



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

The Southland Vine

For OCTOBER 2025

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



Southland's Fall Family Fun

Sunday, October 26
(4:30-7:30pm; supper at 6pm)

**You're invited to join your
Southland FAMILY for this
fun Fall-themed event.**

See page 2 for all of the details.

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We plan to publish the next edition of *The Vine* in early November.



**CENTRAL INDIA
CHRISTIAN MISSION**

Sunday, October 5

A special day at Southland as we host Dr. Ajai Lall from Central India Christian Mission - more information about plans for the day throughout this edition of "The Vine."

Southland "FAMILY" News

A brief look back to the month of September:

Within the Southland family, September represents an important-and-busy month as we launch into a new ministry year. Many of our ministries resume after being off for the Summer (*i.e.* Wednesday evening Cultivate, Group Huddle and W.S.A.). All in all, it's been a great kick-off season as things are now rolling along - a great start to a new ministry year in our church family!

Some UPCOMING EVENTS in the Life of the Southland Family:

Throughout this edition of "The Vine," we continue to share about some key upcoming events in the life of Southland - some for the whole Southland family and others within our ministries for specific groups. While there is much more information on the next page, we want to make sure we especially highlight the broader FAMILY-wide impacts here in one spot:

Sunday, October 5 - a special day as we're hosting Dr. Ajai Lall from Central India Christian Mission

As a reminder, he will be sharing during a combined 9:15am time (MS/HS students and all CONNECT Groups) about the ministry of CICM. Then, as part of our 10:30am ENCOUNTER, he will be preaching. *Due to the plans for this day, there is no "First Sunday CONNECTION" time.*



Our "Fall Family Fun" event is coming soon - Sunday, October 26 from 4:30 to 7:30pm (supper served at 6pm)

This is an annual autumnal event when we come together to enjoy some fall fun together as a church family. As in the past with this event, we have various activities planned for all ages - many of them outdoors, including inflatables and a new addition, mini-golf - so good weather would be great! As part of the evening, we will enjoy a delicious chili/soup supper at 6pm; we're also planning on s'mores with marshmallows cooked over fire pits in the courtyard. All in all, we're looking forward to a fun, relaxed time together as a church FAMILY!

Here's some information about what we need you to know and do to make this event happen:

- ⇒ **We need volunteers to prepare and bring soup/chili for supper. Please sign-up at the display in the foyer starting Wednesday, October 1.**
- ⇒ **If you're not bringing soup/chili, we ask that you bring some sort of dessert (like cookies or brownies). The church will provide all that's needed beyond this - like crackers, shredded cheese, supplies for s'mores, etc.**
- ⇒ **There may be some other ways we ask for specific help with the evening. Be watching for more on this and please do what you can to help make this night an enjoyable one!**

If you're at all connected to Southland, you're a part of this family, so come join us!



Our next “First Sunday CONNECTION” - Sunday, 11/2

When the calendar permits, we host these times (on “first Sundays” of the month) for the Southland FAMILY simply to make connections with others - to bolster existing relationships and/or perhaps to establish new ones. We offer simple breakfast items and coffee, but otherwise, there’s nothing else we do besides providing the basic context. *Due to the special day on Sunday, October 5 (a combined time at 9:15am), we are not having a “First Sunday CONNECTION” that day. So, our next one is at 10am on Sunday, November 2.*



THANKSGIVING Baskets

As we make our way toward the Thanksgiving season, we will be starting the annual process for our “THANKSGIVING Baskets” project. This effort is a great (and easy!) way for the Southland FAMILY to come together to serve those outside of our church and bless others in this season. We will be communicating more details about how you can participate during October. As always, this will include the opportunity to donate items to help us build the baskets. *Be looking for more information as we head through the month of October.*

December: “A Church FAMILY Christmas”

This is how we package the Christmas season at Southland. Just as families have traditions for the season, so do we as a church FAMILY. It may seem like a long way off, but it will be here soon. For now, see page 5 for a few specific dates that have already been set for this season: specifically, our Thanks-Mas dinner (12/7), the women’s Christmas party (12/11) and the C.O.P. morning (12/14).



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. Let us know if you’re not receiving these.

FACEBOOK, including “The Southland Scoop” ... We have a general Facebook page that is public/visible for sharing some basic information about us more broadly (e.g. this is what we use for putting out our weekly live stream as well - see page 15 for more on that). *We also have a page called “The Southland Scoop.”* We use this more “internal” page to share more specific church family-related information: pictures from recent events - including several over the Summer, 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 with us in this way.





