

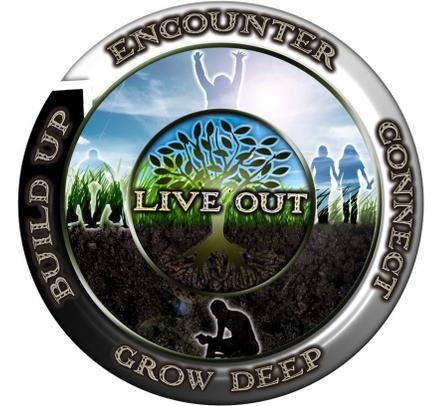


1630 W. Republic Road \* Springfield, MO 65807  
www.gosouthland.org

# The Southland Vine

For MARCH 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.



**We hope you join us as we celebrate the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection!**

**Good Friday Service - April 3 at 7pm**

**Easter Sunday - April 5 at 10:30am**

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We'll publish the next edition of *The Vine* in late March/early April.

**HAPPY**  
*Spring!*



# Southland "FAMILY" News

## UPCOMING EVENTS for the Southland family:

There is not another one of our big church FAMILY events to advertise in this space at this point (the next one is really the picnic in June). Yet, there is obviously still a lot happening with our regular ministry programming - see below - and within individual Southland ministries. Such ongoing ways are still a great way to experience the goodness of our church FAMILY life.

### Our next "First Sunday CONNECTION" is Sunday, March 1 at 10am

At Southland, we value CONNECTING with others within the church family; in fact, we identify this as a key priority that we believe is part of God's design for His people in Christ. It's why we have CONNECT Groups that meet each week (see p. 17). It's also why we have some opportunities throughout the year for experiencing and developing relationships with one another.



That's the goal behind these "First Sunday CONNECTION" times (after March 1, it will actually be awhile after that due to the way the calendar falls). We want to provide an informal time for making connections with others. For these times, we provide some simple breakfast items and coffee, but otherwise, there's nothing else we do besides offering the basic context for good conversation. We have regular 9:15am Connect Groups for adults/S.S. classes for kids and youth on these days, just dismissed earlier than normal. If you're not typically here with us in that time, we encourage you to join us on these days at 10am for this time of CONNECTING.

**NOTE:** Kids up through 5<sup>th</sup> grade will have their own time on these days, meeting in Rooms 1 and 2 (nursery-age kids will remain there during this time).

Throughout this edition of "The Vine," we've shared about some upcoming events later this Spring and into the Summer. While there is much more information on the pages that follow, we want to make sure we highlight them here as well so that they're not missed:



Each Summer, our high school students take an annual trip to the "MOVE" Conference (part of the ministry of CIY - see p. 13 for details). It is a costly trip, and part of how the broader Southland family can support our young people is through the annual YOUTH YARD SALE. The yard sale is *the main fundraising event* for our students attending MOVE; each year it certainly makes a big impact! This year's sale will be May 1 and 2.

*With the calendar turning to March, Les is ready to accept donations - why we're mentioning this now! You can leave them in the south foyer or in the church trailers (they are unlocked if/when the building is closed); if you want to arrange a time for Les to pick-up items, contact him at 417-773-1650. Obviously, such donations are crucial to making the yard sale a successful endeavor, so we encourage you to help out in this way. Thanks, in advance, for helping in this way!*

Each year, EASTER weekend is a significant time in our church family - when we celebrate the heartbeat of the Good News and our faith in Jesus by reflecting on Jesus' death and resurrection. Here are the basic details about our plans for this year:





We'll host our Good Friday service at 7pm on Friday, April 3 - a time to reflect on Jesus' death for us on the cross.

Then, Sunday, April 5 is Resurrection Sunday; we'll come together at 10:30am to celebrate what happened on "the third day" when God raised Jesus back to life. *No 9:15am ministry programming on this day.*

Our annual "LIVE OUT: Service Day" is Sunday, May 3. It's a great day in the Southland FAMILY as SERVING becomes our intentional focus church family-wide. We adjust the schedule of the morning so we can go out into our community to show love through practical action. Please put the date on your calendars and make plans to join us for this day!



Mission 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.



Mark your calendars for Monday, July 27 through Thursday, July 30; it's our 2026 VBS: "Emerald Crossing: An Irish Adventure through Psalm 23" from Answers in Genesis. 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.

Over the next few months, there will be ways you can help - from volunteering to donating supplies, etc. One of the cool things that happens during VBS is this: it becomes a great way for us to grow as we work together to bless and serve our younger ones!

*Be watching the calendar page as Jessica has already started having VBS meetings with various teams of volunteers (e.g. a couple of them in early March).*

## "THANK YOU" Notes



In response to how we've shown care and concern in various situations, we at times receive cards, notes, etc. expressing gratitude to the SCC family. Since there is not a great place to display these cards, we share them with you here in this section of "The Vine."

