

# Stories MADE NEW



## 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.

Winter 2026

Volume 7

## Go-Giver

Nathaniel Gingrich, Board Secretary

As a board member of Stories Made New, I find myself deeply grateful as I reflect on 2025.

This past year marked a significant transition for the ministry as we moved into a new home. It's a change that required far more than bricks and mortar. It required people; and people responded.

Many gave generously of their time. Others offered their energy, creativity, and skills. Still others gave financially, trusting God and the mission enough to invest sacrificially. And together, these gifts formed something far greater than any one contribution. The ongoing expansion to add five additional rooms has benefited from this generosity.

Scripture reminds us, "Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered." (Prov 11:25 ESV).



We have seen that truth lived out this year. It represented a community pulling together to provide, serve, and grow together.

The book The Go-Giver teaches that lasting impact flows from giving more value than we take. And this principle aligns beautifully with the heart of God. Jesus Himself modeled a life poured out for others, calling us to see the world not as something to fear, but as a place where God is at work.

As we look ahead, we do so with hope, and we thank the staff members, volunteers, donors and supporters who continue to engage and encourage. This is a place where stories will continue to be told, healing will deepen, and lives will be restored. The same generosity that carried us through the recent transition will shape our future.

Thank you to every giver. Your faith has made room for new stories—stories still being written. And as we move forward, may we continue to live as Go-Givers, trusting that in God's economy, open hands are never empty.



Wanita graduated in January

Stories Made New has been established 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 Jesus Christ.

**Please pray for this ministry to our Anabaptist communities!**

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 1

Ernest & Yvonne Witmer, Administrators

(Recognition is given to [The Story of Paul](#), by James Kallas, Zondervan)

In previous articles we discussed the first two of three critical concerns for Christians in the world of counseling, and how we approach the ministry of helping young women here at Stories Made New. We believe they are foundational to a wholesome view of ministry. Let's review them briefly:

**1) SEQUENCE:** The Tree of Life (keeping first things first), and **2) FOCUS:** The School of Christ (keeping our eyes on Jesus).. And this third article then, has to do with **3) BALANCE:** The Art of Insight (keeping it all together).

Christian truth is dialectical in nature—in fact, it would appear at times to be almost paradoxical.

Our Bible is a Hebrew book. And even though the New Testament was originally written in Greek, the writers of the NT were Hebrew men.

The Hebrew frame of mind tended to express itself



in terms of opposites by saying at the same time two seemingly contradictory things.

The real truth was then found in holding both of these seemingly opposite truths together in balance; not rejecting one truth in order to accept the other but accepting the tension of balance in holding them both together with each other.

And by doing so, they did not subtract from each other, but instead, each truth added weight and meaning to the whole truth.

We find this to be the case in many places throughout the Bible. For example:

**1)** On the one hand the Bible makes clear that God is sovereign, but on the other hand it is equally clear that man is responsible.

**2)** On the one hand the Bible includes the book of Galatians, but on the other hand it also has the book of James.



Nadine Weaver plying her culinary skills

**3)** And in those two books we discover on the one hand that salvation comes alone by grace through faith, but on the other hand we also discover that faith without works is dead.

**4)** On the one hand we learn in the Bible that love without truth is less than real love, but on the other hand we also learn that truth without love is less than real truth. So, it says we should “speak the truth in love.”

**5)** We read in the Bible the value of believers being separate from the world, but on the other hand we also learn the value of believers being the salt of the earth.



Wintertime Ladies

**6)** We read in one place, just three verses apart, how we are to “bear one another’s burdens,” but also that “everyone should bear their own burden.”

In so many instances we see this critical concept of balance as imperative for fully understanding biblical truth!

Our problem then, as Bible students today, is that we do not have Hebrew mindsets. We are westerners and tend to major in logic: if [(a=b) and (b=c) then (a=c)]. If this is true, and that is true, then this and that is also true. We highlight one truth at a time, often going to great lengths trying to make harmony out of *apparent* contradiction by either stressing one part of the truth or another.



All too often we approach the Bible in the same way. We pick and choose whatever seems the most *logical* and emphasize that. But we will never begin to understand real Bible truth until we are willing to adopt the Hebrew manner of thought—holding all of truth together in balance.

