



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

The Southland Vine

For SEPTEMBER 2026

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



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:

- 2-4 **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**
- 13-14 **Southland Women**
- 15 **ENCOUNTER**
- 15-16 **CONNECT**
- 16 **GROW DEEP**
- 17-18 **BUILD UP (serving schedule)**
- 18-19 **LIVE OUT**

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



**Wednesday evenings
(see page 16 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

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 2026



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 for his work on this family time!). It was all great! As part of our FLOURISH event itself, we also got to hear from some in our church family - see page 17 for a list - their testimonies about the blessing of church family, especially here at Southland. Hearing

from them 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 also, 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 several key upcoming events - some for the whole Southland family and others within our ministries for specific groups. While there is much more information on the pages that follow, we want to make sure we highlight these events that have a broader impact on the whole church family here in one spot:

A New MINISTRY YEAR Launches in Late August/Early September

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 at Southland - 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 2026.

A note about “First Sunday CONNECTIONS”

We occasionally host these times - on “first Sundays” of the month, obviously - for making connections with others - to bolster existing relationships and/or perhaps to establish new ones. However, we haven’t had one in awhile due to the recent schedule (the last one was back in March!). The same is true for the first Sunday of September since we aren’t having 9:15am groups/classes on September 6. *So, at this point, we’re looking at the next one at 10am on Sunday, October 4.*



Sunday, October 18 - 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 6 and our C.O.P. (Children of Praise) program on December 13.

An Update re: Southland Leadership

Each Summer, we go through a process designed to help us identify potential new elders. As with any group (e.g., a company/organization, family, sports team, etc.), the leadership of a church family certainly matters, and the role of elder is a key part of God’s design. *You can check out 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 use this space in “The Vine” to communicate information about how it works and to provide ongoing updates.



At this point, we’ve completed the process, culminating in the “ordination” of a new elder - Chris DeNovi - at our FLOURISH gathering on August 30. As we shared, we had seven names originally recommended with Chris being the only one choosing to move through the process. As we move into the new ministry year, he begins his service in this role.



Elders currently serving: *Chris DeNovi, Ernie Emmerton, A.J. Gegg, Pat Little, Terry Ochs and Rick Randleman. As Lead Pastor, Matt is also considered a part of the elder team.*

Ben Jennings and Bob Wood have begun a “sabbatical” (a required year-off after six consecutive years).

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).

Scholarship Update:

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

This year, we had three applicants/recipients. We take a picture of them to send to Warren’s former employers. (They’ll also be updating the plaque for the foyer as well.) We thought it appropriate to share with you as well.

*Pictured from left-to-right:
Zoey Smith, Grace Worthy and Callie Kilgo*



Congratulations to them on receiving this scholarship award! We are certainly grateful for this opportunity to further Warren’s legacy as part of this church family!

The Latest Property Update (Our South Lot):

As we’ve been sharing, we have signed a preliminary agreement to sell ~1.5 acres of our south lot, the portion we’ve had on the market for years now - a huge praise!

As we’ve mentioned before, there are still some big steps that have to be taken by the developer before we are able to finalize and close in the Spring of 2027. One piece of that is an effort to re-zone the property to fit with the intended use at the buyer’s cost (multi-family housing), a process that is well underway, and also, that is receiving good initial feedback overall. In fact, you can find some reporting about the whole project, one that is packaged as being very beneficial for veterans and the community as a whole. *(On a side note, there is an agreement with the city that, should this deal not be finalized, the property would revert to its present zoning class - a far better option in the long run.)* From there, the developer still has an application process with the state to go through in order to be awarded the project. As Rick shared at FLOURISH, even beyond the helpful financial implications, we believe that this project can bring potential ministry opportunities as well. We are grateful for the way the Lord has been working in this process as we’ve sought His leading all along the way. We’ll keep you up-to-date ; for now, continue praying about this opportunity and its impact on our church family.

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 (you can also use the QR-Code). It's 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 2026

We provide this basic info to keep you updated about what's happening with giving at Southland. In each edition of "The Vine," we share a monthly snapshot with a ministry year total as well.

INCOME: August monthly tithe = \$61,755⁰⁰ (5 Sundays) Average weekly tithe = \$12,351⁰⁰

At this point, we have reached the end of our fiscal/ministry year (September 2025 through August 2026); and, our annual tithe ended at \$467,792!