From time-to-time, we want to bring attention to RightNow Media, an exciting ministry tool that we have available here at Southland.

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

OTHER GENERAL REMINDERS & INFO



TITHE.LY

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

FINANCIAL UPDATE ... For September 2025

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: September monthly tithe = \$31,564⁰⁰ (4 Sundays) Average weekly tithe = \$7,891⁰⁰

This is the first month in our new fiscal year. If you're curious, as a weekly average, that puts us in the \$420,000 range; while it's well below our need, it's not an unexpected start given past years.

We did finish the last ministry year right where we need to be with our giving - even with some growth overall (annual tithe total of \$477,533). *Thank you for your ongoing faithful giving to Southland!* Added to that, we started in a good spot *last* September ... with some levels of reserves which were strengthened this past year; even more, our mortgage has been reduced to the mid-\$80,000 range (our only debt). It all puts us in a good financial position as we move into this new ministry year. At the same time, our budgeted tithe need does increase a bit so that we need in the \$480,000 range. Accordingly, we 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."

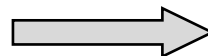
Weekly ministry happenings - Southland FAMILY-wide:

Sunday mornings at 9:15am ... ministry programming for all ages including back to regular CONNECT Groups for adults - Sunday School classes for all kids and youth as well. See page 15 for more specifics (*meeting as normal in October with a special day on Sunday, 10/5 - see page 18 for more on that*). 



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. See pages 14 and 15 for more information.

Sunday evenings (normally 6-8pm) ... Group Huddle for middle school and high school youth (see pp. 9-10). *We're now at the point in the year where this is meeting each week - albeit with an adjustment on October 26 for our annual Fall Family Fun event.*



Wednesday evening CULTIVATE, a “GROW DEEP” ministry ... 5:30 for dinner, 6:30 for ministry programming each week, including another new round of D-Groups. See page 16 for more details.



Thursday mornings (10am start time) ... WSA - Ladies' Bible Study (see p. 13) - *for this semester, WSA is operating as a D-Group, just on Thursdays instead of during CULTIVATE.*

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, October 5 ... Dr. Ajai Lall will be with us during both the 9:15am time slot and during our ENCOUNTER worship service; see pages 14 and 18 for more on this - *no “First Sunday CONNECTION” on this date due to the special day.*

Monday, October 13 through Wednesday, October 22 ... a 10-day prayer campaign for the 10 countries with the most unreached people groups (see p. 18).

Wednesday, October 15 ... the youth group's annual trip to the Cornfield Maze (see p. 11).

Mid-to-late-OCTOBER into NOVEMBER ... during this stretch of time, we invite you to join us in our annual “Thanksgiving baskets” effort (see p. 18).

Sunday, October 19 at noon ... next meeting for “Open Hearts, Open Homes.”

Tuesday, October 21 at 6:30pm ... another worship night opportunity - this time, acoustic and outdoors around a fire; see page 14 for more information.

Sunday, October 26 ... the deadline for letting Jessica know who wants to attend the 2026 Super-Start event in Tulsa on January 30-31 - includes both kids and parents (see p. 8).

Sunday, October 26 ... our annual “FAMILY Fall Fun” event - check out page 2 for some general information.

Sunday, November 2 ... “Daylight Savings Time” ends for 2025. Make sure to set your clocks *back an hour* Saturday into Sunday.

Sunday, November 2 ... our next “First Sunday CONNECTION” at 10am (9:15am groups/classes still meet, just with an earlier end time).

Sunday, November 2 ... we will again be participating in the annual “International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church” (see p. 18).

Saturday, November 8 ... a kids' event - a trip to Incredible Pizza - 12-2:30pm; see p. 8 for details about this event.

Sunday, December 7 ... our annual “Thanks-Mas Church FAMILY Dinner” at 5pm.

Thursday, December 11 @ 6pm ... Southland Women's annual Christmas Party; more details will follow later on.

Sunday, December 14 ... our 2025 Children of Praise production during our 10:30am time.

It's hard to believe that we're already down to the last quarter of 2025. We've shared the December dates to make sure these events are already on your calendar.

What MATTERS to me ...

