



The Southland Vine

For MAY 2026

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

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.



2 Big Events in Early May:

Friday, May 1 and Saturday, May 2 - our annual youth yard sale

Sunday, May 3 - "LIVE OUT: Service Day" ... worship at 9am before a time of serving

Southland FAMILY PICNIC



JUNE 7 at **Living Memorial Park**
5pm 4323 S. Nature Center Way – Springfield 65804

Check out page 2 for details!

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We'll publish the next edition of *The Vine* in late May.

Another graduation season is here!

At this time of year, we want to recognize our 2026 graduates within the Southland family. We want to celebrate this important milestone with them; so, on pages 4-6, we have highlighted our Southland class of 2026.



Southland "FAMILY" News

UPCOMING EVENTS for the Southland family:

Throughout the course of the year, we have various events *for the whole church family* - some of them are not until later this Summer, but it's good to have them in front of you even now. While there is much more information on the pages that follow, we want to make sure we highlight these church family-wide events here in one spot so that they're not missed:

A Note about "First Sunday CONNECTIONS"

We have occasionally hosted these times - on "first Sundays" of the month, obviously - for people to make connections with others - to bolster existing relationships and/or perhaps to establish new ones. However, due to the upcoming schedule of things (e.g., a morning impacted by "LIVE OUT: Service Day" on 5/4 with our ENCOUNTER time at 9am + the picnic on the evening of 6/7, the first Sunday in June), we don't have a next one planned at this time.



There are two events during the first weekend of May that we've been highlighting (there's no need to share broader info at this point):

- ♦ The youth yard sale on Friday, May 1 and Saturday, May 2
- ♦ "LIVE OUT: Service Day" on Sunday, May 3 (see page 20 for more on this day)



Our annual Southland FAMILY Picnic:

**Sunday, June 7, 2026 from 5pm to whenever
... held again at Living Memorial Park
in southeast Springfield**

This is an opportunity to come enjoy a meal and some time with others in a relaxed environment - a time of food, fellowship and fun with one another. There's no specific structured plan besides the meal, just being together.

NOTE: *Obviously, we are planning this as an outside event (we have rented the sheltered pavilion there at the park). In the event of rain, we will communicate any necessary change in plans that afternoon - likely just moving the event to the church.*

What the church is providing: Grilled hamburgers/hot dogs, buns & fixings - *we do potentially need some volunteers to help grill (we're using the church grill)*
Single-serving bags of chips
Drinks, paper products, utensils, etc.

What we need you to bring: Sides and/or desserts to be shared pot-luck style (remember we are providing chips)
Lawn chairs (there is a lot of shade there)
Any outdoor yard games (easily transported, of course) that you enjoy playing and can be set-up in such a location

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 20 for more.



Our 2026 VBS is Monday, July 27 through Thursday, July 30: **“Emerald Crossing: An Irish Adventure through Psalm 23”** from Answers in Genesis. See page 11 for more on this year’s theme. 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 this: 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!

See page 11 for registration information (including a link) and page 18 for a link volunteers can use.

A note about helping by DONATING items - starting Sunday, May 17, there will be a VBS table/display in the foyer; it will have instructions for how you can help via donations (actual items or financially). *These items will need to be returned by Sunday, June 21.*

Also, keep watching the calendar page as Jessica has already started having VBS meetings with various teams of volunteers.

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. As always, dinner is included, as well. For now, we ask that you mark down the date and plan to join us.

An Update Re: Southland Leadership

Within the life of the Southland FAMILY, the leadership role of elders is one that has great significance. In God’s design for the church, these men have received from Him an important responsibility as shepherds and leaders to care for the spiritual health and well-being of the church FAMILY. Each year during the Summer months, we go through a process designed to help us identify potential new elders to serve in this capacity within our church family. So you know, this begins in June (we will share more details in the next edition of “The Vine”). Throughout this process, we will be using space here to communicate information about how it works and to keep you updated regarding our progress.




This is now the sixth year we have had the opportunity to offer a scholarship in memory of Warren Burros. He was a long-time elder and member at Southland who passed away on April 8, 2020. His long-time company decided to honor and reflect his legacy by contributing 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. We 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). At this point, the applications are available; *these must be completed and submitted by the end-of-May*. We are grateful for this opportunity to further Warren’s legacy as part of this church family!