It's a **HUGE PRAISE** that our August offering ended up where it did. We fell short of our annual goal - in the \$480,000 range, but, we are still in a pretty good spot. As a comparison, at FLOURISH, we were projecting in the \$445,000-\$450,000 range - even that number was an increase from where things appeared to be in early August. In fact, it was just at the beginning of the month that we were communicating - in "The Vine" and via e-mail - about the challenging spot we were in financially. So, THANK YOU for your response to that, enabling us to end the year strongly, even bolstering our reserves for the start of a new ministry year (we had drained that significantly in recent months, but now are back nearly to where we started this year). The extra this month could have been some "catch-up giving." It could have been some planned giving that came during the month. It also could have been your response to the need we presented. Either way, whether it's what you gave in August or along the way throughout the year, we appreciate your investment and participation in this "ministry" that's part of the Southland family.

Ending in a much better place also means starting the new year likewise - in fact, even with a good amount in reserve. In addition to that, we have a reduction in our General Fund expenses due to some recent adjustments. (That's not to mention what will happen in the Spring, assuming the property sale goes through and we pay off the \$70,000+ we owe on our mortgage, eliminating those monthly payments.) In light of that, our giving need for this upcoming year is around \$473,000. *We certainly encourage you to keep striving to "excel" in this grace of giving (see 2 Corinthians 8:1ff).*

Weekly ministry happenings - Southland FAMILY-wide:

Sunday mornings at 9:15am ... ministry programming for all ages including CONNECT Groups for adults - Sunday School classes for all kids/youth as well - see pages 15-16. *As a reminder: we're not meeting on Sunday, September 6, part of Labor Day weekend; otherwise, we are meeting as normal the rest of September and October.*





Sunday mornings at 10:30am ... our ENCOUNTER service - the time when we gather as a church FAMILY to meet with God; you can join us “in person” or online via the live stream if you cannot be here. See page 15 for more.

Sunday evenings (normally 6-8pm) ... Group Huddle for middle school and high school youth (see pages 11-12). *The kick-off event for this semester happened back in August; normal weekly meetings moving forward, starting on Sunday, September 13.*

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 resume on September 2.* See page 16 for more details.



Thursday mornings (10am start time) ... WSA - Ladies’ Bible Study (see p. 14) - *WSA is again serving as a D-Group (the same content), just on Thursdays instead of during CULTIVATE.*

Specific Events to Highlight (listed by date):

Wednesday, September 2 ... the first night of CULTIVATE for the Fall semester.

Thursday, September 3 ... the first meeting of WSA/Ladies’ Bible Study for the Fall semester.

Sunday, September 13 after our ENCOUNTER time ... an informational meeting for parents (for students of all ages, K through high school) held by our student ministries; see page 10.

Sunday, September 13 ... normal Group Huddle resumes; see pages 11-12 for plans for this new school/ministry year.

Saturday, September 19 ... The Pregnancy Care Center’s annual “Walk for Life” event; see page 18 for a link to more details.

Saturday, September 19 ... CCH’s annual golf tournament to support their mission trips; see page 18 for a link to more details.

Sunday, September 20 after our ENCOUNTER time ... VBS meeting to start planning for 2027.

Wednesday, September 23 ... the date for the 2026 “See You at the Pole” event (see p. 13).

Sunday, September 27 at noon ... next meeting for “Open Hearts, Open Homes.”

Sunday, October 4 ... 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).

