



1630 W. Republic Road * Springfield, MO 65807
www.gosouthland.org

The Southland Vine

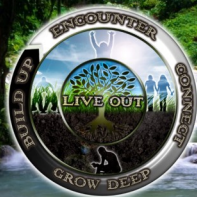
For AUGUST 2026

Who we are: A church family where *together* we are equipped to **LIVE OUT** faith in Christ as we **ENCOUNTER** God, **CONNECT** with others, **GROW DEEP** and **BUILD UP** one another.



You're invited!

FLOURISH



Sunday, August 30 - 5PM

Each year, as we move toward a new ministry year in September, we come together for our annual FLOURISH event. We gather as a church FAMILY to celebrate how God has been at work; of course, it's also about looking and moving forward together as He is leading us.

See pages 2-3 for even more details about the evening!

Please RSVP for the event so we can be prepared for meal/childcare purposes.

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We plan to publish the next edition of The Vine in late August.

Due to the busy-ness around the publishing of this edition of "The Vine" (it is, after all, VBS week), it is a bit limited, specifically, no staff articles. We do still have a lot to share as we move into August and a new ministry year.

Southland "FAMILY" News



Congratulations to **Aiden Gunter** who was immersed into Christ by Grace Worthy on Sunday morning, July 2 (following a week of church camp).

We rejoice with him in this decision to follow Jesus!

A Look Back to the Month of June in the Southland Family:

Within the Southland family, July was highlighted by some BIG events:

1. The **MOVE** Conference for our high school students was early in the month (see pages 11-12 for some reflections on the week). *Thanks, again, Southland family for supporting our youth in their trip.*
2. We held a Baby/Child Dedication with eight families on Sunday, July 19. *What a great day as we participated in celebrating these new lives and encouraging parents as they set themselves apart for this task of raising their precious ones up in the Lord!*
3. Our 2026 mission trip to Mexico with *Casas por Cristo* happened. We'll hear more from the group on Sunday, August 9 as they share about their week during our ENCOUNTER time.
4. **Then, of course, at the end of the month, we hosted our "Emerald Crossing" VBS week** ... so much happened during that week that's *supposed to* happen in a FAMILY. Kids were able to learn the truth of God's Word through a look at Psalm 23. They found and experienced LOVE - even God's love through the conduit of other people. They had lots of fun being with God's people. *Together, we raised over \$1,650 for the Tuttles who serve as missionaries in Ireland.* Of course, along the way, many, many people volunteered (see pages 16-17 for a list), allowing relationships to be built or to be established for the first time. Serving together is a great way for a family to be connected. Indeed, VBS 2026 truly was a great week in the life of our church FAMILY; thanks to all who made it happen!



All of that is beyond the more ongoing "regular" ways we share life together as a church family. As always, it was a month filled with good reminders of the many ways we find great blessing by being united together as a church FAMILY.

Some UPCOMING EVENTS in the Life of the Southland Family:

Throughout this edition of "The Vine," we continue to share about several key upcoming events - some for the whole Southland family and others within our ministries for specific groups. While there is much more information on the pages that follow, we want to make sure we highlight these events that have a broader impact on the whole church family here in one spot:

Sunday, August 30 at 5pm - FLOURISH 2026

Each year, our annual FLOURISH gathering is an important event in the life of the Southland FAMILY. It's an opportunity for us to enjoy time together as family (including a delicious meal), to reflect on what has happened in the past ministry year and to prepare for where God is



leading us as we move ahead. It has been a key event each and every year since 2012. It's strategically timed because of how our ministry calendar works (September to August) - we are ending one year and preparing to launch another. That makes this a fantastic night to celebrate what God has been doing within our church family and try to align ourselves with His agenda and plans for what is ahead for Southland. Of course, a big part of the value of the evening is the time simply to enjoy being together as church family. Some label it a "congregational meeting" - which it is at a base level, but we design it to be far more than that as we emphasize the sense of **FAMILY** and togetherness.



There are aspects of **FLOURISH** that do make it best for us to collect RSVP's for the evening - not required, but certainly helpful. Because we share a meal together, we need to know how many are coming; the same is true with planning childcare. So, please take a moment to let us know if you are coming or not ("YES" or "NO" - it's helpful to know an answer either way). There will be ways to do that in the foyer starting Sunday, August 9 and available throughout the month. It can also be done electronically using this link (you can access the same site by scanning the QR-code to the right) - <https://gosouthland.churchcenter.com/people/forms/1281195>. This is a link that will be available on our Facebook page as well - "The Southland Scoop" - and via e-mail sometime in August.



*We're looking forward to the evening and hope you can join us for the time together as a church **FAMILY**!*

A New MINISTRY YEAR Launches in Late August/Early September

The end of August into the beginning of September is an important time within the Southland **FAMILY** as we move into a new ministry year. It's an exciting time of getting back into the swing of things. Just as with schools and the football season, it's a kick-off time for us at Southland - a re-launching as we resume much of our normal ministry calendar after a break over the Summer. See various sections throughout this edition of "The Vine" for what that looks like within our ministries (we have also included a list of kick-off dates on page 6 with the calendar). Overall, it's a great time to become a part of what's happening within the church family!