A name matters. It's why I always felt a lot of pressure when it came to naming our kids. When you have 5 kids, it means you have 5 opportunities to get it right and choose a name well. I specifically took on the task of coming up with all the ways that junior high boys might make fun of the ones we were pondering. (For example, Harmony's has been short-hand written as H-\$, even to the point that she's called "H-money" by some; I didn't see that one coming at all, but it's fine because I think she likes it.) As parents, you're choosing a name that becomes so intertwined with that person's identity - not just as a child, but for their whole earthly life. We landed on each one for a specific reason, even hoping that each name would be reflected through a desired identity and character from each child. It matters what names get chosen.

A name matters. There's something special about how we are addressed by people around us. It's true of titles, I suppose, but even more so with a name. I was insistent as a child at being called Matthew, even to the point of correcting others who shortened it to Matt. Yet, now, it's weird if anyone outside of my parents calls me by the full Matthew. I'm not entirely sure what's changed, but I've preferred Matt ever since high school days. I never thought of myself in this way, but being called a pet name like "Honey" by Kristie has always meant something special - an expression of our relationship, even. Of course, "Daddy" (upgraded by at least Simeon to "Pops") has always held a special place in my heart. Likewise, I've never loved titles for my vocation, but somehow, I can appreciate being called "Pastor Matt" when it comes with a sense of respect, but also a certain kind of relationship. It matters what we wear as a name in life.

A name matters. Recent events have me thinking about a new name that I'll start using before long. If you haven't heard yet, Kristie and I will be welcoming our first grandchild - a girl, we found out in late September - in March of 2026. We are so excited for Anna and Carson ... and for ourselves, too! It's led to this consideration of what I want to be called. After all, moving forward in life, it's a name that will have great significance for the rest of my journey. It will start with this little one who arrives in March who, hopefully, will be followed by many more along the way. Choosing the right name feels important!

Back in my childhood, I knew Grandpa and Grandma Martin plus Grandpa and Grandma Rudkin - I know, real unique, right?! Since then, it seems, people have been far more creative and intentional about a specific name they wear as a grandparent. For ladies, it's everything from Granny, to Gram, to Mimi, to Gigi, to Grammy, to Nana, etc. For men, it's a range from Papoo, to Pepaw, to Pop, to Papa, to Pops, to G-pa, to Papaw, etc. So, so many options. As this stage of life nears, I like that there are more fun and personalized names that are available, it seems to capture the significance of the relationship - not just a generic one, but one that represents the specific connection that you share with these special little people. (I'm so excited about so many aspects of this role!) I know that there is likely to be some change as grandchildren come to express whatever you pick in their own unique ways; yet, there has to be a starting point. That's what I've been mulling over.

Kristie's already settled on hers: Grammie (yes, with an -ie, just like her name); I like it and cannot wait to hear it uttered by a little one that belongs to one of our little ones. I still cannot decide. At one point, I started joking that if she's going by Grammie, then maybe I should be Oscar - you know, like the Grammy Awards for music and its counterpart for movies. Even though someone immediately connected it with a grouch who lived in a trash can, I still kind of like it. After all, it's unique, it's creative. Even as I process it all, though, here's what I know, my guess is that whatever this precious little girl ends up calling me, I'll proudly wear this new name, even if it changes somewhat along the way with her eventual sibling(s) and cousins whom we hope arrive. Why? Because when someone you care about gives and calls you by a name, it matters!

Twice in Revelation (in 2:17 and 3:12), Jesus promises to give "a new name" to those who overcome and remain faithful as His people. It's part of the eternal reward He offers. Amidst all the promises, why a new name? In the end, this is the point: because it's a reminder of the intimacy and relationship we share with Him - we belong to Him and He personally, specifically calls each of us His own for all eternity. Names matter; and this too is one we'll each wear proudly forever because it's what He the Lord of all has lovingly chosen for us.

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 of kids. *These are meeting as normal during October - no "First Sunday CONNECTION" this month either.*

CHILDREN'S
Sunday School

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

Based on some changes we made earlier this Summer, here's what happens for kids 5th grade and younger during this time slot.

Nursery, "Wee Kid ENCOUNTER" (newer - for two and three year-olds) and "Li'l Kid ENCOUNTER" (kids up through Kindergarten/1st graders - 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 September.