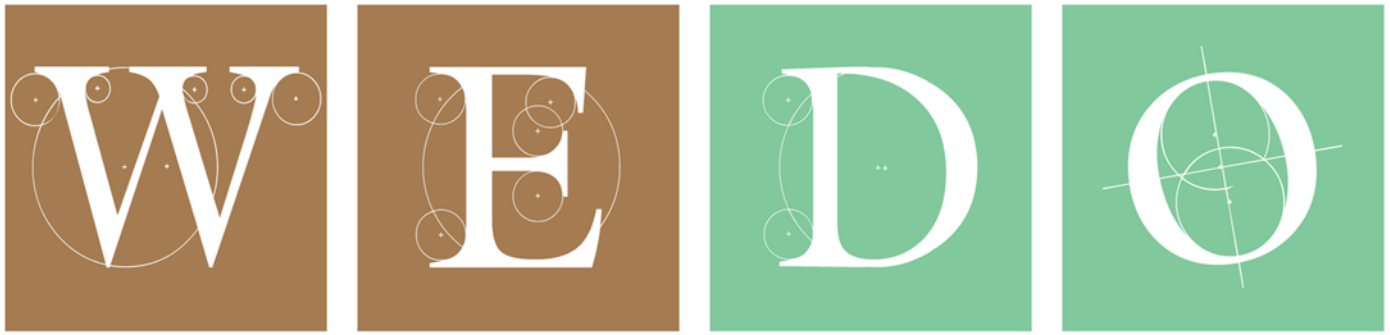
Wednesday, October 14 ... the youth group’s annual trip to the Cornfield Maze (see p. 13).

Sunday, October 18 ... our annual “Fall FAMILY Fun” event - check out page 3; *we’ll share even more details in the next edition of “The Vine.”*

Thursday, November 12 through Saturday, November 14 ... ICOM in St. Louis; see the bottom of page 19 for more information about this missions conference, including how to register.

Sunday, November 15 ... the deadline for letting Jessica know who wants to attend the 2027 Super-Start event in January - includes both kids and parents (see p. 10).

Beyond these events, there is much more to look forward to in the rest of 2026. 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 2026). 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 ...

Before it became a part of the Disney domain in 2006, Pixar had found quite a successful niche in making kids' movies - ones parents could enjoy watching, too, even. There was *Toy Story*, *Monsters, Inc.*, *Finding Nemo* and *Cars*, just to name a few. Many of these films have become part of the nostalgia for an entire generation+ of young people. At the heart of its core values as a company, there was a focus on teamwork and collaboration.

Here's how pastor Matt Woodley captures this aspect of Pixar (I've shared this before, but it's been awhile):

Originally, the company planned to build three separate buildings with separate office spaces for the animators, computer programmers, and management (all important divisions in their work). But Steve Jobs scrapped that plan and instead moved everyone into an old Del Monte canning factory that had one huge room with an atrium in the center. Jobs wanted to create a space where people throughout the company could bump into each other, deepen relationships, and share ideas. But Jobs took it one step further: he moved everything - including mailboxes, meeting rooms, a coffee bar, and even the bathrooms - into the center of the atrium so people would be forced to interact.

*Initially, some of the employees complained that it was a waste of time to walk to the atrium every time they had to go to the bathroom or grab a cup of coffee. But Jobs kept telling Pixar employees, **"Everybody has to run into each other."** One Pixar producer called it **"SMOOSHING,"** (no, not 'smooching,') and added, "If I don't see lots of 'smooshing,' I get worried."*

*Brad Bird, the director of *The Incredibles* and *Ratatouille*, eventually caught the vision for teamwork. Bird said, "The atrium initially might seem like a waste of space ... But Steve [Jobs] realized that when people run into each other, when they make eye contact, things happen. So he made it impossible for you not to run into the rest of the company."*

It's no surprise, then, that the Latin motto for Pixar says it all - as translated into English "alone (alienus) no longer."

I love the basic picture on display in this piece of Pixar's history and success. It's intentionally creating a culture where people would come TOGETHER for the sake of teamwork and collaboration. Likely, this became part of the foundation of Pixar's success, even. Something valuable happens when, as people, we find our place as part of a broader team, working together. There are all kinds of other examples in life where that is the case.

Even more, for our purposes, I think it captures a key element of what God has designed His church to be in its life *together*; maybe we could even call it "holy 'smooshing.'" In fact, it's a major part behind the metaphor of the church as FAMILY - a group of people closely bonded together, in this case, because of our common connection to the same Father. On the one hand, it's about the simple benefit of belonging ... Knowing we have a place where we can be encouraged and loved on. On the other hand, it's also about this greater sense of collaboration and teamwork toward a shared goal or mission. As much as many people in our culture want to approach a life of faith in Jesus more like "the lone ranger," in God's design, being a part of Christ means experiencing this connection to others in church FAMILY - a *together* life of faith.

There are two applications I regularly come back to as part of this broader theme; may we embrace each one.