Southland Graduates

CLASS OF 2026

Part of what a family does is celebrate milestones; so do we each year at Southland during graduation season! Below, we have highlighted our **2026 high school graduates**, another large class overall with 10 total graduates we're celebrating. *Congratulations to the Class of 2026 from the Southland Family!* On page 6, we've also included a list of our **2026 college and post-college grads**.

Note: Those students marked with an * have been connected more through Group Huddle and other youth group activities, even if not on Sunday mornings.



Zach Brothers
(Glendale H.S.)



Allison Burford*
(Republic H.S.)



Allie Conboy*
(Republic H.S.)



Izzy Foster*
(New Covenant)



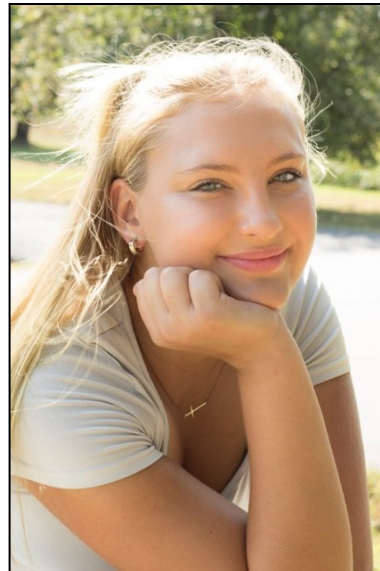
Vaughn
Gunter
(Central H.S.)



Callie
Kilgo
(Kickapoo H.S.)



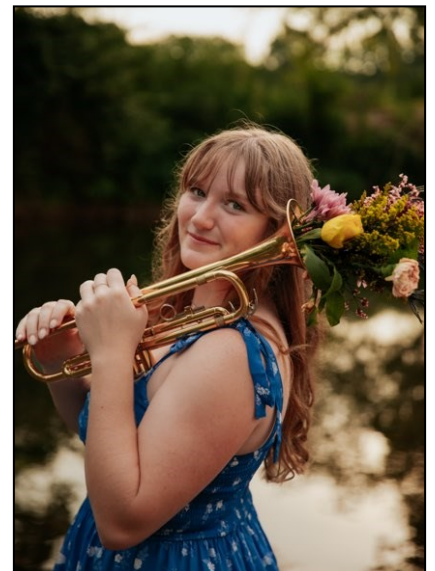
Arabella
Moritz*
(Glendale H.S.)



Zoey
Smith
(Willard H.S.)



Ella
Walter*
(Republic H.S.)



Grace
Worthy
(Republic H.S.)



In addition to this section of "The Vine," part of how we recognize our Southland graduates is through a display in the foyer during the month of May. (The youth group did their own graduate recognition as well during Group Huddle back in April.) We also briefly acknowledge our graduates during our ENCOUNTER worship service on Sunday, May 17.

See Les' Latest (pages 12-13) for a celebration of and challenge to our 2026 graduates

Southland's 2026 college/post-college graduates:

The pomp and circumstance of this graduation season means the completion of post-secondary degrees for several in our church family as well. Here is a list of these individuals with their degrees:

Grace Easterday (Missouri State University) - a Master of Social Work

Tommy Hall (Ozarks Tech) - an Associate in General Studies

Liz Kilgo (University of Central Missouri) - a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education

Olivia Randleman (Ozark Christian College) - a Bachelor of Arts in Counseling and Pastoral Care

Kira Smith (Missouri State University) - a Bachelor of Science in Animal Science

From the Southland family, congratulations on the completion of these degrees!



"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 from Pattie Sellers after her hip replacement surgery:

I thank God for finding such a caring and loving church and am blessed to be part of it. Those who stopped and said a prayer for me, I thank you from the bottom of my heart!

**Love and Blessings,
*Pattie Sellers***

Some Technology Tools for the Southland Family



CHURCH CENTER by Planning Center ... This tool provides an online directory that those who have signed-up can access through a secure log-in and password (<https://people.planningcenteronline.com/>). This is also an app - "Church Center." 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 within the "PEOPLE" portion - for sharing both general information and prayer requests.



FACEBOOK, including “The Southland Scoop” ... We have a general Facebook page that is public/visible for sharing some broader information. *We also have a page called “The Southland Scoop.”* We use this more “internal” page to share church family-related information: pictures from recent events, reminders, announcements, updates, etc. If you’re on Facebook and not a part of “The Scoop” already, we encourage you to find it and get connected.