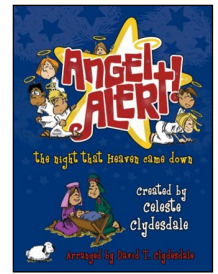
Kid ENCOUNTER uses material from **Answers in Genesis** (we've used their VBS curriculum for the past few years). Each Sunday, students dive-in to God's Word, put Scripture in their hearts and learn how it applies to their everyday lives. This includes a memory verse each week as well. As is typical for AIG, there is even an "apologetics" emphasis attached to the content. *During October, the lessons focus on Paul's third missionary journey.*

FALL 2025 Wednesday evening CULTIVATE Plans for Kids

During the Fall Cultivate session, our kids ages 4 and through 6th grade participate in "Children of Praise." They spend their time on Wednesday evenings rehearsing songs, practicing drama and more, all in preparation for their annual Christmas performance (set for Sunday, December 14 during our 10:30am ENCOUNTER time). *We are also making available some time on Sunday mornings - the last portion of our Sunday School class time - for kids to learn some of the songs then as well so they can be involved.*



This year's program is called "**Angel Alert!**" It's the story of God's messengers waiting to be told when they could go to earth to make the grand announcement re: the Savior's birth. Along the way, these angels review God's faithfulness as they anticipate His promises and prophecies coming true. Of course, they also celebrate His love being shown through the coming of the Messiah.



Parts and solos are handed out in early October - those need to be memorized by early November.

An Upcoming Kids' Event: a fun trip to Incredible Pizza



Saturday, November 8 - meet at Southland at 11:30am; we'll return there at 3:30pm

(We're planning to be there from noon-3pm.)

**For kids age 4 through 5th grade
Cost is \$20 - includes lunch (buffet and drink),
a game card worth \$20 and 2 "attractions" ...
the cost is \$10 for just the meal alone**

We'll load-up in a church van (or 2, if necessary) and head to Incredible Pizza for lunch and time together having fun. **Please sign-up at the check-in counter.**

As always, parents are certainly welcome to come along for this event.

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

C.I.Y. "Super Start" in Tulsa, OK - January 30-31, 2026



This event is earlier in 2026 (typically, it's in March). ***As a result, Jessica needs to know by October 26 who plans to attend - both kids and parents who are interested in going as sponsors!*** This will help us make sure we get registered in time.

Some details: Cost is \$85 (this includes all meals)

We'll stay overnight at a church in the area (you'll need to pack a sleeping bag, pillow, etc. in addition to clothes and bathroom supplies).

Info for all Kids/Youth

Our student ministries hosted an information meeting in early September. At that meeting, we distributed our "**Hold Harmless Forms**" for the new ministry year, an unfortunate, but necessary part of church ministry today.

If you were unable to attend, we have these available (ask Les or Jessica for a copy); please make sure to sign and return one as soon as possible.

LES' LATEST



Fall is in the air and leaves are beginning to show some color. This ushers in a season of football games and homecoming festivities. **HOMECOMING** - it's an interesting word. Some schools will compete for originating the concept on their campuses, but here's an interesting historical event. In 1911, Mizzou's Athletic Director, Chester Brewer, asked alumni of the university to help inaugurate the new location of their football field by "**coming home**" to attend the annual game against the University of Kansas. Brewer planned a celebration with parades, parties, a pep rally and then, of course, the football game. More than 10,000 alumni and fans attended the events, making Mizzou's homecoming an example for this special event across the country.

Homecomings are great times of remembrance and reconnecting, of sharing stories and seeing old friends. In Luke chapter 15, Jesus shares a homecoming story that lives in the hearts of His listeners. The story focuses on a rebellious son wanting to make his mark on the world with his dad's inheritance. Along the way, though, circumstances change when he irresponsibly squanders his resources and his situation becomes destitute.

When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, "At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.'" So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming, filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him.

This familiar parable is a heartwarming illustration of reconciliation. It teaches us a very profound truth about forgiveness and repentance. Sometimes we think that our repentance somehow earns us God's forgiveness - if I do my part, God does His part. It is not quite like that. Our repentance simply allows God's prior offer of forgiveness to have practical effect. My repentance doesn't change God's desire to forgive, it just makes reconciliation possible. The father in this parable didn't stop loving his son. He didn't decide to be merciful as soon as he saw him from a distance. He had already chosen to be merciful; he had always wanted to act in love towards his wayward son.

The son's homecoming meant that mercy, forgiveness and love could be showered on him. My repentance is not the means by which I get God to forgive me. Repentance is not my attempt to persuade God to welcome me. It is a decision to receive that welcome which always awaits me. Repentance is homecoming and God's forgiveness is waiting for us there.