1. Belonging together to the church FAMILY is a great blessing/privilege to be experienced and embraced. That's part of what I love each year about FLOURISH - hearing new voices express that same beautiful truth about what they've experienced here. I know I have too; and, I hope you can say the same.
2. Seen from another angle, belonging together to the church FAMILY is also a great responsibility to live out, even as part of our faith and calling in Christ (see Ephesians 4:1ff - as we saw on 8/30). This part greatly matters in God's design for the church. It's why we put so much emphasis on this broader language of "INVESTMENT" on the Sunday morning of FLOURISH. We can only experience the true greatness of together as FAMILY in Christ when we each are choosing to be invested in it. In fact, ultimately, it's the only way we experience the mutual blessing God has for us in His church. So, as we move into this new year, let's choose just that: to be invested in one another as FAMILY in Christ!

SOUTHLANDkids

A Note from Jessica:

It is hard to believe that in January our family will celebrate five years at Southland. We are blessed to be a part of the church family. Thank you for pouring into our kids. They have all grown in so many ways and I'm praying they continue to grow. Thank you also to all the volunteers who help with each piece of the children's ministry. I think back to VBS and the excitement of all the kids each night. It takes a lot to make that week happen. Thank you for donating items or volunteering 4 nights to invest in the kids. I am grateful for all of you who serve in our children's ministry - at VBS and throughout the year. It is a blessing to serve along side you all!

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. As we move into September, for now, we will keep our K through 5th grade students combined in one class.

CHILDREN'S
Sunday School

After a Sunday "off" on September 6, we're having our regular 9:15am ministry programming - including these classes - for the rest of September and October.

A NOTE: *As we did last Fall, we are again providing an additional opportunity during this time slot for kids who cannot be a part of Wednesday C.O.P. practices. All of the 4 year-olds through 5th graders will come together around 10am to spend some time learning songs for the C.O.P. program. This starts September 13.*

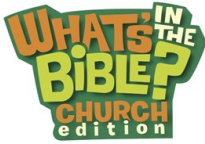
Kids' Programming during ENCOUNTER (10:30am on Sundays)

Here's what happens for kids 5th grade and younger during this time slot:

Nursery, "Wee Kid ENCOUNTER" (for 2-&-3 year-olds) and "Li'l Kid ENCOUNTER" (kids age 4 up through Kindergarten/1st grade - those in 1st grade have the option: here or in "Kid ENCOUNTER") are all available throughout our ENCOUNTER time.

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





Back in the Summer, "Kid ENCOUNTER" started a new set of lessons called "What's in the Bible?" It's a year-long curriculum focusing on the big, overarching story of God's Word. *For August, the material focuses on Joshua and Judges as kids continue discovering what's found in the Old Testament.*

FALL 2026 Wednesday evening CULTIVATE Plans for Kids

During the Fall Cultivate session (re-launches on September 2), our kids ages 4 through 6th 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 (*this year, December 13*). We'll share more details on this year's program - called "Christmas in Reverse" - in the future; for now, we hope your kids plan on being a part of this.



On the first night, kids will receive a handout with the practice schedule and information about tryouts for parts (both speaking parts and solos). Those will be decided on September 16. Kids will also be receiving a way to be practicing the music at home.

See the note on the previous page (in green) for details about a special Sunday practice option for kids who want to be a part of the choir. Starting on September 13, we're making available some time for kids to learn some of the songs during our Sunday School time as well. Please let Jessica know if this applies to your child.

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



"Super Start" is a high-energy C.I.Y. event designed especially for pre-teens (kids in 4th, 5th and 6th grades). It's become a great annual tradition for our kiddos! This year, we are attending this event at a different

location - in Bentonville, AR on January 22-23, 2027 (it's typically been in Tulsa). Because of the timing, *Jessica needs to know by November 15 who wants to go - both kids and parents interested in going as sponsors.* We'll share more details in the months to come.

VBS 2027 ... Already? Yes, Already!

Jessica is meeting with a team on Sunday, September 20 at noon for about 15 minutes to discuss next year's VBS, including the theme for the week. We're not counting down the days yet, but, believe it or not, it's time to at least start the process.

INFO APPLICABLE TO ALL KIDS/YOUTH



Attention Southland PARENTS (with kids entering Kindergarten through high school) ... as we move into a new ministry year, we are having an informational meeting on **Sunday, September 13** after our ENCOUNTER service. It's a time to share about the year ahead and take care of some important details for the year.

