



Hope 2022



Ministry Baptisms – August 2022



Downtown Scoop Fundraiser



Covenant Community Fellowship Men's Service Day



Franconia Mennonite Church's Women's Tea



Check us out on YouTube!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yN4leitev4>

Written by Leah

After losing a second child to stillbirth in under 2 years, I felt God’s strong call to enter into grief counseling ministry. I had felt some urge to counseling for years, and I would dabble on university websites to see how I might pursue something, but nothing ever stood out to me.

My experience with stillbirth and miscarriage gave more clarity to this interest. It wasn’t just our own loss that pulled me towards grief ministry. My public acknowledgment of losing our son Max in 2018 at 7 months pregnant really made an impact on people. Other women started sharing their miscarriage stories with me. What stood out was how they minimized their loss in comparison to mine. I had a miscarriage between my stillborn boys, and it was devastating. What really struck me was how alone I felt in that early loss because no one knew about it except for a few friends. I started developing a passion for calling attention to the full measure of grief and loss in miscarriage.



Psalm 139:13-16 tells us about God’s attention to every detail in knitting us together in the womb. He ordains the exact number of days in each life, even if all of those days are pre-birth. Each baby who dies before birth is fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of his or her Creator, and that loss is every bit as profound as any other death. But I also believe that there is a special blessing in carrying these precious souls. God chooses these babies for Himself. He takes them home to heaven before they experience any of this broken world. They know only the greatest love there is to know, that of their Heavenly Father and King. And he chooses us to be their earthly mothers and fathers. Our deep parental love for our children produces that pain and anguish in grief over their death. I feel called to help women express that grief and grow closer to their Comforter in this time of mourning. I also hope to better equip churches to minister to women experiencing pregnancy loss so that we can learn to turn towards God in our lament and trust Him further.

When I finally knew my calling, God showed me the way to a grief counseling program at a Christian university. I nervously mentioned my need for a Field Experience to a few friends, one of whom is a volunteer at Living Streams Ranch! She thought that I should definitely meet Debbie and see if it would be a good fit. After my very first phone call with Debbie, in which she faithfully and fearlessly proclaimed the Lord and prayed over our decision making period, I was overcome by emotion. I realized how much fear I held in my heart about my worthiness to do this work for God. I went to visit the ranch on the coldest day in January and took a tour of the trails with Debbie. Despite worrying that my toes might be permanently damaged, I felt so encouraged by that visit! I had been noticing a lot of secular ideas in my master’s program, and I felt as though I might have to really tone down my faith in my counseling work. When I toured the ranch and saw just how integrated faith is with healing ministry, I got a renewed sense of purpose that God absolutely wants me to proclaim His power and goodness in my work.

Debbie and I decided that I would be a rancher for the Spring term, and then I would complete my Field Experience with the Summer term. My 10 weeks as a Rancher were life-giving. Though I have heard and read many stories of big revelation, God was gentler with me. We did work on my healing from pregnancy loss, but we went so much further than that. Debbie helped me confront the abuse I experienced as a teenager. I had dealt with this once before in counseling, but the physical activities of painting a horse, exploring the Truth & Lies trail, and spending time at the cross allowed me to really process the feelings I still stored in my heart and mind. I was able to remove the self-blame, forgive people who failed or hurt me, and see how my Savior grieved with me and for me during my darkest hours. Though I had some level of acceptance of God’s preparation in those difficult circumstances (Ephesians 2:10), my work as a Rancher allowed me to grasp that knowledge more fully so that I can turn all of it around into praise for how God will use me for His powerful plans.

During my time at the ranch, I also learned more about quietly listening for God. He revealed to me a very simple thing – not to work with a certain potential client. I am self-employed and have been somewhat concerned about bringing in enough work while most of my time is tied up in this Field Experience. That day, I was struggling to work out whether my not wanting to work with that person was a pride issue, or if there was more to it. God made it clear that I should not work with that person while I was riding Monty, and I actually argued that it couldn’t possibly be God telling me this and that it was just a trick of my own mind. Then it struck me that He cares about every detail, and just then, Monty stopped short and pooped! Debbie asked me what was going on, and I told her about the conversation I’d just had. She explained that Monty stopped to give me further confirmation that it was from God – Monty didn’t need to stop for that, but he did to prove a point.