GROUP HUDDLE NEWS

"GROUP HUDDLE" is a weekly time (6-8pm on Sundays) for middle school and high school students who strive to love Christ and demonstrate His love to others. It offers a place for students to connect and dive into God's Word as they participate in meaningful small groups, worship and fellowship.

GROUP HUDDLE Focus for this semester: "No Other Name"

When you set up a password, there are usually a few sentences that explain what the password should contain (like at least one capital letter and a number). However, there are also websites that caution you against using important personal information as a password. Most often they explicitly tell you not to use your name as the password.



It says a lot about human nature that we have to be cautioned against using our own name as a way to unlock our social media, bank accounts and other important information. This semester, we are going to explore how Jesus' Name is the only name that brings salvation. We find ourselves "locked out" of eternal life because of our sin; and His is the only name that can save us. Join us Sunday nights as we embark on a new series entitled, **"No Other Name."**

Upcoming GROUP HUDDLE THEMES:

- Sunday, 10/5** **"School Spirit"** ... "We've got spirit, yes, we do; we've got spirit, how 'bout you?" Represent your school with apparel and flair!
- Sunday, 10/12** **"Ballpark Night"** ... Swing on over because the evening is going to be a home run!
- Sunday, 10/19** **"Pretzel Fest"** ... Are you ready for the 'wurst' party ever? Come enjoy root bear, pretzels and yodeling
- Sunday, 10/26** ***No regular Group Huddle for this Sunday as we're encouraging students instead to come and enjoy Southland's "Fall Family Fun" event from 4:30-7:30pm.***

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 \$25 for each student** (that covers this semester, through December). Make checks payable to Southland. *You can also do this through Tithe.ly by choosing the "Group Huddle meals" option ... please also cover the fee for this if you are using this option (see p. 4 for more on using Tithe.ly).*

Parent volunteers are also welcome/needed to help with meals;
there is a sign-up sheet where you can sign-up to take a turn or you can simply talk to Les.

GROUP HUDDLE and CHILDREN'S MISSIONS:

Each semester, we identify a missionary or mission's organization we can support through the school year. This year, our mission partners are **Andy & Lisa (Husted) Nunn** who are part of a broader ministry called **"Discipleship Global."**

The Nunn's are located in London. In July, they were here at Southland and presented their work to our students. They are currently assisting with a church-plant in London, conducting Bible studies and doing some one-on-one discipleship. They also have the opportunity to share the Gospel in the intermediate schools in London. Each Sunday this semester, our students will have the opportunity to pray for our mission partners and give during both "KidENCOUNTER" and Group Huddle Bible Study.



DISCIPLESHIP GLOBAL

FOR MS/HS STUDENTS

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 as they will in October).*

These are meeting as normal in October and November, except for Sunday, October 5, when these students join our adult CONNECT Groups in the auditorium as Dr. Ajai Lall with C.I.C.M. is sharing about their work.

Wednesday Evening CULTIVATE (from 6:30-7:45pm each week): a study of the Gospel of Matthew, highlighting Jesus as the promised Messiah and King.

It's almost time again to "Get Lost" in the Giant Cornfield Maze in Aurora!

**Wednesday evening, October 15
from 5-9pm - instead of CULTIVATE**

Students from middle school and high school are going together this year *(yes, we have worked it out so that younger students typically in C.O.P. will be able to attend).*



Join your friends in testing your sense of direction at the giant cornfield maze. You can enter at dusk or wait until dark for the creepier journey. Enjoy delicious build-your-own sub sandwiches as well as s'mores over a fire pit.

Cost is \$15/student; that includes supper costs, the maze, life-sized boxing robots, a scenic hayride, mechanical bull and the cow train. *Invite your friends and be looking for a sign up-sheet.*

In the event of bad weather, regular CULTIVATE activities will take place instead.

FOR SENIOR HIGH STUDENTS

The 2025 College and Career Fair at Central High School Tuesday, October 7 from 5-7pm

Admission staff from over 60 colleges will be present; there will also be FAFSA/financial aid workshops, area business/job scouts and military branch representatives.



Due to space limitations, **registration for the 2026 MOVE Conference (for the '26-'30 graduating classes) happens this Fall to ensure spots.** Les has reached out with some details - dates, location, etc. - as we work toward reserving spots. **We're trying to get a basic count by Sunday, October 5.**

NOTE: We know it's early, but because of this, the first pre-registration (\$75) for next year's conference will be due Sunday, November 9.

