



STONECROFT
COMMUNIQUÉ FALL 2019

A close-up photograph of a dandelion seed head, with its stem and several seeds visible. The background is a soft, teal-colored gradient. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent teal rectangular area.

I am praying not only for these disciples
but also for all who will **ever believe in me**
through their message.

I pray that they will all be one,
just as you and I are one—

as you are in me, Father, and I am in you.

And may they be in us
so that the world will
believe you sent me.

— John 17:20-21

Rally!

REUNITING AROUND HARVEST

I have a teeny box-garden outside my kitchen in which I grow one pea plant, three strawberry plants, eight bean plants, and six or so carrots. It's unimpressive, but it's what I can manage in this life-season. My mom-in-law used to notice when I'd get up the energy to grow a huge garden, because then, she knew, my capacity to do some big project was about to sprout. (And she was embarrassingly right! Usually about the time I'd start planting big, backyard gardens, my husband, Frank, and I would decide we were ready to have another child!)

Gardens are more than just their produce; they are an expression of faith. And this autumn, I want to encourage you in how God makes you fruitful in the Rally toward loving 1 million women toward Jesus.

One meaning of “rally” fits this season particularly well, and that is this: to reunite. Reunions describe these days of harvesting gardens, cooking up great food, gathering around tables, and giving thanks for God’s bounty and Jesus’ birth.

So, what will reunite you and your ministry buddies this fall? What can rally your Planning Team, your regional leadership, your hub, your prayer group, your Bible study, or your neighbor with whom you are leading a Where Love Lives group?

In my seminary studies on what leads to growth toward Jesus, I stumbled across data on how different spiritual disciplines relate to unity. *I was super awed when I learned that one discipline that related to people feeling unified was actually a very quiet, non-talking one: silent prayer. Stunner!*



Dr. Naomi Cramer Overton, President and CEO

Silent prayer also relates to spiritual revival – the kind of spiritual harvest we yearn for. One of the elements present before the Great Awakening was intimacy. Intimacy with God and with each other. The practice of silent prayer leads to this intimacy.

The Stonecroft Leadership Team recently tried out this idea: Create one day that month when each of us took a “pray and plan day” and listened for God to guide.

Savor the Silence: Take a day or a couple of hours over a few days to “pray and plan” silently. Invite your co-leaders to do this also. The Stonecroft Leadership Team used John 21 during our first go-round. Many of you are setting goals for how you long to love women toward Jesus, perhaps through your Fall Fund-raiser, a special outreach experience, hosting a Where Love Lives group, or starting to intentionally befriend not-yet-Jesus-followers. What better way than to hear God’s good goals for you, uniquely?

Delight in the Differences: My harvest may be small, but I celebrate every yield of garden-goodness. When Frank and I pluck a red, ripe berry before the birds do, we tell each other about our victory! Similarly, I can rejoice in planting my part of God’s garden and cheer you on as you plant yours. Rejoicing together is encouraging and honoring. It invites us to celebrate, not compare; to delight, and not diminish.

Faith for the Fruit: Gardens are a symbol of faith, and how we root down, unseen and silent, individually before God, nourishes us to bear fruit that will last. I invite you to reunite in intimacy with God and each other to advance the Gospel. To pray and plan in silence, waiting on God, to delight in each other’s differences, and to plant in faith knowing God is the One who creates the fruit.



THE STORY OF NOW:

‘RELEVANT, SUPER PRACTICAL, AND ENJOYABLE’

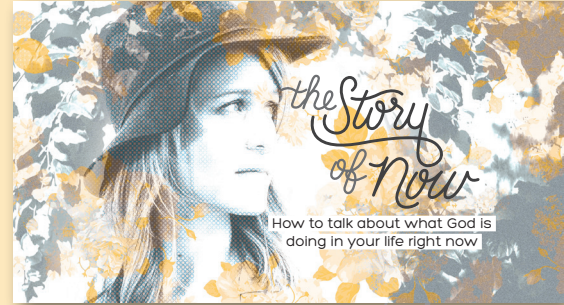
Looking to expand your reach and connect with women in your circles of influence? Do you have a passion to grow your outreach group through personal invitations? Consider being trained as an individual or a team in *The Story of Now*.