On my last session at the ranch, while at the cross, I had a visual of breaking free from chains and walking towards Jesus. Then as I drew closer to the cross and prayed, I pictured Jesus wrapping me in his arms for a full strong hug. As I pictured my face against his chest, I just felt so comforted. I never before considered the idea of actually touching Jesus, and this visual of him giving me that strong, soothing, and comforting hug made me feel safe and loved. I do not know what trials are ahead in this life for me, but I do know who does, and He will never leave me or forsake me.

My take-home verse for my last day as a rancher was John 8:32, “Leah, you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.” The truth is that my God, my Savior, my Holy Spirit knows me, loves me, and calls me His. He will set my feet on the path that is good for me, will set my boundaries in good places, will counsel me, and will be my strength (Psalm 16:5-8) as I follow Him into this new season of ministry. I am so thankful for Debbie’s unrelenting faithfulness to God and this healing ministry. This is hollowed ground where His truth, THE truth, will be proclaimed!

Written by Cat LaPlante

I heard of Living Streams Ranch from a dear friend. She decided to be vulnerable with me when I overshared (my natural tendency) and the result was an immediate “sign me up!” After all, all my friend really needed to say was “Jesus” and “horses” and I was there. So, when I was asked to write this testimonial, I started to think back on my time and wonder what drove me to truly apply and spend my time at the Ranch. In my quest, I picked up the Ranch’s and read the words “broken women” and instantly thought, “Wait. That’s not me. I’m not broken.”

“Be still.”

That was the word from God that Debbie shared with me on my second day with her. Truth is, I have heard those words echoing in a whisper throughout my life, but it wasn’t until my time with Debbie at the Ranch that I started to hear and feel the importance of being still. It wasn’t until this broken woman sat down in a barn with a new friend that they hit hard enough to break through. You see, my whole life was filled with “yes, I will” but it seems that none of these “yesses” were set up in the boundary of God’s protection. I was the “get it done” girl. The girl that could do it all. The girl that felt bored with ordinary and craved multitasking. The girl that just put her head down and got “it” done. Then, in 2020, my endurance ran out.

In 2020, instead of slowing down with the shutdown, my life became more hectic. I, now, unprepared for the chaos, had all four of my young children home with me trying to navigate the thrown-together in-a-day online school model for three age groups while I worked full time from home and my husband, who was deemed essential, went to work in an unknown atmosphere. That year is also the year that God blessed us with our fifth child. With this incredible blessing came more stress, less sleep, and brought my “I will do this” attitude to a screeching halt as I started to crack.



It took about a year and the birth of my daughter for the feeling of utter inability to do it all on my own to ruffle me up to the point of breaking down completely. It was through this season when my dear friend mentioned the Ranch. Looking back, I thought the Ranch would give me time to get away from the chaos for a moment. I thought my breakdown of 2021 was behind me. After all, in May 2021 when I broke, I had finally surrendered to God. In my surrender, I listened to Him as we put our house up on the market and lived in our camper with our five kids and two dogs so He could show us our new community and provide us with our new home and church family. The pieces of my shattering were being mended back together daily. But then, April 7, 2022 happened.

It was my second day at the Ranch. It was rainy and cold, I was bummed I wouldn’t get to work with the horses that day and getting the kids up and moving proved difficult. Needless to say, I wasn’t really in the mood to sit in cold, unheated barn. But God choose this day for me specially to show me what I was carrying that I didn’t even know I had on me. On April 7, 2022, the core of brokenness was revealed. This was the day when Debbie shared “Be still” with me.

Debbie didn’t know me. She has only met me for a couple of hours the week before. She didn’t know about my breaking and piecing together. This was from God. He used His servant Debbie to bring me to a place of total surrender. The rest of my time that day and the days that followed found messages to get me thinking about the core of my breaking, while the Ranch provided the space for me to be still.

