



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

# The Southland Vine

For SEPTEMBER 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.



**It's that time again ...**



**We're launching into our new ministry year as we move into September and beyond. Check out this edition of "The Vine" for details; come join your church family in our life together!**

## What's Inside:

- 2-5 **Southland FAMILY News**
- 5-6 **Other Info. + What's Happening at SCC (includes calendar)**
- 7 **"WE Do!"**
- 8 **What MATters to Me**
- 9-10 **Southland KIDS**
- 10-13 **LES' LATEST WITH GROUP HUDDLE AND MS/HS NEWS**
- 14-15 **Southland Women**
- 16 **ENCOUNTER**
- 17 **CONNECT**
- 17 **GROW DEEP**
- 18-19 **BUILD UP (serving schedule)**
- 19-20 **LIVE OUT**

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



**Wednesday evenings  
(see page 17 for details)**

*Meal served from 5:30-6:15 with  
ministry programming at 6:30.*

**We hope you join us for this time!**

# Southland "FAMILY" News

We want to extend a "welcome to the family!" to our newest members: **Jared & Laci Bottorff** with their children, **Gus, Alex, Liam and Lani**. They had attended our "Discover Southland" event back in the Spring and officially joined on Sunday, August 24.



## A look back to the month of August:

Within the Southland family, August is always a month spent getting ready for a new ministry year and, of course, **FLOURISH** (see below). That's in addition to ongoing "regular" ways we continue to experience Southland life together. Throughout it all, we experience the Father's blessings by being united together in Christ as church **FAMILY**.

## A specific look back at FLOURISH 2025 ...



Each year, this is a significant church **FAMILY** event. Once again, we enjoyed a delicious meal together (thanks to Kristie and her team for this part!) as well as some fun and fellowship (thanks to Les and Kendall for their work on this family time!). It was all great ... including good, clean fun charades with some blow-up guys! As part of the morning of **FLOURISH** and the event itself, we also got to hear from some of our church family - see page 18 for a list

- their testimonies re: the blessing of church family, especially here at Southland. Hearing such stories provides a great reminder of the ways that God uses us to bless others within the context of church community. In that way, it's a celebration of His design for His people in Christ united together. Of course, it also should encourage each of us to reflect on the ways we've been blessed as well as the difference we can be making in lives of each other too!

An important part of this gathering each year is the time spent reflecting on the past year or so at Southland and then looking forward to what's ahead. There is much to celebrate about as we look back - so many ways we have experienced God's faithfulness and goodness as a church family. This event also helps us turn the corner toward the new ministry year that launches around this time of year. We're looking forward to all God has in store for us in the months ahead. Without a doubt, there is much that happened at **FLOURISH** - all of it reminding us of how God has been, is and will continue to be working in and through the Southland **FAMILY**!

*If you were not able to attend, we have copies of the packet from the evening available in the foyer along with some other supplemental materials. Those will be available at least for the first couple of weeks into September.*

## 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, etc. 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:



## A New MINISTRY YEAR Launches in Late August/Early September

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

*As we head into this new ministry year, please make sure you're staying tuned-in to "The Vine" as well as "The Southland Scoop" Facebook page for all the details about what is happening in the life of the Southland family! Next month, we'll share dates for big events in the rest of 2025.*

### **Our next "First Sunday CONNECTION" - Sunday, 9/7**

Throughout the past year, we have occasionally hosted these times (on "first Sundays" of the month, but not all of them) for people 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 schedule over recent months, it's been awhile since we've had one of these. [We are hosting our next one at 10am on Sunday, September 7.](#) We'll keep you updated re: future ones from there.



### **Sunday, October 26 - Our "FAMILY Fall Fun"**

We are planning this annual autumnal opportunity to enjoy some relaxed and refreshing time together as a church FAMILY - a night of Fall-themed fun for all ages. We'll share more details in the next edition of "The Vine," but for now, mark it on your calendar.

### **More FAMILY Events Later in the Year**

We're also looking forward to December (don't laugh, it will be here before you know it!) and our "Church FAMILY Christmas." Part of that will involve our "Thanks-Mas" event on Sunday, December 7 and our C.O.P. (Children of Praise) program on December 14.

## **A Note about Southland Leadership**



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

we do it here at Southland. Ultimately, we want this to be an opportunity for us to be in step with the Holy Spirit's leading as we seek His guidance in this process. We've used this space in "The Vine" to communicate information about how it works and to provide updates.