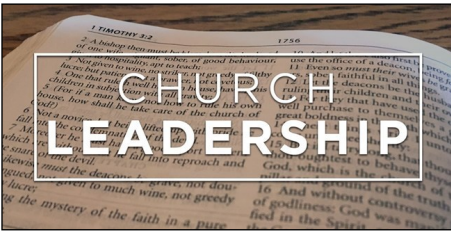
As we head into this new ministry year, please make sure you're staying tuned-in to "The Vine" as well as "The Southland Scoop" Facebook page for all the details about what is happening in the life of the Southland family! Next month, we'll share dates for big events in the rest of 2026.

A note about "First Sunday CONNECTIONS"

We occasionally host these times - on "first Sundays" of the month, obviously - for making connections with others - to bolster existing relationships and/or perhaps to establish new ones. However, we haven't had one in awhile due to the recent schedule (the last one was back in March!). The same is true for the first Sundays of upcoming months - *e.g.*, a different kind of fellowship event to wrap-up VBS week at 9:30am on 8/2, then no 9:15am groups/classes on 9/7 for Labor Day weekend. *So, at this point, we're looking at the next one on Sunday, October 4.*



An Update re: Southland Leadership



Each Summer, we go through a process designed to help us identify potential new elders. As with any group (e.g., a company/organization, family, sports team, etc.), the leadership of a church family certainly matters, and the role of elder is a key part of God's design. *You can check out previous editions of "The Vine" for more details about the role and about our annual*

process for considering new elders. Every church has its own method for choosing leadership. Ultimately, we want this to be an opportunity for us to be in step with the Holy Spirit's leading as we seek His guidance in this process. We use this space in "The Vine" to communicate information about how it works and to provide ongoing updates.

Earlier this Summer, we provided an opportunity for Southland members to recommend names for consideration. Of the seven names originally submitted, only one has chosen to continue on in this process *at this point.* (It is not at all uncommon for individuals to be recommended, but they decline for a variety of reasons, sometimes, even just a matter of timing.). For that one who is continuing, next comes an "interview" with the current elders to help in determining the Spirit's leading. Then, at some point in August, we'll share the list of elders moving forward; *this is not done for a "yes" or "no" vote, but to give the congregation an opportunity to raise any Biblical concerns re: those being recommended for this role.* From there, new elders will be "ordained" at our annual FLOURISH gathering on August 30 to begin serving in this role as we start a new ministry year in September. We'll continue to keep you updated on how all of this unfolds.

As a reminder, this overall process is designed to help us - both those recommended for this role and the existing leadership - discern God's direction in this matter. Throughout it all, we are trying to align ourselves with Him as we strive to recognize those men that *He* is calling to serve in this vital role of leadership in the Southland family. Underneath any such human process in place for a local congregation, ultimately, it's about those He appoints (see Acts 20:28). Of course, as we seek the Spirit's leading on this matter, prayer is a necessary part of this process too. In the midst of it all, we do ask the Southland family to be praying along with us.

Elders currently serving: *Ernie Emmerton, A.J. Gegg, Ben Jennings, Terry Ochs, Rick Randleman and Bob Wood. In September, Ben and Bob begin a "sabbatical" (a required year-off after six consecutive years) while Pat Little returns.*

As Lead Pastor, Matt is also considered a part of the elder team.

In the last two editions of "The Vine," we've shared the elder portion of our "Leadership Covenant" as well as those commitments made by elders and staff. In this edition, we have highlighted the commitments made specifically by staff (see the "WE DO!" section on page 7).

A PRAISE - The Latest Property Update (Our South Lot):

We are grateful to announce that we officially have a signed preliminary agreement to sell ~1.5 acres of our south lot, the portion we've had on the market for several years now - a huge praise!

As mentioned previously, we had been in conversations with a potential developer for the past several months now. In July, we officially signed the document. It's a full price offer (according to



an asking price we reduced in 2024 to get more aggressive with selling). Due to the nature of the project, there are still some big steps that have to be taken by the developer before we are able to finalize and close, - in fact, it won't be until sometime in Spring of 2027 before the whole process is done. As a result, it's *still* too early to share much information about the specifics out of respect for the process and the buyer. In the end, please know that we have been thorough in this process, praying for the Spirit's leading and the right opportunity. Even beyond the financial implications, we believe that this project can bring potential ministry opportunities. *We are grateful for the way the Lord has been working in this process.* We'll keep you up-to-date as we can; for now, continue praying about this opportunity and its impact on our church family.

A Broader Financial Update for the Southland Family:

Each month, we share a brief financial income update (see below) - what's given to further the work of Jesus through Southland. Such giving is *the* source of what allows us to operate, as those in the church family participate through giving. As you can see from this month's update, we are not where we need to be. On one level, lower giving months are not unusual for this time of year. However, we're at the spot where we have now exhausted a good portion of our reserves *except for an "emergency fund" CD*. In August, we'll be sharing more about this, especially at FLOURISH. For now, we ask that you join us specifically in praying about this matter ... and responding accordingly; may we each strive "to *excel* in this grace of giving" (see 2 Cor. 8:1-9).

OTHER GENERAL REMINDERS & INFO



TITHE.LY

We use an online platform called "Tithe.ly" as a giving option. It can be accessed at <https://tithe.ly/give?c=1302996> or through the app (you can also use the QR-Code). It's a page designed for Southland where you can give. In addition to regular giving, this can be used for other purposes like payment of fees. Especially when using this platform to make such a payment, we do ask that you cover any charges. *There is certainly no requirement to use this tool, but we are grateful to have it available for those who choose to use it.*



FINANCIAL UPDATE ... for July 2026

We provide this basic info to keep you updated about what's happening with giving at Southland. In each edition of "The Vine," we share a monthly snapshot with a ministry year total as well.