*We received the following note after the passing of Sandy Holt, Lisa Deckard's Mom:*

Thanks so much for your prayers and kindness shown to our family after Mom's death. Thanks, also, for the beautiful plant and candle. Our church family has been such a blessing to us over the years. Thanks for your love and support.

Love,  
*Lisa Deckard & Family*

*Jewell Rand was a long-time member of the Southland family who passed away in January. We received the following note from her family:*

Thank you so much for the beautiful plant that you sent our family in honor of my Mom, Jewell, at her recent passing. She loved the church and the many people there. We appreciate your kindness.

*Karen Westfall*



This is now the sixth year we have had the opportunity to offer a scholarship in memory of Warren Burros. As many of you will remember, Warren was a long-time elder and member at Southland who passed away in April of 2020. His long-time company decided to honor and reflect his legacy by contributing each year toward a scholarship fund that we would run. It's exclusively designed to bless and benefit high school graduates from within our Southland family.

We have developed criteria and an application process. Our intention is to make the scholarship available to *all* qualified applicants based on criteria such as involvement, service, future plans, etc. (more on this is shared in the application process). We're sharing the news now in preparation for launching the process in April - we open the process on April 8, the anniversary date of Warren's passing. 2026 graduates, be watching for more information about this.

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## ***OTHER GENERAL REMINDERS & INFO***

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### **In the Event of INCLEMENT WEATHER ...**

We are still in that time of year when wintry weather can become a possibility. Unfortunately, there are times when we have to cancel or adjust our regular schedule as a result. These changes will be made as soon as reasonably possible (*we try to have a decision made at least two hours prior to start time*) and communicated in these main ways:



- ⇒ Through our "Southland Scoop" Facebook page.
- ⇒ Via e-mail through the "Planning Center: PEOPLE" lists we regularly use for sharing information.
- ⇒ We also make an attempt to call those who may not have such "electronic access." *Please do let the office know if you wish to be contacted in this way when weather requires a schedule change.*

### **FINANCIAL UPDATE ... For February 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:** January monthly tithe = \$33,493<sup>00</sup> (4 Sundays)      Average weekly tithe = \$8,373<sup>25</sup>

*Five months into this fiscal/ministry year-to-date (September 2025 onward), our tithe is \$243,311 for a weekly average of a little over \$9,730 ... this projects to more than \$506,000 annually.*

We started this ministry year in a good spot overall, including some layers of reserve. At this point, we're actually a bit *behind* last year's pace (on a month-by-month basis). While we had an especially strong December and January, we were off of the total from February 2025 by quite a bit.

Even still, we continue to be in good shape, *especially with the layers of reserve we have*. We also continue to 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!



**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.*

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## **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 17 for more specifics. *We are meeting as normal during March, including a "First Sunday CONNECTION" time at 10am on Sunday, 3/1.***



**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 16 for more on this.**

**Sunday evenings (6-8pm - *not meeting on Sunday, March 15*) ... Group Huddle for middle school and high school youth; see pages 11-12 for more details about themes for the various weeks and more.**

**Wednesday evening CULTIVATE, a "GROW DEEP" ministry ... 5:30 for dinner, 6:30 for ministry programming. At this point, we are in a six-week session of ELECTIVE classes through March 11; we'll have another session of D-Groups from there, starting March 25 (*we don't meet on March 18 due to Spring Break week*).**



**Thursday mornings (10am start time) ... WSA - Ladies' Bible Study; *see page 15 for details (not meeting on Thursday, March 19).***

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## **Specific Events to Highlight (listed by date):**

*We try to consolidate into one list the dates you need to be aware of for the weeks ahead.*

**Sunday, March 1 ... Les is accepting donations for the annual youth yard sale (see p. 2)**

**Sunday, March 1 ... another "First Sunday CONNECTION" at 10am (see p. 2).**

**Sunday, March 1 at noon ... a VBS meeting for the pre-k/K leaders.**

**Friday, March 6 ... the high school "Mid-Nighter" from 6pm until midnight (see p. 13).**

**Sunday, March 8 ... Daylight Saving Time begins, time to "spring forward."**

**Sunday, March 15 ... no Group Huddle on this day (the front end of Spring Break week).**

**Wednesday, March 18 and Thursday, March 19 ... no CULTIVATE or WSA during this week due to Spring Break.**

**Friday, March 20 ... Winter Jam at Great Southern Bank Arena; doors open at 6pm - the youth are *not* going as a group, but we wanted to share the information (see p. 12).**



**Wednesday, March 25 ... another round of D-Groups begin (after our round of electives and a week off for Spring Break) - 6 weeks through the end of the semester on April 29.**

