



Congregational
Church of Batavia

THE TOWER

Congregational Church of Batavia

United Church of Christ

21 South Batavia Avenue, Batavia, IL 60510

May 2026

630-879-1999

office@congregationalchurch.org

congregationalchurch.org

ucc.org



Join us for worship
every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.
in-person or online.

What's Happening?

May 1-2 — Rummage Sale

May 20 — Summer Adventure*

May 24 — Pentecost Sunday*

May 26 — Articles for the June/
July Tower due

May 31 — Empathy Circles

June 3 — Summer Adventure*

June 5-7 — Gun Violence
Awareness*

June 14 —Pride Sunday Service*,
Aurora Pride Parade*

June 17 — Summer Adventure*

*See related article



Church Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday,
Thursday, Friday —
9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Wednesday — 8:30-11:30

From Our Moderator



Spring is in full swing. The buds are becoming leaves, and the grass is lush. As daylight lingers later, our block comes alive with activity as kids bike by on their way to the park — joyfully riding ahead of their parents. I take time to catch up with my neighbors when we are outside cleaning up our yards. After a long winter, it feels good to reconnect. Across the street, our 3-year-old neighbor clearly feels the same. Ellie greets us by name each day with proclamations of her daily activities. “Hi, Peter! Hi Michael! I have a umbrella! It pink! I playing soccer. Come play too.” Her unending exclamations and the joy she exudes in sharing tidbits of her day bring a smile (and a little giggle) to each of our faces — even our teenage boys.

I love spring’s promise of light and warmer days ahead, along with the visible growth in both nature and our community. I feel more energized to build relationships and reconnect with people in person. At CCoB, we are already thriving in our connections. In April, volunteers gave their time on a Saturday for our annual spring clean-up, while also enjoying conversations and connections with one another. We also hosted a community event to share the *Building Bridges: Family Diversity Project*. If you attended, you likely found the photographs and stories of refugees and immigrants as moving and impactful as I did.

This is a small taste of how we see God still speaking. Spring will soon make way for summer where we will have more opportunities to connect and grow relationships. We are in the midst of revising our language on membership, and we are seeking input from YOU. Council will be putting on workshops for input on updating our Vision and Mission Statements in the near future. There are many opportunities to get involved in our newer ministries, including the **Capital Campaign 2 Committee**, which is working to bring church projects to life, and our **Stewardship Ministry**, which focuses on sharing our time, talent, and treasure. Or simply stop by for coffee hour after Sunday worship to meet and connect with friends, both old and new. However you choose to connect, I encourage you to find ways to share God’s light, love, and warmth.

With peace and joy,
Jen Larson Angelini, Moderator

moderator@congregationalchurch.org



*If you want to fly, you have to
give up what weighs you down.*

Roy T. Bennett



Wishing Bernie, our office manager, a happy retirement.

GOOD NEWS

We are pleased to announce that our very own Laura Bernabei will be the new office administrator here at CCoB!

After many years of serving as our Director of Children's Ministry, Laura will transition to her new role in the office during the first half of April. She will also continue to work with our Sunday school children until a new director can be found at the end of this summer.

Please note that office hours will remain 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. with the exception of Wednesdays, when the hours will be 8:30 to 11:00 a.m.

Please join us in congratulating Laura on this new adventure.

Send your June/July Tower articles to bzillgitt685@gmail.com by Tuesday, May 26.

Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

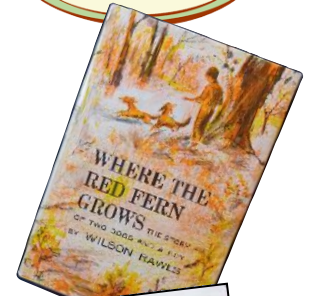
From Pastor Paige

My parents read to my sister and me a lot when we were children. I guess there was really no way around it...Dad was an English teacher, Mom a librarian. Books were big in our house. So, we read...when we were very small, picture books like *The Pokey Little Puppy*, or *The Little Engine That Could*. As we got older, it was the Trixie Belden Mysteries, and the Anne of Green Gables series.

These instilled in us a love of reading which remains to this day. But, they also instilled within us a set of values: things like kindness, perseverance, curiosity, honesty, empathy, and justice. It's not too much of a surprise that these were the same values we were learning about in our Sunday School lessons, too, the same values found in the stories of Jesus healing the sick, and feeding the hungry, and answering questions from the Pharisees and the crowds. There is a strong overlap between some of these early books we heard and read, and the Gospel we live by.

For that reason, our Summer Series this year is "Storytime," in which we will use some of our favorite children's books to shine some light on some of our favorites, and maybe some unfamiliar, scripture passages. Each week we will highlight one of these books, and feed our inner child, as we explore what the Bible has to say to us right now, whether we are 3, or 30, or 60, or 90.

All we need is a list of your favorite childhood books. If you have one...or seven, email me at pastorpaige@congregationalchurch.org. And join us for a wonderful sermon series this summer.



To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven

Ecclesiastes 3:1

Spring Cleaning

On April 18, the Facilities Team sponsored a spring clean up at the church. We had a great turnout of 13 hard working volunteers. Windows were cleaned, leaves were picked up, the parking lot was cleaned and spider webs were removed among other tasks.

