



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

The Southland Vine

For JULY 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.



Southland's 2026 VBS



Monday, July 27 through
Thursday, July 30
(from 6-8:30pm each evening)

See page 10 for kid-related details about the week (including how to register). Otherwise, see page 3 for broader VBS information.

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We'll publish the next edition
Of *The Vine* in early August.

**FLOURISH 2026
is Sunday, August
30 at 5pm!**

See page 3 for details.

Southland "FAMILY" News

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

Within the Southland family, June was highlighted by the following: (1) our annual Southland family picnic early in the month - an event this year impacted by weather forcing us inside (not to mention into a room during a tornado warning!), (2) a couple of worship night opportunities, (3) camp sessions for our grade school/middle school students and (4) the women's tea. 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:

First, 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 same is true for the first Sundays of upcoming months (*e.g.*, no 9:15am groups/classes on 7/5 for the 4th of July weekend or 9/7 for Labor Day weekend ... plus a different kind of fellowship event to wrap-up VBS week at 9:30am on 8/2). *We'll look into this more once we get into Fall.*



The 2026 CIY MOVE Conference trip is Sunday, July 5 through Friday, July 10. This event is such a significant week for our high school students. We're asking the Southland family to be praying for what our young people are going to experience during this year's conference.

Trip back to Mexico - July 18-25 ... a group from within the Southland family will be returning to partner with *Casas por Cristo* in building a house for a family. See page 18 for more information about the family and how you can help with the trip even without going.



It's an exciting time in the Southland family with the recent number of babies born. Because of that, we're going to have a "Baby/Child Dedication" as part of our ENCOUNTER time on Sunday, July 19 (part of the sermon time with a question that fits with the day). Ultimately, as much as the day is about setting apart these little ones to the Lord, it's really the parents who are dedicating themselves to the task of raising them up accordingly. *While we are hosting this specifically for those born in the past several months, if you are parents who want to participate in this with your child, please let us know as soon as possible.*



Our 2026 VBS is finally here at the end of this month - Monday, July 27 through Thursday, July 30 (evenings - from 6-8:30pm). This year's VBS from Answers in Genesis is **"Emerald Crossing: An Irish Adventure through Psalm 23."** Each Summer, this is a key event in the life of our church family. While it's designed for kids - both our own Southland kiddos as well as others, a successful VBS requires help from the *entire* church family. In fact, one of

the cool things that happens during VBS is how it becomes a great way for us to grow as we work together to bless and serve our younger ones ... kind of like what a FAMILY does!

A few VBS-related notes as we move toward the event at the end of this month

- ♦ Please continue praying for the week as it draws near.
- ♦ Thank you to all who helped by donating items for the week; as always, we're grateful for your generosity in serving in this way!
- ♦ If you have kids participating (up through 8th grade), please remember to register your kids ASAP. *See the link on page 10 for this.* Also, if you're inviting others, please send them to that link as well.
- ♦ Please spread the word; encourage your own kids to invite friends or invite those younger people you know to come experience the week (remember, it's for ages 4 through 8th grade). Guests use the same registration link mentioned above.

One last VBS item: check out page 10 and/or the display in the foyer for information about this year's VBS mission partners: the Tuttles in Ireland ... seems appropriate given this year's theme!

Our 2026 "FLOURISH" gathering is set for August 30 at 5pm ... each year, it's an important evening together for our church family as we reflect on what has happened in the past ministry year and prepare for where God is leading us as we move ahead. 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. As always, dinner is included, as well, to help create such an atmosphere. For now, we ask that you mark down the date and plan to join us. *We'll share more about this event as we head further into July and beyond.*



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 the June edition 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.



During June, Southland members had the opportunity to recommend names for consideration to potentially serve in this role. For this year's process, we had 7 different names submitted. We've begun preliminary conversations with these individuals about their own interest and sense of calling to this role (a few have already declined - for now, at least). The process will continue throughout the rest of the Summer and involve an "interview" with the current elders for all who choose to proceed. It's all designed to help us - both those who have been recommended 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. Any new elders will be "ordained" at our annual FLOURISH gathering in late August to begin serving in this role as we start a new ministry year in September. We'll continue to keep you updated on this process.

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 edition of "The Vine," we shared the elder portion of our "Leadership Covenant." In this edition, we have highlighted the commitments made by both our elders and staff (see the "WE DO!" section on page 7).

