

JOY EL

ministries

Journal

Volume 44 Fall 2025

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The Privilege of Giving

Joy El is a member of ECFA (the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability), which is an expression of our commitment to integrity in all aspects of the ministry. All donations to Joy El are tax deductible.



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Giving stock is the perfect, cost-effective way to close out a year of generosity. Not only will you further the important work of Joy El Ministries, but you will also benefit from tremendous tax-wise savings!

To learn more, contact David at david@joyel.org or 717-369-4539 x 103

Rooted in the Word, Rising in Christ

By David Rudy, Chief Advancement Officer



"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers." — Psalm 1:2-3

As you walk through the forest in autumn, you can see which trees are thriving. Some soar with strength and life, their leaves full of color and vibrancy. While others appear anemic, brittle, and frail, ready to bend, break, or wither.

The difference is unseen but essential: the root system.

Psalm 1 paints the same picture for our lives with God. A person who delights in His Word, meditating on it day and night, is like a tree planted by streams of water. Like the autumn trees soaring with color and vibrancy, their roots are deep and unshaken. A person rooted in God's Word has a life that goes deep into truth, their soul is nourished, and their life bears lasting fruit.

At Joy El, in everything we do, Bible Adventure/CIA, camps, retreats, 4.12 Leadership Training, we are planting students by the streams of God's Word. We believe His Word is not just something to be taught, but something to be delighted in, lived out, and passed on. Every Scripture memory verse, every small-group discussion, every devotion is a way of strengthening the roots in our lives—those serving and being served.

When those roots grow deep, the rising comes naturally. We have the privilege of seeing students and adults rise with courage in their schools and communities, with kindness among friends, and with resilience when challenges come. They rise because they are anchored in something eternal, God's Word.

This is why Psalm 1 matters so much for us right now. In a culture full of noise and shifting truths, we are helping the next generation become firmly planted in God's Word. That is what allows them to flourish—like trees whose leaves do not wither, bearing fruit in every season.

As you read this issue, we invite you to join us in this vision. Pray with us. Partner with us. Delight in God's Word with us. Together, let's raise up a generation that is **Rooted in the Word and Rising in Christ.**



Wilderness campers taking a hike in God's creation

From Resistance to Rooted

By Susie Barkdoll, Director of Bible Adventure & CIA



For two years, Toby* resisted looking up or memorizing Bible verses. No matter the encouragement, he preferred to stay distant from scripture, and it seemed like he might never engage with God's Word. Yet even in this season of quiet resistance, the seeds of faith were being planted, preparing him for growth that would come in God's perfect timing.

During his 5th grade year, something began to change. Toby started to memorize scriptures and look up verses on his own. Slowly but surely, he became more rooted in the Word, letting God's truths take hold in his heart. Each new verse he learned was a step toward spiritual growth, strengthening him from within and shaping the way he saw his life and faith.

His transformation did not go unnoticed. The Bible Adventure leaders were deeply impressed with his newfound dedication. Toby's journey reminds us that when we are deeply rooted in God's Word, He will provide growth, inspire faith and it is never in vain, for His Word never returns void. Toby's story encourages all of us to trust the process, knowing that even quiet beginnings can lead to remarkable growth.



Volunteer listens as student recites Bible memory verses

**Name changed for privacy*

Rooted Through the Generations

by Leah Myers, Joy El Alum



I will never forget the joy of seeing Skarlet at Old Home Week in Greencastle. "Hi Skarlet!" I called out. She turned, eyes wide, exclaiming, "LEAH!" before giving me the biggest hug. Just two weeks earlier, she had been one of my students at summer camp. During that week, we had grown close, and even more importantly, she had started a relationship with Jesus! We had sat down together to talk about faith, and when I asked if she had accepted Jesus, she said no. Together, we opened her Bible and went through the Romans Road. After praying together, she committed her life to Christ. I noticed the date on her Bible's cover: "Summer Camp 2023," along with a note from her previous counselor. This reminded me of 1 Corinthians 3:6-7: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God has been making it grow..."—a beautiful reminder that God nurtures faith in His perfect timing.