**Sunday, March 29 ... “Open Hearts, Open Homes” lunch after service.**

**By the end of March ... Rick is wanting the 2026 mission trip team set; see page 20 for more details.**

**The month of April ... camp registration as we prepare for the 2026 season at Maranatha.**

**Friday, April 3 ... Good Friday service at 7pm.**

**Sunday, April 5 ... Resurrection Sunday 2026 - *NO 9:15am ministry programming or “First Sunday CONNECTION” time, only our 10:30am ENCOUNTER time as we celebrate the day.***

**Wednesday, April 8 ... the opening of the application process for the “Warren Burros Memorial Scholarship” - this date is significant; see page 4 for more.**

**Friday, April 10 ... the annual banquet for the Pregnancy Care Center (see pp. 7 and 19).**

**Saturday, April 11 ... “Bullfrogs and Butterflies” at Maranatha Bible Camp for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders; see page 9 for more details about this event.**

**Friday, April 24 and Saturday, April 25 ... Women’s Event/Conference at Ozark Christian College in Joplin, MO (see p. 15).**

**Some late Spring and Summer dates so you can have these on your calendar:**

**Friday, May 1 and Saturday, May 2 ... annual youth yard sale; see pages 2 and 13.**

**Sunday, May 3 ... our annual “LIVE OUT: Service Day” (see p. 20).**

**Sunday, June 7 ... the date for our 2026 church FAMILY picnic.**

**Various dates in June ... sessions at Maranatha Bible Camp (see p. 10).**

**July 5-10 ... the high school MOVE conference (see p. 13).**

**July 18-25 ... a mission trip to Mexico with *Casas por Cristo* (see p. 20).**

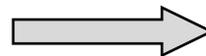
**Monday, July 27 through Thursday, July 30 (starts at 6pm each day) ... “Emerald Crossing: An Irish Adventure through Psalm 23” - our 2026 VBS; see page 3.**



## (An Abbreviated) What MATTERS to me ...

There’s lots to pack-in to this month’s edition of “The Vine” - besides, you regularly get opportunity to hear my reflections anyway through sermons. So, we’re abbreviated in this space this week.

In my regular Bible reading, I was recently in the book of Genesis. Every time I read the story of Joseph - and it was no different this time - I marvel at what unfolds. Sold by his brothers into slavery. Presumed dead by his father because of the story they told. Elevated to a position of prominence in the house of an Egyptian leader. Falsely accused by the leader’s wife after he failed her advances. Sentenced to prison. Yet, once again, promoted to a leadership role while there. Forgotten for two full years by a fellow political prisoner for whom he had done a favor. Yet, once again, as an opportunity presents itself due to the capacities received by God, given a high position over the entire land of Egypt. From that spot, used to rescue God’s chosen people of promise. Re-united with his family, even his father. (How’s that for a summary!) It’s a fascinating story that unfolds over the course of 14 chapters overall; it’s little wonder why his story is so loved.





# 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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.

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## 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. We are meeting as normal in March, including a "First Sunday CONNECTION" at 10am on 3/1 (kids have their own time).

CHILDREN'S  
Sunday School

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

Here's what happens for kids 5<sup>th</sup> 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/1<sup>st</sup> grade - those in 1<sup>st</sup> grade have the option: here or in "Kid ENCOUNTER") are all available throughout our ENCOUNTER time.

**Kid ENCOUNTER** (1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders) meets 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 in March.*

Kid ENCOUNTER is using a new curriculum called "Jesus Up Close." This 12-lesson series "zooms in" on the life of Jesus - perhaps even some of the less familiar moments - as the Easter season draws near.

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## Wednesday evenings this Winter/Spring

## CULTIVATE KIDS

Kids up through 5<sup>th</sup> grade have their own programming as part of CULTIVATE on Wednesday evenings; for now, they are meeting in Room #2 while the adult elective classes are happening (through March 11, back in the Fellowship Hall after that). Jessica leads this time with a lesson series called "Dave Did!" The curriculum focuses on King David, one of the most fascinating characters in the Bible - a warrior, a poet, a man after God's own heart. After looking at his life in these lessons, the plan is to watch the new kids' "David" movie at the end of this semester.

CULTIVATE is not meeting as normal on March 18 (Spring Break week); check out page 17 for information about what is happening on Wednesday evenings more broadly.



Here's a picture of the group that went to SuperStart 2026 in Tulsa back at the end of January. The focus for the weekend was God's mysterious truth - what we find in Jesus. It was another great time for these young people. **A special thank you to the sponsors who went!**

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## An Upcoming Event for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Graders:

**"Bullfrogs and Butterflies"**  
at Maranatha Bible Camp



**Saturday, April 11**  
**(leave at 8am and return at 4:45pm)**

This is a day specially-designed for younger grade school students. This session emphasizes how God's Word changes us! **Cost is \$25/camper; this covers lunch, snacks, materials and activity supplies for both the student and one parent (a second parent can attend for an additional \$10).** *Jessica needs to know by March 29 who is planning to attend.*

While it's helpful for Jessica to know directly, please take care of registering on your own using this website: <https://maranathabiblecamp.campbrainregistration.com/> (this is the normal camp registration website - you can click directly on it if viewing this electronically).