A Brief Property Update: As we mentioned in the JUNE edition, we are in conversations with a potential developer re: our south lot - the preliminary agreement is almost in place. This piece of property has been listed with a realtor for several years now. Leadership made the decision back in 2024 to get a bit more aggressive in the process of selling the land (basically, all we do now is mow it and there aren't any longer-term uses we have for that land). It's *still* too early to share much information out of respect for the process and the potential buyer - and, due to the nature of the project, it will likely still be a few months before we can share the fuller details. 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 it's a project that can bring potential ministry opportunities as well. We'll keep you up-to-date as things unfold; for now, please be praying about this opportunity and its impact on our church family.

Some Technology Tools for the Southland Family



CHURCH CENTER by Planning Center ... One benefit of this specific tool is the online directory that those who have signed-up can access through a secure log-in and password (<https://people.planningcenteronline.com/>). This is also available for you to download as a convenient app called "Church Center App." It's a great tool for us to maintain connections with others in the Southland family. It also allows each individual person with access to manage their own contact information as that needs to be updated.

We also use the e-mail platform from within the "PEOPLE" portion of this here at Southland. Through that, we are able to send messages to the full lists we've created using the contact



information available. All of our family-wide e-mail communications now are coming from here, including any prayer requests we send out. *Please let us know if you are not receiving these.*

FACEBOOK, including “The Southland Scoop” ... We have a general Facebook page that is public/visible for sharing information about us more broadly (*e.g.* this is what we use for putting out our weekly live stream as well - see page 14 for more on that). *We also have a page called “The Southland Scoop.”* We use this more “internal” page to share more specific church family-related information: pictures from recent events, reminders, announcements, updates, etc. We encourage you to find it and get connected with us in this way.



Occasionally, we like to bring attention to RightNow Media, an exciting ministry tool that we have available here at Southland.

Through our church account, *anyone connected to Southland* can have **FREE** access to the materials available. If you're not already set-up, click this link to do so: <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/join/gosouthland>.

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. Either way, you can find 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 May and June 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:	May monthly tithe = \$31,045 ⁰⁰ (4 Sundays)	Average weekly tithe = \$6,209 ⁰⁰
INCOME:	June monthly tithe = \$28,315 ⁰⁰ (4 Sundays)	Average weekly tithe = \$7,087 ⁷⁵

Now most of the way through this fiscal/ministry year-to-date (September 2025 through August 2026), our tithe is \$377,647 for a weekly average of a little more than \$8,780 ... this projects to a little under \$456,700 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

We started this ministry year in a good spot overall, including some layers of reserve. At this point, we're now quite a bit *behind* last year's pace (on a month-by-month basis), and, we are in a season when tithe amounts tend to be lower. It all leaves us in a spot where we have begun using up some of those funds. As a reminder, our budgeted need for this year is around \$480,000 in tithe. We encourage you to keep pressing on in your financial participation with our ministry - as **2 Corinthians 8** puts it, “to excel in this grace of giving.” As always, leadership works to manage where we are overall with wise stewardship - balancing our responsibility to be realistic while still prioritizing effective ministry and necessary expenses that arise along the way ... of course, with appropriate faith in His provision factored-in as well!

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. *We are meeting as normal in July except for 7/5 (there will be a different schedule for the morning of 8/2 as well - a post-VBS fellowship time at 9:30am.*



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 pages 14-15 for more.

*Weekly ministries on a break over the Summer (and have been since the month of May):
Group Huddle for middle school/high school youth + Wednesday evening CULTIVATE +
Thursday AM WSA/Ladies' Bible Study.*

Specific Events to Highlight (listed by date):

Wednesday, July 1 ... another “Worship Night of the Summer; see page 14 for more on this.

Thursday, July 2 ... the third “Ladies’ Lunch” at noon in the Fellowship Hall (see p. 13).

Saturday, July 4 ... “Happy Independence Day!”

Sunday, July 5 through Friday, July 10 ... the 2026 MOVE Conference in Lincoln, Nebraska for high school students; see page 12 for more.

Sunday, July 12 (at noon in the Fellowship Hall) ... a VBS meeting for those helping with registration and grade school crew leaders.

Thursday, July 16 ... the fourth and final “Ladies’ Lunch” at noon in the Fellowship Hall (see p. 13).

Saturday, July 18-Saturday, July 25 ... mission trip to Anapra, Mexico to bless a family by building a house in partnership with *Casas por Cristo*; see page 18 for more on this, including information about how you can help with this effort even without going.