At this point, we've completed the process, culminating in the "ordination" of two new elders at our FLOURISH gathering on August 24. As we shared, we had five names originally recommended with three of them moving throughout the process. One of these (Chris DeNovi) had to remove himself from consideration due to an increased level of responsibility at work. That left A.J. Gegg and Rick Randleman to be added to the existing elders team. As we move into the new ministry year, they begin their service in this capacity.

***The rest of the elder team: Ernie Emmerton, Ben Jennings, Pat Little, Terry Ochs and Bob Wood. In September, Pat begins a "sabbatical" (a required year-off after serving 6 consecutive years).***

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

In the last three editions of "The Vine," we've shared the elder and staff portions of our "Leadership Covenant." In this edition, we have highlighted the commitments made specifically by Southland members (see the "WE DO!" section on page 7).



## "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."

***Our students (children and middle school/high school youth) supported a worker in Uzbekistan as their mission partner for this past year. We received this note from him; we won't publish his name for security purposes, but we wanted to share his note.***

**"THANK YOU so much for your help and support as our team shares God's love in central Asia. We are so thankful for your help to get us to and allow us to stay there as we teach. I'm praying that your new school year starts well! Thank you again!"**

## 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 16 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.

*If you're not familiar with RNM, it provides access for both church-specific use as well as for more personal use by those in our church family. There's a wide array of faith-related content available.*

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 August 2025 (through 4 weeks)**

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:** August monthly tithe = \$35,678<sup>00</sup> (4 Sundays in) Average weekly tithe = \$8,919<sup>50</sup>

*At this point in our fiscal/ministry year (September 2024 onward), our tithe is \$472,684 for an average of 9,090/week ... we're projecting to end in the \$474,000 to \$477,000 range.*

As a result, we're going to end the ministry year right where we need to be with our giving - even with some growth overall. *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 have only been strengthened this 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 a new ministry year. This next year, our budgeted tithe need increases 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."

Regardless of where exactly we are relative to our projected budget, Southland's leadership continues to work to manage our overall situation 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 back to regular CONNECT Groups for adults - Sunday School classes for all kids and youth as well. See page 17 for more specifics (meeting as normal throughout September).**





**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 page 16 for more information.**

**Sunday evenings (normally 6-8pm) ... Group Huddle for middle school and high school youth (see pp. 11-12). *Group Huddle resumes with the kick-off event on September 7 (see p. 11) and then normal weekly meetings from then on.***

**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 - *we resumed on August 27.* See page 17 for more details.**



**Thursday mornings (10am start time) ... WSA - Ladies' Bible Study (see p. 15) - *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, September 7 ... after several months without one, we'll have another “First Sunday CONNECTION” at 10am (9:15am groups/classes still meet, just with an earlier end time).**

**Sunday, September 7 after ENCOUNTER ... our student ministries are hosting an informational meeting for parents (for students in K through high school - see p. 10).**

**Sunday, September 7 at 4:30-8pm ... Group Huddle kick-off event for the new year at Incredible Pizza (see p. 11).**

**Saturday, September 13 ... The Pregnancy Care Center's annual “Walk for Life” event; see page 20 for a link to more details.**

**Saturday, September 13 ... CCH's annual golf tournament to support their mission trips; see page 20 for a link to more details.**

**Sunday, September 14 from 6-8pm ... normal Group Huddle resumes; see pages 11-12 for plans for this new school/ministry year.**

**Wednesday, September 24 ... the date for the 2025 “See You at the Pole” event (see p. 13).**

**Sunday, September 28 at noon ... next meeting for “Open Hearts, Open Homes.”**

**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 16 and 20 for more on this).**

**Wednesday, October 15 ... the youth group's annual trip to the Cornfield Maze (see p. 13).**

**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. 10).**

**Sunday, October 26 ... our annual “FAMILY Fall Fun” event - check out page 3 for some general information; *we'll share even more details in the next edition of “The Vine.”***

***Beyond these events, there is much more to look forward to in the rest of 2025. It's hard to believe, but we're really not that far away from Thanks-Mas as well as the rest of our annual church FAMILY Christmas traditions. We'll share more as we get a bit closer.***