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 April 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: March monthly tithe = \$27,924⁰⁰ (4 Sundays) Average weekly tithe = \$6,981⁰⁰
Seven months into this fiscal/ministry year-to-date (September 2025 onward), our tithe is \$318,287 for a weekly average of a little more than \$9,645 ... this projects to more than \$501,500 annually.

We started this ministry year in a good spot overall, including some layers of reserve. At this point, we’re actually *behind* last year’s pace (on a month-by-month basis), and, we’re in a time of year when tithe amounts tend to be lower. Still, we continue to be in decent shape. 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 17. We are not having our normal ministry programming on Sunday May 3 (“LIVE OUT: Service Day”) or Sunday, May 24 (Memorial Day weekend).



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 16-17 for more.

Weekly ministries on a break over the Summer (starting in 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):

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

Friday, May 1 and Saturday, May 2 ... the annual youth yard sale, an annual youth fundraiser to support our students attending the “MOVE” Conference.

Sunday, May 3 ... our 2026 “LIVE OUT: Service Day.” *As a reminder, for this morning, we gather for a briefer ENCOUNTER time at 9am before serving in the community; we will come back together for lunch afterwards.*



Sunday, May 10 ... “Happy Mother’s Day!” In keeping with the belief that God is the Designer of life and the family, it’s certainly appropriate on this day to express our appreciation for all mothers, especially those who show His love.

Sunday, May 17 ... camp payments - paid to Southland by check or via Tithe.ly - are due by this date (invoices showing what is owed will be sent out); see page 12 for details.

Sunday, May 17 ... the VBS donation table will be set-up in the foyer starting this day (see p. 3 - items will be due on June 21).

Sunday, May 24 ... VBS meeting for all main leaders (pre-K/K and grade school groups).

Sunday, May 31 ... “Open Hearts, Open Homes” lunch after service.

Sunday, May 31 ... the deadline for applications to be turned in by 2026 high school graduates for the “Warren Burros Memorial Scholarship” (see p. 3).

Thursday, June 4 ... the first “Ladies’ Lunch” of 2026 - noon in the Fellowship Hall; see page 15 for more details - other dates are June 18, July 2 and July 16.

Sunday, June 7 through Sunday, June 21 ... opportunities to recommend potential new elders (see p. 3); we’ll share more details in the June edition of “The Vine.”

Sunday, June 7 ... Promotion Sunday 2026 (see p. 11).

Sunday, June 7 ... the date for our 2026 church FAMILY picnic; see page 2 for more details, including what we need people to bring.

Various dates in June (starting with Beginner Day Camp on Saturday, June 13) ... sessions at Maranatha Bible Camp; see page 12 for specifics dates; we’ll share more details about times, packing lists, etc. in the next edition of “The Vine.”

Saturday, June 27 ... “Timeless Faith,” the 2026 Ladies’ Afternoon Tea, starting at 2pm; see page 15 for information on this.

Sunday, July 5 through Friday, July 10 ... the 2026 MOVE Conference for high school students; see page 14 for more details.

Sunday, July 12 ... VBS meeting for registration team and crew leaders.

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 pages 2 and 11 for more on this.

Sunday, August 30 ... FLOURISH 2026 at 5pm.

What MATTERS to me ...

Over the course of the past several weeks in our preaching, we've put a lot of emphasis on our responsibility as part of a life of faith in Jesus. It was part of the "FOLLOW" series - not only recognizing the path that Jesus took for us on the way to the cross, but what it means for us to "walk as [He walked]" (1 John 2:6). Indeed, it includes our active response. It's also a part of our current "Do GOOD!" series here at the end of April and into May. Even the series title makes it sufficiently obvious that it's about our active response. To put it bluntly, there's no way of understanding the presence of so many instructions/commands in the NT without recognizing that putting our faith in Jesus involves this responsibility to live in a certain way.

In some ways, that *seems* to fly in the face of the Good News of GRACE - at least to some. It's at the heartbeat of our faith in Christ, even what we see taught in Ephesians 2:1ff and Titus 3:3-7. We are saved because of God's love, mercy and grace as expressed through Jesus. It's not because of our behavior, as if it could ever be adequate to save us. Instead, it's because we have His blessings and goodness for now and for eternity because we've reached out with empty hands of faith to receive what He's graciously offered! For some, though, the challenge is this: this Good News of GRACE seems somehow incompatible with us having any responsibility in the whole process. It's as if a commitment to the integrity of the Gospel (*i.e.*, we certainly cannot save ourselves) can cause some to miss what is just as much a part of the Gospel, even if it's as a result or response. Being a true recipient of this grace means having a faith that's inherently expressed through how we live. It doesn't contradict being "saved by grace through faith," it fulfills that equation with the resulting fruit.

