

ATLANTA WEST PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
MESSENGER

**AUGUST
2026**

STRENGTHENED





When I was in high school, our coach gave us some advice about physical conditioning. He said, "You are either getting stronger or weaker, but you are not staying the same." Since that memorable statement was made many years ago, I thought it would be wise to verify the accuracy of my coach's advice.

I entered Coach Bob Hipke's quote into my search engine and found out that he was right. In both biology and personal development, nothing is ever truly static. Without intentional effort and consistent stimulus, your skills, habits, and physical abilities naturally erode. This principle is also expressed by the phrase: "Use it or lose it."

This also proves true for Christians individually and a local church corporately. If we rest on our legacy, we will not fulfill our destiny. If we view ourselves in the faulty mirror of mental reflection, then we will fail to see ourselves as we really are today. We can think that we are strong when we have weakened. The prophet Hosea described the people of Israel as being like aging men who were oblivious to their graying hair and weakening bodies (Hosea 7:9). Let us not be like Israel in the days of Hosea.

The Lord gave an ominous warning to the church in Sardis: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God" (Revelation 3:2). In other words, the local church in Sardis was on spiritual life support, but, on the surface, it appeared to be full of life. The Lord told Sardis that they had a reputation for being a lively church, but, in reality, they were dead (Revelation 3:1). We cannot allow ourselves to be like the church in Sardis.

In the life of a Christian, complacency is a slow, silent killer. Resting on the victories of the past is a death knell to a church. No one wants to be weak or ineffective; however, vitality comes at a price.

Choose to be Strengthened

Because "staying the same" is not possible, we are constantly making a choice between two paths: we either are making progress and getting stronger, or we are regressing and getting weaker. It is always one or the other.

Becoming stronger Christians requires deliberate effort. To be strengthened, we must dig deeper into the spiritual disciplines of Bible study, prayer and fasting, worship, generous giving, and serving the Body of Christ in ministry.

Personally, I am challenging myself to continue growing into the stature and fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). I also feel compelled to call our church to commit to continuous improvement.

We must strengthen our commitment to the great doctrines of the Bible. We must embrace and proclaim the true nature of God, the salvation Gospel, Christian character and conduct, inward and outward holiness, and the whole of Scripture.

We must revive our passion for the mission of the church, which is "to lead people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and develop them into fully devoted followers of Him."

We need to restore health and wholeness in our families, our friendships, and our fellowship with members of the Body of Christ.

To be strengthened means being committed to continuous improvement by being actively engaged in the behaviors that bring growth. If we choose the path of least resistance, we will decline spiritually. If we stir ourselves spiritually, we can rise to new heights in God. Our individual efforts to be strengthened will result in spiritual renewal in our church.

A Lifelong Pursuit

When my grandfather was in his 90s, he told me that he had to push himself every day to work in his garden and stay active. At his age, there was much more in his past than in his future, but he lived with a forward focus. He said that if he did not work at it, he would decline and die. My "Daddy-Doc" lived to be 100 years old. He knew a secret about life: you must constantly strive to be strengthened, or you will atrophy and fade away.

We have great hope that even as our physical and mental capacities decline, our spiritual nature can continue to be strengthened. Paul wrote: "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16).

Will you make a conscious effort to be strengthened? Let's do this together.

Note: On Wednesday, March 25, 2026, I taught a Bible study entitled "Are You Still Reaching?" If this article is speaking to you, please listen or watch that message online.

