



---- January 2025 ----

Dear friends of Vital Signs Ministries,

Wow, 2024 was quite a year, wasn't it? And so for this January LifeSharer letter I thought it fitting to give **1)** the proverbial *bird's eye view* of our activities during the year, **2)** a bit more detail in reviewing our very lively December, and **3)** finish up with a preview of some "coming attractions." Let's get right to it.

In 2024 Vital Signs Ministries hosted 7 letter-writing parties, 3 book discussions, 3 literature booths, 4 Vital Signs Ministries board meetings, 21 speaking engagements, and well over 120 "When Swing Was King" shows. And it was as busy a year as any preceding it for social media, work on the website and blog, writing the monthly LifeSharer, preparing sermons, and writing a basketful of personal correspondence. Indeed, Claire and I wrote nearly 300 cards and letters...and that number doesn't include the ones we wrote at our letter-writing events.

2024 also saw 40-45 mornings in which we engaged in our prayerful, public witness against the demonic violence perpetrated by the mega-abortion profiteer Planned Parenthood. This, of course, is a ministry we have performed throughout Vital Signs' long history. And in a recent blog post, I shared why it still remains crucial to our ministry. You can find it ("Why A Pro-Life Witness Outside Abortion Clinics?") on Vital Signs Blog (Jan. 9) and on the website.

As you know, our ministry includes a commitment to various ministries of hospitality. From hosting dinner parties in our home to taking cookies to neighbors, our Aksarben Village church family, the local firefighters, and more -- from writing personal letters of encouragement to providing meals for people needing a bit of help -- from mowing neighbors' lawns to befriending non-Christian international students -- from giving meaningful greetings (even occasional small gifts) to friends and others we encounter frequently to tipping the waitress liberally -- hospitality is not only a good deed in itself for which the Lord is pleased, it is also a winsome "open door" to more direct expressions of Christ's glorious gospel and other Bible truths. We are pleased to say 2024 was a very engaging, effective year in this area.

We were not always at home in 2024. We visited my little sister Sherry in Wichita twice; we had a Hartford sibling reunion in California; we had wonderful times with several of my cousins when we were in Branson for our 2-week working vacation; we spent a lovely weekend in Kansas City with Larry & Deb Harrold; we traveled to Kirksville, Missouri for the funeral of one of my relatives; we attended the wedding of Claire's nephew in Denver; and we had lunches, coffees, and a couple of overnight stays in the Lincoln area.

Oh yes, in July Ryan Garvey, Ron Scheffler, Aldo de la Cruz, and I climbed another Colorado 14er, encouraged and supported by Linda Scheffler and Claire.

Of course, 2024 was an election year -- a very challenging election year. And it involved not only the greatest of stakes nationally, but here in Nebraska we had to deal with pro-abortion zealots (backed by Very Big Money) seeking to enshrine into the Nebraska Constitution the most dishonest, despicable, and dangerous measure imaginable -- a move that would permanently and completely override every limitation on child murder ever achieved in the Unicameral. Their proposed amendment would have also spelled doom for pro-life pregnancy aid centers, conscience protections, freedom of speech and assembly for pro-life citizens, and more. It was in this specific area of the political battlefield that Vital Signs played its most significant role in 2024; namely, countering the distorted arguments and slanderous attacks made by a splinter group of pro-life "absolutists/abolitionists" who tried to undermine the strategy agreed upon by the Nebraska Catholic Conference, Nebraska Right to Life, Nebraska Family Alliance, Vital Signs Ministries, Students for the Life of America, Business & Professionals for Life, Abortion Dialogue Academy, and so forth. We were ourselves the subject of ugly criticism in those weeks (and it's still going on), but what is much more disheartening is that this group ended up greatly helping the pro-abortion forces. Indeed, Amendment 439, which would have been absolutely disastrous for the pro-life cause, ended up coming way too close to victory.

But, praise the Lord, not close enough! Amendment 434, which protected all limitations on abortion that had been won over the last 4 decades by pro-lifers in the state legislature, passed. In so doing, Nebraska was the first state to stop the deadly losing streak to pro-abortion bigots. In this critical campaign, I wrote a lot; we spoke to churches and pastoral leaders; we answered questions; and we did a lot of praying! And naturally, we were quite involved in networking with other pro-life groups in the effort. And, when the final votes were counted, the right strategy, the hard work, the strong unity among pro-life heroes, and those fervent prayers of Nebraska pro-life champions had won the day. Thank You, Father!

Now, with the intensely purposeful, courageous, and (dare I say it) manly movement which elected Donald Trump to the Presidency, the Church (in Nebraska and all across the nation) has been blessed by a merciful God with what might be our last chance to start shining (without cowardice, compromise, or laziness) the light of His righteousness into the dismal swamp of lawlessness, sexual perversion, antipathy towards God, denial of science, twisting of history, and the slaughter of the innocents that our nation has, in its suicidal senselessness, been pursuing for 60 years.

By the way, relevant to this desperate need for the Church's commitment to stand for their Savior against the godlessness of our age, you might want to check out some of the post-election essays I wrote. You can find them under *Articles* on the Vital Signs Ministries website: "A Top 10 Pro-life Priority List." "For the Watchmen on the Walls: Prayer and Advocacy Priorities for 2025." "After the Election -- Round 2." -- "After the Sigh of Relief: 7 Post-Election Observations"

As suggested in the discussion immediately above, there was more than the usual amount of networking this past year with organizations with whom we are honored to have as friends and colleagues. Examples? Well, we helped out with Nebraska Right to Life in the election battles, with the Walk for Life and their Gala Banquet, and we took a couple of shifts at the NRL State Fair booth in Grand Island. Vital Signs also hosted tables at fundraisers for Assure Women's

Center, the Nebraska Right to Life Gala, and the Nebraska Family Alliance banquet. Furthermore, 2024 saw Claire and I involved with an Essential Pregnancy Services fundraiser, the Abortion Dialogue Academy annual breakfast, a local GOP Pachyderm luncheon, the Global Friends dinner (GF is a ministry to international students), the Nebraska Bishops' Banquet, and a celebratory Nebraska Family Alliance luncheon. Also, as I've frequently mentioned, I serve on the board of the Business and Professional People for Life and so 2024 also saw us organizing the group's four quarterly luncheons, providing emcee services for those events, and helping write their newsletter.