The Story of Now is an incredible tool that helps you:

- **Reflect**
- **Connect**
- **Invite**

When you *reflect* on how God is moving in your life and become aware of ways to *connect* with friends, then you can *invite* them to take steps toward Jesus.

“*The Story of Now* is my favorite material for sharing the Gospel. It has helped me learn and teach how to relate to people,” says Anittah Charles from Louisville, Kentucky. “Because I was trained with *The Story of Now*, it has



opened up a door for me to talk about prayer with a co-worker and connect with her as she was going through health issues.”

Anittah has also trained groups with this tool. “I would only teach something that I believe in ... this material is relevant, super practical, and enjoyable, it has an easy flow to teach, and is easy for people to follow.”

The Story of Now is found, along with other evangelism resources, at stonecroft.org/evangelism-tools. If you are interested in learning more about how to be trained in *The Story of Now* or be a trainer, please complete the form at stonecroft.org/connect.



FOUR STEPS TO *Succeed at Recruiting*

Recruiting is more than something we do to make a group continue to move forward. Recruiting is more than asking someone to hold a position on your team. Recruiting is more than a temporary commitment. Recruiting, or inviting, is a beautiful opportunity that we allow others to have in the vision God has given us.

We can do many things as leaders to allow those joining us on the journey to continue to grow in excitement and start helping us grow our teams!

If we aren't careful, those we recruit may have the option of feeling used or needed only for what they can "do," not necessarily for who they are. The entire process should be covered in prayer for those we're engaging that they grow in the desire to reach women around them.

Here are four steps that will help you succeed at recruiting:

1. SEE THEIR POTENTIAL

Have a conversation about what you see in them before inviting them to be a part.

This is (dare I mention?) the most important step we can do. If we fail to do this and go right to recruiting for a position, chances of success in having them become a part are slim.

Look at someone face to face and say genuine words such as, "I am just so honored to know you! I can see the hand of God on your life, and the gifts that He has given to you are evident, and, wow, I have been so blessed by your life in (blank) areas!" If we start a conversation to recruit them like that, I guarantee that whoever you are speaking with will have ears wide up to hear your invitation.

2. BUILD RELATIONSHIP

Get to know them outside of the volunteer setting you are inviting them into.

If you are recruiting volunteers for your group, I want to encourage you to take some time and get to know them outside of that space. Go have a dinner with them, take them out for a cup of coffee, go shopping with them. In doing this, you communicate that you value them outside of volunteering and you communicate that you want to be their friend! When we are able to serve with friends, it makes all the difference in how we volunteer. It turns from a “need” to a joy! During this time, listen to their passions and what makes their heart come alive!

3. PASSION MEETS POSITION

Invite them to volunteer in a position they are excited about!

When you ask someone who loves to be with people to sit behind a desk all day and not have the opportunity to talk with others, I promise you, they will want to quit. If you have the one who loves people right at the front welcoming, they

will want to do it again and again because it taps into their place of passion. If you know someone well enough to tap into what brings them joy and pair that with what you are asking them to volunteer in, you have a win-win! Take the time to discover what they love and what they feel God calling them to do, and pair it the very best you can with the roles you have available!

4. MULTIPLICATION MATTERS

Encourage them to find someone to mentor and raise up to take their position.

If you encourage your volunteers to find someone they can reach out to and repeat these steps, you will be able to see your teams grow! **Leadership is all about using what God has given you to release those around you.** With this perspective, your leaders will feel empowered!

Happy recruiting!



Autumn Katz,
Western Divisional
Field Director





Evangelistic Prayer

PUTTING IT
ON YOUR (MY) LIST

Stonecroft women across the country unite in loving, evangelistic prayer in our monthly Prayer Call. To find the details of each call, log in at stonecroft.org and go to National Conference Calls on the drop-down menu under Training. We'd love to have you join us!

The women sat around the table, Bibles open, devotion books at hand. We were taking prayer requests, and an older woman with grown grandchildren asked for prayer for a wayward grandson.

“I just want him to see the truth,” she said. It obviously upset her that faith in God was not a part of his life.

A younger woman to her left piped up, “You know, I don’t really think of praying for people like that.”

“Why do you think that is?” I asked her.

“There just seems to be so many things to pray for, and I forget,” she honestly replied.

I directed our table to stop right then and think of at least one person we would like to see come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Then we prayed.