INCOME: July monthly tithe = \$28,390⁰⁰ (4 Sundays) Average weekly tithe = \$7,097⁵⁰

Now most of the way through this fiscal/ministry year-to-date (September 2025 through August 2026), our tithe is \$406,307 for a weekly average of a little more than \$8,630 ... this projects to around \$449,230 annually (down from a projection of over \$500,000 in the Spring). Overall trends and projections actually point to more in the \$440,000 range anticipated by the end-of-August

At this point, we're now quite a bit *behind* last year's pace, and, we are in a season when giving tends to be down. Because of that, we have used much of the reserves we had to start the year. As a reminder, our budgeted need for this year is around \$480,000 in tithe. Of course, we do work to manage where we are with wise stewardship and faith. See the note above for more about this.

Weekly ministry happenings - Southland FAMILY-wide:

Sunday mornings at 9:15am ... ministry programming for all ages including CONNECT Groups for adults - Sunday School classes for all kids and youth as well - see page 15. *On that page, we have listed the schedule for the upcoming Sundays in August (and 9/6) - normal on 8/16, 8/23 and 8/30 with adjustments otherwise.*



Sunday mornings at 10:30am ... our ENCOUNTER service - the time when we gather as a church FAMILY to meet with God; you can join us “in person” or online via the live stream if you cannot be here. See page 14 for more.

Weekly ministries on a break over the Summer: Group Huddle for middle school/high school youth + Wednesday evening CULTIVATE + Thursday AM WSA/Ladies’ Bible Study. These will be resuming soon; see below for specific dates.

Specific Events to Highlight (listed by date):

Sunday, August 2 ... here’s how we’ll wrap-up and celebrate our 2026 VBS week: a time of fellowship at 9:30 (donuts, etc. will be served); then, after singing a couple of VBS songs toward the beginning of our ENCOUNTER service at 10:30, kids will go through day #5 of the VBS curriculum during their Kid ENCOUNTER time (*ages 4-and-up all together*).

Wednesday, August 5 ... another Summer “Worship Night” (see p. 14).

Sunday, August 9 ... *no 9:15am groups/classes except for the Room #6 group.*

Sunday, August 9 ... report from our Mexico mission trip group during our ENCOUNTER time.

Saturday, August 15 ... a kids’ “Pool Party” from 2-4pm (see p. 9).

Sunday, August 16 ... back to our normal 9:15am schedule (after a couple of weeks off) and groups (after a different format for the Summer).

Wednesday, August 19 ... our last Summer “Worship Night” (again, see p. 14).

Sunday, August 23 ... Group Huddle kick-off event for the new year (4:30-8pm - see p. 10).

Wednesday, August 26 ... a meeting for D-Group facilitators at 6pm.

Sunday, August 30 ... our 2026 FLOURISH gathering; see pages 2-3 for more details.

Wednesday, September 2 ... the first night of CULTIVATE with ministry programming for all ages. *We’ll make available a flyer with more details sometime in mid-August.*

Thursday, September 3 ... the first meeting of WSA/Ladies’ Bible Study for the Fall session.

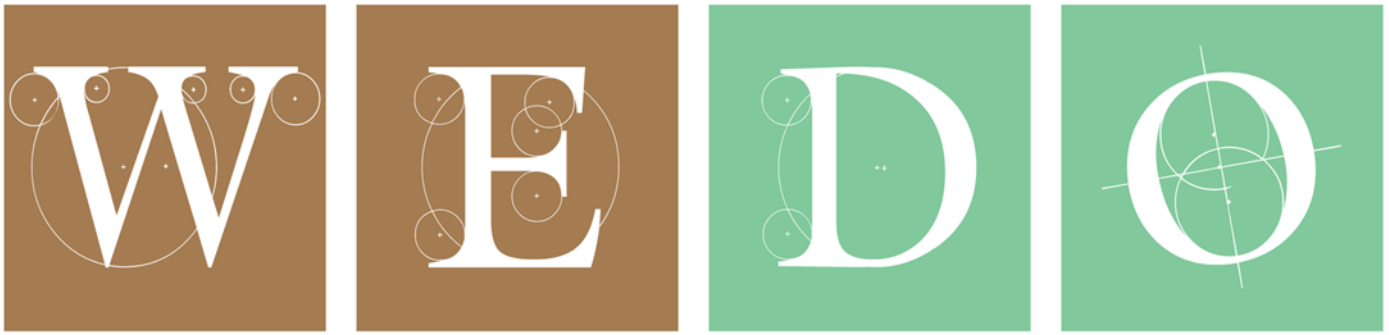
Sunday, September 13 after our ENCOUNTER time ... an informational meeting for parents (for students of all ages, K through high school) held by our student ministries; see page 10.

Sunday, September 13 ... normal Group Huddle resumes.

Saturday, September 19 ... The Pregnancy Care Center’s annual “Walk for Life” event; see page 18 for a link to more details.

Saturday, September 19 ... CCH’s annual golf tournament to support their mission trips; see page 18 for a link to more details.

By the next edition of “The Vine,” we will have much more set in stone calendar-wise as we move toward the rest of 2026. We want you to have those dates as early as possible.



