Shine the Light of Christ...

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

JOHN 1:5

from the heart

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JOHN 1:5

If you're like me, waiting is not your favorite activity. It's normal to get anxious when traffic thickens, threatening to make you late for an appointment. Or when long lines turn your errands into an ordeal. And with the holiday season upon us, it's easy to feel frazzled or frustrated when time runs short and the to-do list grows long.

Of course, for the world's 1.3 billion people living with disability, waiting has a different anxiety and urgency. According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 80 million people need a wheelchair. And in low-income countries, as few as 3% of people have access to the assistive equipment they need. It breaks my heart that for the remaining 97%, help never comes—for them, waiting means sitting in the dirt, or on a mat, or lying on an old mattress day after day.

Friend, people struggling with the heartbreaking cycle of disability and poverty need more than just mobility equipment. They need a hope-filled encounter with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Only Jesus can dispel the darkness of sin and suffering, while giving hope that can never be put to shame, even amid the toughest hardships.

It's why this Advent season, I invite you to meditate—and act—on the mighty promise found in John 1:5… "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." What a beautiful truth! Jesus, the Light of the World, has entered our darkness to bring us new life, hope, and salvation.

And now, God is sending you and me to deliver the Greatest News of all to people with disabilities who are desperate for help and hope. We have the honor of sharing the Gospel of Jesus that will transform their lives for eternity.

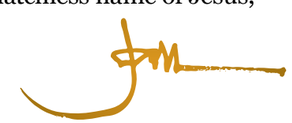
I am excited for you to read how Nada and her mother, Mim, received a much-needed wheelchair and the message of the Gospel from our Joni and Friends team. But this Advent season as we prepare to celebrate our Lord's birth, millions of other disabled people still do not know that Jesus came to love and save them. It's why I'm praising God that you and I have the blessed opportunity to shine the light of Christ into their lives and communities.

You see, when you donate to Joni and Friends or purchase one of our hand-selected products featured in this newsletter, every dollar delivers practical help in the name of Jesus to precious people struggling with disability. God has given us the high calling of declaring the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus to people who are eager for true and lasting hope.

And isn't that what Christmas is all about? Take it from Isaiah 9:2, which says, "the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone" (ESV). When Jesus came, He pierced the desolate blackness with His warmth, light, and life.

So friend, let's shine the light of Christ together, inviting the lost, outcast, and hurting into His family, now and forever.

In the matchless name of Jesus,



Joni Eareckson Tada
Founder, Joni and Friends

You Lit Up Nada's Life with Gospel Hope!

Nada could hardly sleep the night before her mother, Mim, brought her to our *Wheels for the World*® outreach where she would receive her very first wheelchair. Born with cerebral palsy, Nada is unable to walk and has limited function on one side of her body.

For the first eleven years of Nada's life, Mim carried her everywhere they went. From shopping to chores and even riding on a motorcycle, Nada relied on her mother's strength to navigate life in their native Thailand. At home, Nada moved through the single-room apartment she shares with her mom and two siblings by pulling herself along the floor on her forearms.

As a single mother caring for three children, Mim has worked hard to support her family, selling seasonal fruits. And while she couldn't afford a wheelchair or offer schooling for Nada, she has constantly tried to build her daughter's confidence and shield her from society's misunderstanding of her disability.

In Thailand, where an estimated 95% of people hold Buddhist beliefs, disability is seen as a result of bad karma. When Nada was first diagnosed with cerebral palsy, Mim recalls being desperate to find hope. "At first I tried everything," says Mim, "whatever people said was good, whether it was a doctor, a spirit-healer, or a monk... we'd go! I wanted her to be cured."

Custom-fitting a pediatric wheelchair to meet Nada's needs, our physical therapist, Trish, said, "Nada is a joy. She has such a beautiful smile and a beautiful persistence." Trish could also sense Mim's

When Mim brought Nada to meet our *Wheels for the World* team, newfound joy radiated from her smile. It's like she could sense the love in the room and knew her world was about to get unlocked, not just by her new wheelchair but by the love of Jesus demonstrated through you!

deep love for her daughter. “I learned that Mim has done a wonderful job giving Nada the chance to grow and be independent. She’s taught her to put on her clothes and feed herself.”

Given Nada’s independent spirit, our team selected a wheelchair with big wheels for her, which she can learn to push herself. As Trish says, “The wheelchair provided just the right amount of support so Nada was able to sit comfortably, get her hands on the wheels, and—in about thirty seconds—figure out she could push the wheels and make herself go. She was really pleased with that discovery!”