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

Have you ever stood in line for a roller coaster and thought, "Do I really want to do this?" Your heart starts to race, your stomach starts to flip, and your palms begin to sweat. You watch as the ride twists, loops, and dives all around. The thrill, the fear, and the excitement all come the moment you step off the waiting platform and buckle in.

Trusting God can feel a lot like that. We hear stories of God's faithfulness, see glimpses of His goodness, and know that He provides for us. But, fully trusting God usually means letting go of control. Surrender can feel like stepping onto a ride without knowing where it drops.

Psalm 34:8-9 reads, *"Oh taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! Oh fear the Lord, you His saints, for those who fear Him have no lack!"*

God doesn't just invite us to watch from the sidelines or just merely hear about His goodness. He wants us to experience it ourselves. Trusting God means stepping onto the ride even when we can't see what's ahead and letting Him guide us through every twist and turn. The more we trust Him, the more we notice His provision, peace, and presence in ways we could never find on our own.

When we take that leap of faith and trust Him fully, we begin to notice His goodness in real and personal ways. Jesus is enough for every need, even the ones that we don't know how to handle on our own. In the ups and downs of life, we have the opportunity to see God provide and care for us in incredible ways. Stepping onto a roller coaster can feel scary at first, trusting God fully may feel scary as well. But, the reward is something we can't get from watching, imagining, or planning on our own. When we buckle in and rely on Him, we get to experience the full thrill of God's goodness in our lives.

ATTENTION PARENTS:

As we get moving into a new ministry year, make sure you see the note on the previous page re: a Parent Information Meeting coming up on Sunday, September 13.

GROUP HUDDLE NEWS

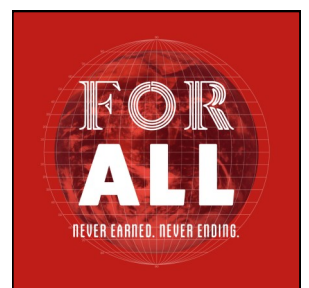
"GROUP HUDDLE" is a weekly time (normally meets from 6-8pm on Sundays) for middle school and high school students. It offers a place for students to connect and dive into God's Word as they participate in meaningful small groups, worship and fellowship - see below for more details about what's happening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

After the kick-off event back on August 23, normal Group Huddle resumes Sunday, September 13 from 6-8pm - not meeting on September 6, part of Labor Day weekend.

GROUP HUDDLE Focus for this semester: "For All"

Nobody likes feeling left out. Whether it's a conversation you don't understand, a group you don't quite fit into, or a faith that feels like it's for everyone else but you. That feeling stinks, and for a lot of people, that's how they think about God. Almost like His grace, love and forgiveness have limits. But the truth of the Gospel is this: **God's Grace is FOR ALL.**

The Good News of Jesus has always been an invitation. Not for the perfect or the put-together, but for the broken, the searching, the doubtful, and the



overlooked. Jesus didn't come for only a select few. He came so that everyone could experience forgiveness, new life, and real hope. The message of Jesus doesn't exclude, overlook, or leave people behind. It meets us all on level ground because the Gospel isn't just for some - **it's FOR ALL.**

Join us Sunday nights at Group Huddle Bible Study as we search the truths of this new series entitled, **"FOR ALL."**

Upcoming GROUP HUDDLE THEMES:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Sunday, 9/6 | <i>No Group Huddle - Labor Day weekend</i> |
| Sunday, 9/13 | "Macho Nachos" ... This is "nacho" average fiesta! Come "taco" 'bout your faith in Jesus; inhale tacos, exhale happiness! |
| Sunday, 9/20 | "National Pepperoni Day" ... Life is better with friends, and definitely better with pizza! |
| Sunday, 9/27 | "Tailgate Party" ... "Down, set, hut-hut!" It's time to huddle-up for some exciting pre-game fun in the parking lot. |

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 year, we identify a missionary or missions organization we can support through the school calendar year. This September, we're introducing our newest partner: **Cuba Mission**. This is an organization dedicated to training and supporting nearly 28 ministers who lead New Testament Christian Churches in Cuba. **Cuba Mission** hosts youth outreaches, city-wide VBS programs, and distributes Spanish-language Bibles. *Each Sunday this semester, our students have the opportunity to pray for our mission partners and give financially during both "Kid ENCOUNTER" and Group Huddle.*



