

Dear Friends,

December 2024

Merry Christmas! As December gets underway, I hope that the busyness of the season doesn't drown out the deep reality that God loves us so much that he sent his Son in such a humble way to deliver us from sin so he can have a relationship with us. God loves YOU so much and he wants to be CLOSE to you now and always.

Many of you are aware that Michelle has had Whooping Cough (Pertussis). We thank you so much for your prayers, kind words, and support. They say it's a 3 month illness and that the first 6-8 weeks are the worst. She is about 7 weeks in. She was in the hospital for 2 nights in late October and then on oxygen for most of November. She's had to lay low during this time and focus on recovery not having energy for much else. It is wonderful to see her return to some of her normal activities, but it is painfully slow at times.

We praise God for what he is doing in our family and ministry. First, here's a quick update on the family. Sydney recently started her 4th year at her law firm in D.C. She got to take her first international trip for the firm in June—2 weeks in Malaysia. Alec has been married to Franny for 15 months now. They were clerking for judges but both got permanent jobs in August. Alec is a public defender in Maryland fulfilling a ten-year dream. Franny is a prosecutor in another county in Maryland. No, they won't face each other in court! William graduated from CO School of Mines with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and started a job in Kansas City in June. Later this month he'll be transferring within the company to their Denver office, making his parents very happy. Gixson has been with his new company as a field engineer for one year now. He has built those huge windmills in CA, TX, and OK and is now in Michigan working at a solar farm. He loves all the travel and everything he is learning. Michelle's consulting business, Virago Strategies, is in its 4th year and keeps her busy working with non-profits around the country. She still leads worship from time to time at Westside Church and can be found around Open Door Ministries doing a training, being a mentor, or coming alongside me in some of my roles. It's been a year since I lost my dad, so I've been learning how to grieve well and have enjoyed some times with my mom and family back in Ohio.

We started at Open Door in June 1996, so we are getting close to that 30 year mark. It's been a joy seeing people develop over the years. We recently heard from a former resident and worship team member when Michelle was leading at ODF that she is finishing her Bachelor of Science degree in criminal justice in June 2025. She writes, "I love you guys and you're part of the reason I'm pursuing my degree and my passion so that I can finally fulfill my purpose and help others like me!" ODM recently hired a man on our maintenance team who came to Open Door back in the early '90's. He was a 15 year old street kid at the time having been kicked out of the home of his adoptive parents. He first came to Jesus way back then on a white water rafting trip. Over the years, he has lived in our housing on and off and was briefly on staff with our men's home. After a brief stint of homelessness again, he is now living at our new apartment complex, Humboldt Beginnings, and is on staff full time with us. He has an amazing attitude and is a joy to work with.

Developing leaders like I shared above is one of the great joys of this work. In fact, of ODM's ~50 staff, 1/3 of them are graduates from our programs over the years. This is so important because they have a unique ability to speak into the lives of the new ministry participants. In order to facilitate and speed this along, ODM started the Nehemiah Leadership Initiative a year and a half

ago. This is our 2nd year and we have 7 “fellows” in the program—3 of them coming from within the ministries. They each work 25 hours per week in one of the programs and spend 15 hours per week in various trainings preparing them for urban ministry.

For those of you who are numbers people like me, here are some of the numbers from 2024 as of the end of November. 4426 people served, 100 people housed, 54 salvations, baptisms, or rededications, 44,426 meals/snacks served, and 85,865 total points of contact which could include anything from a visit to our drop in center or an attendance at one of our Bible studies.

ODM has an exciting \$100,000 matching gift opportunity right now. It applies to all areas of ODM including my personal support which does still have a \$500/month shortfall. There are 2 ways to qualify.

1. Any gift from a brand new giver is doubled! If you haven't donated to ODM or my support before, this is a great time to give and get your donation doubled.
2. Any increased gift that is committed for 2 years or 24 months will also be doubled! If a current supporter increases their monthly gift by \$25 and commits to 24 months, that would count as \$600 (24 X \$25) toward the match and ODM would get that extra amount.

Donations can be given or set up online at <https://www.odmdenver.org/staff-giving>. Please choose “David Warren” in the designation drop down menu. You can also leave a comment to indicate that it qualifies for the match or just let me know.

I've included some pictures below for your enjoyment.

Merry Christmas,

David & Michelle







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