Oh yes, I mustn't forget another really cool networking event from the year -- Claire and I helping out at the Tim Tebow Foundation's **Night to Shine** prom event for special need teens and adults held at King of Kings Church. That was a fantastic evening!

Yet another "Wow" item from 2024 would be our hosting Dr. Greg Gardner from Birmingham, England. Greg visited us for several days as we set up radio interviews and 9 personal meetings with local pro-life activists. He did a great job and, in addition to the radio audiences, over 70 people heard his enlightening takes on American history and politics, the pro-life movement, the fight for freedom of religion and speech, chemical abortion, science denial, and much more. Greg's visit was certainly one of the best of 2024's blessings.

But, hold on; I'm not done listing peak moments from the year passed. There was, for instance, our leading neighbors in an intense 3-day cleanup effort after the August windstorm. We helped Bob & Linda Potter pull off another successful Christian Brotherhood reunion. I recorded several mini-sermons for uploading onto the Vital Signs YouTube channel. I compiled the series of recommended articles I post every Saturday, The Top 5. And I proofread and made a few suggestions for the manuscript of a book recently written by ChristyAnne Collins, one of the pioneers of the pro-life direct action movement.

And, as has been the case every Sunday afternoon since February of 2021, a group of residents from Aksarben Village Senior Living enjoy having church -- courtesy of Vital Signs Ministries. And what a grand outreach that has been to all involved!

So, okay. That quick zip through 2024 brings us now to the holiday season. And, since you all know what hearty Christmas enthusiasts Claire and I are, you'll no doubt expect that our 2024 Yuletide was busier than the other months of the year. You're right; it was. For instance, our hospitality ministries, always a steady feature of our lives, shift into an even higher gear at Christmastime. This year, counting the dinners we hosted on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day One, Claire and I hosted a total of 56 guests at 12 at-home dinner parties. And yes, each one of those guests (whether old and dear ministry partners or new friends from Ukraine and India) was a real peach! Furthermore, we were blessed beyond measure by being guests ourselves at several really inspiring gatherings. So thank-yous are definitely in order to the Garveys, Roberts, Harrolds, Fichters, and Noretta Glup for treating Claire and me to such delightful parties.

Other December items? With help from Ruth Denzler, Claire hosted a Christmas Ladies' Tea for 13 gals from Aksarben Village Senior Living. What a blessing that was for these dear people! --- Early in the month we hosted 2 Christmas card editions of Vital Signs quarterly

letter-writing parties. Among the primary letter targets at both events were the N.U. female athletes whose pro-life TV spot had such a profound effect in the amendment fight. (Each young woman thus received 8-11 cards each AND a box of chocolates from Bakers' Candies!) --- I served as a co-presenter with Pastor Dan Hauge at the Christmas Eve service at Grace Bible Church. --- Claire baked cookies and they were generously distributed (along with Christmas quizzes we had created) to neighbors, church folks, and our local firefighters. --- The December Sunday afternoon church services at Aksarben Village Senior Living were delightfully Christmassy. --- And that word Christmassy certainly applies to the heartwarming Christmas edition of our "When Swing Was King" shows as well. My how our audiences loved it!

Also this Christmas season --- We embraced again our tradition of singing Christmas carols during Saturday prayers and street witness outside the abortion business. --- In addition to promoting our longstanding resource "Making the Most of Christmas" which is always available on our website, we created a similar packet (27 pages) called "The Thanksgiving Present." --- I joined new state senator Tanya Storer for interviews in the State Capitol building for a project of Nebraska Right to Life. --- Among the month's writing was a dramatic personal story, "Stranded at La Veta Pass: A Rescue Story." It's on the blog for Dec 14. --- Claire and I took New Year's Day at Prairie Creek Inn to evaluate our resolutions from 2024 and to candidly, humbly, and seeking God's gracious empowerment discuss the new ones we have made. --- We attended concerts at Prairie Creek Inn and at Immanuel Village Senior Community. ---

Well, okay; this letter doesn't contain *everything* that we managed to squeeze into 2024 (not even into December), but you get the idea. And I only have so much space for this letter. And, before I close, I wanted to encourage your prayers for a few of the "coming attractions" in 2025.

Claire and I will be involved in the Nebraska Right to Life Gala featuring guest speaker Jim Caviezel on January 31 along with the Walk for Life the next morning at the State Capitol --- We will also be in Washington, D.C. for the March for Life January 24. --- We will again be helping with Night to Shine on February 7. --- And we will be "staying the course" with our street witness (and sidewalk counseling when we can), our "When Swing Was King" presentations, our Sunday afternoon church services, and all of our other duties with correspondence, social media, networking, and hospitality.

Now as you can see, I have just a little space to finish this very newsy January letter, so let me simply say thank you, dear friends, for your prayers, encouragement, utilization, and support of Vital Signs Ministries. They make possible all the things I've described in this letter...and they will help so much in keeping us going strong for the Lord, His Kingdom, and "the least of these" in the coming year. May our Lord's blessings to you, your loved ones, and your various ministries in His vineyard be momentous and bountiful in 2025.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Denny". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned at the bottom left of the page.