MORE MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

SUNDAY SCHOOL (starts at 9:15am on Sunday mornings): We have separate Sunday School classes for our MS and HS youth. *Both meet the Gathering Room - it has a divider with two separate rooms - off of the Great Room.* **After being "off" at 9:15am on Sunday, September 6 (part of Labor Day Weekend), we are meeting as normal for the rest of the month and October.**

Wednesday Evening CULTIVATE: "Biblical First Aid for Teens" - resumes on September 2. Do you have questions about God, faith, friendships, stress, purpose, or the problems you face every day? **You're not alone!** Join us at CULTIVATE Youth where we'll talk honestly about real-life struggles and questions of faith as we discover how God's Word can give us help.



"See You at the Pole" 2026



**Wednesday, September 23 - 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 14
from 5-9pm - instead of CULTIVATE**



For middle school and high students (*we will 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 roasting hot dogs as well as s'mores over a fire pit; chips and drinks will also be provided for supper.

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 2027 MOVE Conference (for the '27-'31 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 (\$90) for next year's conference will be due Sunday, November 8.

.....

Southland Women

Happy New School Year! If you aren't in a season of life that a new school year changes your routine, maybe my words won't hold much meaning today. But in our house, a new school year signifies a number of things. We experience a change in routine. We get up earlier. We (well, I) strive to be more organized. Summer lends itself to "going with



the flow” a little more, and the school year tightens up the routine. Our girls who are still in school each have begun a new season – Harmony as a senior in high school, finishing her last year, and Eden as a freshman, beginning her high school years. It’s an exciting time!

Then here at Southland, it’s the season of beginning again as well. Our regular activities that have taken a break for the summer months have begun again. There is much to look forward to, and much to be done. And I’ll be honest, it can be a daunting time for me.

I’m getting older. That’s no secret 😊. I find that my energy isn’t quite what it used to be. I’m not great with transitions, but they keep coming nonetheless. So, as I look at the calendar and read the signs of new seasons around me, I find myself turning to God even more often in prayer. “Lord, please give me strength. Please give me wisdom. Please help me know what is worthy of my time and what is not. Please let me be ‘in the moment’ with my girls and my family so that my mind and heart are invested in their lives and their needs. Please help me see opportunities. Keep my eyes open. Keep my hands busy. Keep my feet grounded and following You. Please give me a heart of peace, not chaos. Please keep my conversation uplifting to those around me. Please help me point people to You.”

Maybe you resonate with those prayers. They can probably apply to almost anyone. If you would be willing, I would love to have you pray for me! And if you reach out, I would love to specifically pray for you as well. We can lift up one another and hopefully encourage each other in this season of transition.

God is with us in these moments of beginning again. He is with us in every season. His mercies, or His compassion, is new every morning. Lamentations 3:22-23 reminds us of this – **“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.”** And if some days you feel yourself weary and remind yourself to take life one day at a time, remember, that’s how He wants us to live. Each new day, He gives us strength and purpose and hope. Hebrews 10:23 tells us how tightly we can cling to our hope in Christ – **“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.”**

I hope this can be a season of excitement for you. God walks with us through all our ups and downs. May your heart be full and your calendar be as full as you want it to be! Our Father will be faithful in this season, as He has been all along.



After being “off” for the Summer, we’re beginning 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”).

**Starting Thursday, September 3, WSA meets at 10am
in Room #6; we finish around noon each week.**

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 16 of “The Vine” or at the display in the foyer; you can also find a guide for each week’s session there as well.



WEEKLY ENCOUNTER

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

Our Upcoming Preaching Calendar

We launch into our Fall 2026 sermon series this month (it actually starts on September 13; we have different plans for our focus on Labor Day weekend). As we come to this time each year, we typically focus on a specific book of the Bible. Often, we do that in an "exegetical" way where we work straight through the material as it is - for example, with Colossians in the Fall of 2025. ***This year, we are landing in the Gospel of JOHN for several weeks.*** Due to its length (21 chapters, and some of them quite lengthy), it's going to be a different kind of approach than just marching through it verse-by-verse or even chapter-by-chapter. Yet, the focus of the series will be consistent with the reason John wrote in the first place - to help us see Jesus more clearly and *believe* in Him so that we find the life that's only available through Him (see John 20:30-31). These chapters are filled with incredible truths about Jesus - who He uniquely is as God in the flesh. As such, He truly is worthy of our faith! As of early September, we are still in process of fleshing out the series; we'll keep you updated along the way.