We've hit on this theme already, but let's make sure we clarify it in a couple of ways. First, with this reminder, a quote from Dallas Willard as he writes in one of his works when talking about our effort in living a life of faith in Christ: "We cannot do this, of course, purely on our own (*more on this in a bit*). But we must act. Grace is contrasted with earning, but not with effort." I love that line. Grace certainly means that it's impossible for us to sufficiently and adequately perform in such a way that we deserve to be saved. It would no longer be grace if that were so - nor would there have been a need for God to send Jesus to be our Savior! Yet, to suggest from there that such grace means passivity from us misses the point entirely. We are not doing good to earn in Christ; we're doing good because we have already received. We're doing good, investing our effort to strive for what He's designed us for in Christ (remember Ephesians 2:10). It's Paul's instruction to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" in Philippians 2:12. Or, a chapter later where he writes about "pressing on" in his race of faith (Philippians 3:12ff). Did Paul forget what saves us? No, not at all. He simply recognizes this foundational truth of the Gospel: the grace that saves us also motivates us to strive with effort! What better way is there to respond to all He has done for us than pursuing an active life of faith that honors Him accordingly and reciprocally?

Yet, this second reminder matters too: even this activity *in response to what He's first done* still requires grace. After all, it's only possible through the ongoing presence of His Holy Spirit, a continuing expression of His grace in our lives. It's not as if we're exerting effort on our own. Yes, we have responsibility to "do;" a life of faith does involve our activity. Yet, in the end, we're doing only through His power that is working in and through us (see Colossians 1:28-29 or even Philippians 2:13 as a follow-up to verse 12). We had a great conversation in our D-Group back on April 22 about the same POWER that raised Jesus from the dead being available and at work in us through the Holy Spirit. As we reflected on this, it was a great reminder of what is possible for us because of this gift that God has given us through His ongoing presence. But, to assume that the Holy Spirit somehow enacts something in and through us *independent of us* is to misunderstand how He works. If He is going to be at work, it will happen because we too are actively involved in expressing our faith in life. He will guide us as we are seeking Him. He will equip us as we are serving. He will transform us as we are cooperating with Him by cultivating our hearts and minds. He will empower us as we are engaged in living out faith. In the end, all of it will accomplish something because of His gracious activity in our lives ... activity that's working with our actions, too!

So, yes, it's absolutely the Good News of His GRACE - grace that motivates us and grace that continues to work in us. It just so happens to *also* be grace that carries responsibility from us, even in response!

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. There are some potential shifts in age groupings, especially once we get to Promotion Sunday; we'll communicate these along the way.



Check out the bottom of the next page for Sunday School-related impacts from Promotion Sunday (starting on Sunday, June 7).

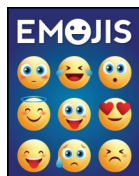
There are a couple of weeks in May when we are not having our typical 9:15am ministry programming: Sunday, May 3 ("LIVE OUT: Service Day" - worship at 9am on this day) and Sunday, May 24 (Memorial Day weekend - nothing that day until 10:30am).

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 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 May except for 5/3 (different schedule for "LIVE OUT: Service Day" with a briefer ENCOUNTER time/devotion).



Since Easter Sunday, Kid ENCOUNTER is using a curriculum called "Emojis" - we see these little symbols all the time, it seems! They have become a fun and simple way to express our feelings to others. God has created us with these emotions and has a purpose for them. But, how can kids learn to express them in a way that honors Him? That's what this session is about!

We wrapped-up our Spring semester on 4/29; we'll resume in late August.



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

We're gearing up for our 2026 VBS. 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.)

If you are interested in volunteering for VBS, we'd love your help; see page 18 for a link; for information about donating items to help with VBS, see page 3.

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).

* Accommodations are made for younger children of workers.