REMEMBERING OUR COVENANT COMMITMENTS

*One of the great privileges and joys of following Jesus is being joined together with other believers as His church. Here at Southland, we express that vital connection in part through our “**Membership Covenant.**” It provides the basic parameters for belonging to the church family here – the commitments we have made to Christ and one another as His people. This covenant is our attempt to communicate the teaching of God’s Word when it comes to His Church. Just what is required of us to belong to one another here?*

*As with any other area, we believe that leadership should set the pace – **it’s to be a higher level of responsibility.** That’s why a significant part of our covenant deals with the commitments made by SCC leaders. In conjunction with our annual process of considering new elders (see p. 4 for the most recent update), this is a good time of year overall to share these. In the June edition, we identified the specific commitments made by SCC elders in their unique leadership role. In the July edition, we highlighted those commitments made by elders and staff together. So, it seems fitting for us to use this space in this edition to share the staff commitments – what have SCC staff members committed themselves to as part of the leadership here? We have provided a list in the space below. Again, as a reminder, these are in addition to the commitments made by both elders and staff in the “general commitments” section.*

Staff COMMITMENTS – made by ministry staff as part of the leadership team:

- ♦ *We covenant to embrace the direction and priorities established by the elders, affirming the unique place of leadership God has entrusted to them.*
- ♦ *We covenant to seek the Holy Spirit’s guidance for how we creatively implement His plans in our specific areas of ministry.*
- ♦ *We covenant to partner with other staff members, functioning as a unified team for both greater effectiveness and, more importantly, God’s glory.*
- ♦ *We covenant to work with volunteer ministry leaders and other staff in designing and effectively implementing the work of ministry here.*
- ♦ *We covenant to set the pace for ministry at Southland, being out on the front lines as servant-leaders carrying-out the special work He has given and gifted each of us to do.*
- ♦ *We covenant to demonstrate the effort appropriate for servants of Christ investing ourselves in eternally significant work (e.g. the right heart, commitment, humility, etc.).*
- ♦ *We covenant to be “workers worth our keep” (see Matthew 10:10) so that through our faithful, diligent service we earn the financial compensation we receive.*
- ♦ *We covenant to be faithful in how we handle the day-to-day operations of Southland Christian Church, living out Kingdom values such as integrity and excellence.*

SOUTHLAND Kids

CHECK-IN Process for our Kids' Ministries



We use a check-in process on Sunday mornings for those who are participating in our ministries for kids (birth through 5th grade).

This is for those coming for the first time - it takes a little longer to provide some basic registration information - and for regulars.

REMINDER: We use this process for both time slots on Sundays so please check your kids in when you first arrive.

Sunday School Classes for kids (9:15am on Sundays)

We have kids' Sunday School classes as part of our regular weekly schedule. In addition to nursery for our youngest ones, we have classes for all ages. For this Summer, due to numbers and age groupings, post-Promotion Sunday, we have combined our K through 5th grade students.

CHILDREN'S
Sunday School

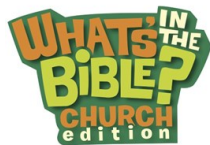
We have an adjusted 9:15am schedule for the following days: August 2 (a fellowship time with donuts to wrap-up our 2026 VBS week at 9:30am) and August 9 (9:15am classes/groups are not meeting this day). Otherwise, classes are meeting as normal during August before another adjustment on September 6 (Labor Day weekend).

Kids' Programming during ENCOUNTER (10:30am on Sundays)

Here's what happens for kids 5th grade and younger during this time slot:

Nursery, "Wee Kid ENCOUNTER" (for 2-&-3 year-olds) and "Li'l Kid ENCOUNTER" (kids up through Kindergarten/1st grade - those in 1st grade have the option: here or in "Kid ENCOUNTER") are all available throughout our ENCOUNTER time.

Kid ENCOUNTER (1st through 5th graders) meets in the Gathering Room during the sermon portion of service. Kids start with their families and then are dismissed at the appropriate time. *Kid ENCOUNTER is meeting as normal throughout August.*

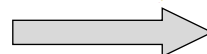


Earlier this Summer, "Kid ENCOUNTER" started a new set of lessons called "What's in the Bible?" It's a year-long curriculum focusing on the big, overarching story of God's Word. For August, the material focuses on Exodus and Leviticus as kids discover what's found in the Old Testament.

(See the note on the next page - in green as part of the VBS section - for more information about Sunday, August 2).

FALL 2026 Wednesday evening CULTIVATE Plans for Kids

During the Fall Cultivate session (we re-launch on September 2), our kids ages 4 and up participate in "Children of Praise." They'll be spending Wednesday evenings rehearsing songs, practicing drama and more, all in preparation for their annual Christmas



performance (the program date is not fully set at this point). We are grateful for Jessica and her team of volunteers who lead our kids for this. We'll share more details on this year's program - including the specific play we are doing and a confirmed date - in the next edition of "The Vine;" for now, we hope your kids plan on being a part of this.

Our 2026 VBS is now behind us - a Look Back



VBS 2026 was another great week as kids had fun while learning about Psalm 23 and what it means to trust God as our Shepherd ... all with an Irish twist! The kids made crafts, experienced science, learned through lessons (with a nightly memory verse), heard about missions, played games, enjoyed snacks and even enjoyed a small petting zoo on the last night. It was another great week for those who participated - an average of around 70 kids each night!