*For this event, we do need you to pay the registration fee directly to the camp.*

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



As we move further into this new year, we're gearing up for our 2026 VBS. This year's (Irish) theme focuses on Psalm 23. As is the case each year, we're excited about this event and all that will happen in these jam-packed days! We'll share much more along the way as we continue preparing for the week; for now, please get the dates on your calendar. VBS is a great week for the kids and everyone involved within the Southland family!

*If you are interested in serving as a volunteer, we'd love - and need - your help; please contact Jessica (we'll share a link next month that you can use to do this as well). We will continue to have meetings in the months ahead as we get ready for VBS 2026, including one on March 1 at noon in the Fellowship Hall for the pre-K/K team.*



## Dates for the 2026 Camp Season

Below are the sessions and dates Southland will be attending at Maranatha this Summer; we wanted to make sure you have them on your calendar.

Camp Session (ages/grades)*	Dates (days of the week)	Camp Theme
Beginner Camp 2 (K-1 <sup>st</sup> )	June 13 (Saturday)	 MARK 10:45 <b>Jesus the Servant</b> A study of Mark
Kids' Camp 1 (2 <sup>nd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> )	June 18-20 (Thursday - Saturday)	
5 <sup>th</sup> /6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Camp 1	June 14-17 (Sunday - Wednesday)	
Junior High Camp (7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> )	June 28 - July 2 (Sunday - Thursday)	

\* It's the grade students are in for the 2026-2027 school year!

For the April edition of "The Vine," we will share information about registering for the 2026 camp season.

## LES' LATEST

One of the biggest battles we face is discouragement. Everybody has fought this at least one season in life. In fact, some might agree that discouragement is worse than fear. The truth is, discouragement should have no place in our minds. Yet, it's something we often tolerate. We don't recognize it as an enemy to our faith, so we pamper it and coddle it, we lean into it and feel sorry for ourselves when it comes.

But why? When we know that God is our source of joy and courage, we have no reason to fear or be discouraged. When discouragement inevitably comes knocking at our door, here's what we need to do: **be strong and of good courage!** Psalm 112:7-8 states -

*"How joyful are those who fear the Lord and delight in obeying His commands ...  
 They do not fear bad news; they confidently trust the Lord to care for them.  
 They are confident and fearless and can face their foes triumphantly."*

We see this illustrated in a clear example of bravery and faith in the Bible. Joshua was one of the children of Israel who left Egypt to embark on the great exodus. He and Caleb were among the twelve men sent from the tribes of Israel to spy out the land on Canaan. This was the land the Lord promised to them. Yet ten of those spies didn't believe the Israelites could secure it because their enemies looked like giants. Only Joshua and Caleb declared with confidence that the Lord would securely deliver Canaan into their hands. All twelve leaders saw the same things, but they didn't see the situation or possible outcome the same way. Ten chose the path of their own ability, which led to discouragement, and only two saw God's ability. This was the reason God said, **"Be strong and of good courage"** (Deuteronomy 31:6). The Lord knew this would be one of Joshua's greatest challenges.

Discouragement occurs during the droughts in our lives. It arrives in the middle of the battle when we feel deserted by God. The true enemies to the Israelites weren't the intimidating giants living in the promised land. No, the true enemy was the insulting whispers in their minds to remain discouraged. Take the Lord's advice: **be strong and of good courage!**

# GROUP HUDDLE NEWS

"GROUP HUDDLE" is a weekly time (normally meets from 6-8pm on Sundays) for middle school and high school students. It offers a place for students to connect and dive into God's Word as they participate in meaningful small groups, worship and fellowship - see below for more details about what's happening.

## Upcoming Group Huddle Schedule:

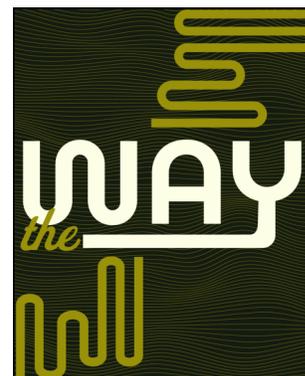
- Sunday, 3/1** "Sauce Night" - Bring your favorite savory sauce for dipping your nuggets and fries.
- Sunday, 3/8** "Fast Food Frenzy" - We're loading up the vans and giving you a choice of what you want for dinner; remember to bring cash!
- Sunday, 3/15** *No Group Huddle; enjoy your Spring Break!*
- Sunday, 3/22** "March Madness" - dribble, pass, shoot and score; tell us who you are rooting for!
- Sunday, 3/29** "Hanging with Your Peeps" - Oh, for peeps' sake! As if we needed a special night for marshmallow, sugary goodness.
- Sunday, 4/5** *No Group Huddle; enjoy Resurrection Sunday with your family!*

From there, we'll have a normal Group Huddle on April 12 followed by our graduation celebration on April 19 and an end-of-semester party on April 26.