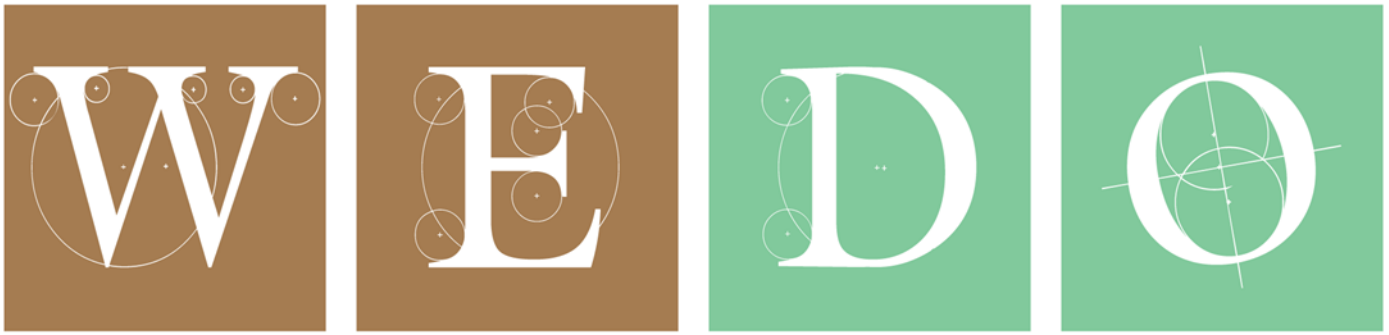
Sunday, July 19 ... A “Child/Baby Dedication” as part of our ENCOUNTER worship service (during the sermon time); see page 2 for more on this event.

Monday, July 27 through Thursday, July 30 (starts at 6pm each day) ... “Emerald Crossing: An Irish Adventure through Psalm 23” - our 2026 VBS; see pages 3 and 10 for more about this key Summer event. *Also, remember the middle school activities for this week as well (see p. 12 for those details).*

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.

Sunday, August 30 ... FLOURISH 2026 (see p. 3); be watching for more details about this important annual event in the life of the Southland family.

In the next edition of “The Vine,” we’ll share more details re: kick-off dates for our new ministry year (what happens in last August and early September).



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?

We are in our annual process of considering new elders to add potentially to our team (the process began in June – see pages 3–4 for an update). In light of that, we use this “WE DO!” page to highlight the specific commitments SCC elders make as part of this covenant. All Southland members embrace the responsibilities of belonging. Appropriately, leaders also embrace a higher level of responsibility. In the previous edition of “The Vine,” we shared the commitments specific to the role of elders here at SCC. In this edition, we share a broader set affirmed by both elders and staff – the commitments we believe are important for those in such leadership positions to make and carry out.

General Leadership COMMITMENTS – made by both elders and staff members:

- ♦ *We covenant to cultivate a growing personal relationship with Christ as His followers so we continue to become more and more like Him.*
- ♦ *We covenant to demonstrate the kind of character fitting for one who is leading in His church – living the kind of life that is worthy of being followed.*
- ♦ *We covenant to follow Jesus’ own leadership example – serving with humility and investing ourselves in those we lead.*
- ♦ *We covenant to always remember we are leading His church and carrying out His agenda.*
- ♦ *We covenant to affirm the doctrine of Southland Christian Church as it is laid out [in the covenant].*
- ♦ *We covenant to take seriously the responsibility we have to equip people for maturity and ministry.*
- ♦ *We covenant to provide pastoral care, including praying for the congregation and making ourselves available especially in times of spiritual need (NOTE: this is a shared responsibility).*
- ♦ *We covenant to participate with fellow leaders as a unified team, being diligent in carrying out the work He has given us with a spirit of unity and mutual accountability.*
- ♦ *We covenant to be faithful stewards of the resources and opportunities God provides.*
- ♦ *We covenant to have our families (i.e. those living in our homes) involved in the life of Southland.*
- ♦ *We covenant to set an example in how we live out the membership responsibilities contained in this covenant.*

What MATTERS to me ...

The letter of Philippians has always been one of my favorites; I don't think I'm alone in that. It was the first full book that I ever memorized back in the 1990's. It also has some of my favorite isolated Scriptures - ones that I gravitate to in my faith journey along the way. While there are more popular passages from Philippians (e.g., 1:21; 2:1-11; 4:4-7 or 4:13), one that has always seemed significant is 3:12-14.