One of the highlights of the week was our offering for the Tuttles - appropriately - from Ireland. **We raised over \$1,650 during the week; way to go, kids (and parents + others too)!**

Make sure you check out "The Southland Scoop" Facebook page for some pictures from the week. We will also share a specially-made VBS video on Sunday, August 2.

A reminder about Sunday, August 2 as we wrap-up and celebrate VBS - three specifics: (1) a fellowship time with donuts and coffee, etc. at 9:30am (no normal 9:15am classes/groups this day) ... (2) kids are singing a couple of VBS songs toward the beginning of service at 10:30am ... (3) they will then be dismissed to the Great Room for VBS day #5 (kids ages 4 through 5th grade are combined for this time).

See pages 16-17 for a list of the volunteers who helped make our 2026 VBS happen (in addition to so many people who donated items for the week); thank you to all of you!

An Upcoming Event for All Kids (birth - 5th grade):

A Pool Party @ the Jennings' House*

Saturday, August 15 from 2-4pm

It will be a fun time to swim and have fun together; we'll also have ice cream, juice boxes and water available.



Make sure you sign-up at the check-in counter or let Jessica know how many from you're family are planning to attend. We're looking forward to this time together!

*** The address is 4599 S. Farm Road 115 - Brookline, MO**

An Upcoming Event for kids 4th through 6th grades:



We are attending a different "Super Start" event this year - in Bentonville, AR on January 22-23, 2027 (it's typically been in Tulsa). This has become a fun event in our kids' ministry.

Because of the timing, **Jessica needs to know by November 15 who wants to go - both kids and parents interested in going as sponsors.** We'll share more in the months to come.

INFO APPLICABLE TO ALL KIDS/YOUTH



Attention **PARENTS** of kids entering Kindergarten and older ... our student ministries are having an informational meeting on **Sunday, September 13** at noon (after service). It's a time to share about the year ahead and take care of some logistics like liability forms for the year. Please plan to be there!

GROUP HUDDLE NEWS

Group Huddle - for middle school and high school students - does not meet over the Summer. As we head into August, though, it's a good time to start looking ahead to the upcoming year (yes, even though that also means thinking about the start of the new school year!).

*Due to the timing of things during this season (our church-wide FLOURISH event on Sunday, August 30 plus Labor Day weekend that impacts Sunday, September 7), the start of the Group Huddle year is a bit delayed again; **see below for our kick-off event still in August.***

"Group Huddle Kick-off" at Incredible Pizza

Sunday, August 23 from 4:30-8pm



It's time to kick-off a new Group Huddle year and we know just the place to release your back-to-school excitement! Incredible Pizza is offering another great deal to our group. **For a cost of \$25/student**, everyone can enjoy the all-you-care-to-eat buffet, have a game card for playing some of the newest arcade games in the area *and* be able to enjoy some of their attractions - laser tag, bumper cars, and go carts. Make plans to come and join us for this fun, memorable night as we kick-off a new year!

After the kick-off event, normal Group Huddle resumes Sunday, September 13 (6-8pm).

Be looking for details about this upcoming semester (e.g. the theme, mission partner for the year, etc.) in the youth planner and the next edition of "The Vine."

MORE MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

SUNDAY SCHOOL (starts at 9:15am on Sunday mornings): We have separate Sunday School classes for our MS and HS youth. *Both have moved to the Gathering Room - which has a divided wall to separate it into two rooms - off of the Great Room. We are meeting as normal at 9:15am on August 16, 23 and 30. However, we are not meeting August 2 (donuts/coffee fellowship time at 9:30am to wrap-up our VBS week) or August 9 (no classes this morning); the same is true for September 6 (the Sunday of Labor Day weekend - no classes again).*

Wednesday Evening CULTIVATE - resumes on September 2. We'll share specific details about this along the way in August as we move toward our new ministry year.



"See You at the Pole" 2026



**Wednesday, September 23 - 1 hour
before classes start at your school's flagpole**

This is an annual gathering for prayer, Scripture reading and worship before classes start. Set your alarms early and meet at your school's flagpole to pray for your campus, teachers and peers. Don't miss this opportunity to be a part of the largest student-led prayer movement around the world!

FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Between a session at Maranatha Bible Camp that rolled over into the early days of the month (see the group picture to the right) and VBS fun nights at the end of the month, July was full for our middle school students. Both were great opportunities to experience community together in the midst of the Summer.

We're grateful to Les and others who served as sponsors for both!



FOR H.S. STUDENTS - MOVE FOLLOW-UP



Thanks to the support and prayers of the Southland family, the 2026 MOVE conference was another incredible experience for our high school students and their sponsors. This year, the group went back to a familiar location (Lincoln, Nebraska). In addition to the picture of the group to the left, we've shared some reflections from a couple of our students who attended. It's a great way to follow-up on this great experience!

move move move move move move

From Preston Gegg (Incoming Senior at Kickapoo High School)

For me, CIY Move is so much more than just a camp; it's a life-changing experience. At CIY, I get to truly feel the love and community we have in Christ. Besides the amazing preachers and their messages, or the incredible worship team, the Holy Spirit is constantly at work. It doesn't matter if I'm singing at the top of my lungs or if I'm sitting in my room resting with friends.



As amazing as the sermons and worship sets are, my favorite part is the people I get to surround myself with for the week. It wouldn't be the same experience if I was doing it by myself, and I wouldn't get as much out of it. As a youth group, we spend all week together, and like it says in Proverbs 27:17, "iron sharpens iron." Together, we become better people, pushing one another to be our best selves. The friends who surround me not only make me a better person but they bring me closer to God. That's what CIY is all about. Growing closer to each other brings us closer to Him.