## REMEMBERING OUR COVENANT COMMITMENTS

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

*For the past three editions, we focused on the commitments made specifically by SCC leadership. This was done in conjunction with our annual process of considering new elders. (see pages 3–4 for a final update on that) We identified the specific commitments made by SCC elders in their unique leadership role as well as those commitments made by elders and staff together. Last month, we then shared the staff commitments. It seems fitting for us to use this space in this edition to lay out again the members’ portion of the covenant (it’s especially appropriate on the heels of FLOURISH 2025). These are designed to help SCC members know specifically what it means to belong to the church family here.*

***Member Commitments** (we have not provided here the actual NT texts that serve as the basis for these commitments made by Southland members; see a copy of the covenant for those):*

- ♦ *As members, we covenant to protect the unity of Southland by doing that which leads to building up one another and avoiding that which threatens to undermine the Spirit’s bond of peace.*
- ♦ *As members, we covenant to support the doctrine established by the leadership, affirming it in any teaching capacity and choosing not to be divisive in a potential disagreement with these beliefs.*
- ♦ *As members, we covenant to strive for holiness so our lifestyles appropriately represent Christ and Southland.*
- ♦ *As members, we covenant to be faithful stewards of the resources God has graciously provided, regularly giving to Southland and God’s Church of my time, abilities and financial means in a way that is reflective of how Christ Himself gave — sacrificially, generously and willingly.*
- ♦ *As members, we covenant to help create a positive culture where people are warmly welcomed and encouraged to discover God’s Truth, follow Jesus and be changed by His Spirit.*
- ♦ *As members, we covenant to care about the health and well-being of Southland, actively doing our part to help bring that about (e.g. praying for the church).*
- ♦ *As members, we covenant to accept the leadership God has established at Southland, including their responsibility to lovingly discipline when it is appropriate.*
- ♦ *As a member of Southland, who desires to participate in the priorities established by the Southland leadership for my own growth in Christ, I join with others and covenant to be actively involved in the priorities of the process statement.*

# What MATTERS to me ...

Growing up, it seems like we closed several worship services the same way at Countryside Christian Church in Pittsburg, KS. It was the same simple chorus every week:

*I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God! I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood.  
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod, for I'm part of the family, the family of God!*

Admittedly, during my childhood, I was not fully tuned-in to the significance of the lyrics. In fact, I found myself rather confused how we might share hairs with Jesus ... whatever that meant! Some of the language went way over my head; yet, the basic point of the song certainly stuck with me, especially this emphasis: there is joy, blessing and privilege that comes from being connected to Jesus and to one another as part of His family! I'm sure that young me couldn't begin to wrap my head around just how important that reality would be to me some day - nor just how true that would be of my overall experience as part of God's Church. I'm so glad, indeed!

Church FAMILY ... it's a theme we regularly emphasize around here, especially around FLOURISH each August as we wrap-up one ministry year and move toward a new one. Again this year, it was a key focus of both the event itself on August 24 and that morning too. As has been the case for several years now as people have shared on this theme, I marveled at the ways God used this beautiful reality to bring together people. It never ceases to amaze me the mutually beneficial community that His Spirit weaves together in the church. Of course, it's hard for me not to personalize that as well. It calls to mind all of the many ways that I too have been blessed by church family along the way - from those growing up years at Countryside, through different church stops along the way, even to today here at Southland. Yes, even in my role, I get the joy, blessing and privilege of belonging! I know the church - any local church as an expression of His Body - isn't perfect; there's mess involved because there are people involved. Yet, when it's striving to operate according to God's design, it's truly a beautiful thing!

Without a doubt, this is the intention of God's design. It starts with our connection to Him through Christ; each one who comes to faith in Him is adopted as God's own child, chosen by His love. Yet, this connection to Him automatically unites us to His other children. That's not just a theoretical reality we experience with the global Church, but a practical one that happens in the context of a local church. Years ago, I came across a book titled *When Church Was a Family* written by Joseph Hellerman. After reflecting on these truths from the NT and the overall Biblical emphasis behind the metaphor (including the frequent language of "brothers and sisters"), here's Hellerman's summary:

*For Jesus and His followers, loyalty to God was not just about a personal relationship with Him, but something that found its tangible daily expression in unswerving loyalty to God's group, the family of surrogate (in many cases, they replaced the biological family left behind) siblings who called Him Father. Jesus wanted His followers to interact with one another like members of a strong-group, surrogate family characterized by collectivist solidarity and community on every front. Such was Jesus' vision for authentic Christian community.*

Indeed, it's the picture - not just a metaphor, but the reality - of FAMILY! Think of it, when we are born, God's design for life is that we are born into a family, the people He's put around us to help us as we grow physically, emotionally, etc. So too when we are "born again" through faith in Christ. Once again, His design is that we are placed into a FAMILY, the people in Christ that He's put around us as we strive to live as His people together.