Just like any part of our walk with God, learning new and better ways to pray is a journey. The young woman had simply not thought to pray for it. Neither would I except that we had been talking about evangelistic prayer at Stonecroft's Home Office for weeks. I was very aware that my prayer life needed some adjusting.

Many of Stonecroft's prayer resources, such as *Connecting with God* and *Loving Your Neighbors*, show us how to do this. First, pray for yourself to simply remember to pray for the nonbelievers in your life.

"Please fill me with Your love and compassion for individuals around me. Open my eyes to see with Your mercy and Your vision - to see the potential in the people You bring across my path," reads one of the prayers in *Aware*, a popular Stonecroft resource.

Becoming open-eyed and ready is the perfect step toward evangelistic prayer. Put it toward the top of your prayer list and write down specific names. Don't let yourself be discouraged if it takes time - sometimes a lot of it. Be persistent in your prayers, turning back to Scripture for inspiration and encouragement.

But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

- 2 Peter 3:8-9

I know I am going to ask for both remembering and patience in my prayers for nonbelievers. It's my step forward into evangelistic prayer, and I can't wait to see God answer those prayers.



Cara Day,
Director of
Marketing &
Communications

Recipe for Success

FALL FUNDRAISERS BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER AND ADVANCE THE MISSION



“You’re bringing people together,” encouraged Dr. Naomi Cramer Overton, President and CEO, on a recent call with Stonecroft leaders to explain how Fall Fundraisers advance the Stonecroft vision. “You’re building the Kingdom where a million women can be personally invited into a relationship, to know about the Good News, to be able to study the Bible, and to be your friend.”

On the call, Susanna Hafner, Chair of the Marietta, Georgia, Christian Women’s Connection, explained how her group uses a variety of activities at their “Fall Festival” that last year attracted 15 first-time guests. They had a silent auction, bake sale, gift card prizes, and a “shabby chic” room (mini garage sale).

Corporate Gift Cards. Of particular interest was the use of “corporate gift cards” for cultural, arts, and entertainment venues as prizes. These venues include attractions such as museums, aquariums, orchestra organizations, botanical gardens, and others. Acquiring these

gift cards require more work than asking for those from local businesses, explained Brenda Brooks, Co-Chair. She gave some tips for obtaining these cards:

- Make your request 60-90 days before your event as noted on the venue's website. Search for "community donations" or a similar topic.
- Be prepared to complete an online request form that gives information about your organization, your event, and how the card will be used.
- Have the Stonecroft 501(c)(3) letter (not the sales tax letter) available to send. You can request one by email at groupfinances@stonecroft.org or call 800.525.8627, ext. 8861.

Shannon Reid, Chair of the Tulsa, Oklahoma, Women's Connection #1, said her group makes its fundraiser an annual guest event where they invite their spouses. Speakers have topics of interest to husbands that increase their outreach. They also use a multi-activity approach with gift

card prizes, themed baskets, a make & take table, and vendors. A ticket drawing for a 4-foot fully decorated Christmas tree is an annual highlight.

Promoting the event. Promotion increases event attendance. The group prints twice as many invitations than its regular amount and the distribution begins three weeks earlier than normal. The additional invitations are taken to businesses to hand out, mailed to first-time guests from the previous year and guests who attend the fundraiser annually, and hand delivered to friends and family by group members.

Several women who have attended the Tulsa Fall Fundraiser as first-time guests have continued to get involved in Stonecroft through their regular events and Prayer Connections. Some have even joined the Planning Team!

For details about our next Fall Fundraiser call on Sept. 26 and more information on this year's events, visit stonecroft.org/fall-fundraiser. Look for additional ideas in Section 6 of the Women's Connection Handbook.



Robyne Baker,
Writer & Editor

**VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:
WENDY PARKER**

Sharing Hope IN ALASKA




Wendy Parker

Every Monday evening about 15 women sip hot tea from vintage teacups and indulge in desserts served on fancy platters. But the venue of this downtown Anchorage, Alaska, teatime isn't a cozy

tearoom or a five-star hotel. It's a shelter for homeless women.

The women are served by volunteers from a new Stonecroft hub called Heart to Heart. Hub leader Wendy Parker and her team try to make the gathering a special time for the women.





“We want them to feel important and cared for,” she says.