Some Info Applicable to Kids and Youth



At the beginning of each June, we "promote" our young people to their next grade level throughout our ministries for kids and youth; fittingly, it's called "PROMOTION Sunday." (This year, the first Sunday of June isn't until the 7th.) As soon as one school year ends, kids mentally advance themselves; so, we do too here at Southland! This applies to all of our normal ministries (more applicable once we get to the Fall), special summer activities (e.g. camp sessions, VBS,

etc.) and beyond. While we move all of our kids up, it doesn't necessarily mean a change for *each and every* specific grade level.

Here are the specific Sunday morning impacts from Promotion Sunday (again, starting June 7):

During Sunday School (9:15am), students entering the following grades move to a new class:

A this point, our classes for grade school kids and younger are a bit undefined due to numbers; we'll help you find the right class as we move into the next year.

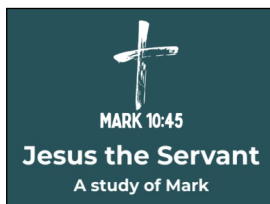
Incoming 6th graders to the Middle School class (Gathering Room - part B)

Incoming freshmen to the High School class (Gathering Room - part A)

Graduated seniors to the Launch college-age Connect Group (Room 5 - can also wait until August)

During "Kid ENCOUNTER" (10:30am) ... any incoming 1st graders also move up to the 1st-5th grade "Kid ENCOUNTER" or, at least, have the option too (younger kids are "promoted" throughout the year according to birthdays); as a reminder, our grade school students start in service with their families. In addition, new 6th graders remain with their families for the entire ENCOUNTER service.

Summer Camp 2026 - Reminders and Details



We're excited about the 2026 camp season at Maranatha Bible Camp. It is certainly fast approaching and is always a highlight of the Summer for our young people. In past editions of "The Vine," we've shared the dates and registration instructions. Just to make sure you have the basic dates, they are listed below:

Camp Session (ages/grades)*	Dates (days of the week)
Beginner Camp 2 (K-1 st)	June 13 (Saturday)
Kids' Camp 1 (2 nd -4 th)	June 18-20 (Thursday through Saturday)
5 th /6 th Grade Camp 1	June 14-17 (Sunday through Wednesday)
Junior High Camp (7 th -8 th)	June 28 - July 2 (Sunday through Thursday)

* Remember: it's the grade a student will be entering for the 2026-2027 school year!

For Camp REGISTRATION (in case you still need it; let us know if you need assistance):

<https://maranathabiblecamp.campbrainregistration.com/?ReturnUrl=%2fHome%2fLanding>
(if viewing "The Vine" electronically, you can click directly on the link)

A note about camp scholarships: based on registrations we had at our deadline (the end of April), we go through our process of determining the funds we have available to help families send their kids to camp. We provide these scholarships for anyone attending Maranatha through Southland as we believe that this is a great way to help support both our families and the camp. You should receive an invoice showing your family's balance due; let Jessica or Les know if you didn't receive one by around May 12.

Please pay this amount by Sunday, May 17 as that helps us meet our deadline for getting payment sent on to Maranatha.

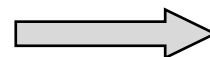
You have two payment options: either (1) by check - made out to Southland or (2) using "Tithe.ly," our online giving platform (see page 7 for instructions on how to use Tithe.ly), selecting the "camp payment" option; please remember to cover the fees for this.

LES' LATEST

Graduation marks more than the end of a school year and a stage of education; it's the beginning of a new chapter filled with purpose, opportunity and growth. **To the Class of 2026, congratulations!** Your hard work, resilience and determination have carried you to this moment and you should be proud of how far you've come.



As you step into the future you may feel excitement, uncertainty or even a bit of both. That's completely natural. Life after graduation brings new challenges, but it also brings incredible possibilities. In those moments when the road ahead feels unclear, remember this powerful truth: **"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"** (Philippians 4:13). This message is not



about having all the answers or never facing difficulty; it's about knowing that you are not alone. Your strength doesn't come only from your own abilities - it comes from faith, perseverance and trust in God's plan in your life. When obstacles arise, lean into that strength. When doubt creeps in, let your faith speak louder.

Each of you are uniquely created with gifts, talents and a purpose. Whether your paths lead to college or directly into a job, trust that you are equipped for the journey ahead. So, go forward with confidence. Chase your dreams boldly. And when life challenges you, remember because of Christ, you have the strength to rise and overcome. **Congratulations, again, to the Class of 2026!**

Make sure you check out pages 4-6 for more as we celebrate our 2026 graduates (including our post-high school grads there as well)!