## GROUP HUDDLE Series for this semester: "The Way"

*We are all on a journey. Some wander without direction. Some run towards success, comfort or control. Others don't even realize they're moving. But, every path leads somewhere, and every heart longs for the same things: truth, purpose and life that lasts.*

*From the very beginning, there has only been one true Way: Jesus Christ. He doesn't just point to the Way - He is the Way. The life He offers isn't about empty religion or performance; it's about relationship. It's not a path we trek on our own, but one He's already walked for us and now walks with us.*



## GROUP HUDDLE MEALS:



Each semester, we ask parents to help defray the expense of feeding several hungry teens at Group Huddle. **We ask parents to send \$30 for each student** (we've raised this total recently due to rising food costs; this does cover the whole semester through April).

*You can pay this by check or through Tithe.ly by choosing the "Group Huddle meals" option; please cover the fee for this if you are using this option (see p. 5 for more on using Tithe.ly).*

**As always, we need parent volunteers to help with meal preparation and clean-up throughout the semester; sign-up in the foyer.**

## **GROUP HUDDLE and CHILDREN'S MISSIONS:**

We're continuing to support **Andy & Lisa (Husted) Nunn** as our mission partners. They are in London - Andy's home country - as part of a broader ministry called "**Discipleship Global.**" They are currently assisting with a church-plant, conducting Bible studies and doing some one-on-one discipleship. They also have the opportunity to share the Gospel in intermediate schools within London. Each Sunday that we meet, our students have the opportunity to pray for our mission partners and give during both "Kid ENCOUNTER" and Group Huddle Bible Study.



Thanks in part to the efforts during Group Huddle's annual "**Presidential Coin Challenge**" held on **February 15 and 22**, *students have now raised \$891 this year for the Nunns.* \$208 came in during this two-week effort. We are grateful for all who are giving as we support this Kingdom work!

## **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 (off of the Great Room; that room has a middle divider for when the classes meet separately).* **We are meeting as normal this month, including a church-wide "First Sunday CONNECTION" at 10am on March 1.**

**Wednesday Evening CULTIVATE (6:30-7:45 each week).** Our middle school/high school youth are using a Bible study called "**Why Not Now?**" as their content to start this semester. This curriculum challenges students to accept the calling to live like Jesus and participate in His mission even now, not just later. It does this by sharing stories of adolescents from the Bible and in modern life who did/are doing significant things for the Lord.



**@ MSU's Great Southern Bank Arena  
Friday, March 20 - doors open at 6pm**

**The 2026 Winter Jam Tour is coming back to Springfield - tickets are \$15 at the door (make sure to get there early!).** *We're not going as a group, but we wanted to let you know about this event; make sure you arrive early!*

## **FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Beyond our ongoing ministry programming, there are two significant events coming this Summer for middle school students. We'll share more about both of these along the way, but we wanted to make sure they were on your calendars even at this point.

- (1) Junior High Camp at Maranatha (for next year's 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders) - Sunday, June 28 through Thursday, July 2, later than normal ... we'll share more about camp, including registration details, once we get to April.**



(2) **VBS week (July 27-30 ... 6-8:30pm each night)** - in addition to what VBS involves for younger students, each year, ours also includes special activities designed for middle school youth (this will be for those going into 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades in the 2026-2027 school year). As we get closer to Summer, Les will share details about our plans for these evenings.

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## **FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ...**

**"High School Mid-Nighter"**  
**Friday, March 6 (6pm - midnight)**  
**Cost is \$25/person**



Whatever the plans (specifics are still being worked out), we'll be here until the clock strikes midnight! Make sure to sign-up in the foyer for this event.

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### **Attention 2026 High School Graduates (and Parents):**



Check out page 4 for information about a scholarship opportunity available to graduates who are part of the Southland family - **"The Warren Burros Memorial Scholarship."** We've not yet opened up the application process (that happens in early April). However, we did want to go ahead and make you aware about this opportunity so you can be watching for when we do.

### **Graduation Recognition for our 2026 Seniors**

Our Group Huddle graduate recognition is on Sunday, April 19 this year. In addition to that, we highlight our graduates church-wide in the May edition of the "The Vine" and through a display in the foyer.