Southland Women



It's officially fall! The temperatures are beginning to cool, and leaves are beginning to change colors on a few trees. Some leaves have begun to fall, though I suspect its more from the lack of rain than the normal pattern of leaves changing colors and then falling.

This last month has held some big events in my life. I suppose one could say it's been a changing of seasons, in a way, and maybe also signs of more changes to come.

We found out in August but were sworn to secrecy until recently - we're going to be grandparents! I know it's a natural step when you have kids who are grown and married, but this is a stage I have dreamed of with excitement for a long time! I adore babies, and, since having my own, I have eagerly anticipated a day when we would have a baby in the family again. There just isn't anything sweeter, if you ask me.

We are praising God for His goodness and thanking Him for this little blessing that we know will be a HUGE blessing to us. It has been fun to share the news with our church family and enjoy the excitement of others. I'm not sure how people celebrate big life moments if they don't have church family to help them celebrate! I've never known life without the blessing of friends at church.

Another big event came this past month with the news of my mother falling and fracturing her hip. I'm not in the medical field, but I know enough about life to understand that breaking a hip is a big deal. I was very sad and scared, and I felt helpless since my mom lives several hours away. I appreciate very much the prayers and support from many of you, my church family. The saga continues as this week my mom went back home after 3 weeks in a rehab facility. I appreciate your continued prayers, because we know the healing will take time and there are many things my family will need as they/we strive to keep my mom comfortable and upbeat in this process.

It's not the the first time that I've wondered how people get through big changes, challenges and life events without faith in Jesus and a supportive church family. I know they do somehow, but I marvel at how difficult that would be.

Our faith is not a "pull it out and dust it off every Sunday" kind of faith. It is something that adds joy and dimension to happy times and exciting moments, and it also gives hope and peace in hard, challenging moments. It doesn't mean that we aren't concerned about real life practicalities or don't take action in the ways that we can. But it does mean we have the Holy Spirit's presence with us, giving strength and fortitude, even as we ride out our feelings and sometimes do the hard work that life requires.



I know many of you have stories of your own of life's ups and downs and how your faith in God sustained you through those. We encourage one another when we talk about those experiences and how God was faithful through them. We have his Spirit with us giving comfort and strength, and in the joyful moments we praise Him and exalt Him. In good times and hard times, may we echo the Psalmist who said:

² I will glory in the LORD;

let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

³ Glorify the LORD with me;

let us exalt his name together.

⁴ I sought the LORD, and he answered me;

he delivered me from all my fears."

- Psalm 34:2-4



The Next Women's Ministry Event

Thursday, December 11 @ 6pm ... we'll gather that evening for our 2025 Southland Women's Christmas event. Each year, it's an opportunity to slow down and enjoy being together celebrating the season amidst the hustle and bustle. More specific details will follow; for now, we wanted to provide the date so you can put it on your calendar.



We're already several weeks into a new semester of WSA. This ministry is an opportunity for women of all ages and life stages to spend time studying God's Word together while forming bonds with sisters in Christ (designed for "CONNECTING" and/or "GROWING DEEP").

**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.**

In case you missed the news, we've made an adjustment to how we're approaching WSA this semester (and likely, even beyond that): *we're using our weekly WSA time as an additional D-Group opportunity.* Among other benefits, this provides an opportunity for those who are unable to be involved on Wednesday nights ... perhaps even because they're serving elsewhere during CULTIVATE. Check out information about our D-Group content in the CULTIVATE section (page 16); you can also find a link to the guides for each week's session there as well (those guides are also available each week at the display in the foyer).

One of our sub-ministries within the women's ministry is a "Meal Team Ministry." It's a church-wide way that the Southland family can bless someone at a poignant time of life. **We are currently in need of more people to serve as part of these teams.** If you want to be a part of one of these meal teams, please use one of the blue "BUILD UP" cards in the foyer and write "meal team" on it.





WEEKLY ENCOUNTER

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

An Outdoor "Acoustic Worship Night" at Southland Tuesday, October 21 @ 6:30pm

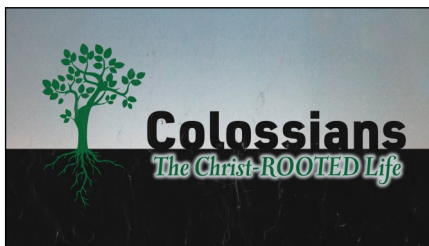
Here's a note from Kendall re: this evening ...