August Birthdays

1 Sarah Blackwell Tommie Washington Lyssa Nunn Chloe Cagle Brooklyn Perez Jared Grayson	16 Sobany King Danielle Fain	28 Hunter Derickson Bro. Kevin Hudgens Glen Campbell Ezra Fain Cheryl Talbot
2 Kristy Grant Merritt Burdett Maya Nnah	17 Troy Nixon Mira Douglas Missy Stubelt Gabriel Ahudey David Perez	29 Cynthia Hampton Phoenix Hose
3 Nich Davie Daniel Johnson	18 Brad Nixon Gabrielle Arwood Janet Crabtree	30 Phillip Shelton
4 Victoria Puckett Clayton James	19 Natalie Campbell	31 Desyl Domingo Casandra Gardner Annett Richards Ryker Rowland
5 Gina Burley	20 Andrew Marsh Sis. Martha Hudgens Carmen Puckett Ellis Taylor Rhett Johns	
6 Annalise Menera	21 Gene Sykes	
7 Lauren Clark Phyllis Shand	22 Bro. James Turner Reagan Nunn Aubrey Barker	
8 Roseanne Sims Sheri Grant	23 Jackson Island	
9 Adelina Austin Zara Johns Regina Machowski Sion Strahan	24 Ethyn Cole Danae Richardson Karen Dunks Lynn Horn	
11 Rick Nixon Natalie Austin Errol Swaby Shereida Austin	25 Andy Sims Keith Dollar Annalia Hudgens Nikki Sweeney	
12 Justin Austin	26 Paxton Floyd Graham Livingston	
13 Sis. Holly Jury	27 Becca Austin Virginia Williams	
14 Samuel Johnson Connie Leseueur Kole Taylor		
15 Christina Duncan		

August Anniversaries

3	Bro. Brad & Dana Fain
5	Donald & Deborah Walburn
6	Keith & Enjoli Dollar
6	Henry & Rachel Hernandez
8	Greg & Deanna Puckett
9	Bro. Calvin & Sis. Tereaoon Fisher
14	Lionell & Dyneice King
22	Gary & Kelly Floyd Jr.
22	Gary & Wanda Stevenson
23	Bro. Kevin & Martha Hudgens
24	John & Keren Oshogbor
25	Bro. Justin & Theresa Johns
27	Theo & Jennifer Davis
29	Jason & Alejandra Morris
30	Don & Joanie Camden
31	Mark & Nardia Haight



Filled with the Holy Ghost

Melany Bustillo
Maxwell Cooper
Raiden Hart
Jacob Hernandez-Rosas
Ginny Ivie
Kendall Johns
Alexis Johnson
Georgia Jones
Gunner Polk
Jennifer Shelton

Baptized in Jesus' Name

Stefan Marsh
Angel Martinez
Daniel Milanez
Gunner Polk
Daveeque Rhodes
Dontaveous Sargent



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
AUGUST 2026						¹ 6:30 am HOPE 7:30 pm Pastor's Prayer Partners 1
² Missions Sunday Back to School Sunday Ch.I.P.Z. 9 am Welcome to the Family Class	³	⁴ 7 pm 301 Meeting Online	⁵ 7:30 pm Ch.I.P.Z. 7:30 pm CrossOver 7:30 pm CROWD	⁶	⁷	⁸ 6:30 am HOPE 7:30 pm Pastor's Prayer Partners 2
Week of Prayer and Fasting						
⁹ Ch.I.P.Z. 9 am Welcome to the Family Class	¹⁰	¹¹	¹² 7:30 pm CROWD 7:30 pm HYPHEN	¹³	¹⁴	¹⁵ 6:30 am HOPE 11:30 am Ladies' Event Guest Speaker: Sis. Stacy Gaddy 7:30 pm Pastor's Prayer Partners 3
¹⁶ IMAGINE Guest Speaker: Bro. Tim Gaddy Ch.I.P.Z. 9 am Welcome to the Family Class	¹⁷	¹⁸ 7 pm Ladies' Prayer	¹⁹ 7:30 pm Ch.I.P.Z. 7:30 pm CrossOver 7:30 pm CROWD	²⁰	²¹	²² 6:30 am HOPE 7:30 pm Pastor's Prayer Partners 4
GA District Youth Extreme						
²³ MTM Sacrificial Offering Guest Speaker: Bro. Jonathan Walker Ch.I.P.Z. 9 am Welcome to the Family Class	²⁴	²⁵	²⁶ 7:30 pm CROWD 7:30 pm HYPHEN	²⁷	²⁸	²⁹ 6:30 am HOPE 7 pm Family Prayer
³⁰ Small Groups Fair No. Ch.I.P.Z.	³¹	Ch.I.P.Z. - Children in the Power Zone				