

# Planting in the Desert

*A monthly newsletter from the Austin family*

**August 2024**

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

Our brothers and sisters in Christ, greetings from Mesa, AZ. Where we have had the hottest recorded summer on record. Phoenix is traditionally known to be hot, but to set new records is amazing. Should we feel blessed to have been a part of a new record?

Salt River is now 11 years old! God has blessed us and continues to bless us richly. We are grateful and full of His joy. By His grace He has allowed us to share in so much good.

August started off as July ended, with another soul added to the body of Christ. In July, Mike Cota was baptized up at camp, and now his mom decided to follow him. It was special to see Mike baptize his mom [Mike, born from his mother, now helping her be born into Christ]. Sadly, this is another family that might be moving to Yuma, AZ in the next month or so.



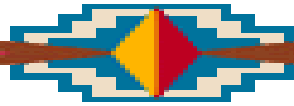
Speaking of those moving, Will and Step Guajardo were founding members at Salt River in 2013 and have been part of the core since that time. Their family goes hand in hand with Salt River. They have moved to Prescott, AZ for his job situation. We miss them, but at least we have a few of their girls and grandkids still with us.



Even as we lose some, God provides others. Cynthia & her daughter Bianca also gave their lives to Christ this month. I started studying with Bianca at the DOC & something clicked in her mind, and her faith took off. She has been waiting for the time that she could finally be baptized. While waiting, she shared the good news with her mom & now Cynthia has been worshipping with us. She has not hesitated in getting right to work & finding ways to serve. We thank God for this family as they're already trying to influence other family members.

In August, we plugged our new Christians in to lead worship. Four of these guys had never been in front of the congregation. It is encouraging to see them fight their nervousness, and yet serve. They didn't just serve but did a great job as well. They have their assignments for one month, and then we switch up the duties.

One Saturday, we invited a couple of the new brothers and their families over for food and let the kids go swimming. We had a great visit, and our kids helped their kids have a good time. These opportunities build lasting bonds.



I traveled to Morenci, AZ to give an update to the wonderful brethren there. Even though they are not the largest congregation, they are big givers in kingdom work. They have helped us, many on the reservations, and many attend preaching schools. It was nice to be with them again. Since my parents worship there, it was a perfect opportunity to spend time with them. I have been abundantly blessed by the sacrifices, examples & love of my mom & dad. God has enriched my life because of them.

I took another overnight trip with Alayna to visit the University of Denver. She has been recruited to play volleyball by them when she graduates. Ironically, Divine and I both attended there and now she is being recruited. It was a quick trip, but beautiful. Alayna enjoyed meeting everyone and found the campus to be beautiful. We shall see what the future holds. The following week Divine and I were both able to visit Grand Canyon University. It is on the other side of Phoenix from us. Once again, the campus was beautiful, and the people were great. We didn't realize how big that campus was until we did the tour. Please pray for wisdom as Alayna is trying to decide where to play and go to school.

Divine and I also celebrated our 24<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary! I thank God for such a supportive, hard-working, God-fearing, and loving wife. She does so much behind the scenes for the family and for the church. She is a "Doer." She is always doing for someone. Her perseverance and dedication to educating our children in the secular and spiritual world is priceless. I am grateful I get to share life with her. We appreciate the kind brethren that gave us a gift card to have a nice steak dinner.

Josiah has started up with club volleyball again. He is enjoying his new team and is having a lot of fun with the higher level of competition. He likes the fast-paced games that the older guys play. Alayna is playing for the local high school team - her 3<sup>rd</sup> coach in 3 years. Thankfully, she likes the new coach and the teammates are great. Alyssa is playing volleyball for Freed-Hardeman and is excited to be getting time as a freshman. Aaliyah is starting her Junior year as a Business major at UTEP and is working quite a bit as a nanny when not in school. ♥