

**Dear friends of Vital Signs Ministries,**

**October 2022**

I begin this letter where I begin most mornings – at the Panera near the West Dodge Costco store. It is the last day of September and it's only 49 degrees outside. That makes the hot hazelnut coffee I'm enjoying not only tasty but welcomingly warming. Autumn has most certainly arrived here in the heartland.

The agenda for the next few days is a very ambitious one with this month's letter to write, my evaluations of the 3rd quarter of our 2022 Resolutions to finish, and more preparations for the adult Sunday School series I'm teaching on spiritual disciplines. That reminds me too that I need to post on Vital Signs Blog the review of last week's class. I'll be doing that, by the way, with all 8 classes: **Class 1)** "What are spiritual disciplines and why are they so important?" **Class 2)** Intentionality and Purpose: "Planning Produces." **Class 3)** Consistent Intake and Interaction with the Bible. **Class 4)** A Life of Natural, Effective Prayer. **Class 5)** A Giving and Thanksgiving Lifestyle. **Class 6)** The Disciplines of Self-Denial: Investments in Your Eternity. **Class 7)** The Corporate Disciplines: "We're all in this together." **Class 8)** Looking Back and Looking Forward: A Class Review and Planned Action Steps.

And I can't forget the immediate agenda includes our breakfast this morning with missionaries LaVern and Marlene Smith, tomorrow morning's prayer and public witness outside the Planned Parenthood abortion business, preparations for recording video sermons for the Aksarben Village Sunday afternoon services when I'm away, creating the next "When Swing Was King" show which we begin next week, and watering the new grass seed that I put in the lawn yesterday.



But what of the last month? Well, it was one for the books, as they say. There were several difficult occasions: saying goodbye at the funerals of Pierce White and Betty Pistone; ending our monthly book club after 30 years; and watching over my little sister Sherry who is dealing with both the sudden death of her husband and her rapidly developing dementia. In fact, we brought Sherry to Omaha from Wichita to stay with us for 12 days which were quite special to us all. There were a few mornings that she didn't feel too chipper and she needed nearly constant oversight, but we

had some really wonderful times. Those times included "When Swing Was King" shows, watching the Christian music clips we use at our Sunday afternoon church services, meals and other visits with the Morans and Lawsons and Maleks, clothes shopping, listening to early rock music, watching old "Murder, She Wrote" episodes, talking out on the deck, tripping through a local pumpkin and produce spot, listening to an old cassette we had all recorded over 30 years ago, and plenty of other sweet reminiscing.

We then took Sherry back to Wichita last Tuesday where a tour was set up for us at the care facility her kids are leaning towards. We were very impressed. For instance, the ratio of staff to residents is the best we've ever encountered and that's the case too with the level of medical care. Very impressive and comforting. And yet...we still hate to see her start living there if it isn't completely necessary right now. And so we have proposed to Sherry and her 2 children that she stay with us here in Omaha – at least through the holidays. They are thinking it over.

Our September also saw a very successful Book Brunch with 8 of us enjoying a delicious (and fancy!) breakfast as well as a lively discussion of *Created Equal: Clarence Thomas in His Own Words*. We added a second event – a lunch at Shirley's Diner – to talk about the book with Sharon Struve who wasn't able to be there the previous Saturday. Stimulating one another to love and good deeds, to be doers of the Word and not hearers only, to encourage one another more as the day of the Lord draws near --- these are reasons we take such care to create programs like the Book Brunch and we are always honored and pleased to serve whoever is willing and able to participate. And the next Book Brunch? Well, that's on Saturday morning (10 AM until noon) on November 19 with the book under discussion to be the novel, *The Christmas Room*. And guess what? We've managed to convince the book's author to be on hand personally! This one might be a bit bigger than others so please let us know if you're interested so we can plan accordingly. Thanks.

Other noteworthy items for September?

\* I had the honor to address the congregation of Grace Bible Church on Sunday morning September 4th with a sermon entitled "An Apostolic Argument" covering Acts 15:36-41. If you're interested, you can watch that sermon on the Vital Signs Ministries YouTube Channel. You might even find a couple of other clips of interest while you're there.

\* Claire celebrated her 70th birthday with a week of fun fellowship events including a breakfast at A.J.'s with me, a drive out to Fremont with me for tea at M'Lady's, brunch at First Watch with Jean Lawson, lunch with me and the Nelsons at Goldbergs, lunch in Lincoln with her brother, sister and nephew, and a BBQ dinner with me and the Morans. Plus, after coping with the one we inherited when we bought this house 17 years ago, Claire got a new dishwasher for her birthday! How nice to have such an efficient and remarkably quiet machine!

\* September's "When Swing Was King" shows went swimmingly. So too did the Aksarben Village Senior Living Sunday afternoon church services. What an incredible ministry both of these have proven to be. We are truly blessed to be a part of them.

\* As a new member of the Business and Professional Persons for Life governing board, I've undertaken a couple of projects, one linked to the promotion of an October 18th luncheon at Gorat's Restaurant featuring Republican candidate for Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen and another in which I'm writing a special Christmas-themed newsletter for BPPFL.

\* Also along the way in September was a delightful lunch with Ralph and Linda Aldrich, a lunch in Lincoln with Harold Berry, having a new set of greeting cards printed for us (all with terrific photos I've taken in my Colorado hikes) which we use for gifts and for our own

voluminous correspondence, and dealing with a few health challenges. On that last front, the Lord has used our nurse practitioner to perhaps find a breakthrough regarding an ongoing congestion issue that had me lightheaded and off balance for several weeks. We managed to keep going at pretty much the normal pace, but it's really a blessing to have a respite from that "unsettling" condition. Thank You, Father.

Okay, that's about it except for our tackling correspondence, conducting VSM business matters, and starting preparations for our upcoming VSM Board meeting. I've also managed to fit in 8 walks this month with an average of 5.8 miles each outing. And to deal with the inclement weather coming up, we've joined a gym. I'm praying that somebody will show me the weight machines to develop my atrophied muscles so that hiking another 14er next summer (if the Lord tarries and if He so permits) won't be as hard as last month's climb!

Your prayers and support are always among the most important, welcome, and appreciated of all of God's blessings to us and we sincerely thank you. So, until next month's letter, be sure and check us out on Vital Signs Blog (where, among other things, I'm posting those reviews of the spiritual disciplines class), our Facebook pages, or even stop into one of the "When Swing Was King" shows!

Our love to you all,



P.S. For your plans...

**\* The Business and Professional Persons for Life luncheon featuring Republican candidate for Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen is October 18th at Gorat's Restaurant. Doors open at 11:30 with the program from 12 until 1. Tickets are \$17. Contact us ASAP.**

**\* The next letter-writing party is our always festive Christmas card edition. It's on Monday evening, November 28th from 7 o'clock to 8:45.**

**\* Once again, the next Vital Signs Book Brunch (*The Christmas Room*) is on Saturday morning, 10 AM until noon, on November 19. Need a copy of the book? Just let us know.**

