

Planting in the Desert

A monthly newsletter from the Austin family

July 2024

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Bear Valley church of Christ
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Northside church of Christ
Salt River church of Christ
Sunset church of Christ
Westhill church of Christ
& many generous individuals*

We keep you in our prayers and think of you often. Anytime we do anything for a long time, it is easy to take blessings for granted. I was reminded not long ago that our financial support is completely in your hands. We thank God for Him working through you.

The Lord blessed us with four new babes in Christ this month. Ian is one of the guys I have been telling you about in the DOC who was knocking out all the Bible correspondence courses. He was released about a month ago and after a few studies he was baptized into Christ! Five days later his wife gave birth to their fourth child, Kimbella. She and mom are doing great. A day after Kimbella's birth, Ian's best friend at the DOC was baptized. His name is Bert Vest, and he has connections with our other new Christians, Ramona and Sam. God continues to use Ramona in amazing ways. Bert said the changes he has seen in Ramona and Sam had an impact on his decision to explore what Christianity was about and now has given his life to Christ. Ian has also had a great influence with Bert, helping him to grow in his faith. It is exciting how God is at work.



Craig also obeyed the gospel this month (pictured above with Ezekiel). Craig is from New Orleans & is looking for work here in Mesa. Not sure how he came to know us, but someone in his family has connections with the churches of Christ. Ezekiel studied with him and later gave his life over to Christ. He is already inviting others who are coming to worship with him.



Mike, Molly, Madi, Miles, & Sage all went to church camp in Prescott the 1st week of the month. Alyssa & Wacey were counselors. Mike Cota Jr. was buried into Christ while at camp. He studied with us at Rez camp and then after studying more at Copper Basin, he knew what he needed to do. Mike's father was baptized several years ago with us, but sadly has not attended with us for quite some time. We praise God for this young man. We already plugged him in to help lead the offering for our worship assembly (pictured).

A big shout out to the church at Salt River! This was the first time we led a VBS and I thought they did a great job. We did all the planning, decorations, and teaching for the kids classes. Normally we have a group help us, but this time our brethren from TN were our support group as we took the lead. We appreciate Jonathan challenging us and the 30 wonderful saints from Graymere who did all the rest to make it a tremendous event. We started with 53 and ended with 65, increasing each day. If we include Graymere we had 83 to 95! We covered the 7 days of Creation. It was encouraging to see who stepped up to give the extra efforts to serve and attend. Ian's family had 6-10 kids attend every day.



Ezekiel and Julie finished their summer internship with us and did a wonderful job. They had a humble heart and zealous spirit. They were a blessing to me and the Salt River church. I appreciate their love for the Lord and desire to grow. If all goes well, after graduation next year they will come back to work with us here at Salt River. We ask for your prayers.

Alyssa & Josiah attended Maywood church camp in Alabama this month. It sounds like they had a great time. Alyssa was a helper while Josiah attended. Since she was so close to school starting, she decided to stay out there the extra week. We hated to see her leave 2 weeks earlier than we thought, but it all works out. We appreciated having her for the summer. She worked two church camps & attended a third.

Aaliyah worked several jobs in El Paso while finishing up summer school this month. She did great in both of her classes and is getting ready to start her Junior year. It is hard to believe she has two years down.

Josiah played in Florida for a national volleyball tournament. Divine went on the trip to watch. They did ok, but the boys had a lot of fun and had a good experience.

Alayna played her national tournament in Las Vegas. Alyssa and I went out there to watch the last couple of days. Alayna and her team played one of their best tournaments. She had multiple college coaches watch her play. She is in the recruiting process at the moment – we solicit prayers of wisdom & guidance as we face decisions in the upcoming months.

The Decatur church of Christ has been a big supporter of ours and they had me come out to speak to give an update to the congregation. It was wonderful to worship with them and share about Salt River. I really appreciate their sacrifices. A special thank you to Brent and Annie who have continually been my cheerleaders and supporters. They chauffeured me around, fed me, housed me, and encouraged me. Many thanks to them.

The end of the month ended with me heading to St. George, UT to attend the annual American Indian Missions Seminar (AIMS). I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be there this year. Evan, Crystal, Decovan, Brianna, and Ryan came out from Kayenta with their families. Terry and Pam Laurence were there with their kids from Ft. Defiance. David from Hogback, NM was a first timer with his wife. Ben and Bernie Begay are the 30+ year veterans from Many Farms and they brought their two grandsons. Nick and Heidi, along with so many other generous supporters, make this a blessed event for all who are striving to spread the gospel among the Native reservations. There was time to encourage, pray, visit, and learn from one another. There was a even a fun night out that was relaxing. ♥