It's in this FAMILY where we grow to greater maturity in our faith. It's in this FAMILY where we experience encouragement - both the pats on the back and, when needed, even the kicks in the pants ... all in love, of course. It's in this FAMILY where we become stronger as we stand together. It's in this FAMILY where we find the wisdom to help us navigate our way through life as we come to His Word together. It's in this FAMILY where we find others who help us learn to live out our faith. It's also in this FAMILY where we are reminded of our calling as God's children to reach out beyond ourselves! Indeed, there is great joy, blessing and privilege that comes from being part of His FAMILY ... and we should be glad that we're a part of it!

# SOUTHLANDkids

## CHECK-IN Process for our Kids' Ministries



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

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

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

---

## 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. As we get into September, we've adjusted our class groupings and will continue doing so to reflect our 9:15am attendance.

CHILDREN'S  
Sunday School

We're having our regular 9:15am ministry programming - including these classes - all throughout September (in fact, we're in a long stretch of meeting as normal).

*See below for an overview of the Sunday morning schedule for both time slots.*

---

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

Based on some changes we made this Summer, here's what happens for kids 5<sup>th</sup> 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/1<sup>st</sup> graders - those in 1<sup>st</sup> grade have the option here or in "Kid ENCOUNTER") are all available throughout our ENCOUNTER time.

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

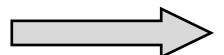


Kid ENCOUNTER uses material from **Answers in Genesis** (we've used their VBS curriculum for the past few years). Each Sunday, students dive-in to God's Word, put Scripture in their hearts and learn how it applies to their everyday lives. This includes a memory verse each week as well. As is typical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

---

## A Note re: Sunday Mornings Starting in September

We're anticipating a bump in our 9:15am attendance as we launch a new CONNECT Group for parents of families with younger kids (see page 17). With that, we've been working on how best to use the overall time - both kids' Sunday School from 9:15-10:15am and the various layers of



"Kid ENCOUNTER" groups at 10:30am. We thought it might be helpful to share a bit of the plan. Overall, there isn't much change to the **10:30am** time - the younger groups (ages 2 through K/1<sup>st</sup> Grade) have a rotation schedule that includes a lesson, crafts, memory work, worship songs and play time. The **9:15am** time is focused on kids' Bible study material from Wonder Ink - a story, memory verse, age-appropriate activities and prayer. As something new, *to provide an additional opportunity for kids who cannot be a part of Wednesday practices, all of the 4 year-olds through 5<sup>th</sup> graders will also come together at 9:55am to spend some time learning songs for the C.O.P. program.* We'll continue working to shape this time overall to create the best opportunities for kids along the way. Let Jessica know if you have any questions.

-----

## **FALL 2025 Wednesday evening CULTIVATE Plans for Kids**



During the Fall Cultivate session (re-launched on August 27), our kids ages 4 and through 6<sup>th</sup> grade participate in "Children of Praise." They're spending Wednesday evenings rehearsing songs, practicing drama and more, all in preparation for their annual Christmas performance (on Sunday, December 14). We'll share more details on this year's program - called "Angel Alert!" - in the future; for now, we hope your kids plan on being a part of this.

*See above for details about a Sunday practice option for kids who want to be a part of the choir (let Jessica know if this applies to your child). Starting in September, we're making available some time for kids to learn some of the songs then as well.*

-----

## **An Upcoming Event for kids 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grades:**

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



"Super Start" is a high-energy C.I.Y. event designed especially for pre-teens (kids in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades). It's become a great annual tradition for our kiddos! We'll share more details later on, but for now, we wanted to get the basic information communicated to you. *Because the conference dates are earlier next year (it's typically been in March), Jessica needs to know by October 26 who wants to go - both kids and parents who are interested in going as sponsors!* This will help us make sure we get registered in time.

**A few 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 APPLICABLE TO ALL KIDS/YOUTH**



**Attention Southland PARENTS** (with kids entering Kindergarten through high school) ... we are having an informational meeting on **Sunday, September 7** after our ENCOUNTER service. It's a time to share about the year ahead and take care of some important details for the year. Please plan to be there!