Watching Nada’s joy as she propelled herself forward in her wheelchair, our whole team knew they were witnessing a sacred moment. Because of your partnership, Nada no longer needs to drag herself across the floor on her forearms. Instead, she can meet the world at eye-level, with dignity and expectation.

The day after Nada got her wheelchair, our team, including our Joni and Friends President, Shawn Thornton, and our Chief Operating Officer, Jason Holden, visited her family at their home. They learned that Nada loved her wheelchair so much that she wanted it right beside her bed all night.

Around the family’s table, with Nada sitting upright as an equal participant for the first time, Shawn and Jason had the privilege of sharing the Gospel message. “What a joy it was to share the Good News of Jesus with them through a simple Gospel bracelet, which they eagerly received along with a Bible in their language,” says Shawn.

Shawn also shared with Nada and Mim the powerful truth that every person, regardless of disability, is made in God’s image and loved by Him! Through this truth, Mim has been released from the burden of believing Nada’s disability is a punishment and can now see her beautiful child anew as the blessing she is, fearfully and wonderfully made by God.

And now, thanks to your support, our dedicated churches and Christian partners in Thailand are inviting Nada’s family and others like them into the local body of Christ. By God’s grace, this work dispels the darkness hovering over families struggling with disability and shines the light of Christ into and through their lives!

Friend, when you follow God’s call to love people in need through your prayers and generosity, you bring glory to Jesus and introduce people to Him! As we prepare to celebrate our Savior’s birth, you can give the greatest gift of all: the Gospel message to people struggling with disability around the world!

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

JOHN 3:16

Invite Those the World Forgets into the Light of Christ

"Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame....
Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full."

LUKE 14:21, 23, NIV

Friend, this Advent season I pray that the love of our magnificent Savior Jesus Christ will illuminate your heart, home, and life like never before. And to invite you deeper into the radiance of His love, I'd like to share with you about my painting entitled *Christmas Eve Night*...

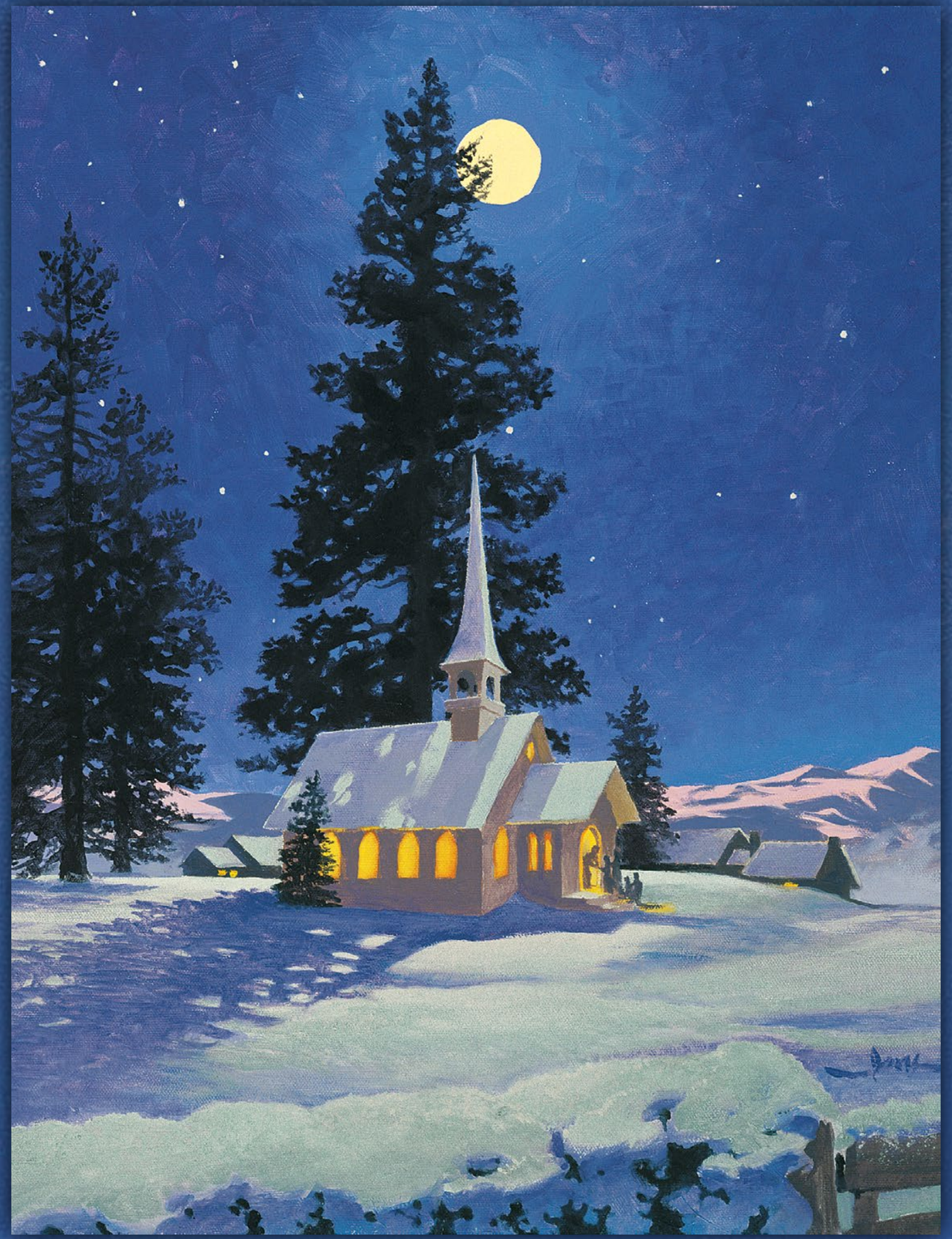
If you look closely at this piece, you might notice that the entire composition plays on temperature, contrasting a warm, golden glow inside the church against an austere-blue freezing night. I don't have to tell you—let alone those who struggle with disability, chronic illness, poverty, or grief—that we live in a harsh world, too often devoid of hope and light.