Now, for some context, 3:1-11 provides an important foundation - funny how that works, huh?! Every student at Ozark Christian College within the main Bible degrees takes a class that includes a big project, one that often ends up being 75+ pages. It includes all levels of interpretation: historical background of the letter as a whole plus the passage itself, word studies, grammatical impacts, etc. It's a labor of love that helps student learn how to be faithful interpreters of God's Word. For my project, 3:1-11 was my text. It's one I grew to appreciate and even resonate with - amidst all that we might find to be profitable to our story, ultimately, all of it is insignificant apart from knowing Christ. The greatness of having a relationship with Him now and sharing His glory later far surpasses any religious pedigree we might have to our (seeming) advantage. After reading 3:1-11, it's easy to make an assumption about Paul: he feels as though he's arrived at his goal. That's where 3:12-14 comes into play.

Here's what Paul writes:

¹² *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.* ¹³ *Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,* ¹⁴ *I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

There's so much we could unpack in these words, but let me highlight what I most appreciate from these verses:

- ♦ There's the grace note - "taking hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." In the midst of our pursuit to know Him, this is often a part we forget. While our striving after Jesus matters, it only becomes possible in the first place (let alone remains possible along the way) because of what He has first done for us by His grace ... and what His sustaining grace continues to provide. For those of us inclined to keep emphasizing our own effort, such language keeps drawing us back to the Good News. As we pursue Him, may we never lose sight that He makes the first move to provide what we could not on our own.
- ♦ Yet, part of what this text undeniably invites us to is just such a pursuit - a striving after the goal of Christ. If grace reminds us that our effort is irrelevant without His far more significant contribution, this emphasis on striving reminds us that what we do still matters. The "press on" word is a word used in other contexts to describe persecution, pursuing believers, albeit to inflict harm. Similarly, it's a word used to describe people hunting after animals. Yet, the goal can also be good - chasing after some prize as in a race or some noble characteristic in a life of virtue. As part of our "Do GOOD!" series back in the Spring, we saw this emphasis on our activity in response to His grace as a major NT theme. Dallas Willard, one of my favorite authors on a life of faith says it this way: *"Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning."* The metaphor in the text invites us to see our faith journeys as an ongoing race throughout. Our goal at the finish line is Christ and especially, all He has in store for us in eternity. Along the way, like a runner, we continue straining toward that end as we actively strive after Him.
- ♦ There's this additional reminder: this pursuit is truly a lifelong journey. Sometimes, it's frustrating along the way - to know that we cannot fully arrive at our goal this side of Heaven. We are regularly reminded of how short of the goal we are. Yet, in the end, it's comforting to me amidst the ebbs and flows that come on our journeys of faith. If you're not there yet, join the club; rest contentedly that His grace doesn't stop flowing. What matters is never letting such contentment become complacency. Just keep pressing on!

It's a great way to package our lives of faith. Saved and sustained only because of His grace. Yet, instead of producing a passivity in us, in light of what He has done, we keep pursuing Him to the very end!

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 are combining our K through 5th grade students.

CHILDREN'S
Sunday School

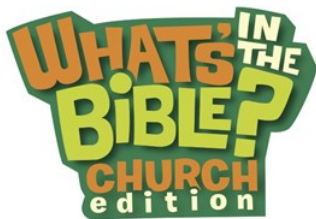
We have an adjusted 9:15am schedule for the following days coming up: July 5 (nothing at 9:15am as part of the July 4th weekend) and August 2 (a light breakfast fellowship time to wrap-up our 2026 VBS week at 9:30am); as of now, classes are meeting as normal otherwise during July and August.

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 July; see the next page for a look ahead to August 2 as we wrap-up our 2026 VBS week.



In June, "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. Each week includes an activity for kids to take home and complete for the following Sunday. For July, the material focuses on Genesis and Exodus as kids discover what's found in the Old Testament.

Wednesday evening programming (including C.O.P. - a Christmas program has been chosen) resumes at the end of Summer.

CULTIVATE KIDS

A Look Ahead to Our 2026 VBS - July 27-30 (evenings)

After all the planning and counting down of the days, "Emerald Crossing" (another curriculum from Answers in Genesis) happens at the end of this month! This year's Irish theme focuses on Psalm 23 and David's story - exploring God as Shepherd, Guide, Counselor, Provider and King. We are excited about this event and all that will happen in these jam-packed days. VBS is a great week for the kids and everyone involved within the Southland family!