Some women choose to stay for a Bible study that Wendy’s team offers afterward where they discover God’s message of love and hope. The group’s first study was *Whole*, part of Stonecroft’s Conversations series. It struck a deep chord within the homeless women, who learned how God can heal their brokenness and shape them into the women He created them to be.

One participant had contemplated committing suicide but felt God wouldn’t let her. Through *Whole*, God touched her heart and showed her, “This is why I saved you.”

The hub team’s outreach at the shelter – called Hope Center – began with a journey of prayer that started last year. Wendy had just become a stay-at-home mom of a newborn and wanted to connect with other women while doing community outreach. She and her husband began fasting and praying for God to show her how.

One day a friend invited Wendy to a Stonecroft 80th anniversary luncheon in Anchorage. Wendy wasn’t familiar with Stonecroft but welcomed a mom’s day out. At the event, Autumn Katz, Western Divisional Field Director, told about Stonecroft’s hubs, a newer model of gathering women to share Jesus in their communities.

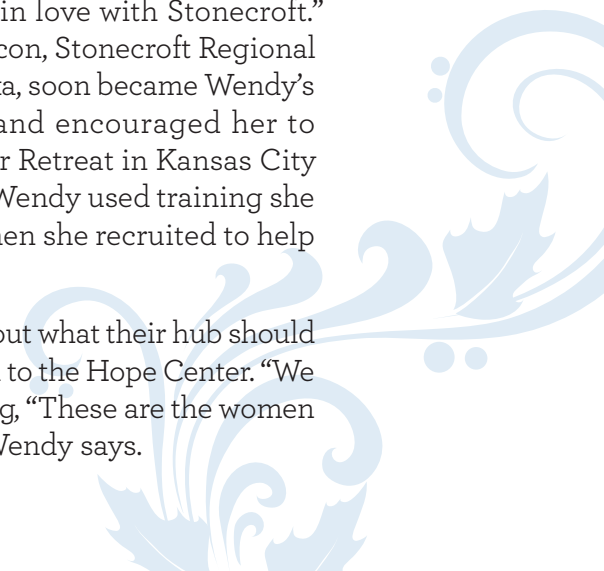
“Something ‘clicked.’ I thought, *This is exactly what I’ve been searching for!*” Wendy recalls.

That day Wendy “fell in love with Stonecroft.” Autumn and Anita Bacon, Stonecroft Regional Administrator in Alaska, soon became Wendy’s Stonecroft mentors and encouraged her to attend the Hub Leader Retreat in Kansas City last November. Later Wendy used training she got there to train women she recruited to help start Heart to Heart.

As the team prayed about what their hub should look like, God led them to the Hope Center. “We felt like God was saying, “These are the women I want you to reach,” Wendy says.



Mary Speidel,
Writer & Editor





WE'RE NOT ALWAYS AWARE
OF THE PEOPLE AROUND US.
THROUGH THIS POPULAR
STUDY AND POWERFUL
PRAYER, WE LEARN TO
***SEE THOSE WHO NEED
JESUS AND CULTIVATE
OUR HEARTS TO REFLECT
GOD'S LOVE TO THEM.***

STONECROFT.ORG/STORE
888.819.5218

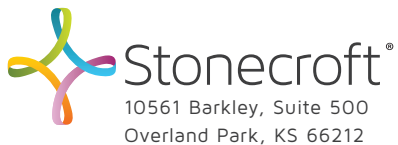
Giving

STILL BENEFITS OTHERS AND YOU DESPITE TAX LAW CHANGES!

While tax laws have changed, your support is needed more than ever. With your help, we can love 1 million women toward Jesus Christ by 2025.

There are some easy ways that you can help us this year and make an impact on our work. Some of these gifts include benefits for you, such as income and capital gains tax avoidance and lifetime income.

For more information, visit stonecroft.org/donate and click on **Lifetime Giving**. Or contact Joan Johnson, Stewardship Manager, by phone at **800.525.8627, ext. 8863** or email jjohnson@stonecroft.org.



**DID YOU KNOW THAT
STONECROFT STAFF DELIGHTS
IN PRAYING FOR YOU?**

Please send in your requests so we can unite with you in prayer. Just contact

connections@stonecroft.org

or call us at **800.525.8627**.

To pray with us be sure to watch for the Prayer Connection and the Prayer Call information, both found in the monthly newsletter, which you can subscribe to at **stonecroft.org** (scroll down to Stay Up to Date – subscribe to our newsletter).