

July 29, 2022



## Sunday, July 31, 2022 | Baptisms!

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Joni & Friends (J&F) Nebraska Family Retreat was held at Maranatha Bible Camp the week of July 17, 2022. It was a time for the whole family who walk this life of special needs to be loved on. J&F retreat allows parents to be with other parents while their children are safe and having fun with volunteers. The kids have a chance to try new things, make friends, and not be bullied for being different and siblings can just be kids.

Bethel Church volunteers share their experience below.

**KeleeAnn Littrell:** *Joni and Friends was an amazing opportunity to see the love of Christ and be able to share the love of Christ with others. One thing that impacted me was how quickly some of the kids got attached to their buddies on the first day. A lot of the parents said that their kids never did that with anyone. They felt safe with us; in turn, the parents could feel safe with their kids in our hands. I saw the families see that their kids matter to others. No matter the disabilities, their child or children can do what they set their minds to and not be held back. In a society where the world (even in church) says they won't be able to achieve this or that, these kids proved them all wrong. The little boy that I was assigned to had mental disabilities with little to no motor skills; rolling a ball on a table was difficult. He went on the zip-line and even did archery! The smile on his face was from ear to ear; he was the happiest 10-year-old boy alive! When I told his parents about it, they were so proud and overjoyed that he got the chance to do that. We had a few campers in wheelchairs who did the zip line. In a world that says it is impossible, we have a God that, through Him alone, all things are possible!*

**Ann Lusk:** *As a volunteer, I wasn't sure what to expect. I was blown away with the quality, love, and commitment of all the volunteers. I now understand what families deal with on a daily basis, and with love, some have chosen to adopt the disabled. The families were pleased to have time to relax and enjoy the special things that were provided for fun and learning new things. I saw some of the kids especially come out of their shells and try new things. The highlight of the retreat was seeing people connecting with new friendships.*

**Jodi Lowe:** *The impact was emotional for me. To be able to serve in such an environment was a special privilege. Without a doubt, I was receiving more than I was giving. I was with young girls, and they were thrilled to be able to, freely and safely, experience the various activities and have 'buddies' to share it with. Such joy! I could also see the special connections these girls made with anyone who took the time to connect with them – truly beautiful. Being reminded that people with disabilities have so much to give in every situation was humbling. Seeing the love between caregivers and/or families and those they support was nothing short of miraculous. Meeting authentic servants, and there were many, was also a highlight. God willing – I'll be back!*

**Tina Finstad:** *I totally love the fact that not one person stands out as the "star of the show". There was none of the comparisons or striving to be #1 that normally is present in a group of people. Everyone was everyone else's biggest cheerleader! What a beautiful thing to experience and be part of! It really was the nicest, kindest bunch of people I have ever met. One of the moms was asked what her big takeaway for the week was ~ her reply was when the parents stayed back to talk (as the kids were involved in their own activities). She loved the support she felt amongst those other parents. It was so evident that being with those who truly understood her "hard" was like a healing balm on her weary soul. The highlight was probably the talent show. I loved seeing each performance/talent and being part of the cheering that went on after every one of them!!*

**Nan Hynes:** *The impact on me was to see the compassion that the leaders and the volunteers had to make it special for the kids and parents. The highlight was the karaoke event. I loved the energy and enthusiasm that the kids had to perform.*

If you would like to learn more about the retreat, please talk with any of those who shared. Thank you for helping make it possible for two local families to attend and seven volunteers to help.

In His Service, Tami Littrell



Dear Bethel Family,



Thank you so much for the prayers and financial support for the boys and me to attend Joni & Friends. We had a great time bonding with other special needs families, doing fun activities, and most importantly growing our faith. Brendyn played baseball and skated for the first time. Preston loved getting to go fishing, make crafts, and even go on a boat ride. The boys did amazing!! I got some much-needed adult-only time with other parents, it's always great to know we're not alone in this special needs walk of life. We absolutely loved the volunteers and can't thank everyone enough for our time at camp!

God Bless,  
Sarah, Brendyn, and Preston Shaver

# Save the Date

## Leadership training dates

August 20 - Light Company (evening)  
August 27 - Awana  
September 7 - Awana Parent Night with registration  
September 11 - Student Ministry Training (afternoon)  
September 11 - Small Group Leader Training (evening)

## Kickoff dates for Fall ministries

August 25 - Light Company  
September 14 - Awana  
September 14 - Student Ministry (Middle School and Sr High)  
September 18 - Connect Groups  
September 18 - Fall Equipping Labs

## Dates to remember

Oct 22 and 23 - Missions Conference  
Nov 5 to 12 - Adult Mission to Guatemala

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**Bethel Mission's will be hosting dinner at the Salvation Army on Friday, August 26, and we are looking for help planning, cooking, and serving. If interested please call or text Kathy Phares, 530-6487, or Kim Carter, 520-4640.**



## Production Team opportunities...

Any and all are welcome to join our team!  
No prior experience is needed, we will provide the training.



- Soundboard
- Worship graphics
- Camera operations
- Live stream support

Come and see if this is an area that God is calling you to help in.

Contact KeleeAnn Littrell, Director of Production, at [klittrell@bethelnp.org](mailto:klittrell@bethelnp.org), 308.660.0761 for more details, or contact the Bethel office, 308.532.7040.

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We love being a sending church. We often think in terms of missions when we think of that phrase. However, we sometimes get to send those that we don't expect! We will be sending the Warners to Scottsbluff, NE this week. We have had the incredible opportunity both to be poured into, and to pour into Bud and Illa over the years. Now that God is moving them west, we will celebrate the "sending." If you would like to be a part of that send off, please send a card or letter to them as they begin their new adventure!  
Let's be sure to pray for them as they go!

**Bud and Illa Warren**  
**320 E 42nd St., Unit W103**  
**Scottsbluff, NE 69361**