So, for this rendering of a church in the mountains on Christmas Eve, I chose predominately cool shades of green and blue. Even the pink color on the distant mountains edges toward frigid blue. Ninety-five percent of the painting is rendered in icy-cold colors. Can you feel it?

There is, of course, one exception... I painted the windows of this little church to look as though they are emanating warm, radiant light. It's just a touch of heat in an otherwise cold color palette, but this touch changes everything. I imagined this church, inviting all passersby to come inside on a brisk Christmas Eve night and find warmth, comfort, joy, and a happy welcome.

This image of a small, bright country church is meant to be a picture of Christ's light shining into our hurting world, piercing the frosty darkness with His warmth and life! And here's some magnificent news: you and I have the great privilege of being a bit like this church. We can share the inviting light of Jesus's love with those we encounter.

Thank you for joining me and the whole Joni and Friends team as we carry out the call of Jesus to go out quickly... find the disabled and outcast... and bring them out of the cold, into the light and warmth of God's presence, this Christmas season and forever!



A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Pray with Our President

Friend, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior and Light of the World, reflect with me on the words of the priest Zechariah in Luke 1:78–79:

"Because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

Take a moment to savor this Scripture's powerful imagery, which captures the essence of who Jesus is—the dawn breaking through the darkness, bringing hope to a weary and waiting world. Zechariah's words reflect the deep longing of a people who had endured centuries of spiritual darkness and silence, waiting for their promised Messiah.

The "rising sun" symbolizes the dawn of a new day, the arrival of Jesus, who would dispel the darkness of sin and death with the light of His presence. This light is not just a distant or abstract concept; it is deeply personal, shining into the darkest corners of our lives and world, offering hope, healing, and direction.

Right now, here in the U.S. and around the world, people living with disability are suffering, many without hope or knowledge of Jesus, the only true source of lasting light and hope. It's why I praise God for you who step out in faith this season and throughout the year to make the ministry outreaches of Joni and Friends possible.

Let's praise God together that with every wheelchair delivered and Christ-centered outreach held, families like Nada's in Thailand meet our Savior—Immanuel, God with us—and discover the truth that they can find a joyful and permanent place of belonging in the Lord's house.

Today and throughout the days of Advent and Christmas, thank you for shining the light of Christ through your interactions, prayers, and generosity. Together, we can bring the Gospel message to people in need and glory to our marvelous Savior and King!

Will you pray with me?

Lord Jesus, thank You for being our Rising Sun and Light of Life that will never fail or fade. We praise You and thank You that no matter how dark the world becomes, we can trust You. Help us to carry out Your will by inviting people with disabilities and those the world forgets into Your presence where they will dwell in Your light, now and for eternity!

Shawn Thornton
President, Joni and Friends

Give and Shop to Shine the Light of Christ!

Every item purchased and dollar donated will make our Savior Jesus real to people living with disabilities worldwide!

Joni's 2026 Christmas Card

"Unto us a child is born..." Isaiah 9:6 KJV

Joni's new postcard-style card features her Christmas Wreath artwork to ring in the season with joy! And behind Joni's festive wreath, the shape of a cross subtly appears in the door. As she says, "Jesus was the one man born to die for us. And that's what brings joy and gladness into Christmas."