*VBS is for kids age 4 through 5th grade with separate plans for middle school students (all based on next school year).**

Our VBS home page: <https://gosouthland.myanswers.com/emerald-crossing/>

To register: <https://gosouthland.myanswers.com/emerald-crossing/register/>

(You can click on both of these links if you're viewing this electronically.)

Also, make sure you're paying attention to the general calendar section for information about various VBS meetings coming up (we list them there when they're scheduled - like one on 7/12).

** Accommodations are made for younger children of workers.*

A reminder about our VBS missions partner:

*In keeping with this year's broader theme, VBS offering this year is going to support **Nick and Jes Tuttle**. They live and serve as missionaries on the west coast of Ireland in a small village called Oughterard. This year's goal is \$1,500 for the week. The money raised will enable students there to attend a CIY event in Ireland - a big deal to young people there just as it is here. In addition to a note we've shared, we'll learn more about the Tuttles during VBS.*

We're looking forward to another great week of VBS!

*As is our tradition, we celebrate the VBS week on the following Sunday (this year, August 2). **We have a fellowship time with donuts and coffee, etc. at 9:30am.** Then, during our 10:30am time slot, kids will be singing as part of our service and wrapping-up the VBS curriculum w/ Day #5. To allow for enough time on this morning, all ages meet for the whole ENCOUNTER time after singing at the beginning of service.*

2026 Summer Camp at Maranatha



As we move into July, the Summer camp season at Maranatha is almost in the rearview mirror for us (the Junior High session is at the end of June/early July). It has been another great one! We had a total of 28 campers attend with 7 different sponsors helping out, including Jessica and Les; see page 16 - in the "BUILD UP" section - for a full list of these sponsors ... we are certainly grateful for their willing service in this way! This year's camp focus has been on the Gospel of Mark. It was



another good year of worship, devotions, messages, recreational activities, swimming and lots of fun! As always, we are grateful for our partnership with the camp as an extension of our ministry here at Southland - for the fun, the memories and especially for what happens in the hearts of our young people there as they discover more about Jesus and faith in Him. See below for our three younger Southland groups (you can find more on "The Southland Scoop" Facebook page):



LES' LATEST

I love a good before-and-after story. Many might remember the excitement of **Extreme Makeover: Home Edition**. Families would leave their homes, and while they were away, a team would completely renovate the house. When the family returned, they would hear the famous words, "*Move that bus!*" and see something beautiful standing where something old and worn once existed.

God does something even more remarkable. When we come to Christ, He doesn't simply patch up our lives. He transforms us from the inside-out. He removes the brokenness caused by sin, repairs what has been damaged, and begins building something new according to His perfect design.

Sometimes, we wish God would renovate our lives overnight, but His work often happens in more of a "room-by-room" kind of way. Yes, I'd much prefer my journeys through change to be succinct. Let me have my story at the beginning, skip quickly through the middle, and relish the fantastic final result. Unfortunately, change doesn't work that way, does it? Although the process can take time, His goal is always restoration and growth.

Just as the families on the show had to trust the builders while they couldn't see what was happening, we are called to trust God even when we don't understand what He is doing behind the scenes. The Apostle Paul writes it this way: "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*" (2 Corinthians 5:17 - NIV).

Today, if there is an area of your life that seems worn out, broken, or unfinished, place it in God's hands. His grace is greater than your failures, and His plans are better than anything you could design yourself.

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 throughout July except for 7/5, part of the holiday weekend (we won't meet on August 3 either, but more on that later).**

Wednesday Evening CULTIVATE: this resumes in late August/early September.

FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

The Junior High session at Maranatha Bible Camp - for *next school year's* 7th and 8th graders - is Sunday, June 28 through Thursday afternoon, July 2.



