



## **BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CORNERSTONE**

In 1984, a group of five Catholic women finished a six-year non-denominational scripture study and hoped to find a comparable Catholic study. (Maryann Rice, Maleen Corrigan, Helen Pennington, Judy Gallaher, and Peggy Kerkhoff). After a fruitless and frustrating search, they consulted a priest who suggested that they gather regularly to pray and ask for the Lord's guidance.

They met together weekly for over a year and were joined by several others. In the next few years they wrote a manual, located a place to hold sessions, and found a theologian who was not only willing to write a commentary with study questions, but also to lead a study group and give weekly talks on the scripture passage being studied. In 1986, a pilot study on the Gospel of Mark began at St. Peter's Church in Kirkwood, Missouri. By 1989 there were four Branches operating in St. Louis and that number has remained fairly constant although the locations have changed.

In 1998 when the last founder of THE CORNERSTONE retired, a need for future direction for the ministry resulted. A visionary workshop was held that included many leaders of The Cornerstone, past and present. It was discerned that reorganization was needed to systematize and formalize the structure, materials and procedures of The Cornerstone. This would enable the ministry to grow outside the St. Louis area.

To meet this need, the Shepherding Board developed. In 1998 five members of The Cornerstone began to meet and pray. Over the next year, they prayerfully formed the core of the Shepherding Board, revised the existing Manual and began implementing procedures and policies that would facilitate the growth and spread of The Cornerstone ministry.

At this same time, the Shepherding Board was contacted by a group from Springfield, MO interested in beginning a Branch of The Cornerstone. A former member of a St. Louis Branch moved to Springfield and was introduced to a group of Catholic women who wanted a Catholic Bible Study in their city. With much prayer, trial and error, in 1998 the first independent out-of-town Branch began. (There was a Branch operating in Florida at this time which was ministered by a couple from St. Louis who lived there during the winter months.) Establishing this Branch was the vehicle used to create a model to begin new Branches. Although this model has been modified over the years, it is the foundation on which The Cornerstone as it exists today was built. The following year, 1999, a Branch began in Safety Harbor, Florida and the rest is history.

**As of June 2018, these are our Branches:**

- 7 in St Louis, MO
- 2 in Springfield, MO
- 1 in Norman, OK
- 1 in Englewood, FL
- 1 in Safety Harbor (Tampa), FL
- 2 in The Woodlands (Houston), TX
- 2 in Kingwood (Houston), TX
- 1 in Brooklyn Park (Minneapolis), MN
- 1 in Mission Parish (San Juan Capistrano), CA
- 1 in Belleville, IL
- 1 in Leavenworth, KS