



Illinois Campers On Mission

July 2026

President's letter **1**

National Rally news **2**

Schedule **3**

Faith Focus **4**

MorningStar Project list **6**

National Rally 2027 **7**

Project report **8**
From Hamilton -
& photos **10**

President's letter—

Hi COM family,

June has been a big month—for encouragement, for fellowship, for friendship, for prayer requests, for traveling, for seeing the Lord work, for camp ministry, for work projects, for DR call outs—and so much more.

God is at work in a mighty way using those who are willing and able to work for him. So blessed COM is part of that !

July is quickly approaching and COM has another big project planned in Joliet at MorningStar Mission. You can find the details on page 6 in this newsletter. There is much work to do and always a great time to work with the women & family shelter residents and much more. If you cannot attend this project please be in prayer for it as there is great need in Joliet and the mission is reaching out to lead those around them to Christ.

There also is included in this newsletter a new format for COM National Rally 2027. Check out page 7 for an announcement about the date, time and location of rally next year and plan now to attend.

So much is going on with IL COM. Please be part of it as you can. As of August 1st, Mike Young will be our new IBSA contact. Mike is a long time friend of IL COM and we welcome him to this new position.



See you all soon, Fred

COM Officers

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National website: campersonmission.org



Those attending 2026 National Rally in Amana, IA

From Illinois

Front: Karen Mowers, Paula Riley, Francie Lindeman, John Lindeman

2nd: Dick Mowers, Cathryn St. Dennis, Irma Burnet, Jan Kragness, Debbie Odum, Sandy Tedford, Debbie Shelton

Back: Fred Riley, Jim & Marilyn Diercks, Leroy Burnett, Scott & Sue Naevestad, Terry Odum, Don Kragness, Randy Tedford, Josh Hunley, and Paul Shelton.

Missing from photo: Logan, JoAnne, Ella & Eve Diercks, Wayde, Wyatt and Weston Hunley, Susan & Harold Mills, Phil Sutton, Rick & Cindy Truesdail.



**Thank you, Iowa, for a great
2026 rally!**

We will see you next year
for more fun and camp fires and
spending time with God and
each other.



Tentative 2026 schedule

July 19 – 24 – MorningStar Mission – Joliet

August 16 – 21- Baptist Children's Home, Carmi

September 20 – 25 - SICC, Makanda, IL

September ? - Carmi Fall Fest

October 18 – 23 – Lake Sallateeska & Fall Rally

November 12 – 21- Passion Play, Eureka Springs, AR

Dec. 5 – COM Christmas luncheon

Jan. 18 – 30, 2027 – Piney Woods, TX



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Dick and Karen Mowers received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2026 COM National Rally. The award was presented by Tim Jones, Region 4 Representative.

Other Illinois award recipients were not present and their photos will be included later.



- 4 Cathryn St. Dennis
- 15 Francie Lindeman
- 18 Bryan Keller
- 18 Sonny & Sondra McKenzie
- 25 Jim Barnes
- 29 Gary Watson
- 31 Dan & Denise Golden
- 31 Ryland Bonnell





Faith Focus— Independence Day

Colossians 1:14

We have redemption in Jesus, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.

The annual fireworks display was rained out a few years ago. All the money that had been paid for the planned fireworks was wasted. Now, there was nothing to see but storm clouds and sheets of rain.

Families quickly packed up their picnic baskets and lawn chairs, and ran for their vehicles, scanning weather channels to see if the storm and winds would pass so they could resume celebrating America's freedom. Is it possible that the thunder and lightning, the rain and misery, the spoiled plans and disappointments were a a more fitting tribute?

Our country's independence came at a high price. Lives were upended. Courage was tested. Battles were won and lost. (This holiday has a special importance for our family, as our ancestor, Charles Carroll, was the final signature on the Declaration of Independence). We've made Independence Day a celebration of excess with lavish displays in the sky. It's so easy to forget the price paid when a party is in our minds.

What about our soul's freedom? We say we're conscious of the price Jesus paid to set us free. But do we celebrate only with flashy experiences and fun stories about how Jesus freed a parking space for us just when we needed it? Or do we give the honor and reverence He deserves for what it cost Him emotionally, physically, and spiritually to win our freedom?

Do we pause to imagine the moment when midday turned to blackest night, when the air chilled as if all the warmth had been sucked from Earth's atmosphere, when tremors unlike any human has known coursed through Christ's dying form? Do we ponder the torment of both body and soul that the King of Glory endured so we could live free?

This 4th of July, let's have a moment of silence and consider the high price tag of our freedom.

Dear Jesus, we cannot express enough our gratitude for the sacrifice you made so that we could be truly free.

Amen.