From Harmony Martin (Incoming Senior at New Covenant Academy)

If you've ever been to a MOVE Conference before, then you hear me when I say it's amazing! It's truly a week that I look forward to all year long. When thinking about what to write about my experience at this conference, I can't help but think about what the word **"MOVE"** means to me. I just can't get over how perfect the name is for the conference. It's so amazing to literally watch God move in the room, in my life, and in the lives of so many others my age.

One of my absolute favorite parts of the conference every year is the worship. Being able to stand in a huge auditorium packed with students who are singing their hearts out to Jesus is so cool to be a part of. My favorite memory from this year's conference was on Wednesday night after the sermon was over. They had bell towers standing all around the room, and they gave an opportunity for students to go to a tower with a leader and ring the bell acknowledging their decision to follow Jesus. There were two groups of students that rang the bell. The first group was students who were making a first time decision to follow Jesus, and the second group was those making a recommitment to Him. As these bells were being rung over and over, the room was erupting with applause and praise.

The band began singing a song called "Homecoming" - which is one of my favorites every year. As I was listening to the bells ring, the words of the bridge in the song really stuck with me: *"Heaven joins in with a glorious sound, and the great cloud of witnesses all gather 'round. 'Cause the ones that were lost are finally found; the Father is welcoming. This is our homecoming!"*

It felt like the words fit perfectly for the way God was moving throughout the room! I love the thought of Heaven rejoicing, joining in with our worship, because of these lost souls that have finally been found, and knowing the Father is welcoming them with open arms! What an amazing experience to be a part of!

Before I close this out I want to say thank you to our amazing sponsors! As much as I know they enjoy the week too, it's really cool to me that they choose to give up a week of their summers to spend with us. To Ashley, Kale, Les, Kristin, A.J. and Terra, thank you so much for the ways you've invested in my life and the impact you've had on it. As fun as MOVE is, it would definitely not be the same without you. Thank you for spending the week with us and making it amazing!

Overall, the MOVE conference is such an amazing experience! I'm sad that I only have one year left but I can't wait to hear about the many ways God is going to continue to work through the lives of all these students in the years to come.

Southland Women

A Look Back to Our 2026 Summer Ladies' Lunches

This was our fourth Summer of Ladies Lunches and, once again, they were a big success!

Thank you to each lady who joined us for one or all of these this Summer. It is a pleasure to spend time with each of you! Again this year, I felt we had great discussion. I hope everyone who attended came to know other ladies of Southland better.

Thank you, also, to those who came a bit early and helped with last-minute preparations, and thank you to those who stayed afterward to clean up! You ladies make it a privilege and a pleasure to serve you!

I'm thankful for my sisters-in-Christ and for the many ways each of you bless my life. Thank you, again, for attending this Summer's lunches!

♥ Kristie

As we move toward a new ministry year in the Southland family (it begins in September), plans are in the works for what's coming within our Women's Ministry. Be watching this space for details!



After not meeting over the Summer, we're moving toward a new semester of WSA. This ministry is an opportunity for women of all ages and life stages to spend time studying God's Word together while forming bonds with sisters in Christ (designed for "CONNECTING" and/or "GROWING DEEP").

**Starting Thursday, September 3, WSA meets at 10am
in Room #6; we finish around noon each week.**

We're still working through the curriculum plans for this upcoming semester. Kristie will either communicate that in advance (especially to those who had been coming last year) or you can show up on the first day and find out from there! We'll certainly share it in the next edition of "The Vine" as well.



WEEKLY ENCOUNTER

... a time to gather in God's presence together.

Summer Worship Nights



**Wednesdays, August 5 and 19 - 6:30pm
in the courtyard* both times**

We host these times as part of our worship ministry - opportunities for a music-centered worship experience in a relaxed atmosphere. ***We have hosted these more regularly during these Summer month, but these are the last two with CULTIVATE resuming on 9/3.*** We hope you join us as we ENCOUNTER our Father in this context, but still to express our praise and adoration!

* In the event that weather doesn't cooperate, we'll simply move indoors.

Our Upcoming Preaching Calendar

A Look Back to our Summer 2026 Series: We wrapped-up our "Questions" series at the end of July. As mentioned on 7/26, *if we didn't get to your question*, feel free to either (1) talk to someone on staff/leadership about it or (2) bring it up in a CONNECT Group or D-Group. It might still lead to a great conversation even if we didn't get to it in the series itself.

A Look Ahead to August: The month of August is going to be a bit sporadic before we launch into a Fall series in September. Here is a brief snapshot of what's happening this month:

- * **August 2** - VBS wrap-up Sunday, preaching Psalm 23 (the focus of this year's curriculum)
- * **August 9** - Mexico mission trip report with a briefer message from Rick during the sermon time
- * **August 16 and 23** - Rick preaching
- * **August 30** - something connected to our FLOURISH event which happens later that day

We continue to offer a LIVE STREAM of our worship service through Facebook LIVE. ***You can access it directly from our website itself:*** <http://gosouthland.org/watch-online> ***or through our general/public Southland Facebook page.*** Even though this format is not as ideal as "in-person" participation - the much better way of joining us for our weekly ENCOUNTER - we do value this online option as an alternative, *especially as we are still in the busier Summer months when people are in-and-out a bit more.* Whatever the reason you are not able to be present with us in-person, you can still stay connected to your church family in this way.