At this meeting, we distribute "Hold Harmless Forms" for the new ministry year, a necessary part of church ministry today. *If you are unable to attend, these will be available beyond that day; please make sure to sign and return one of these as soon as possible.*

# **LES' LATEST**

This summer I began my 33<sup>rd</sup> year serving as a student minister at Southland. You would think with years of experience, this job would be easier. But, the truth is, it's work – but worth every minute of it. Youth ministry holds a unique and powerful place in the life of the church. The teenage years are a season of change and discovery, filled with questions about identity, purpose and belonging. In a world that often pulls young people in conflicting directions, youth ministry provides a safe, Christ-centered environment where students can grow in their faith and learn what it means to follow Jesus.

At its heart, youth ministry is about discipleship. It's not only teaching students the truth of God's Word, but also helping them apply it in their daily lives. Whether through Bible study or small groups, it helps teens develop a faith that is strong, personal and lasting. It equips them to stand firm in their beliefs and to shine as witnesses for Christ in their schools, families and communities.

But, youth ministry is not just preparation for the future – **it matters today!** Young people are not simply the "church of tomorrow;" they are part of the Body of Christ right now, with gifts, talents and abilities that can be used to build up the church and reach the world around them. I'm so excited to see our teens serving in the nurse's, leading in worship, volunteering for VBS and passing communion plates. By investing in our youth now, we are planting seeds of faith that will grow for a lifetime and bear fruit for generations to come.

Youth ministry is not just a program; it is a mission. It is the church's commitment to walk alongside the next generation, guiding them with love, truth and encouragement as they navigate some of the most important years of their lives. When the church invests in youth, it invests in its own future and in the advancement of God's Kingdom.

---

## **GROUP HUDDLE NEWS**

Group Huddle for middle school and high school students does not meet over the Summer. As we head into September with a new school year already underway, though, we're ready to get back up and running with a new a new Group Huddle year as well!

*Due to the timing of things during this season (our church-wide FLOURISH event back on Sunday, August 24 plus Labor Day weekend that impacts Sunday, August 31), the start of the Group Huddle year is a bit delayed again.*

### **"Group Huddle Kick-off" at Incredible Pizza**

**Sunday, September 7 from 4:30-8pm**



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

***After the kick-off event, normal Group Huddle resumes Sunday, September 14 (6-8pm).***

### **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 (beyond the kick-off on September 7):**

- Sunday, 9/14**    **"Macho Nachos"** ... This is "nacho" average fiesta! Come "taco" 'bout your faith in Jesus; inhale tacos, exhale happiness!
- Sunday, 9/21**    **"Tailgate Party"** ... "Down, set, hut-hut!" It's time to huddle-up for some exciting pre-game fun in the parking lot.
- Sunday, 9/28**    **"Beach Games"** ... Enjoy a night of ocean breezes, loud/colorful Hawaiian shirts and crazy grass skirts; we'll get the night started with the lively sounds of a luau.

### **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. 5 for more on using Tithe.ly).*

**Parent volunteers are also welcome/needed to help with meals;**  
**be looking for a sheet where you can sign-up to take a turn.**

### **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 middle school and high school 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.



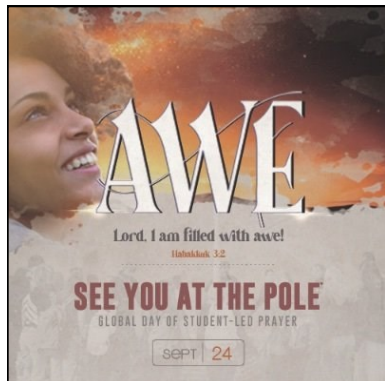
## **FOR MS/HS STUDENTS**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL (starts at 9:15am on Sunday mornings):** We have separate Sunday School classes for our MS and HS youth. *Both are moving to the Gathering Room (off of the Great Room; that room has a middle divider) starting 9/7. These are meeting as normal in September.*

---

**Wednesday Evening CULTIVATE (from 6:30-7:45pm each week - resumed on August 27):** a study of the Gospel of Matthew, highlighting Jesus as the promised Messiah and King.

---



### **"See You at the Pole" 2025**

**Wednesday, September 24 - 1 hour  
before classes start at your school's flagpole**

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

---

### **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**

**For middle school and high students** (*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 hot dogs, chips and drinks for supper as well as s'mores over a fire pit.