***So, PARENTS of 2026 graduates, please submit a photo to Les (e-mail to [les@gosouthland.org](mailto:les@gosouthland.org)) as soon as possible.***



## **The High School "MOVE" Conference**

**July 6-10 @ in Lincoln, Nebraska**  
**(for the graduating classes of 2026-2030)**

*At this point, we have completed the registration process, and the conference is full (there is an active waiting list). Let Les know ASAP if you have given a "YES," but are no longer able to attend for some reason.*

**The total cost for this year's conference is \$489.** This includes all of the conference fees and housing as well as transportation costs; it doesn't cover any travel meals, merch, etc. ***The balance will be due post-yard sale (likely in June, after we've applied a yard sale credit, etc.).***

As a reminder, we help offset the cost of the MOVE Conference through the annual yard sale fundraiser (in addition to the cinnamon roll fundraiser back in November); we have set the dates for this year's sale: **Friday, May 1 and Saturday, May 2.** See page 2 for details about donations.



# Southland Women

In this new year, I imagine many of us are striving to read, study and understand God's Word even better. One of the tools I have used some years is a podcast (with other resources available) called "The Bible Recap." I don't want to get caught in the weeds of information about this specific devotional option, but it is a useful resource, in my opinion.

One of the things I like is the way the writer(s?) points to the big picture of God's Word, the whole story God has been writing from the beginning. There is a focus on growing in our knowledge of God Himself, His character, and His ways as we read and study His Word. It helps to make connections and see the Bible as a cohesive message from a loving God. Bible reading plans can get very challenging in books like Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy 😊. But, this resource helps to raise awareness and understanding of how we can see God and His character even in those more challenging books. An example I appreciated comes from the February 24<sup>th</sup> podcast (the day I write this) based on Numbers 3 and 4. These chapters describe a census, God's plan and instructions for the Levite family group, specific responsibilities different groups were given, etc. It could be easy to get caught in the details and let the chapters go "in one ear and out the other." But, the podcast challenged me to see the whole picture differently. It brought something into focus that I likely would not have seen on my own. (And I think that is a tremendous gift that this group is giving the world!)

May I share a portion of today's transcript with you?

*So just as the largest tribe, Judah, has a position of honor, so does the smallest tribe, the Levites. In God's economy, both the greatest and the least are welcomed in and bestowed with honor and a place to serve His Kingdom.*

*And that's where my GOD SHOT was today. Even within the Levites, I saw how God gave everyone a specific assignment that benefitted the whole. Ministering to people was one way of serving, and doing the less glamorous heavy lifting was another way to serve. In order for the tabernacle to function well and all the people of Israel to be blessed, both types of service were necessary.*

*In most churches today, the people who are more visible get more praise and attention, but they can't do what they do without someone assembling things. The worship leader needs the sound guy. The pastor needs the person who writes the checks to pay the electric bill and the mortgage.*

*The same is true for other ministries like this podcast - EVERYONE involved plays a vital role, or things fall apart. ... And YOU may think all you do at your church is stack chairs or park cars or serve in the nursery - but everyone who serves the church has a vital role, appointed by God for the service and upbuilding of His people. No one is invisible to God.*

*So whether you're up front, like the Kohathites, or behind the scenes like the Gershonites and the Merarites, your role is important and God is glorified. What you do to serve the church honors God.*

This brings home one of the many truths that can be gleaned from Numbers 3 and 4: we are all needed in God's Kingdom. We see that over and over in Scripture, and this is just one example of a passage that conveys



this message. It comes up many places in the New Testament as well, like in Ephesians 4 - a text that's at the heart of our "BUILD UP" priority at Southland:

"So Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip His people for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ... <sup>16</sup> From Him the whole Body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

There are passages all over the New Testament about this (Romans 12:3-8 is another great one)!

There are so many opportunities to serve at Southland! If I were to list ones I think of, the list would probably take several pages. If you don't have a place you are currently serving, let's talk! We need you, and you need to use your gifts here! Let's work together to advance God's Kingdom!

♥ Kristie



WSA is in its regular rhythm (see the specific schedule below). 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").

**WSA meets at 10am in Room #6 - finishing around noon each week;  
see the note below for details about the content for this session of WSA.**

**WSA Schedule for the Upcoming Weeks:**

- Thursdays, March 5 and 12** The last two weeks in our RightNow Media series "Trite, *not* True."
- Thursday, March 19** *WSA is not meeting (Spring Break week)*
- Thursday, March 26** Resuming with the same curriculum as D-Groups are using (specific focus to be announced)

**The "Women's Event" at Ozark Christian College is April 24-25.**



*We are not formally taking a group to this conference; however, we did want to make you aware of the opportunity that is available through OCC, one of our local ministry partners. Through March 15, the cost to register is \$35; it increases to \$40 after that (until the conference day itself).*

For more details/to register, use this link:

<https://occ.edu/events/womens-event>



# WEEKLY ENCOUNTER

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

## Our Upcoming Preaching Calendar

Each year as we move toward Easter (it's Sunday, April 5 this year), we specifically turn our attention to **the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection**. Without a doubt, it's most appropriate - to focus our hearts and minds on the events in history that are at the foundation of our faith as those who belong to Jesus. Indeed, this is the story of our salvation - what God has done on our behalf through Him. Many years, we take this time to focus on the **STORY** and/or its **SIGNIFICANCE** - what unfolds in the Gospels themselves or the way the rest of the New Testament packages what it all means.