I learned that when there are life events that you do not take time to heal from but instead rush from one thing to the next, multitasking your way through to stay away the boredom, tendencies develop that could easily be disguised as gifts to fill the cracks beginning to start. Ceasing from stillness, you cannot hear what God is whispering to you. That is what Debbie gave me at the Ranch. Time to stop and hear God. The incredible opportunity to be still, to listen, to be prayed over – all amazing gifts of my time spent there.

My testimony is one that the Holy Spirit is alive at the Ranch. God uses the incredible servants at the Ranch to give you gifts that support, gifts that mend, and gifts that heal. I am immensely grateful for my time at Living Streams Ranch and for the support of the village that got me there.

“You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.” - Psalm 16:2



Cornhole Tournament 2022

Written by Gwen Bredow, cont.



Back in the saddle with Monty, we worked together on building trust. At first, we worked on riding and steering Monty through obstacles and some practice games. Then riding with eyes closed, I had to use all my senses to trust Deb to lead and Monty to carry me within the boundaries of the circle arena. Already I couldn't see, and my breath felt short and anxious. Then Deb encouraged me to let go of my hands, and instead my body felt ready to tighten the grip. Even still, I loosened my grip & all the while a question echoed my mind: what are you holding back for? Taking a deep breathe in, Lord, here I am, exhaling, I am trusting you. Then lifting my arms, outstretched into the Holy Spirit's lead and trusting Jesus to carry me. That day my voice received the gift of safety – now able to trust and be seen and heard, fully known.

Another powerful encounter, with Deb by my side, bowing down next to the cross, our hands laid open for healing, together entering full surrender to the authority of the heavenlies to mend the effects of PTSD on my mind and body, binding up all that's been damaged within me. The touch of Deb's hands on my head as we prayed together brought a sense of lightness and relief, which was evidence of the restoring power of God working through and all around us. That day my mind received the gift of renewal - as the Spirit of God flows within me to bring clarity and purpose, delivering me into freedom again.

So many other moments are not captured here by these words, yet they are all important on this healing journey, including time with a horse Jeremiah practicing equine massage for self-care, venturing down the truth/lies trail to affirm who I am created to be in Christ and riding with Monty on a prayer relay revealing gifts of peace and self-control.

Then I met a horse named Trigger for a painting project. At first, I had no idea how to use paint to describe all that I had learned during my days at the ranch. So, I started with Day One using "black & blue" to represent the emotional bruises of abuse. From that ground, the prayers for healing and forgiveness rise with trust to meet the mercy and grace shining down within the rays of sunshine. In that bruised ground, a raw seed that had been buried and hidden is now sprouting with new growth. There are three stems maturing in faith relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Each stem has a bloom full of petals for all the gifts received and a flower bud for all that is promised and yet to come. The flowers are places of rest along the journey – learning to pause & breathe for there will be an abundance of flowers and singing and joy! (Isaiah 35:2) Painted above the flowers are butterflies for the moments we had seen butterflies along the trails and in the meadow, a sign of rebirth in Christ. Surrounding the butterflies are music notes for the gifts of joy and strength of soul with a new song, worshipping in spirit and in truth. The LORD is my strength and my song, he has given me victory. This is my God and I will praise Him... (Exodus 15:2)

Now beginning to thrive, my heart is healing; my mind focusing, my soul untangling – and there is another gift that holds them all together. I have received the gift of a voice, once stolen, now found.

My life has renewed purpose, as I continue to "just show up and be ready". In August, I was able to speak with my voice unhindered by fear, sharing these gifts to a public audience at the Living Streams Ranch summer fundraiser. I have told all your people about your justice. I have not been afraid to speak out... (Psalm .40:9)

And God has been opening doors to serve and volunteer in ministries for trauma wellness and sexual abuse recovery support groups, as well other coaching and leadership opportunities. As my healing continues, I am learning to manage the daily effects of trauma and PTSD in creative & healthy ways that will honor God, love Jesus, and live fully by the power of the Holy Spirit leading me deeper into streams of living water. (John 7:38)

Written by Gwen Bredow



When I arrived at the ranch this past spring, my heart was bleeding; my mind was scattered, my soul was in knots; and my voice was faint. Emotionally, I was numb and spiritually exhausted.