**Cost is \$15/student;** that includes the maze, life-sized boxing robots, the food mentioned above, a scenic hayride and the mechanical bull. *Invite your friends and sign-up at the display.*

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

---

## **FOR SENIOR HIGH STUDENTS**



Due to space limitations, **registration for the 2026 MOVE Conference (for the '26-'30 graduating classes) actually happens *this* Fall to ensure spots.** We're still working out the details when it comes to dates and location; be looking for more information soon!

***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



Believe it or not, its almost September! How does the year fly by so fast?!

This month of August marks a variety of things: it is the unofficial end of summer, the beginning of a new school year, the end of our Southland ministry year, the month we hold Flourish, the beginning of Cultivate and WSA, and - for our family specifically - the 15-year anniversary of moving to Springfield and starting life with the Southland family.

It's hard to believe that much time has gone by. We moved to Springfield when our kids were ages 9½, 7½, 3½, and 1½. Now our kids are in these stages: a married professional, a college graduate, a high school graduate, a junior in high school and an 8<sup>th</sup> grader who came along after we moved! My how life has changed in those 15 years!

What hasn't changed is God's faithfulness and goodness. We see it all over the place. We've seen it through ups and downs and challenges. We've seen it in blessings and joys. We've seen it in your kindness to us and your friendship and camaraderie. Thank you for your part in blessing our family. We appreciate you!

As we look toward the beginning of a new season, a new school year and another busy year of church activities, I'll be honest, it can sometimes feel a little overwhelming. I can struggle with the transition from summer to fall. The pace - in a way - picks up, and I can feel a little anxious as the fall and then winter activities stretch before me. May I remind you, and also remind myself in the process, of some truth from Scripture that helps me?

Matthew 28 reminds me that God is already present in tomorrow, and He will be in the months ahead as well.

*<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.*

*<sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

He isn't going away from me, and He won't ever change, through all the seasons of life - "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Each day is a reminder of God's goodness, and that He is always faithful - "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22-23).

And on the inevitable days in which I'm tired, Isaiah 40:30-31 reassures me with these words:

*<sup>30</sup> Even youths grow tired and weary,  
and young men stumble and fall;*

*<sup>31</sup> but those who hope in the LORD  
will renew their strength.*

*They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint."*



The next season won't always be easy; we know that. We've experienced enough of life to know some days are hard. Some seasons are hard. But God is always good! And having church family around you is good. As church activities pick up again, please be a part of them. We need you! We need the unique gifts and perspectives and characteristics you bring! Your Connect Group needs you. Even if you haven't joined one yet, you are needed! Same with D-groups: there is a group that needs you, even if it's your first time to come. The Southland family needs and wants you to be an active part of us. Women's ministry needs you ladies to bless each other! Seek out others and connect with them. Form relationships so that you have support when you need it and you provide support when others need it. That's part of the Church being the Church.

In this season and in every season, I'm thankful for God's faithfulness. These 15 years in Springfield have been so good! I'm thankful that God is always at work, and I'm thankful that I get to follow Jesus next to each of you. I echo Paul's words in Philippians 1:3-6 - *"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*

We can be confident that He isn't finished with us. As we stay engaged and seek to grow, He will be faithful to continue His work in us. May this next season bring you closer to Him, as we follow Him together.



## The Next Women's Ministry Event

Our next special event for ladies will be our annual Christmas party *(we'll share the date by the next edition of "The Vine")*; otherwise, be looking for more details as we move toward December.



After not meeting over the Summer, we've moved 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 has resumed (as of the end of August) - meets at 10am  
in Room #6; we finish around noon each week.**

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 this 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 on page 17 of "The Vine" or at the display in the foyer; you can also find a guide for each week's session there as well.

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.