You're invited to join us for this special evening of worship around a bonfire - a new expression of our worship night opportunities. This "Acoustic Worship Night" will be a time to gather in community, sing together and enjoy the simplicity of praising God together around a bonfire! We'll provide chord charts, lyrics, and a variety of instruments for anyone who would like to join in, but you are also just as welcome to simply sing along. Whether the night becomes a joyful jam session or a

simple guitar and voices lifted in praise, the focus is on worshiping together in unity and authenticity. Bring a friend, bring your voice, or simply bring yourself; and, let's make a joyful noise to the Lord!



Our Upcoming Preaching Calendar



In September, we launched into our main Fall 2025 sermon series - an "exegetical" look at Paul's letter of **Colossians**. Moving forward into October,* we're continuing to make our way through this letter. As we reflect on what Paul wrote to these 1st century believers in Colossae, we're considering how that message speaks to us today in our context as 21st century followers of Jesus. As we've seen already in this series, Paul writes in this letter to combat a false teaching that is trying to

move people on past Jesus, striving to help his readers consider the place of supremacy (and sufficiency!) He should have in our ongoing lives of faith. It's what is captured in the "theme verses" of this letter, Colossians 2:6-7 - ***"just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, CONTINUE in Him."*** Paul then adds some clarifiers to that, including the imagery of being "ROOTED in Him," hence the sub-title for this series. In our lives of faith we don't "move on" from Jesus because He's the point! The rest of the letter helps us identify what being "Christ-ROOTED" looks like in a life of faith as His followers.

We'll be continuing this series through the end of October/early November. As always when working through a book like this, we encourage you to be reading through Colossians on your own during this time. We're excited for where we've already been on this journey and what's still ahead!

*** A Reminder re: Sunday, October 5:** We're taking a break in our Colossians series for this day as we welcome a special guest speaker. **Dr. Ajai Lall** from **Central India Christian Mission (CICM)**, one of our global partners is here with us for this morning. In addition to his sharing about their work during the 9:15am time slot, he'll also be preaching during our ENCOUNTER time. This is a great opportunity that became available and we are thankful 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. Whatever the reason you are not able to be present (especially as we wrap-up the Summer months), you can still stay connected to your church family this way.

Facebook is no longer archiving past videos as it used to (it's not totally clear how long they are keeping past live streams). 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.

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**.

At this point, our **“regular” Connect Groups** are meeting at 9:15am on Sundays (note: we also have Sunday School classes for all ages of kids/youth during this time). There's a half-sheet flyer at the Welcome Center listing our current groups, including a new one launched this Fall. With the group that's been added, we have good coverage across the various life stages/demographics: **a group for college-age students** (in Room #5) ... **a group for young adults, entering the career stage** (in the Fellowship Hall) ... **a group generally made-up of those with young families** (in Room #7) ... **a group generally for those with older kids, even out-of-the-house by now, but who are still working** (in the Great Room) ... **a group generally for those who are in the retirement stage of life** (in Room #6). *Please don't hesitate to ask if you need help deciding which group is best for you; we'd love to help you find a place to get connected with others!*

Connect Groups are meeting as normal each week during October (and, for that matter, November, too) *except for Sunday, October 5*. On this special day, we are hosting Dr. Ajai Lall from Central India Christian Mission. As part of his time with us, he is sharing during a combined 9:15am time.

To maximize our time with Dr. Lall on Sunday, October 5, we are not hosing a “First Sunday CONNECTION” time that morning. As a result, our next one will be on Sunday, November 2 at 10am.

GROW DEEP MINISTRIES



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



We're currently in the midst of our Fall 2025 CULTIVATE session!

We shared a flyer about this session that runs through November 19; you can find it through this link if you're viewing "The Vine" electronically: [Fall 2025 CULTIVATE Session](#) (we no longer have the paper copies of the semester flyer available in the foyer).