In conjunction with our children's VBS, we offer recreational activities for middle school youth (those going into 6th-8th grades *next* school year) - **6-8:30pm each evening, Monday, July 27 through Thursday, July 30.** You're invited to come enjoy nightly adventures while making new friends. **If you're inviting a guest, be sure their parent/guardian fills out a Southland participation consent form as this needs to happen *before they join us.***

Here's the lineup of fun-filled events:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Monday, July 27 | Field Games at Southland ... enjoy hilarious "bigger-than-life" games in the church's open field (<i>bring tennis shoes and bug spray; water bottles and popsicles provided</i>). |
| Tuesday, July 28 | Miniature Golf ... here's your opportunity to walk around the course pretending your putter is a fancy cane (<i>admission is covered for this evening's event and water bottles will be provided</i>). |
| Wednesday, July 29 | Roller Skating ... lace up the skates and enjoy your time with friends under a giant disco ball (<i>again, admission is covered, but be sure to bring extra money for concessions</i>). |
| Thursday, July 30 | Sonic & Sand Volleyball ... this week wraps-up our time together with a night of fun (<i>bring money for a sweet treat</i>). |

To help us plan, we ask that you use the same VBS registration link on page 10; and, again, don't forget the extra consent form for any new friends joining us!

FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ...



The High School "MOVE" Conference
July 5-10 @ in Lincoln, Nebraska
(for the graduating classes of 2026-2030)

We depart after service on Sunday, July 5 and return Friday night, July 10.

Two MOVE-related notes:

1. All MOVE release forms are complete and balances have all been fully paid. Way to go!
2. *Check out the conference guide Les mailed out for other MOVE-related details.*

Southland Women

We recently had our annual women's ministry summer event. This year, it was a Women's Tea on a Saturday afternoon, and we enjoyed snacks, time together, a time of worship in song, and an encouraging speaker. Teresa Roberts, who teaches at OCC in Joplin, spoke to us on the theme of "Timeless Faith."

The decorations included clocks - thank you to those who let me borrow your pretty clocks for the event! While it may seem odd that our theme was "Timeless Faith" and we were surrounded by clocks, it made sense to me. We live our lives with clocks front and center - our schedules and calendars are dictated by them. We have literal clocks that we rely on. We have clocks on the front screens of our phones. We often rush from one event to the next without much time to breathe. Our lives are often fast-paced and stressful. Time may cause our blood pressure to rise and our jaws to clench - think back to the last time you were running late - but the concept of time was God's idea. I don't know if He intended us to be as tied to clocks as we are, but time overall is His creation.



We also think of time in the passing of seasons and years. This year I have felt the passing of time poignantly as my oldest became a Mommy herself, and my youngest will enter high school this fall. Where has the *time* gone? It passes one day at a time, but we might look backward and wonder at its passing. I have a saying on my desk which reads "The days are long, but the years are short." I believe that very strongly!

Yet, I am comforted by the fact that God is not bound by time. He's above it. He transcends it. He sees and knows the beginning and the end of each of us, and through each season, He is aware and at work in our lives. God is timeless, and so is our faith. Our faith in God is not dependent on time or season, because He is in every one. Our speaker, Teresa, reminded us of how God used many people in His big story, and we know He wants to use us today to continue that story. Teresa pointed out, using Hebrews chapter 11, that our faith has been handed down to us by many in Scripture who were living by faith. But they were not perfect people. Most of them had failures and sin in their lives and yet God used them for His purposes and His glory. Their failures did not disqualify them from serving God, and in this passage, they are even commended for their faith!

In case you sometimes feel like your failures mean you aren't "good enough" to serve Jesus, may I remind you that isn't true? You are a loved, chosen child of God, and when you were redeemed by Jesus' blood, you were given citizenship in Christ's Kingdom. You will no doubt go through ups and downs and challenges in life, and maybe even specifically in your faith, but our God is big enough and strong enough to carry you through them. We can hold onto hope that He will always be with us, and He is always faithful. Hold on tight to your timeless faith, because He is holding on tight to you!



Summer Ladies' Lunches

Two Thursdays Left: July 2 + July 16 - at noon each time (lunch provided or bring your own)

RSVP through this link: <https://gosouthland.churchcenter.com/people/forms/1218706>

We hope you can join us for food and time to connect!



WEEKLY ENCOUNTER

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

Summer Worship Nights



Wednesday, July 1 - 6:30pm in the courtyard* (after that, the next one will be in August)

We host these times as part of our worship ministry - opportunities for a music-centered worship experience in a relaxed atmosphere. ***We have been hosting these more regularly during these Summer months (on Wednesdays since CULTIVATE is not meeting).*** We hope you join us as we ENCOUNTER our Father in a different 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

Our Summer 2026 sermon series - continuing into and through July - is called **"You've Got Questions."** In this series grid, what unites the various sermons is this common feature: **we're using God's Word to answer YOUR specific questions - ones you've submitted/asked!** The in-and-out nature of Summer is a good time to do such a series when each week becomes its own "stand alone" topic. So far, we've answered questions on a wide-range of issues: **when faith feels lukewarm (5/31) ... joyful endurance in the face of challenges (6/7) ... the OT Law and its Application to Followers of Jesus (6/14) ... responding amidst disagreements with others (6/21 with Brian Jennings as our guest) ... the reality of evil in this world, including the evil one (6/28).** (As a side note, see below for ways to access previous services and sermons via YouTube.)



