



Vision

To bring young women who are struggling into fulfillment and purpose in **Jesus Christ.**

Mission

To help young women work through life-dominating challenges.

To provide loving nurture, discipleship, and care.

To assist in learning the value of self-discipline and intentional living in a structured family-like setting.

To inspire a vision for and an understanding of the joy of serving others.

Spring 2026

Volume 8

Labor On!

Ezra Martin, Auxiliary Board Member

It is spring-time! Such a nice time of the year. I often thank God for the beauty of nature.

Reflecting back over the past few years I notice time has a way of moving on. Like the Bible says, "as thy days so shall thy strength be." We can see how the Lord leads in many ways! Stories Made New, has seen a number of changes along the way, and changes often do not come easy.

We are settled into a different locality and a different building. We are working on getting adjusted to the building and making a few changes. On the second floor, we have added two bedrooms and a bath. And on the third floor we are making plans for three more bedroom/bathroom combinations. All this will make so we can accommodate two more young ladies and another mentor.

One big issue is the sprinkler system. We are making improvements to this system so we can have approval for the additional bedrooms. We are working with the township on the above improvements. Ernest and Yvonne Witmer are kept busy and filling a very important role. They work closely with the young ladies that come for help.

In the words of H. R. Palmer, the hymnwriter:

Labor on, labor on!
Keep the bright reward in view;
For the Master has said He will strength renew;
Labor on till the close of day!



*Touched by a loving heart,
wakened by kindness,
Chords that are broken will
vibrate once more.*

Love is the image of God in the soul of man; for God is LOVE. By faith we receive this from our Maker. By hope we expect a future and eternal good; but by love we resemble God; and by it alone are we qualified to enjoy Heaven and be one with Him throughout eternity.

Faith is the foundation of the Christian life, and good works follow; hope rears the structure; but love finishes, completes, and crowns it in a blessed eternity. Faith helps us, and hope sustains us; but love for God and man makes us obedient and useful. This one consideration is sufficient to show that love is greater than either faith or hope.

Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. Heb 6:1

Stories Made New exists especially for young women who support the 1963 Mennonite Confession of Faith.

We desire to see these young women brought into spiritual freedom and life in Christ Jesus.

Please pray for this ministry within our Anabaptist community!

Stories Made New operates under a Board of Directors and an advisory committee. Names and affiliations are listed on the back page.

The Art of Insight, part 2

Ernest & Yvonne Witmer, Administrators

So, how does the crucial concept of BALANCE contribute to the art of insight in how we view Christian counseling here at Stories Made New? You will sense the necessary tension involved as we approach this from the biblical foundation of our Hebrew Bible. (Perhaps a rereading of last quarter's winter newsletter may be helpful.)

1) In the beginning, God made mankind very good (Gen 1:31). Yet all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). This is not good.

When life is not working for the young women who come to us for help, to one degree or another it's usually because they have lost sight of who God has designed for them to be.

Somehow, they have been so wounded by others or are living under the condemnation of what they may have done to themselves that they fail to see both the beauty of their heavenly Father's



original intent and the joy of redemption through what Jesus has done for them now.

2) Men and women are much the same, yet very different.

We have all been made in God's image (Gen 1:27), and the healthiness of wholesome interaction between the sexes modeled to us by our parents largely determines how well we do in life. This is why marriage matters so much! Since we work with young women, we're largely working with the female aspect of who God is. But for these young women to grow into God's complete design for them, they also need to have a healthy understanding of men too.

3) Children are to honor their parents, both father and mother. Yet we must all repent and forsake the inherited sins of our family systems too.

The warning of God's Word is clear that if we want to cut short the blessing of the life God has given us, we will do so by dishonoring our parents (Ex 20:12). Again, the tension of the original Hebrew mindset is present; we need to honor both father and mother. We can't use the honor we feel for one parent to justify the contempt we carry for the other, no matter how horrible they may have been. At the same time, we must be brutally honest with ourselves and take personal responsibility for and repent of the sins of our parents.



Meal Prep

4) God sets the solitary in families (Ps 68:6), yet subtle ingrown emotional dependency is spiritually unhealthy.

God is a Father to the fatherless and loves to arrange families to surround those who are struggling with loneliness, dysfunction, and confusion. Familial love, identification with each other, and common connections facilitate healing. Yet it is only JESUS, the Great Physician, who heals our hearts, minds, and souls. We should never USE others—even our family structures—to heal ourselves. Such is abuse and only leads to emotional dependency and accentuates sin.