As a reminder of the basic timing, a meal is served from 5:30-6:15 each week (the cost is again \$4/person with a max of \$15/family) and then ministry programming *for all ages* from 6:30-7:45; *see the kids' and youth section for more details about their Wednesday evening plans.*

Our D-Group focus for Fall 2025 is the book of ACTS. It's the story of what continued even after Jesus' physical departure from earth at His ascension - what He carried on through the Holy Spirit as His representative/agent and the Church as His Body. Each week, we're providing a guide to supplement your reading through the text. *These can also be accessed throughout the semester at the display in the foyer or electronically at our website: <https://gosouthland.org/ministries/cultivate>.*



OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD UP

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

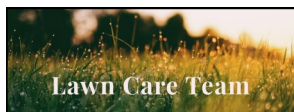
This section of the Vine provides a central place for you to be informed about how to become active in service at Southland. One of our major priorities is to be a place where God's people BUILD UP one another. In fact, according to Ephesians 4:16, the overall health of the church (the Body) depends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

Opportunities to Serve & "BUILD UP" the Body

Just like any FAMILY, we function as we do *because of the willing-hearted volunteers* who choose to embrace opportunities to BUILD UP others through serving. As we move further into a new ministry year, there are several areas in which we regularly need volunteers.

At the Welcome Center, there are blue flyers identifying various areas in which we need volunteers. There are also blue "BUILD UP" cards that you can fill out and leave in one of the offering boxes (or give to a staff member) to let us know you want to get plugged-in to serving; we'll get in touch with you from there.

A **“THANK YOU”** to the many who have helped with keeping our grounds looking good during the past several months - mowing, trimming, etc.



Here are the family names on our 2025 mowing team schedule (hopefully we haven't missed anyone): **Baadsgaard, Brothers, Constantine, Deckard, Easter, Harnstrom, Jennings, Little, Martin, Randleman** and **Wood**. A big, heartfelt **“thank you”** for all you invested in this way; also, a big **“thank you”** to **Rick** for organizing this and to **Bob & Liz Wood** for the “extras” they do in this area.

SERVING SCHEDULE for October 2025

	Foyer Hosts (10:15 on, through whole service)	Greeters (at the doors from 10:15-10:40)	Serving Team Leader
10/5	Pat & Debbie Little	<i>T.B.D. (combined 9:15am time)</i>	Mark Miller
10/12	Doug & Susan Graves	Room #6 Connect Group	Doug Graves
10/19	A.J. & Terra Gegg	Great Room Connect Group	Deckard Family
10/26	Bob & Liz Wood	“Voyage” Connect Group	Les Londeen

	Nursery workers (all morning)	Wee Kid ENCOUNTER & Li'l Kid ENCOUNTER	Kid ENCOUNTER (1 st - 5 th grades)
10/5	Wilcox Family	Harmony M. Sandy A. & Becky K.	Jessica Y. & Cary S.
10/12	Harnstrom Family	Ezri S. Jessica Y.	Falconers
10/19	Smith Family	Jessica C. & Aiden S. Harmony M.	Halls
10/26	Deckards (Will & Ashley) @9:15am, then Martins	Jessica Y. & Olivia S. Sandy A. & Becky K.	Jamie B. & Anna R.

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

ShowMe
Christian Youth Home

www.occ.edu



Our annual “Thanksgiving Baskets” project is quickly approaching!



Each year in the Thanksgiving season, the Southland FAMILY blesses those in need through this effort. We have done this LIVE OUT project for several years now during the months of October and November. Sometime during October, we'll share more information and begin this project. **Be looking for what you can do to be a part of this and bless those in need during this season!**

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.” Check out www.indiamission.org for more information about some of the global Kingdom work we get to partner in here at Southland. You can also find their Facebook page for ongoing updates.

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.



Some Upcoming GLOBAL-Connected Opportunities:

1. **Sunday, October 5** - As highlighted already, we are looking forward to welcoming **Dr. Ajai Lall** from CICM on this morning. *The plan is for him to share about the ministry during a combined 9:15am time, then to preach as part of our 10:30am gathering.* We're looking forward to this opportunity and hope you plan to join us for the day!
2. **Monday, October 13 through Wednesday, October, 22** - a 10-day prayer campaign for the 10 countries with the most unreached people groups. This effort is “hosted” by Gospel Ambition, a global ministry (our partners in North Africa work as part of it). Part of their emphasis is mobilizing prayer for Jesus’ global mission. The design is for people to sign-up for 15 minute slots for these 10 days, each day focused on a different country. A daily e-mail will provide information and guidance for that day’s time of prayer. Check out <https://unreached.prayer.tools/> for more information and to sign-up to participate.
3. **Sunday, November 2** - We'll again be participating in the annual **International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church**. Many believers in Jesus around the world today “share our faith, but not our freedom” as they face constant and, at times, intense pressure. We participate each year in this special day as *part of our ENCOUNTER service*. It's a time when we raise awareness, but, most importantly, when we pray – expressing our oneness with them as we intercede on their behalf.