Based on the length of this series, we cannot get to every single question that's asked - at least, in a sermon format. We'll try to identify an alternative way where we can answer some of the others that we don't address. With each one we do select, our goal is to consider how Scripture addresses that specific issue. **Be watching "The Southland Scoop" Facebook page toward the end of each week (usually Friday afternoon) where we'll post the question we're answering for that coming Sunday.**



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 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/@southlandcclstreams>. 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.



One of our priorities here at Southland is to provide a context where relational *family-like connections* can develop. Because it's a prominent theme in the New Testament, we emphasize it within our process statement as a key way we can grow and be equipped in faith. That's a big part of what our CONNECT Groups are about - a small group relational setting for reflecting on God's Word and praying *together*.

Here in Summer 2026, our Connect Groups continue meeting at 9:15am on Sundays* (note: we do have Sunday School classes for all ages of kids/youth as well during this time). Please don't hesitate to ask if you need help deciding which group is best for you.

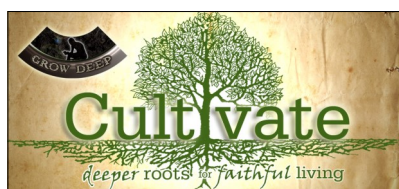
* We are meeting as normal at 9:15am on July 12, 19 and 26, but *not* on July 5 (part of the 4th of July weekend). On August 2, as has become our tradition, we'll wrap-up our VBS week with a time of fellowship with donuts, etc. at 9:30am. It's a good way to help celebrate the busy week with a more relaxed Sunday; it's also a good opportunity to invite VBS guests to join us.

An Additional NOTE: A few of our CONNECT Groups combined for the month of June; we'll continue this into July as well - meeting in the Great Room.

A Note re: Upcoming "First Sunday CONNECTION" Times

As mentioned on page 2, it's been awhile since we've had a normal "First Sunday CONNECTION" and will be a while before our next one (we're not meeting at all on 7/5 and 9/7 due to special weekends + on 8/2, we have scheduled a special post-VBS fellowship time at 9:30am). We'll continue to update you on this.

GROW DEEP MINISTRIES



Our Wednesday evening CULTIVATE is off through the Summer. We'll share more details about plans for what's ahead as we move toward August and a new ministry year.



OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD UP

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

This section of the Vine provides a central place for you to be informed about how to become active in service at Southland. One of our major priorities is to be a place where God's people BUILD UP one another. In fact, 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. We've been sharing about ways to help with our VBS toward the end of July; let Jessica know if you missed those opportunities and are available to help.

Beyond VBS, 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.***

A **"THANK YOU!"** to all who helped make our annual church family picnic a great time earlier in June (*even if the weather forced us indoors*): to **Rick Randleman and Dylan Young** for grilling the burgers, to all who brought food, to **Doug & Susan Graves** who came early to help set-up the room, to staff/their families who helped in various ways with the event (e.g. planning, getting the building ready, reset, etc.) and to all who helped with clean-up (the ending with a tornado warning made it a challenge to get a good list of names).

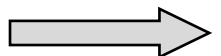


In June, work on a new fence around the playground - including a new gate - was completed. A **"THANK YOU!"** to **Aaron Flagg** for leading this effort (donating the time/labor) with help from **A.J. Gegg**. If you haven't seen it yet, make sure you check it out; it looks great!

A **"THANK YOU!"** to those who served as sponsors during the 2026 camp season at Maranatha: **Les Londeen, Harmony Martin, Tristan Martinez (2 sessions), Rick Randleman, Aiden Simpson (2), Grace Worthy (2) and Jessica Young (3).**

Also, a **"THANK YOU!"** to our volunteer team of elders (beyond Matt and Rick who serve in this capacity as well as being on staff): **Ernie Emmerton, A.J. Gegg, Ben Jennings, Pat Little (on sabbatical this year), Terry Ochs and Bob Wood**. Based on where we are in the year (see pages 3-4), it is an appropriate time to express our gratitude to them for their heart, leadership and investment in serving the Southland family as they do. We appreciate you all!