Camp has been a cornerstone in my own life for as long as I can remember. My dad first came to Joy El as a camper, where he began his relationship with Jesus and was disciplined by mentors who poured love and guidance into him. His experiences shaped him into the man he is today. I, too, have been drawn to camp because of the deep growth I experienced there. One week in 6th grade stands out as particularly special: my counselor loved me unconditionally, made me feel seen, and pointed me to Jesus. That Wednesday night, I had a personal encounter with Christ and rededicated my life to Him.

Since then, camp has been a place where I've not only grown in my faith but also learned leadership, life skills, and the power of community. Through the 4.12 Leadership Training Program, summer staff roles, and countless mentors, especially Jan Diaz, I have experienced the importance of God's Word, prayer, discipleship, and investing in others. Joy El has impacted not just me, but my family—my siblings, cousins, and even extended family have been rooted in this community and continue rising in Christ because of it. Now, as a college senior, I reflect on these summers with gratitude. While my time at camp may have come to an end, the lessons, relationships, and faith cultivated there will continue to guide me for a lifetime. It is a lasting reminder that when we are deeply rooted in God's Word, we rise in Christ and bear fruit that lasts far beyond ourselves.



Inspiring young students as summer camp counselor

MEMORIAL GIFTS LIST

In Memory of:

Given by:

Doris Barrett

Janet Shirley

Ruth Garling

David & Jean Finkenbinder

Donald Helfrick

Pauline Helfrick

David A. Hoffman

John & Lois Hoffman

Gladys McCrae

L. Jean Ekman

Karen McCandless

David & Beth Mummert

Todd McNaley

Richard Sharrock

Kim Shatzer

Thomas Shatzer

Rooted to Stand, Rising to Share

By Nic Goodwin, 4.12 Coordinator



As I think about being Rooted & Rising, I am reminded of the incredible journey of Isaiah, an inspiring teenager who is currently a Level 5 student in Joy El's 4.12 Leadership Training Program. Isaiah has grown up rooted in the Word. He has been a camper for several years and has also served on staff, and this year he stepped into new, challenging roles as part of our summer camp staff.

One particular week proved especially difficult, and I noticed Isaiah struggling under the weight of his responsibilities and the discouragement of campers being unresponsive to gospel messages. So we took time to encourage one another and pray together, leaning on God's guidance.

As Isaiah immersed himself more deeply in scripture, most particularly the book of Acts, I saw a remarkable transformation. He was particularly moved by Acts 4:29-31 and found himself increasingly challenged by the realization that life is short and we need to do everything possible to make sure people know where they are going. As his faith grew stronger, his boldness increased, and the way he engaged with campers became even more impactful. Even with campers who were struggling with behavior or showed little interest in learning about God, Isaiah persisted in sharing the Gospel. His dedication opened

meaningful conversations, planting seeds of faith that only God could nurture.

Isaiah's story is a powerful example of what it means to be rooted in the Word and rising in Christ. The perseverance, prayer, and reliance on scripture that shaped his own faith allowed him to influence the lives of campers around him. It reminds us that growth is rarely easy, but as we stay grounded in God's Word, our courage and impact can extend far beyond ourselves, shaping hearts and lives for His glory.



Isaiah listens to student's stories and shares The Gospel at summer camp

Roots Go Deeper, New Growth Appears

By Cruz Ortiz, Summer Leadership Team



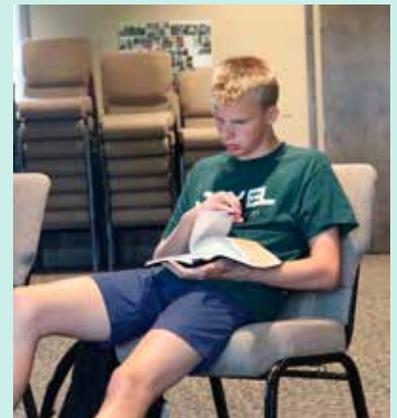
This summer, one student in particular showed me what it truly means to be rooted and rising, and his journey left a lasting impression on my heart. For Summer Camp 2025, I had the pleasure to serve on the Summer Leadership Team (SLT), overseeing some of our younger male students who were serving at camp. One of the most memorable stories for me was watching *Rodney's transformation. Rodney was a Level 2 student in our 4.12 Leadership Training Program, so a 14-15 year old teenage boy who had always been a bit of a silly guy. Because of this, many of his peers, and even younger campers, struggled to take him seriously.