GROUP HUDDLE NEWS

Now that we have reached the busy month of May, Sunday evening GROUP HUDDLE has begun its annual Summer hiatus. It will resume with a fun kick-off event around the time when a new school year begins.

Make sure you check out page 19 for a list of those people who volunteered as sponsors during this Group Huddle year; help us thank these individuals for serving as they did. We couldn't do it without their help!

GROUP HUDDLE and CHILDREN'S MISSIONS for this past school year:

During this past Group Huddle year, **our students raised over \$1,000 to support the work of the Nunns with an organization called "Discipleship Global" in London, England. Well done, students!**

MORE MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

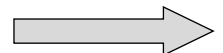
SUNDAY SCHOOL (starts at 9:15am on Sunday mornings): We have separate Sunday School classes for our MS and HS youth. *Both have moved to the Gathering Room (off of the Great Room; that room has a middle divider for when the classes meet separately).* **Meeting as normal on May 10, May 17 and May 31, but not on May 3 (our "LIVE OUT: Service Day") or May 24 (Memorial Day weekend - nothing except for our 10:30am ENCOUNTER worship on that day); also, see page 11 for a reminder about Promotion Sunday on June 7.**

Wednesday Evening CULTIVATE (6:30-7:45 each week): This semester ended with the last Wednesday of April; we'll resume in late August or early September.

FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

There are two significant events coming this Summer for middle school students (we wanted to make sure they were on your calendars):

- (1) Junior High Camp at Maranatha (this is for next year's 7th and 8th graders) - Sunday, June 28 through Thursday, July 2, later than normal ... check out page 12.**



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

FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ...

Attention 2026 High School Graduates (and Parents)

Just a reminder to check out page 3 for information about a scholarship opportunity available to graduates within the Southland family - "**The Warren Burros Memorial Scholarship.**" We opened that application process **on April 8** which is the anniversary of Warren's passing. Contact Les if you are a graduating senior and want to apply for this. ***The deadline for submitting an application is the end-of-May.***



Also, don't forget to check out our graduate recognition section of this edition of "The Vine" on pages 4-6!



The High School "MOVE" Conference

**July 5-10 @ in Lincoln, Nebraska
(for the graduating classes of 2026-2030)**

At this point in the registration process, our group is set, but there are always some adjustments; please make sure to let Les know ASAP if you have given a "YES," but are no longer able to attend for some reason. We do have a deadline approaching soon to finalize our group.

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. for the conference. **After two \$75 deposits so far, *the final payment will be due on June 7; Les will send out a "balanced owed" amount after factoring-in the yard sale profit.***

Once you get that, payments can be made in two ways: **(1) by check - made out to Southland** or **(2) using our online giving platform called "Tithe.ly"** (see page 7 for instructions on using this; select the "MOVE Payment" option; please remember to cover the fees for this).

As a reminder, we do help offset the cost of the MOVE Conference through the annual yard sale fundraiser (in addition to the cinnamon roll fundraiser back in November); **this year, it's on Friday, May 1 and Saturday, May 2.** Once again, we have collected donations for this event from church families - ***thanks to all who donated for your generosity in this way!*** It's a great way for us to help with the overall cost of the conference for our students. Of course, a special "**Thank you!**" also goes out to all who help each year with the sale - from Les, to the students/families it benefits, to all those who pitch-in just to help be a blessing to this effort! We cannot make this fundraiser happen without all who are a part of it each year. We will share the final total later on in May and in the June edition of "The Vine."



Southland Women



We've reached the end of this WSA semester. As is our custom, we break for the Summer months. *We do still provide occasional opportunities for connecting over this Summer - gathering for coffee (let Kristie know if you want to be informed about those) as well as the two items below.*

Summer Ladies' Lunches are back for 2026!

4 Thursdays: June 4 + June 18 + July 2 + July 16

Noon each time - lunch provided or you're welcome to bring your own.

RSVP at the display in the foyer (up later in May) or through this link:

<https://gouthland.churchcenter.com/people/forms/1218706>

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

An Upcoming Women's Ministry Event

Ladies' Afternoon Tea - Saturday, June 27, 2026
at 2pm in the Great Room

(for all ladies - those in middle school and older)

This has become a key Summer event in our women's ministry. We enjoy time together as sisters-in-Christ, eat delicious food, listen to a speaker (Teresa Roberts from Ozark Christian College is coming back this year) and more. We're looking forward to another great time together!