This March, we're still going to focus on Jesus' journey to the cross; but, we're going to turn our focus around a bit - from what this **GOOD NEWS** offers us to what it means for us as those who belong to Jesus. We're calling the series **"FOLLOW."** It's at the heart of putting faith in Christ: receiving Him as **"Savior"** also means responding to Him as **"Lord."** In fact, it's what discipleship is all about. We



We certainly benefit from what Jesus has accomplished for us (to use our previous series' language, we're **"BLESSED"** by what He's done!). Yet, throughout the Gospels, Jesus Himself also regularly emphasizes that He's setting an example for His people to imitate. This series is about walking in the way of the cross - following Jesus along this path. It's what it means to be a "disciple," to be an **APPRENTICE** who both learns from and puts into practice what's passed down by a teacher/master. *As John writes in 1 John 2:6, whoever claims to live in God - i.e., to know Him and be His child - "ought to walk in the same way [Jesus] walked" (ESV - the NLT appropriately communicates the imagery as "should live their lives as Jesus did").* For this specific series, it means that we are called to walk in the footsteps of the One who was headed to the cross, hence the graphic. That's where we'll start the series on March 1 - in Matthew 16:21-28. From there, we'll consider each week a different aspect of what Jesus displays as He moves toward the cross and what it means for us to use that example as a model: **to FOLLOW Him!**



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 on a Sunday like back in January that was impacted by weather!* 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/@southlandcccstreams>. If you missed a week and want to catch-up, they are accessible at this location.*

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.**



YouVersion

# 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*.

As we continue on into 2026, our "regular" Connect Groups - with some adjustments during a session on parenting through *Raising Disciples* - are meeting at 9:15am each Sunday (note: we do have Sunday School classes for all ages of kids/youth as well during this time). For a list of our current groups, please see the information at the Welcome Center. *Please don't hesitate to ask if you need help deciding which group is best for you. We'd love to help you get connected to others within the Southland family!*

We're in a stretch (through the end-of-March) when we are having our regular schedule with 9:15am groups and classes each week. *The next change to that schedule will come on Sunday, April 5, Resurrection Sunday - no 9:15am ministry programming that day, just our 10:30am ENCOUNTER time.*

## An Upcoming "First Sunday CONNECTION" at 10am - March 1

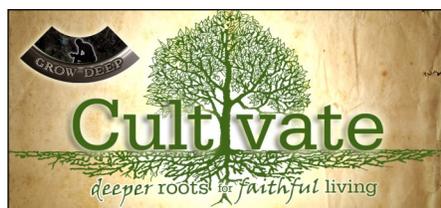
As highlighted on page 2, we host such times as opportunities for church-wide connection over breakfast items and coffee. Groups are dismissed early on that day and we gather in the Fellowship Hall/foyer area for this informal time. Even if you're not normally a part of a group, we invite you to join us!

*NOTE: When we host these times, Jessica also has a special CONNECTION time for kids - special breakfast treats for them to snack on and games; meeting in Rooms 1 and 2.*

# GROW DEEP MINISTRIES



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



## We are in the midst of our 2026 Winter/Spring CULTIVATE semester.

Through March 11, we are in a six-week session of ELECTIVES; once that is done, we'll finish the semester off with another D-Group session - from March 25 through April 29. *We'll share details about the content plan for that stretch sometime in March.*

*As is our custom, we are not meeting on Wednesday, March 18 - Spring Break week; we'll resume on March 25 with D-Groups.*



# OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD UP

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

## **Opportunities to Serve & “BUILD UP” the Body**

We use this space to share some specific ways we need volunteers. In so many different ways, just like any FAMILY, we function as we do *because of the willing-hearted servants* who BUILD UP others through serving.