During his second week of serving, I noticed he seemed to be struggling. As we talked, Rodney opened up and shared that he wanted to change—he desired to take his faith more seriously and grow in maturity. But he admitted it was hard, because his past reputation often made others doubt him.

We prayed together, and I encouraged him to dig deeper into God's Word. He accepted the challenge wholeheartedly. That week, he devoted himself to reading and prayer, and I began to witness something remarkable: a genuine transformation. Over the next few weeks, Rodney grew in accountability and responsibility. When he spoke about his faith, his peers began to listen. He was no longer just the silly jokester—he was becoming a leader others respected.

Though his main role was in the kitchen and dining staff, by the final weeks of summer I moved him into a Junior Counselor role. He flourished there, pouring encouragement into his campers and modeling the same transformation he had walked through himself.

Rodney's journey this summer was a vivid reminder of what it means to be Rooted and Rising—rooted in God's Word, and rising into the leader God is calling him to be. His story reminds all of us that true growth begins when we allow our roots to go deep, so that in God's timing, we can rise and bear fruit that impacts the lives around us.



Going deeper in God's Word over summer

**Name changed for privacy*

Mark Your Calendars

Date	Event	Time (s)
Nov 6	Stewardship Banquet Lancaster* Eden Resort & Suites	6:30 PM
Nov 7-9	Fall Youth Retreat Grades 6-12	7:00 PM Fri to 2:00 PM Sun
Nov 11	Stewardship Banquet Joy El*	6:30 PM
Nov 13	Stewardship Banquet Joy El*	11:30 AM
Nov 14-16	Father-Son Retreat	7:00 PM Fri to 2:00 PM Sun
Nov 21	Stewardship Banquet York* St. David's Evangelical Church	6:30 PM
Jan 9-11	4.12 Leadership Training Summit	6:00 PM Fri to 2:00 PM Sun
Jan 10	Barnabas Training (mentors only)	6:30 PM to 8:00 PM
Jan 30 -	Winter Youth Retreat	7:00 PM Fri to 2:00 PM Sun
Feb 1	Grades 6-12	
Feb 5-6	Home School Retreat Grades 1-8	9:00 AM Thurs to 3:00 PM Fri
Feb 20-22	Bible Adventure Weekend Grades 2-6	7:00 PM Fri to 2:00 PM Sun
Feb 22-25	CCCA Allegheny Sectional Visit Allegheny Sectional Website For Schedule	
March 6-8	Mother-Son Retreat	7:00 PM Fri to 2:00 PM Sun
March 21	Work Day* (Lunch provided)	8:00 AM to 1:00 PM
April 9	Barnabas Training (mentors only)	6:30 PM to 8:30 PM
April 25	Work Day* (Lunch provided)	8:00 AM to 1:00 PM

*Email or call katie@joyel.org 717-369-4539 to RSVP for a banquet.

Call 717-369-4539 or visit our website at www.joyel.org for info on additional events and for online registration for camps and retreats.

ATTENTION CCCA CAMPS

JOY EL IS HOSTING THE
2026 CCCA ALLEGHENY
SECTIONAL THIS YEAR!
WILL WE SEE YOU THERE?



FEBRUARY 22-25, 2026

GOD IS DOING A
NEW THING
ISAIAH 43:19

STEWARDSHIP BANQUETS 2025



SCAN FOR
SCHEDULE

2025-26 RETREATS
HAVE BEGUN!



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Now you can get the most up-to-date information on Joy El events along with updates on what God is doing through our ministry.

Updates and Events

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