Joni is excited for you to enjoy this new Christmas card format, which offers plenty of space to write your personal greeting on the back!

$14 per box (15 cards with 16 envelopes)

Advent Scripture Cards

Prepare your heart for the birth of our Savior Jesus with these elegant Advent cards featuring 25 pieces of artwork by Joni Eareckson Tada on one side and hand-selected Scriptures on the other. They are perfect to display in your home, tuck into a card, or deliver to a friend to share the true meaning of Christmas!

$14.99

joniandfriends.org/gift-catalog

Bless your loved ones & share the love of Jesus!

Your gift given **in honor** or **in memory** of a loved one brings the hope of the Gospel to people living with disabilities worldwide! View your loved one's name on our online Tribute Wall at *joniandfriends.org/tribute* or by using this QR code!

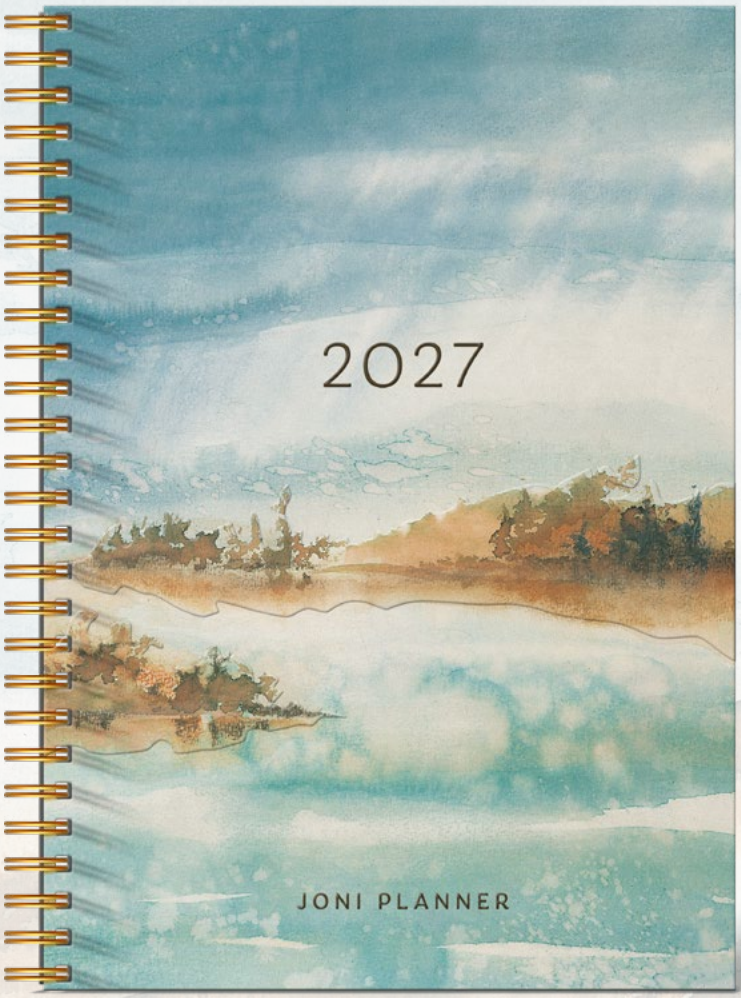
Joni's 2027 Planner

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace."
JOHN 16:33

Featuring her *Fishing on the Lake* artwork, Joni's 2027 Planner is an invitation to experience the peace of Christ by abiding in Him, every day and in all circumstances. We live in a troubled world, and our hearts long for peace.

Drawing upon Scripture, deep personal reflection, and a lifetime of following her Savior, Joni designed this Planner to help us all find true peace by trusting Jesus, the Prince of Peace, throughout 2027 and into eternity.

"For this Planner, I chose artwork rendered in wild watercolor. Why? Because I pray God will use this year to help you loosen your grip and surrender the attractive illusion of control. You see, in surrendering to our Creator and Lord Jesus, trusting Him to hold the outcomes of the family struggle, health challenge, or financial uncertainty, you will find a sweet, unshakable peace." – Joni



Product Details:

- Size: 6.5" x 9.25"
- 12-month agenda planner
- Chronological Bible Reading Plan
- Gold spiral binding
- Lay-flat design
- Interior 2 pocket pages
- Updated monthly & weekly sections
- High quality paper stock

$22

Every dollar spent and donated will make a difference for people with disabilities in the name of the Savior we celebrate!

For more inspirational Christmas gifts, visit *joniandfriends.org/gift-catalog*, scan the QR code, or call 800.736.4177.