Game Time

5) God's Word has the answers for every human need. At the same time, we can be no more spiritual than what we are emotionally healthy.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jer 15:16). This speaks of emotional health, brought on by the treasuring of God's Word. But we need to also remember that it was the Spirit of God who inspired this Word. Spiritual health then is measured not by what we know about God through His Word but by how much His Spirit has engaged our spirit in emotional health.

6) Our healing in Christ is both miraculously instantaneous yet gruelingly laborious.

Sensationalism loves to highlight miracles that we can physically sense and emotionally feel. And we love it when God chooses to do this.

Yet the greatest miracle of all is a life transformed through the power of Jesus' life flowing through her/his spirit.

Often there is a degree of instantaneous change that is felt, but life-long transformation comes by faithfully clinging to Christ and identifying with Him, even in His suffering.

These are fundamental concepts and it's important that we embrace them! Dysfunction always creeps into our family systems when we fail to hold seemingly contradictory truth together in balance—despite the tensions we may feel from it.



All the way from California



Yvonne's birthday party
(downtown Ephrata)

* I want to recognize and honor the late Dr Marlin Howe in his Hope for the Family series. Our family has benefited much from his teaching throughout the years.



I Gave My Life Away – Shyanna

It was the end of October 2025 when my mentor Kim asked me if God was in control of my life. My answer was no. We talked some more, then she prayed for me. When someone prays for me, I always feel a peace and my heart is at rest.

I went inside to help with supper and the rest of the night went well as we did some singing around the campfire. The next day after our morning walk, my other mentor, Keturah, asked if I was doing alright and I told her I was thinking about what Kim had asked me the night before.

We went to discipleship class then and over that time we sang my favorite song, Victory in Jesus. It really spoke to me again. It was like I was starting to know what the song was really talking about. Ernest & Yvonne and Kim met with me afterward and Kim told them about our conversation the night before. They asked me a few more questions about it.

Then I decided to pray and ask Jesus into my life. And when we came back downstairs, I announced to Lavina in the kitchen: “I just gave my life away!” She responded in a way that is SO Lavina, “I hope it was to Jesus!” And I said, “YEP! I gave my life away to JESUS!”

For awhile now I've had joy for the Lord but after Christmas when I came back to SMN I went through a time of wrestling and not wanting to be here. I was feeling a bit homesick and wanted to go home. But after having a couple of meetings with Ernest & Yvonne, and Kim, I was able to surrender that to the Lord. Now I feel like I have my joy back and I'm so grateful for the last few months I've had at SMN. As I go from here, I'm excited to see what God has in store for my life.

2026 Summer Open House

EVERYONE WELCOME!

Saturday, June 27th 3:00 — 6:00 p.m.

154 E Farmersville Road

Ephrata, PA 17522

- Visit the ministry & mansion

- Buy gifts, crafts, pastries, & other things made by the ladies

- Enjoy coffee, tea, and finger foods



154 E. Farmersville Road
Ephrata, PA 17522



PRAISE REPORTS

- Resident ladies with a beautiful hunger for Jesus and the Holy Spirit's power in their lives.
- Vibrant, humble staff loving each other and leaning hard on Jesus.
- Shyanna graduating here in May.
- Great open house experiences with several hundred guests each time.
- Luscious garden space for working together to grow our own food.

PRAYER ITEMS

- Spirit guidance for mentors, counselors, and administrators as they work with the young ladies.
- Sustaining prayers for young ladies still on our waiting list.
- Issuing of permits for phase 2 of the remodeling project.
- Funding of phase 2 remodeling for three more bedrooms on the third floor, changes required for re-zoning, and upgrading old equipment.

Learn more at: www.storiesmadenew.org

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Make checks payable to

STORIES MADE NEW

154 E. Farmersville Rd, Ephrata, PA 17522

Also to give, go to: www.storiesmadenew.org/give

Tax-deductible receipts will be sent upon request.

Monthly operational
budget.

\$30,000

Groceries, fresh
vegetables, beef,
chicken, and pork
also appreciated.

Funds still needed to
cover updates and
remodeling cost.

\$82,000

In-kind donations of
labor and materials also
accepted.