Facebook is no longer archiving past videos as it used to. So, if you're looking for past services, you can now access them on YouTube - find us there through a search for "Southland Christian Church" (clarify Springfield, MO) or at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/@southlandccstreams>. ***If you missed a week and want to catch-up, they are accessible at this location.***



YouVersion

The well-known BIBLE app (a.k.a. "YouVersion") is a great app for accessing God's Word electronically. There's also a feature within the app that we use during our ENCOUNTER time. It is simply called "EVENTS." It's a great way to follow along with the sermon and even take electronic notes. **Please ask if you need help finding and/or using the app.**

CONNECT GROUPS

... a place to discover Christian community.



Here is the upcoming schedule for August 2026 (for CONNECT Groups and Sunday School classes for our kids/youth that also meet at 9:15am):

Sunday, August 2 As has become our tradition, we celebrate the VBS week on this Sunday. *That includes a time of fellowship with donuts, etc. at 9:30am.* It's a good, relaxing way to wrap-up a busy week and to invite guests from the week to join us.

Sunday, August 9 A week "OFF" at 9:15am (except for the Room #6 group that is still meeting)

Sundays, August 16, 23 and 30 Meeting as "normal," *including back to our regular groups* after some had combined for the Summer - **let us know if you need help finding a group that's best for you.**

Sunday, September 6 *NO 9:15am groups/classes again (part of Labor Day weekend)*

See page 3 for a note re: First Sunday CONNECTION® times.

GROW DEEP MINISTRIES

... an opportunity to plant deep roots in Jesus and God's Word.



Our Fall 2026 semester re-launches on Wednesday, September 2. Sometime in August, we'll share details about our plans, including another round of D-Groups. *We hope you join us!*



OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD UP

... a way to serve others and even help ourselves grow.

One of our major priorities is to be a place where God's people BUILD UP one another. According to Ephesians 4:16, the overall health of the church (the Body) depends upon each part doing its "own special work." Through our acts of service, God uses us to help others grow. At the same time, here's what is beautiful about God's design: what we do for the benefit of others even has benefits for our own growth as followers of Jesus.



Opportunities to Serve & “BUILD UP” the Body

In so many different ways, just like any FAMILY, we function as we do *because of the willing-hearted servants* who choose to embrace opportunities to BUILD UP others through serving. There are several other ongoing ways where you can get involved; and, we encourage you to do so. See the blue flyer at the Welcome Center display for more details about such volunteer opportunities. ***You can contact a staff member or use one of the blue “BUILD UP” cards to let us know where you want to get plugged-in to serving.***

We have several volunteers that we need to make sure we recognize this month ... so many, that we need some of the next pages as well (especially with VBS)!



Before we get to VBS though, a **“THANK YOU”** to those who served as sponsors for the 2026 “MOVE” Conference: **AJ & Terra Gegg, Kale Kilgo, Les & Kristin Londeen and Ashley Worthy.** We so appreciate the time you invested in our high school students for this week!

Our 2026 VBS - **“Emerald Crossing”** - is officially in the books. It makes this edition of “The Vine” an appropriate time to extend a tremendous **“THANK YOU!”** to all of those who were a part of making it a success; there are certainly many people (our apologies if we’ve left someone out)! It’s what makes this kind of week possible. In fact, it’s a great picture of the “BUILD UP” idea: ***many parts functioning as one team to accomplish a common goal.***

“THANK YOU” to **Cheryl Boland, Sean Falconer, Niki Short, Aiden Simpson, Chris & Christine Williams** (Jessica’s parents who spent several hours volunteering the week before VBS) and **the Youngs (specifically Jessica, Dylan and Caden)** for helping to decorate/get the building ready for the week. ***A special “shout out” to the Wednesday night Cultivate youth for helping on some décor projects back in the Spring as well!***

Of course, we do want to say **“THANK YOU!”** to those who gave donations (financial or supplies); your generosity certainly is a blessing that helped make the week happen!

“THANK YOU” to **Kristie Martin** along with help from **Debbie DeNovi** and **Jessica Young** for providing pre-VBS meals for volunteers (*the donated items helped with this part of the week, as well*). It’s a great blessing to have these available for those who are serving.

“THANK YOU” to those who served in the Pre-K/K portion of VBS: **Amanda Butler, Debbie Hoenshell, Abi Lauffer, Isabelle Lillard, Harmony Martin and Caden Young.**

“THANK YOU” to those who served in the various grade school rotations:

Donna Lillard for organizing the lesson rotation as well as our other teachers: **Carson Moore, Sean Falconer, Jake Miles and Will Deckard.**

Stefani Hall for leading the memory work time.

Stella Falconer, Brenda Ochs and Anna Randleman for leading the crafts with some pre-VBS help in getting things ready from **Sean Falconer.**

Aiden Simpson and Dylan Young for leading the science experiment station.

Talia Stone with **Debbie DeNovi** and **Eden Martin** for handling snacks (all ages).

Nate Martin and Ella Wiley for leading games (all ages).