This is a fundamental concept, and it's important that we embrace it! Because error always creeps into our theology when we fail to hold seemingly paradoxical truth together in balance—despite the tension we feel from it.

Many of the earliest heresies within Christian theology stemmed from a refusal to hold opposing truths together in balance. And it happens today as well.

The meaning of our word “heresy” in its root does not mean untruth, but half-truth, or partial truth. It is truth taken in isolation—sundered from counter-truth—thus producing error. Romans 1:18 and 25 refers to those who “hold the truth in unrighteousness (unequally) and change the truth of God into a lie.” 2 Timothy 2:15 says, “rightly dividing the word of truth,” meaning to make an accurate cut, to dissect correctly.

**So, how does this relate to Christian counseling and to what we do here at Stories Made New?** Please stay tuned. In the next quarterly newsletter, we will seek to answer this question. It provides some more of the foundational under-girding of our philosophy for helping young women.

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



## God's Calling, God's Timing, God's Miracle

– Kimberly Kleinsasser



It wasn't a profound word from God that I should come to Pennsylvania to work in a young ladies' ministry. Rather, it was simply a longing to serve young women who are hurting, and a passion for discipleship that made me reach out to Mel Esh of Aquila Villa in the summer of 2022. Since I'm Canadian, the board at first didn't think it would be possible. However, discovery was made that one can get a religious workers visa to work in the US. It was exciting that perhaps this could truly become a reality. The door had inched open a tiny bit. We hired a lawyer and started the paperwork.

In the meantime, Mel also encouraged me to sign up for an online training called RESTORE to better equip myself for work at a young ladies' home. I reached out to the organization, but they were not taking any more applications for that year because they were full. It was disappointing yet not entirely when they sent me an email with all the information to do the training on my own. Then God granted me an amazing gift.

A few months later—due to a cancellation—there was an opening for one more trainee and they offered me the slot. It was a confirmation to me that God was opening this door and that I should keep moving ahead.

Despite initially being denied the R1 visa, I continued to sense God's Spirit telling me, "I will grant your petition" (Psalm 20). And because the administration and board was not ready to give up, I agreed to try again. There was a lot more paperwork that needed to be done on the part of the ministry and that included becoming an independent 501(c)3 and forming Stories Made New. Many months of waiting still followed and though I was wondering if this really was what God wanted me to do, I prayed hard that He would either completely shut the door or open it wide. The thought of giving up went through my head many times but I somehow never felt like God was shutting the door and saying no.

Meanwhile there was a shift at SMN in the summer of 2024 that caused some uncertainty for the ministry. I was in Pennsylvania in September and set up a meeting with Ernest and Yvonne who were asked by the board to step in as administrators. Because of the uncertainty of where the ministry was heading, I left that meeting wondering if perhaps stayed with me as I left the meeting: Ernest said to me feel like this is the place for me but that if I still wanted me and would get the paperwork rolling again in order

I went home, spent time in prayer, and again felt God. But once again, He asked me to wait. I finally was able I prayed for a job and in February (a year ago), started so grateful for that open door as I laid my dream into family and to be there for my brother as he planned his

During this time, Stories Made New moved into a new need of another mentor. In late March Ernest made positive about getting me the R1 visa. A few weeks my sister-in-law-to-be with her wedding plans, and huge thing of obtaining an R1 visa. But then the month ing I got a call from Ernest saying, **"The visa is approved!!"**



Shyanna w/Kimberly

this was God's way of shutting the door. But one thing right before leaving that he understands if I no longer to come and serve as a mentor, they would like to hire to re-apply for the R1 visa as soon as possible.

confirming to me that this is what He wanted me to do. to surrender it all to Him and just settle in back home. a new job as a receptionist at a chiropractic office. I was God's hands. I was able to be at home to support my wedding.

location in Farmersville, near Ephrata and was still in contact with an attorney in Michigan who was very passed. I enjoyed the job where I was working, helped waited to see what would happen with this impossibility of May rolled around and—what do you know, one morn-

