosted a “Hobbit Brunch” at our home on Saturday morning, May 30th which featured an intriguing 30-minute video from Dr. Peter Kreeft exploring the religious values inherent in J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. And though it didn’t draw the numbers we had hoped, the 11 of us who did show found it a marvelous morning. Deeply challenging, yes; but it was also a most encouraging time as we discussed the power of friendship, the confidence Christ bestows on willing warriors, the keen edge of spirituality that is honed through suffering and purposeful adventure, how the triumph of heaven affects our lives now, the power of art, and more. It was great.

There has also been the success of the Hartford Café. Begun when the mandated quarantines closed restaurants and coffee shops, the Hartford Café opened on Tuesday and Thursday mornings (6:30-8:30) beginning March 24th with free coffee, tea, and a variety of breakfast treats. After a few weeks, Paradise Café reopened, allowing our normal Thursday morning trio to meet there. But the Tuesday version of the Hartford Café continued up until just last Tuesday. It was a splendid time of fellowship amid the isolation of the “great hunkering down” period.

And finally, before I close out this “newsy” newsletter, I should mention a few other items from recent weeks. We had a super afternoon at the Ralph & Carol Kramper home going over our proofreading of Ralph’s latest writing project...Between Claire and me, we have had a few doctor visits (gastroenterologist, dermatologist, neuro-ophthalmologist, and our trusted nurse practitioner Keri Dillon) which resulted in some pretty optimistic reports...And we are reading, doing lawn work, walking and biking, doing the daily exercises the physical therapist prescribed for me two years ago, trying to help out with our church, and, with God’s merciful help, trying to maintain our various spiritual disciplines that keep our hopes, strengths, and joys centered on heaven’s King even as we try to perform the tasks He appoints for us in the here and now.

Until next month,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Denny", followed by a large, stylized flourish.