So, what happened to qualify for Living Streams Ranch as an “emotionally broken” woman? To help you understand, I will share a brief timeline: Beginning when I was a young girl, my first love was; is and always will be, Jesus. Later as a teenage girl, I was raped. When I was raped, my soul was severed. In college, I was beaten. When I was beaten, my mind and body were trampled. As a victim, my voice was shrouded in silence. In my 20’s, I was a crisis counseling dropout and lost in denial. In my 30’s, I suffered severe depression and attempted suicide. In my 40’s, I could no longer out run the past. As a survivor struggling, I was dismissed and disbelieved; bullied and belittled; mocked and minimized - becoming vulnerable to the emotional and spiritual abuses of many. Jesus endured all these things too.

By the summer of 2017, the long-term effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder could no longer be ignored, and all the decades of trauma overwhelmed my life as I re-entered sexual abuse recovery. Fast-forward five years and through Christian counseling and participating in Christ-centered sexual abuse recovery support groups and many miracles of help along the way, God led me to Living Streams Ranch.

Uncertain with no idea what I had signed up for, one question echoed my mind, “Lord what am I doing here?”. Faithfully, God answered with reassurance: “Trust me, just show up and be ready to receive”. And it was made clear to me, we would not be focusing on the abuse. This would be an opportunity to discover God’s healing plans, uniquely for me.

That first day I met the pony named Lucky, we spent time learning some basic grooming and I began leading Lucky around the obstacles in the outdoor arena. As we began to work together, my voice felt stuck & pulling back from being heard and that is when I knew, God brought me here to heal my voice. The sun began to set, and Deb and I walked the trail leading to the cross. Slivers of warm sun broke the chill in the air around us, as my ears were intent to hear the story of a special love – for a child of God.

When I was introduced to Monty, I learned that he was the head of the pack of horses at the ranch. Also, that horses are fight/flight/freeze creatures by nature, yet Monty’s easygoing demeanor made him a good therapy horse. My life experience holds many similar tendencies, so I was a bit curious of how we would get-along together. When all things went well in the arena leading Monty, Deb offered to do some forgiveness work together, which I accepted. Arriving to the cross in the woods and sitting tall on horseback, deciding to forgive, as the Lord forgives me... (Col.3:13), some unruly moments stirred up within me and it was clear that Monty could sense the distress and tension too. Although Monty was a bit stubborn to stand still, he remained steady and firm to Deb’s lead. With my eyes fixed on forgiveness, all things were leveled at the center of the cross. That day my heart received the gift of forgiveness – new depths for others and for myself - returning all that was stolen from me and releasing me to become whole again.

On one occasion we sat absorbing the quietness of the afternoon & there was space to breath deep. I began to take in the truths of God’s creation and be reminded of my first love, Jesus – sharing how He sees me, knows me and that in all things, I can continue to know that I am near to His heart, His Beloved daughter. We remained together on the swing for the entire session creating a special memory on the eve of my 50th birthday, jubilee! Another day, while sitting side-by-side on the swing in the meadow, my ears leaning into friendship and soaking in the warmth of the sun with Deb, we shared in God’s word with vulnerability and truth, as God’s love saturated our conversation with His goodness. That day my soul received the gift of rest – and the work of His hand creating in me, new life again.

Cont.