(See the next page for additional "thank you's" from recent service at Southland.)



A **"THANK YOU!"** to those who volunteered to make the Women's Tea a success on June 27. Here is a list of those who helped (beyond Kristie who led from her staff



Role): **Nate Martin** (room set-up), **Cheryl Boland + Niki Short** (with some set-up/planning), then **Debbie Jennings, Kristin Londeen, Eden Marin, Kendall Miles, Liz Wood and Jessica Young** (each one of these helped day-of somehow - with food prep and/or clean-up afterwards). *Thanks again to everyone for their work in making this event happen!*

One last item, we've had help with some painting in the nursery and younger kids' area. **Chloe Gegg, Coco Jackson (a friend)** and **Lily Worthy** came together - motivated by some work on "LIVE OUT: Service Day" - to paint a mural in the nursery. It's not all the way finished as of the end-of-June, but it's looking great! Also, **Caden Young** helped **Jessica** with some painting in one of the classrooms. *Thank you to all for serving in this way!*

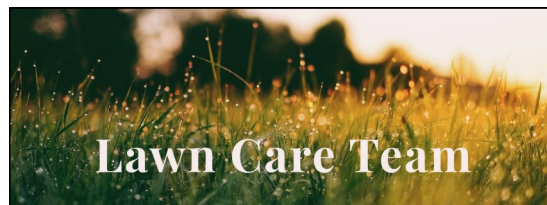
SERVING SCHEDULE for July 2026

	Foyer Hosts (10:15 on, through whole service)	Greeters (at the doors from 10:15-10:40)	Serving Team Leader
7/5	A.J. & Terra Gegg	<i>T.B.D. since no 9:15am groups</i>	Mark Miller
7/12	Pat & Debbie Little	Room #6 Connect Group	Doug Graves
7/19	Les & Kristin Londeen	Room #7 Connect Group	Deckard Family
7/26	Bob & Liz Wood	"Voyage" Connect Group	Les Londeen

	Nursery workers (all morning)	Wee Kid ENCOUNTER & Li'l Kid ENCOUNTER	Kid ENCOUNTER (1 st - 5 th grades)
7/5	Wilcox Family	<i>Darrell & Lisa Deckard Ezri Smith</i>	Jessica Young/Cary Swadley
7/12	Harnstrom Family	<i>Anna Randleman Debbie Hoenshell</i>	Sean & Megan Falconer
7/19	Graves Family	<i>Jessica Young Sonya Simpson</i>	Thomas & Stef Hall
7/26	Martin Family	<i>Aiden Simpson Amanda Butler</i>	Sandy Arneson/Becky Kurth

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

7/4 - Denovi/Arneson
7/11 - Randlemans
7/18 - Harnstrom/Pryor
7/25 - Martin/Little
8/1 - Brothers/Easter



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.



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In the next edition of "The Vine," we'll share about a couple of upcoming "LIVE OUT" opportunities to support some of these local ministry partners: the "Walk for Life" with the Pregnancy Care Center and Christian Campus House's annual golf tournament to support their mission trips.

To keep you informed about Southland's foreign missions partners, we strive to provide updates when available (now in the hallway across from the nursery entrance). This is really the only way one of our partners can communicate with us. Their location makes any online presence too risky from a security standpoint. We do regularly make their newsletters available as they come in.



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.



A REMINDER - Life of Hope does offer a child sponsorship program; for \$35/month, you can support a child through their work. For more details and/or to sign-up, check out their website (click on the "Child Sponsorship" tab).

Our 2026 Mission Trip:



We are preparing for a return trip to Anapra, Mexico with *Casas por Cristo* - it happens in July (the 18-25). On this trip, our group will build another house to bless a different family there - *this year a couple named Juan and Olga Lopez with their 12 year-old son, Brayan*. Obviously, everyone cannot go on such a trip; however, there are some ways people can help even without actually going. In addition to the vitally important aspect of praying for the week, we are needing some donations for the group to take down to provide an additional blessing to the family. As of the beginning of July, there is still a sign-up sheet at the Welcome Center counter with a list of items that are needed (if it's easier, you can make a cash donation to help). *Please make sure you do this ASAP as we need donated items back by Sunday, July 12. Thank you for helping support this effort; we're grateful for this opportunity to shine the light of Jesus and do His Kingdom work in this way!*