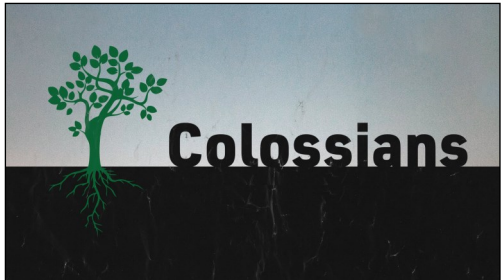




# WEEKLY ENCOUNTER

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

## Our Upcoming Preaching Calendar



After wrapping-up our Summer series in **LUKE** and dealing with some various themes in August, we're ready to launch into our main Fall series on Sunday, September 7. During this series, we'll work through Paul's letter of **Colossians**. Unlike a series in a Gospel - like Luke - where there is so much material to choose from, for this letter of only four chapters, we'll be able to work through it in an "expository" way. It's what we've done in the past with letters like Philippians or 1 Peter. That means we'll be

focusing-on the text section-by-section as it unfolds. Along the way, we'll be reflecting on what Paul wrote to these 1<sup>st</sup> century believers in Colossae, considering how that message speaks to us today in our context as 21<sup>st</sup> century followers of Jesus. It's a valuable letter that reminds us about the place Jesus should have in our lives, where true wisdom is found (not in earthly philosophies!), what Christian freedom looks like and what it truly means to be living a new life in Christ with a new Heavenly perspective. As of the end-of-August, we haven't yet plotted out this series; but, as always when working through a book sermon series, we encourage you to be reading through Colossians on your own during this time. We're excited for this journey through Colossians and hope you join us for it!

***A look ahead to Sunday, October 5 - We'll take a break in our Colossians series for this one day as we'll have a special guest speaker that day. Dr. Ajai Lal from Central India Christian Mission (CICM, one of our global partners) will be with us. 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 wanted to take advantage of 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*.

This is a great time of year to get plugged-in to one of these groups where you can CONNECT with others in the Southland family (note: we do have Sunday School classes for all ages of kids/youth as well at this time). Stop by the Welcome Center for a flyer with more information about these groups. That includes a new group, especially for those with younger families, that starts on Sunday, September 7! 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 group for you!

**See page 3 for more on an upcoming "First Sunday CONNECTION" (9/7).**

Beyond the "First Sunday CONNECTION" on Sunday, September 7, our next adjustment comes on October 5. It's a special day with Dr. Ajai Lall from CICM sharing during a combined 9:15am time; we'll share more details leading-up to that day (you can also check out the brief details on page 20).



## GROW DEEP MINISTRIES

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



**On August 27, we launched into our Fall 2025 semester of CULTIVATE (our Wednesday evening ministry); *it's not too late to joins us!***

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](#) (paper copies are also available on the counter 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 into a new ministry year, there are several areas in which we regularly need volunteers.

**Coming out of FLOURISH 2025, we are especially using this time to encourage serving in such ways at Southland. 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.**

***Especially as we move into a new ministry year, we encourage you to volunteer in one of these ministry areas; it would be a great "next step" to take both for the good of others and for your own benefit too!***

A **"THANK YOU"** to all of those who helped make FLOURISH 2025 happen on August 24; so many volunteers (beyond staff) served as part of the evening.



To those who shared - both on Sunday morning and during FLOURISH about the blessing of church family: **Gavin & Aimee Harnstrom, Jake Miles, Reg & Bev Rowe, Karl & Sonya Simpson and Ezri Smith.**

To those who helped with getting the auditorium ready, especially the **Graves family.**

To those who helped Kristie with meal-prep: **Carol Ricke and Liz Wood** as well as **those who helped provide a dessert (too many to list).**

To all those who helped with clean-up - taking down tables, doing dishes, etc.

We mentioned at FLOURISH the many volunteers who are active on any given Sunday - even 35 or so each week. A big **"THANK YOU"** to every one who is part of that on various Sundays throughout the year; our FAMILY operates because of all who contribute in such ways!

A **"THANK YOU"** to 2 ladies who serve regularly in a behind-the-scenes way: **Catherine Correll** who makes sure the communion trays are cleaned-up from one week and made ready for the next plus **Debbie Little** who makes the communion bread. Thank you, both!

## **SERVING SCHEDULE for September 2025**

	<b>Foyer Hosts</b> (10:15 on, through whole service)	<b>Greeters</b> (at the doors from 10:15-10:40)	<b>Serving Team Leader</b>
9/7	Bob & Liz Wood	<i>T.B.D.</i> ("First Sunday CONNECTION")	Mark Miller
9/14	Les & Kristin Londeen	Room #6 Connect Group	Doug Graves
9/21	Ben & Debbie Jennings	Great Room Connect Group	Ben Jennings
9/28	Matt & Kristie Martin	"Voyage" Connect Group	Les Londeen

	<b>Nursery workers</b> (all morning)	<b>Wee Kid ENCOUNTER &amp; Li'l Kid ENCOUNTER</b>	<b>Kid ENCOUNTER</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup> grades)
9/7	Lillard Family	Kelsey S. & Olivia S. Jessica C. & Aiden S.	Jessica Y. & Cary S.
9/14	Harnstrom Family	Jessica Y. & Isabelle L. Harmony M.	Falconers
9/21	Graves Family	Ezri S. Sandy A. & Becky K.	Halls
9/28	Baadsgaard Family	Anna M. & Harmony M. Debbie H.	Jamie B. & Anna R.