Jim & Marilyn Diercks, Chaplains





**Flag ceremony at the
National Rally:**

American Flag:

Cathryn St. Dennis

Christian Flag:

Randy Tedford

Bible:

Joanne Diercks

Illinois Flag:

Fred Riley, IL

President



MorningStar Mission, Joliet IL
Work Project List and notes

New Lenox Treasure Chest Request Job List

Remodel Bathrooms
New Vanity and Tile
Paint Dressing rooms
Build wall unit for TV's
Build unit for Pictures

General MorningStar Requests Job List

Repair ceiling and paint walls in the emergency shelter.
Assemble the donated gazebo for the 180 program.
Paint the DIC hallway/laundry room, build a platform out of 2x4's for the lockers to sit on and install lockers in the DIC for clients.
Lead morning devotions in the Family Area
Teach a beginning sewing class

Dates: July 19—24

Location: MorningStar Mission, 350 East Washington St, Joliet (Main office)
Treasure Chest in New Lenox, 2571 East Lincoln Highway, New Lenox,

Where we will park: Former YMCA owned by MorningStar,
1350 S. Briggs St, Joliet

Meals: Breakfast on your own, Mission serves our noon meal, dinner on your own
(We may have a potluck or mission may provide a dinner for us)

Campers On Mission National Rally

June 15—18, 2027

Pointing People to Heaven in '27

Matthew 28:19—20

Amana RV Park & Event Center

New dates!!!! New team leaders!!! NEW IDEAS!!!!!!!

Same location at 2026

DETAILS TO FOLLOW SOON!



NEW NATIONAL RALLY IDEA!!!

In a spirit of cooperation among the state COM chapters, 2027 will be a collaborative event. Different states are taking a part of the rally planning committees and the Regional Representatives and National Staff will be the executive team. Tim Jones, Region 4 rep will chair the event and help keep us moving forward and getting things done. Illinois COM is taking on registration and helping Laura Parks, Region 2 Rep, and Gayle Jones, Region 4 rep, organize the breakout sessions.

Please be in prayer for this new organizational plan and the part that Illinois will be playing in it. Please send us ideas and volunteer if asked.

June COM Work Project Report, Joint project with Iowa COM
Hamilton, IL Jun 21 – 25, 2016

Present:

Leroy & Irma Burnett
Cathryn St. Dennis

Dick & Karen Mowers
Fred & Paula Riley

Iowa COM Members

Rick and Sara Mott, Becca, Leo
Lanny & Val Ployner

David & Doreen Short, Emilie
Phil Sutton

Bill Wagner

Guests

Pastor of Hamilton Baptist Church – Randy Bird & wife JoAnn
Cook – church member Connie

Projects:

Finish siding on the east side that was not finished from previous project
Partially change out light bulbs in sanctuary for better visibility
Installed 100 amp RV receptacle for traveling COM workers
Install flooring in hallway by fellowship hall
Made 16 drawstring bags for DCFS in St. Louis area
Made one phone case
Made many As You Go Bears
Researched and found the power source for the outdoor lighting
Installed security cameras
Painted the pastor office, trim and spackle as needed, cleaned up
Painted the entry to the gym area, trim and spackle as needed,
Install new door knob/deadbolt in double doors for outside entry to the gym for security
Drill hole for bottom latch pin in door to gym
Install baseboards in pastor office and gym entry area
Install door transitions on gym entry area on new floors.
Replaced garbage disposal in kitchen
Repair siding along the top of the gym that is coming off on all four sides
Power washed the exterior of the building
Went into crawl space of the church to do general clean up and plumbing clean up to cap off unused drain lines
Mud and sand dry wall where windows were removed in 2023 in fellowship hall, basement and upper classroom
Remodel upstairs bathroom by fellowship hall - Add mirror, new vanity, new flooring, new ceiling light fixture, new toilet and new paint
Fixed exterior stairs and added a handrail
Outside lights were hung
Updated and repaired the sound system in the sanctuary
Cleaned all the gutters on the gym
Repaired lights in the bathrooms downstairs
Repaired the doors on the women's and men's bathroom stalls downstairs
Trimmed trees around church property

Hosted a block party – 20 community members attended
Cleaned the flower beds at the front of the church
Put trim on walls by bathroom
Attached the step into the sanctuary from fellowship hall.
Had morning devotions at start of the day and fire pit and bible study at the end of the day
Had good discussion on the importance of COM and how it works in Iowa and IL and things we can do together and how to work on recruiting new members





If you know Rick Mott, IA COM President, you will know that he always has a good time. Here Rick, his wife Sarah and IA & IL COM member, Phil Sutton, made a fire almost every night. Rick was trying out a new skill he learned at National Rally—using a garden rake to cook marshmallows over the fire. You can also roast hotdogs over a fire with a rake to cook more at a time. COM does have a good time together and the s'mores were great.



It was a week of fun, fellowship and encouragement. We really enjoyed doing the carnival/block party and helped the church meet some of their neighbors. Of course we worked on bears and bags and with 17 of us joined together, we did get a lot done. There was lots of repairs to be completed and general maintenance issues to address but the great spirit of cooperation and ability to jump into almost any project that needed help was a blessing and encouragement to the church. Thanks be to God for the things he helped us to complete. We will be going back again if we are asked.