We continue to offer a LIVE STREAM of our worship service through Facebook LIVE. ***You can access it directly from our website itself: <http://gosouthland.org/watch-online> or through our general/public Southland Facebook page.*** Even though this format is not as ideal as "in-person" participation - the much better way of joining us for our weekly ENCOUNTER - we do value this online option as an alternative, *especially as we are still in the busier Summer months when people are in-and-out a bit more.* Whatever the reason you are not able to be present with us in-person, you can still stay connected to your church family in this way.



Facebook is no longer archiving past videos as it used to. So, if you're looking for past services, you can now access them on YouTube - find us there through a search for "Southland Christian Church" (clarify Springfield, MO) or at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/@southlandccstreams>. If you missed a week and want to catch-up, they are accessible at this location.



YouVersion

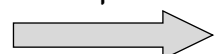
The well-known BIBLE app (a.k.a. "YouVersion") is a great app for accessing God's Word electronically. There's also a feature within the app that we use during our ENCOUNTER time. It is simply called "EVENTS." It's a great way to follow along with the sermon and even take electronic notes. **Please ask if you need help finding and/or using the app.**

CONNECT GROUPS

... a place to discover Christian community.



One of our priorities here at Southland is to provide a context where relational *family-like connections* can develop. Because it's a prominent theme in the New Testament, we emphasize it within our process



statement as a key way we can grow and be equipped in faith. That's a big part of what our CONNECT Groups are about - a small group relational setting for reflecting on God's Word and praying *together*.

As we move into a new ministry year,* 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, including a list of ones that are currently meeting. **Please don't hesitate to ask if you need help deciding which group is best for you; we'd love to help you find one!**

* A Schedule note: We are NOT meeting at 9:15am on Sunday, September 6 due to the Labor Day weekend. Beyond that, though, we are meeting as normal for the next stretch, including the rest of September and all of October.

A Note re: Upcoming "First Sunday CONNECTION" Times

As mentioned on page 3, it's been awhile since we've had a normal "First Sunday CONNECTION." That has been due to special days on the first Sundays of May, June and August as well as holiday weekends on the first Sundays of July and September (when we haven't met at all at 9:15am). *At this point, our next one is scheduled for Sunday, October 4.*

GROW DEEP MINISTRIES

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



On September 2, we launch into our Fall 2026 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 18; you can find it through this link if you're viewing "The Vine" electronically: **Fall 2026 CULTIVATE Session** (paper copies of this flyer 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 2026 is OT stories - "Walking in the Footsteps of Faith." We're looking forward to the journey as we discover the wisdom and encouragement from these examples of faith. As is typical for D-Groups, each week, we provide a guide to supplement your reading through the Scripture text for the week. *These can also be accessed throughout the semester at the display in the foyer or electronically at our website - linked here: <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 2026, 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 2026 happen on August 30; so many volunteers (*beyond staff*) served as part of the evening.



To those who shared at FLOURISH about the blessing of church family: **Donna Lillard, Josh & Abby Pryor and Grace Worthy.**

To those who helped with getting the auditorium ready, especially the **Graves family and Mark & Amanda Miller.**

To those who helped Kristie with meal-prep: **Karen Haynes, Anna Randleman and Pattie Sellers,** 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. A special thanks to **Nate Martin** for re-setting the auditorium.

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 someone who serves regularly in a behind-the-scenes way: **Debbie Little** has served by making our communion bread for several years now.