NOTE: *Childcare can be provided, if/ as needed.*



Please mark the date on your calendar and plan to join us for this special event!



WEEKLY ENCOUNTER

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

Upcoming Worship Nights



**Wednesdays, May 20 and June 3 - 6:30pm
in the courtyard***

We have these times as part of our worship ministry. These occasional opportunities are set aside for a music-centered worship experience. *The current plan is to host a few of these over the Summer months (on Wednesdays since CULTIVATE is not meeting) - future dates beyond 5/20 and 6/3 will be shared later.* We hope you join us as we ENCOUNTER our Father in a different context, but still to express our praise and adoration!

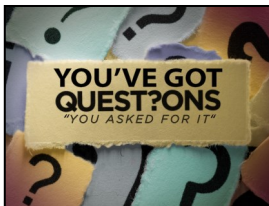
* In the event that weather doesn't cooperate, we'll simply move indoors.

Our Upcoming Preaching/Encounter Calendar

From the end-of-April into May, we're continuing on in a "LIVE OUT" series we're calling "Do GOOD!" It's an appropriate focus around our annual LIVE OUT: Service Day. In this series, we're considering what the NT says about our "good works" in Christ. There is a clear limitation to them as they cannot possibly save us - Jesus alone can do that as we respond with faith. Yet, part of saving faith means a life lived in response to Him, including such good works (see Ephesians 2:10 + Titus 2/3 + James 2:14-26). We are continuing this focus into May.



A reminder about Sunday, May 3 - our annual "LIVE OUT: Service Day" - a day to emphasize intentional church-wide service. The day includes a briefer ENCOUNTER service - all the normal service elements with a short devotion - at 9am (make sure you note the special start time for this day only) before we participate in serving. We're back to doing various projects around the community this year.



Whenever we wrap-up that "Do GOOD!" series (there might be a "wild card" Sunday or two along the way), we'll launch our 2026 Summer series. For this year, we are coming back to a series grid we call "You've Got Questions." We used this grid back in 2022 (and, for that matter, in 2017 too). In this series, what unites the various sermons is this common feature: **we're looking at answers from God's Word to YOUR specific questions - ones you've submitted/asked!**

Sometime in May, there will be a display in the auditorium where you can submit questions to be considered. You can also submit them via e-mail to info@gosouthland.org. The best questions for this series will go something like this: "How would God's Word instruct us to respond to ____ (a specific life circumstance)?" or "What does God's Word say about ____?" or even "What does God's Word teach that causes us to ____?" With each question selected, our goal will be to package the Biblical content available in the most effective way. There is obviously no guarantee that every question will be used. As we select questions, we will be limited by the number of weeks we have available (the series will run through sometime in July). Just remember, along the way in such a series, **"You - or someone, anyway - asked for it!"**

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 head into 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/@southlandcc/streams>. 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*.

As we continue on into 2026, our “regular” Connect Groups are 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’d love to help you get connected to others within the Southland family.

* A note about two upcoming adjustments during the month of May - Sundays when we are *not* having 9:15am ministry programming:

Sunday, May 3 (“LIVE OUT: Service Day”) - on this day, we gather for a briefer time of worship at 9am before a time of serving; *so, Connect Groups do not meet.*

Sunday, May 24 (the weekend of Memorial Day) - no 9:15am ministry programming on this day either, only our 10:30am ENCOUNTER.

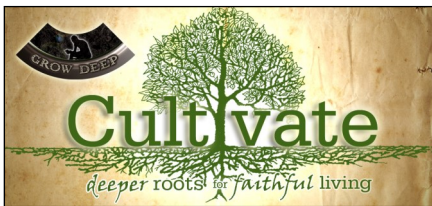
A Note re: Upcoming “First Sunday CONNECTION” Times

As mentioned on page 2, we are in a stretch of time where it’s going to be awhile before our next “First Sunday CONNECTION” (due to a different overall schedule on May 3 as noted above and due to our annual church family picnic on the evening of June 7 - we won’t do the CONNECTION time in the morning because of this event). We’ll communicate details along the way to keep you in the loop about these times.

GROW DEEP MINISTRIES



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



We have reached the end of the CULTIVATE semester. We're now on a break through the Summer; we'll share details about the Fall as we move toward a new ministry year in August.