I was in shock! Only a few weeks after applying, and it went through! I was told I would receive the paperwork in the mail and was asked if I would be available to come in June. I was still doubting this was real when the FedEx package arrived from the lawyer's office. I opened it up and yes it said "approved" on some very official looking documents. Plans were made for me to come to PA at the end of August. I gave my boss my notice of quitting, booked my tickets, flew to Ontario for my brother's wedding, spent time with family and friends, and packed up life as I knew it in Manitoba. After 2 1/2 years of waiting, **God did a miracle and swung the door wide open.**

Still, one more miracle happened at the border when Rebecca and I drove there to get my visa stamped. I figured they would for sure interrogate me for hours and what if they decided not to give me the stamp after all?! About 30 minutes before we got to the border, Rebecca asked me if I wanted to pray before we got there. My prayer was that I would be able to leave there within one hour.

At the border, a really nice guard took my passport & paperwork and had us pass through and go into the office. We had only been there for about 20 minutes when the guard called me up. He asked me a few questions, typed away on his computer awhile and then reached for a large stamp. I couldn't believe it! **He was actually going to stamp my passport!!**

It was such a surreal feeling a couple of minutes later when I walked out with an official R1 visa stamp in my passport. And it only took 30 minutes! I had felt God's call; I had waited on Him with all my doubts; but I kept hanging on to Him, and He swung the door wide in His own time, and made what seemed to be impossible truly happen. **It was His miracle to me!**

In the five months I've been here at Stories Made New I appreciate the way we are able to work together as a team! The support I feel from the administrators has been huge in how they take time for me and have walked with me through all the adjustments. I enjoy the way we dialogue as a team, and even the vulnerability we share together helps me in my own walk with God.

I have faced challenges since coming, but I have the assurance that God is in this. He brought me here and He keeps moving me forward as I serve Him as a mentor at SMN.



Monica's creativity



154 E. Farmersville Road  
Ephrata, PA 17522

## PRAISE REPORTS

- Keturah King, Kimberly Kleinsasser, and Lavina Brubacker for their excellent ministry with us!
- Nadine Weaver, Rachel Deim, Lana Kurtz, Carolyn Sauder, Dave & Rhoda Kauffman, and Raymond & Naomi Burkholder, for their part-time help!
- Wanita Kreider graduated in January, completing her time with us!
- The Christmastime open house gave opportunity to show over 200 people through the ministry!

## - PRAYER ITEMS

- Continued guidance for mentors and counselors as they bring our young ladies to Jesus.
- Sustaining prayers for the ladies still on our waiting list because we don't have room for them.
- Please pray for a breakthrough with some of the permitting complications in getting the third floor completed!



Kim Kleinsasser (mentor), Shyanna, Wanita, Tanya, Monica, Keturah King (mentor)

Learn more at: [www.storiesmadenew.org](http://www.storiesmadenew.org)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Leroy Smucker**, Chairman  
Old Order Amish  
717.629.3915

**Nathaniel Gingrich**, Secretary  
Mid-Atlantic Fellowship  
717.572.7150

### To be supplied

**Cleason Sensenig**  
Mid-Atlantic Fellowship  
717.278.0364

**Mark King**, Treasurer  
Pequea Amish Mennonite Church  
717.278.9287

## STAFF

Ernest & Yvonne Witmer, Administrators  
[storiesmadenew@gmail.com](mailto:storiesmadenew@gmail.com), Main Office  
[ernestwitmer@juno.com](mailto:ernestwitmer@juno.com), 323.333.2279

Yvonne Witmer, Lead Mentor  
Keturah King, Mentor  
Lavina Brubaker, Domestics/Mentor  
Kim Kleinsasser, Mentor

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Make checks payable to

**STORIES MADE NEW**

154 E. Farmersville Rd, Ephrata, PA 17522

To give, go to: [www.storiesmadenew.org/give](http://www.storiesmadenew.org/give)

Tax-deductible receipts will be sent upon request.

GOAL: \$175,000



Funds still needed to cover  
updates and remodeling costs  
(see prayer item above).

**\$75,250**

In-kind donations of labor and  
materials also appreciated.