Board of Directors

From left to right

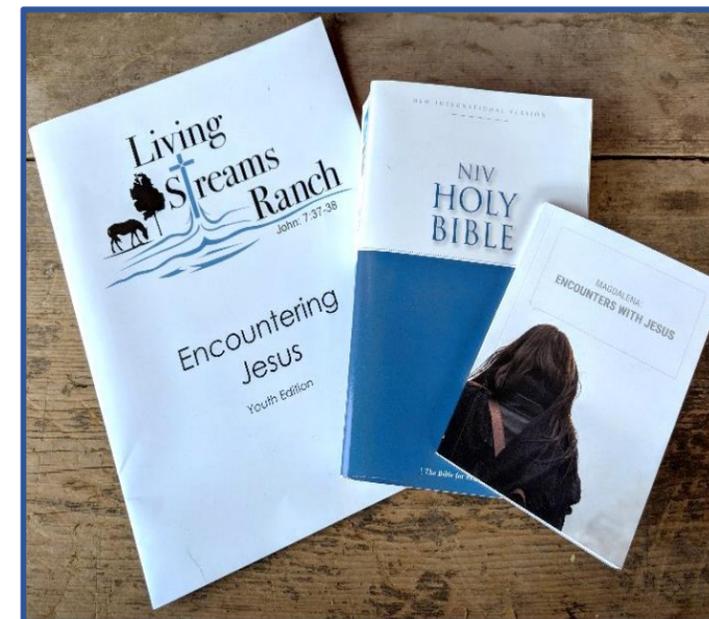
Back

Wayne Rotelle - President
Deb Rotelle – Executive Director

Front

Cindy Moyer – Secretary
Tricia Escalante – Dictation
Jennifer Ashley – Treasurer

Thank you to our amazing Board of Directors for their service!



Devotionals used at the Ranch

A very special thank you to Richter Total Office in Souderton PA for printing this newsletter.



Our Mission

Living Streams Ranch is a Christian Non-Profit Organization founded on the love of Jesus Christ. In faith we open our hearts and our ranch to children and women so that they might find hope and healing through equine related activities in God’s creation, Bible study and healing prayer.

Our Vision

Living Streams Ranch seeks to see every person have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, healed from the past, equipped to begin a new life and given hope for the future. Our goals are to share the truth of the gospel, while providing a place where all people feel safe and accepted just as they are. We pray the Ranch will be a place where individuals who come hurting will feel supported through life’s difficulties, and leave each week seeing their true identity, beauty and value as a loved child created by God.

Our Core Values

- FAITH: Jesus Christ is our Savior, Redeemer, Hope and Healer
- COMPASSION: Accepting people where they are while supporting their growth in wholeness
- VALUE: Honoring the intrinsic value of each person created by God in a grace filled environment
- SERVANTHOOD: Serving people and doing all things with excellence to the Glory of God
- SAFETY: Maintaining a place of physical, emotional and spiritual safety.

Support

Living Streams Ranch is a Christian 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization that relies solely on the generosity of volunteers and donors. The donations enable us to offer free services for all who attend the Ranch. Would you consider becoming a volunteer or making a donation? Volunteer applications are available on our website and we accept online donations at our secure giving site at: www.livingstreamsranch.org. Checks made payable to Living Streams Ranch are also welcomed. Please mail them to:

2375 Schukraft Road, Quakertown, PA 18951

Ranch Roundup

★ Jesus ★ Hope ★ Prayer ★ Horses ★ Healing ★

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within them." John 7:37-38

We give thanks and praise to our mighty God for all He has done in 2022 at Living Streams Ranch. We have had a fruitful year of Ministry and have seen the Lord heal the brokenhearted as He draws them to himself. We joyfully give thanks to all individuals, churches and businesses who generously make it possible to offer our services free of charge, to all who come. We pray God's continued blessing upon you!

This year we added a crown of thorns on the cross in the woods. The droplets of blood start out bright red, fade to pink, then white. This is a visual sign of Jesus' unending, extravagant grace and love toward us. His atonement for our sins washes us white as snow. The blood of Jesus paid for everything, so we can walk in freedom. This redemption cannot be earned by good behavior or good works, it is a free gift from God. For all who repent and believe, his blood washes us clean and pure. Thank you Father God, for your amazing love, and for saving our souls so we can live in eternity with you.

Zach William's song, Heart of God, speaks out this truth:

"Come prodigal children, it's never too late. Run home to the Father, let Him clothe you with grace.

And bury your burdens, break free from your fear. Step out of the shadows, there's no judgement here.

There's only love in the heart of God, no room for shame in His open arms. There's beauty for ashes, so come as you are, and there's only love in the heart of God.

He went to that cross, He went to that cross, 'cause He loves you so much"

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ: and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."



Blessings,
Debbie Rotelle
Executive Director



Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas!
From all of us at Living Streams Ranch