Check out page 19 for some CULTIVATE-related "Thank you's" as we wrap-up this session; we're most grateful for those who serve to help make the various parts of Wednesday nights happen!



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 is one specific upcoming opportunity to serve others: our 2026 VBS!

As usual, we are needing lots of volunteers for **VBS**; the dates for this year are July 27-30 (evenings, from 6-8:30pm - see page 11 for more information about registering, etc.). Here are two specific ways you can participate:



1. **We need volunteers** (if you are willing to serve, please use the following link to let us know): <https://gosouthland.myanswers.com/emerald-crossing/volunteer/> ... you can also contact Jessica and she'll help you find the right spot.
2. **We'll also need donations** if that's more of how you can help; see page 3 for more on helping in this way.

It takes all of us working together to make such an event happen for our kids. Please be considering what part you can play!

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 use one of the blue "BUILD UP" cards to let us know where you want to get plugged-in to serving.**

Thank you to **all who helped make this CULTIVATE semester (and year) happen on Wednesday nights** - so many different people were involved:



A “thank you” to those who helped with meal prep - Kristie Martin who weekly led this group as part of her staff role with the regular help this year from **Kaytlin Deckard, Kaitlyn Graves** and **Carol Ricke (plus several “pancake flippers!”)**.

A “thank you” to D-Groups who all took turns in helping with meal clean-up.

Of course, a **“thank you” to our D-Group facilitators** who put in extra time and effort leading these groups - from more prep time to some more logistic tasks like communications, etc. *We encourage you to express your gratitude to your leader(s)!*

A “thank you” as well to those non-staff volunteers who helped teach one of our elective classes this semester: A.J. Gegg and Dr. Josh Smith.

It’s also an appropriate time to thank our **Group Huddle volunteers** as we are wrapping-up another semester/ministry year:

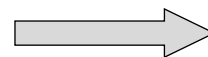
Sponsors - A.J. & Terra Gegg, Andy Lillard, Les & Kristin Londeen, Kira Smith and Ashley Worthy ... a big “thank you” for your help!

Additionally, a “thank you” to those parent volunteers who helped with serving meals throughout the semester. We won’t list all of the names, but so many different individuals volunteered along the way.

SERVING SCHEDULE for May 2026

	Foyer Hosts (10:15 on, through whole service)	Greeters (at the doors from 10:15-10:40)	Serving Team Leader
5/3	Bob & Liz Wood	<i>N/A - “LIVE OUT: Service Day”</i>	Les Londeen
5/10	Ben & Debbie Jennings	Room #6 Connect Group	Doug Graves
5/17	Les & Kristin Londeen	Room #7 Connect Group	Deckard Family
5/24	A.J. & Terra Gegg	<i>T.B.D. - no 9:15am groups this day</i>	Les Londeen
5/31	Pat & Debbie Little	“Voyage” Connect Group	<i>T.B.D.</i>

	Nursery workers (all morning)	Wee Kid ENCOUNTER & Li'l Kid ENCOUNTER	Kid ENCOUNTER (1 st - 5 th grades)
5/3	Harmony Martin/ Cary Swadley	Ezri Smith Jessica Young	<i>N/A - “LIVE OUT: Service Day”</i>
5/10	Wilcox Family	Jessica Young Kristie Martin	Sean & Megan Falconer
5/17	Harnstrom Family	Anna Randleman Sandy Arneson/Becky Kurth	Thomas & Stef Hall
5/24	Lillard Family	Harmony Martin Debbie Hoenshell	Dylan & Jessica Young
5/31	Graves Family	Sonya Simpson Sandy Arneson/Becky Kurth	Les Londeen



LAWN CARE Schedule (mowing/trimming work needs to be completed by the Saturday date listed):

5/2 - Constantine/Jennings

5/9 - Randleman

5/16 - Arneson/Harnstrom

5/23 - Martin

5/30 - Pryor/Martin

6/6 - Little/Easter



LIVE OUT MINISTRIES



... a path for putting
faith into action.



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 participate in some form of active serving; for this year, we're back to various projects in the community. We're certainly looking forward to it!

Also, remember to wear your Southland "LOVE OUT LOUD" t-shirt (if you have one or have ordered one) and jeans for the day; if not, please don't let that stop you from coming and participating.

We pray that God will use this day to help us be a blessing 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); 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 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. 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 was due by April 30, then the remaining balance of \$225 is due by June 1.**