SERVING SCHEDULE for September 2026

	Foyer Hosts (10:15 on, through whole service)	Greeters (at the doors from 10:15-10:40)	Serving Team Leader
9/6	Pat & Debbie Little	<i>T.B.D. since no 9:15am groups</i>	Mark Miller
9/13	Les & Kristin Londeen	Room #6 Connect Group	Doug Graves
9/20	Bob & Liz Wood	Room #7 Connect Group	Deckard Family
9/27	Ernie & Charlotte Emmerton	"Voyage" Connect Group	Les Londeen

	Nursery workers (all morning)	Wee Kid ENCOUNTER & Li'l Kid ENCOUNTER	Kid ENCOUNTER (1 st - 5 th grades)
9/6	Lillard Family	<i>Ella W./Eden M. Aiden Simpson</i>	Jessica Young/Cary Swadley
9/13	Wilcox Family	<i>Harmony M./Olivia S. Zoey S./Chloe G.</i>	Sean & Megan Falconer
9/20	Harnstrom Family	<i>Anna R./Lex R. Harmony M./Olivia S.</i>	Thomas & Stef Hall
9/27	Graves Family	<i>Will & Ashley Deckard Debbie Hoenshell</i>	Sandy Arneson/Becky Kurth

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

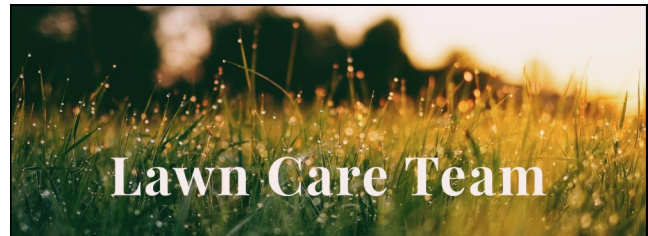
9/5 - Randleman

9/12 - Pryor/Martin

9/19 - Little/Easter

9/26 - Deckard

10/3 - Jennings/Wood



LIVE OUT
MINISTRIES



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

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 again in 2026*):

- ⇒ The Pregnancy Care Center's annual "Walk for Life" fundraiser on **Saturday, September 19**. Here's a link to their website with more details: <https://417pcc.org/26walk/>, including a way to register in advance to participate in the event.
- ⇒ Christian Campus House's annual golf tournament is also on **Saturday, September 19** ... the event actually **tees off at 8am, so be there earlier** - this annual event helps CCH raise funds for their foreign mission trips, a key part of their ministry with college 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 2026, 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 2025 through August 2026 (updated and finalized):

Ozark Christian College:	\$4,680	Christian Campus House:	\$4,200
Pregnancy Care Center:	\$3,305	Crosslines:	\$3,150
Show-Me Youth Home:	\$1,100	Maranatha (direct support):	\$1,520

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

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. This is really the only way one of our partners can communicate (and what they send now comes primarily via e-mail). Their location makes any online presence too risky from a security standpoint. *Let us know if you want us to help you sign-up to receive their regular e-mail communications.*



There is a website for the "Central India Christian Mission" (www.indiamission.org); check it out for more information about their work. You can also find their Facebook page for ongoing updates or use this link to get access to e-mails: <https://www.indiamission.org/aboutcicm>.

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



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

Again, we shared at FLOURISH 2026 our past ministry year's missions giving. We're also including here the support given to our global partners - giving from September 2025 through August 2026:

CICM:	\$11,250 (including \$5,000 in love offerings)
Partners in North Africa:	\$14,400
Contributions to the team fund in North Africa:	\$6,000
Life of Hope:	\$6,000

Additionally, we were in the position to use **\$3,700 in one-time gifts** to each of our main global partners as well as **\$2,000 more in one-time gifts** to others. We have room within this portion of our 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 \$11,400 to the 2026 trip (we received some special donations to help with this over all cost).

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

1. Our 2026 VBS offering was over **\$1,652** (it went to the Tuttles in Ireland).
2. Our young people (through offerings collected both in Kid Encounter and Group Huddle) also raised more than **\$1,004** to support this year's mission partners, the Nunns in England.



ICOM
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
MISSIONS

A Special Opportunity - ICOM in St. Louis

This year's ICOM is being held on **November 12-14, 2026**. It's an annual gathering with a missions emphasis for organizations and workers connected to our "brotherhood" of churches. *Especially because it's so close to us this year*, we are supporting it through a church registration. That provides anyone from Southland who wants to attend the opportunity to do so at a reduced cost of \$20 for an individual or \$40 for a family (*this fee is only for the conference itself*). You can go to <https://www.theicom.org/attendees> to register and use these - for an individual (attending "on site"): **2026stladult** ... for a family (again, attending on site): **2026stlfamily** ... for virtual: **2026onlinestl**.