“THANK YOU” to all of the crew leaders who led the grade school kids to their stations and made this a great experience for the kids: **Sandy Arneson, Douglas Arnold, Jay Butler, Allie Conboy, Gavin & Aimee Harnstrom, Paula Hoholek, Becky Kurth, Madison Lillard, Tristan Martinez, Levi Randleman, Zoey Smith, Grace Worthy and Lily Worthy.**

“THANK YOU” to **Les Londeen** who led a middle school section helped along the way by **Michael Goodman, Kira Smith and Kris Stone.**

“THANK YOU” to **Kristie Martin** who served in the nursery to help with little ones.

“THANK YOU” to those who led the opening (including the pre-VBS portion + music) and closing: **Allie Conboy, Les Londeen, Harmony Martin, Grace Worthy and Jessica Young**

“THANK YOU” to **Aiden Simpson and Dylan Young** for their tech help (sound, lights, etc.).

“THANK YOU” to the **Tuttles from Ireland** for being our mission partners and sharing about their work each night via recorded videos.

“THANK YOU” to **Rick Randleman and Ashley Worthy** for handling registration/check-out.

“THANK YOU” to **Andy Lillard** for helping with security and check-out each night.

“THANK YOU” to all who stuck around and helped with clean-up on Thursday.

Finally, a big **“THANK YOU”** to **Jessica Young** for all her work in planning, organizing and leading VBS as well as all of the extra jobs she covered along the way; it's great to have her serving in this role and all the ways she serves here at Southland!

SERVING SCHEDULE for August 2026

	Foyer Hosts (10:15 on, through whole service)	Greeters (at the doors from 10:15-10:40)	Serving Team Leader
8/2	Ben & Debbie Jennings	<i>T.B.D. since no 9:15am groups</i>	Pat Little
8/9	Ernie & Charlotte Emmerton	Room #6 Connect Group	Doug Graves
8/16	Matt & Kristie Martin	Room #7 Connect Group	Deckard Family
8/23	Doug & Susan Graves	“Voyage” Connect Group	Les Londeen
8/30	A.J. & Terra Gegg	“Launch” Connect Group	Les Londeen

	Nursery workers (all morning)	Wee Kid ENCOUNTER & Li'l Kid ENCOUNTER	Kid ENCOUNTER (1 st - 5 th grades)
8/2	Wilcox Family	<i>Abi Lauffer</i> (Different - VBS wrap-up day)	Jessica Young/Cary Swadley
8/9	Harnstrom Family	<i>Madison Lillard</i> <i>Sonya Simpson</i>	Sean & Megan Falconer
8/16	Zoey Smith + <i>t.b.d.</i>	<i>Jessica Y./Olivia S.</i> <i>Debbie Hoenshell</i>	Thomas & Stef Hall
8/23	Deckard (Will and Ashley) Family	<i>Ezri Smith</i> <i>Aiden S./Isabelle L.</i>	Sandy Arneson/Becky Kurth
8/30	Lillard Family	<i>Anna Randleman</i> <i>Harmony M./Olivia S.</i>	Jessica & Dylan Young



LAWN CARE Schedule (it needs to be completed by the Saturday date listed):

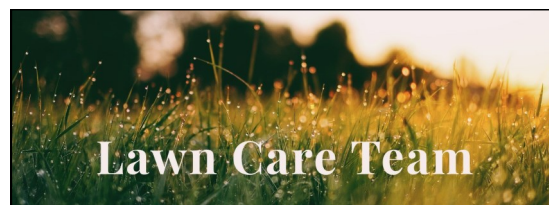
8/1 - Brothers/Easter

8/8 - Deckards

8/15 - Constantine/Wood

8/22 - Jennings/Arneson

8/29 - DeNovi/Harnstrom



Ephesians 4:11-16



“He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” (Ephesians 4:16)

LIVE OUT MINISTRIES



*... a path for putting
faith into action.*

Two upcoming “LIVE OUT” opportunities with and through our local ministry partners (with links to more information; unfortunately, both of these events are on the same day again in 2026):

- ⇒ The Pregnancy Care Center’s annual “Walk for Life” fundraiser on **Saturday, September 19**. Here’s a link to their website with more details: <https://417pcc.org/26walk/>, including a way to register in advance to participate in the event.
- ⇒ Christian Campus House’s annual golf tournament is also on **Saturday, September 19 (starts in the morning)** - this annual event helps CCH raise funds for their foreign mission trips, a key part of their ministry to students. Here’s a link to their website with more details, including a way to sign-up online and more specifics about how this event bolsters their ministry efforts: <https://cchonthe.net/golf-tournament-fundraiser/>.



To keep you informed about Southland’s foreign missions partners, we strive to provide updates when available. This is really the only way one of our partners can communicate (and what they send now comes primarily via e-mail). Their location makes any online presence too risky from a security standpoint. *Let us know if you want us to help you sign-up to receive their regular e-mail communications.*



CENTRAL INDIA CHRISTIAN MISSION

There is a website for the “Central India Christian Mission” (www.indiamission.org); check it out for more information about their work. You can also find their Facebook page for ongoing updates or use this link to get access to e-mails: <https://www.indiamission.org/aboutcicm>.

Check out the website for “Life of Hope Ministries” at www.lifeofhope.org. Through our connection with this organization, we are privileged to partner with various ministries on the ground in Guatemala.



Our 2026 mission trip to Anapra, Mexico with Casas por Cristo took place back in mid-July. On Sunday, August 9, the group will be sharing about their trip during our ENCOUNTER time (Rick will also have a briefer message as part of this). We’re grateful for what the Lord accomplished through this Southland group over the course of this week as they blessed another family with a completed house!