# LIVE OUT MINISTRIES



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

  
www.maranatha  
biblecamp.org

**christian**  
**campus**  
**house**  
a community of students pursuing Jesus  
www.cchonthe.net

  
www.ccozarks.  
org/crosslines


**PCC** PREGNANCY  
CARE CENTER  
www.417pcc.org

www.show-mehome.com  
  
**ShowMe**  
*Christian Youth Home*

www.occ.edu



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

- ⇒ The Pregnancy Care Center's annual "Walk for Life" fundraiser on **Saturday, September 13**. Here's a link to their website with more details: <https://417pcc.org/events/25walk/>, including a way to register in advance to participate in the event. 
- ⇒ Christian Campus House's annual golf tournament is also on **Saturday, September 13 (starts at 8am)** - this annual event helps CCH raise funds for their foreign mission trips, a key part of their ministry to students. Here's a link to their website with more details, including a way to sign-up online and more specifics about how this event bolsters their ministry efforts: <https://cchonthe.net/golf-tournament-fundraiser/>.

## LOCAL MISSIONS giving - direct support and any love offerings/donations:

At FLOURISH 2025, we shared the amounts we gave to our missions partners during the past ministry year. We're including that information here as well - giving from September 2024 through August 2025:

Ozark Christian College:	\$4,670	Christian Campus House:	\$4,210
Pregnancy Care Center:	\$3,305	Crosslines:	\$3,595
Show-Me Youth Home:	\$1,100	Maranatha (direct support):	\$2,365

The amounts to the Pregnancy Care Center, Show-Me and Maranatha include some love offerings as well.

*That makes our total giving to these local partners nearly \$19,245.*

*This doesn't include other expenses related to our local partnerships (e.g. support we provide through paying for sponsors to attend events, camp scholarships, etc.) nor does it include expenses related to our local outreach.*

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](http://www.indiamission.org) for more information about some of the global Kingdom work we get to partner in here at Southland. You can also "like" their Facebook page for ongoing updates.

Check out the website for "Life of Hope Ministries" at [www.lifeofhope.org](http://www.lifeofhope.org). Through our connection with this organization, we are privileged to partner with various ministries on the ground in Guatemala.



**An IMPORTANT NOTE:** As highlighted on page 16 in the ENCOUNTER section, we are looking forward to hosting **Dr. Ajai Lall from CICM on Sunday, October 5**. Tentatively, 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!*

## FOREIGN MISSIONS giving - again, direct support and any love offerings/donations:

Again, we shared at FLOURISH 2025 our past ministry year's missions giving. We're including that information again here with our global partners - giving from September 2024 through August 2025:

CICM:	\$6,250 (including \$250 in love offerings)
Partners in North Africa:	\$14,650 (including \$250 in love offerings)
Contributions to the team fund in North Africa:	\$6,000
Life of Hope:	\$6,000

Additionally, we were in the position to use **\$5,300** from this fund for our 2025 "LIVE OUT: Service Day" project with Lifeline Christian Mission (the food we packed was part of their global outreach). There was also **\$4,200** that went out in one-time support.

We have room within this portion of our missions budget to help with our trips with *Casas por Cristo* (we go there every other year) and Life of Hope. The missions budget did contribute \$2,000 to the 2025 Guatemala trip (we received several special donations to keep this cost down quite significantly). We continue to have funds available as we prepare for next year's trip to Mexico with *Casas*; this is always a more costly trip due to the nature of the project - around \$10,000, perhaps - which we already have set aside.

There are two other youth/children's ministry-related global offerings to note (**well done!!**):

1. Our 2025 VBS offering was over **\$1,260** (it went to the North Africa team fund).
2. Our young people (through offerings collected both in Kid Encounter and Group Huddle) also raised more than **\$844** to support this year's mission partner in Uzbekistan.