**Here are a couple of specific ways you can help moving forward:**

- We're not too far away from the Spring season, and with that comes the need for help with mowing, weed-eating, etc. *Be looking in the next stretch of time for how you can volunteer to serve as part of this team.*



***You can certainly reach out directly to Rick, if you're willing to be added to this team.***

- We will also be needing lots of volunteers (as usual!) for our **2026 VBS**; the dates are July 27-30. VBS always depends upon lots of people being involved. Next month, we'll share more info about how you can serve; ***even before then, you can let Jessica know if you are willing to help.***

Beyond these opportunities, 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 use one of the blue “BUILD UP” cards to let us know where you want to get plugged-in to serving. ***It would be a great “next step” to take both for the good of others and for your own benefit too.***

***We encourage you to check out Kristie's article on pages 14 and 15 for a great reflection on the importance of all serving roles in the church; it's part of God's design!***

**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)**

A **“THANK YOU”** to our SuperStart sponsors: **Laci Bottorff, Tristan Martinez, Rick Randleman** and **Dylan Young** all went with **Jessica** as volunteers!



A **“THANK YOU”** to all who consistently serve as part of **the tech team** on Sunday mornings. **Those who run the sound/lights: Karl Simpson** (a regular part of this team many weeks), **Aiden Simpson, Megan Falconer** and **Grace Easterday** (primarily working with the lights) as well as **those who operate the computer: Dan Gray, Tommy Hall, Zac Jennings** and **Sonya Simpson** ... also, **Rick** and **Kendall** both work closely with this in their staff roles.

## SERVING SCHEDULE for March 2026

	<b>Foyer Hosts</b> (10:15 on, through whole service)	<b>Greeters</b> (at the doors from 10:15-10:40)	<b>Serving Team Leader</b>
3/1	Pat & Debbie Little	<i>T.B.D. (First Sunday CONNECTION™)</i>	Mark Miller
3/8	A.J. & Terra Gegg	Room #6 Connect Group	Doug Graves
3/15	Matt & Kristie Martin	Room #7 Connect Group	Deckard Family
3/22	Bob & Liz Wood	“Voyage” Connect Group	Les Londeen
3/29	Ben & Debbie Jennings	“Launch” Connect Group	Les Londeen

	<b>Nursery workers</b> (all morning)	<b>Wee Kid ENCOUNTER &amp; Li'l Kid ENCOUNTER</b>	<b>Kid ENCOUNTER</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup> grades)
3/1	Graves Family	<i>Ezri Smith Talia Stone</i>	Sean & Megan Falconer
3/8	Wilcox Family	<i>Jamie Brown Sandy Arneson/Becky Kurth</i>	Thomas & Stef Hall
3/15	Darrell & Lisa Deckard	<i>Aiden Simpson Debbie Hoenshell</i>	Jessica Young/Cary Swadley
3/22	Harmony Martin/ Kelsey Swadley	<i>Anna Randleman Kristie Martin</i>	Dylan & Jessica Young
3/29	Harnstrom Family	<i>Ashley Worthy Harmony Martin</i>	Les Londeen

# LIVE OUT MINISTRIES



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

  
www.maranatha  
biblecamp.org

  
a community of students pursuing Jesus  
www.cchonthe.net

  
www.ccozarks.  
org/crosslines

 PREGNANCY  
CARE CENTER  
www.417pcc.org

www.show-mehome.com  
  
Show Me  
Christian Youth Home

www.occ.edu



Each year, the Pregnancy Care Center hosts an annual fundraiser banquet. *This year, it is being held on Friday, April 10 from 6-8pm (see Rick's article on page 7 for more about this year's event).* As in past years, we are again hosting a banquet table at this event as part of our efforts to support the PCC's ministry. We are certainly grateful for the partnership we share with the PCC; and, in addition to our regular support we send from the tithe, we want to encourage you to support their work whether it be by attending this banquet, volunteering, etc.



## Our “LIVE OUT: Service Day” is Sunday, May 3.

This has become one of our favorite days on the calendar at Southland ... a day for us church-wide to have an intentional focus on SERVICE - living out an active love in our community. To give you a glimpse of what happens: we meet at 9am for a briefer time of ENCOUNTER worship (please note this time change for this one Sunday only!). We then leave to spread out and serve in various projects around our community. We're certainly looking forward to it!

We are in the process of planning and preparing for the 2026 version of our “LIVE OUT: Service Day.” For now, get the date marked on the calendar and plan on joining us. *Be watching for more details about the t-shirts we wear for this day (most of us wear jeans and these shirts for this specific day).*

**We pray that God will use this day to help us be a blessing to our community around us as we LIVE OUT service!**

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](http://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](http://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).

### **A 2026 Mission Trip Opportunity:**



We are preparing for a return trip to Anapra, Mexico with *Casas por Cristo* this Summer (July 18-25). On this trip, we will be building another house to bless a different family. Rick is trying to get the team put together by the end of March, so let him know if you are interested, especially if you haven't mentioned it to him yet. As a reminder, the total cost is \$375 - we build into our missions budget the funds to pay for the house itself ... *an initial deposit of \$150 is due by April 30, then the remaining balance of \$225 is due by June 1.*