Lunch was served by Pat Hummel. Participants were; Jen Larson, Annie Barsch, Ann Alexander, Karen and Mike Kosky, Steve Collins, Jake Dekoyer, Don Smith, Pastor Paige, John Halter, and Pat and Kaia Hummel.

THANK YOU
Dave Hummel



Thank you for all your cards, visits, kind thoughts, words of encouragement, and prayers during Art's last few months, and again since his death. Your support has been more than I could have imagined.

Barb Zillgitt



Flowers! Flowers! Flowers! Flowers!

- The flower chart for altar flowers is calling your name.
- Gardens will soon be in bloom. Please consider choosing a
- Sunday to provide a bouquet for the altar. You can find the
- 2026 sign-up on the bulletin board in the hallway as you enter from the parking lot.

Worship Ministry Team



Thank you! Thank you!

The sanctuary has never looked lovier on Easter with the beautiful display of lilies. Thank you to the Decorating Team for their many decorating talents, and thank you also to those who donated toward the purchase of the lilies: Laura Bernabei, Dan and LuAnn Bombard, Mike and Judy Jablecki, and Linda Slaker.

Pentecost Sunday, May 24 : Use of **red** in the church on Pentecost is commonly attributed to its association with the flames of the Holy Spirit, which descended upon the apostles and other followers of Jesus as tongues of fire. Let's celebrate this time by wearing **RED** to church as we celebrate Pentecost on May 24.

PRIDE Sunday: The past several years we have participated in New England Congregational's community service on PRIDE Sunday. This year we will hold our own PRIDE Sunday Service on June 14, inviting the community and other area churches to join with us at this special service. Watch for more information in next month's *Tower*. On this Sunday we will be moving the service to 9:30 a.m. to allow for fellowship time as well as travel time for those heading out to march in the Aurora Pride Parade. Mark your calendars now for the time change: 9:30, Sunday June 14.

Worship Team meets quarterly. The next meeting will be on July 14 at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom. Everyone is welcome. It's a wonderful time to share ideas about worship.



In any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or step back into safety.



Abraham Maslow



Justice and Witness

Looking ahead — Plan to **wear orange the weekend of June 5-7**, to honor the roughly 130 people shot and killed in the United States *every day...* plus the hundreds more who are wounded and countless more whose lives are changed by gun violence. Why orange? It's the color hunters wear to protect themselves and others.

On April 18, Karon Van Gelder was on hand in our parking lot with several other volunteers to receive donations for the monthly Immigration Food Drive. All the donations then go to the Congregational Church in Elgin to be distributed directly to those in need. Mark your calendars for the third Saturday each month for this important mission.

I hope you all had a chance to see the 20 beautiful portraits of immigrants/asylum seekers that were on display in the sanctuary the week of April 19. Personal stories, with information about their countries and a map, was posted with each one. We hosted a special program about the traveling collection on Thursday evening, 4/23. Next the portraits will be on display at New England Congregational in Aurora.

Next month, **June 14**, is the annual **Pride Parade**. Details for our participation will be in the June *TOWER*.

Fox River Valley Initiative News: I am representing CCOB in meetings with several area officials, various experts and members of law enforcement in our efforts to help create more affordable housing and get the Crisis Stabilization Unit at Mercy Hospital to reopen. It was closed last year when Prime bought several Illinois hospitals, changing the not-for-profit status into FOR PROFIT. We will never run out of challenges. You can be proud our church is a member of FRVI.

Ann Alexander, Justice & Witness chair



The Outreach Ministry Team is seeking additional input for how we can provide new or additional outreach ministry from our congregation.

Send your ideas to the Outreach Team Co-Leaders:

Judy Lutz judy.lutz@comcast.net

Don Smith teach86@aol.com

Thank you for your already amazing support.



Outreach Ministry Team

Through May 15, we will be collecting **new socks and underwear** for clothes closets at Dia Nuevo, a Hanover Park Presbyterian church that serves both adults and children, so all sizes are welcome. You may leave the items in the box outside Paxton Hall across from the coatracks. Thank you in advance. We are blessed to be part of such a giving and generous church. For further information contact: Gayle Bridger 630-220-8110.



What an amazing Diaper Drive for 2026! **We collected 3,481 diapers**, most of which went to Mutual Ground, Aurora, an emergency shelter which supports individuals impacted by domestic violence, sexual violence, and substance abuse. A small number were also sent to help a newborn infant refugee and her sibling who are being helped through an Episcopal Church in the area.

We are amazed to report also that we have \$791 dollars in donations to buy additional diapers for delivery to Mutual Ground! This is so amazing! Thanks for your so impressive, beyond-all-words support.

The Outreach Ministry Team



A bend in the road is not the end of the road ... Unless you fail to make the turn.

Helen Keller



Troop 43



Greetings from Troop 43! March has been filled with a series of unique happenings.

Following spring break, the last days of March and first days of April, 8 adults were able to attend the Ottawa district annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner (& meeting). We were thrilled to witness our Scoutmaster, Frank Downey, honored with a major award, including many lovely notes about all he does, not just for Troop 43 but throughout the organization.

The campout took Troop 43 to the Illinois-Iowa border for lessons in shooting various arms. In a very controlled and safe environment, Scouts learned best practices while also trying their hand at archery, bb, and shotguns.

The older Scouts attending High Adventure in Philmont had a series of meetings to review how to pack and set-up at the church and Blackwell. The day at Blackwell included their longest hike to date, and all of them gained immense confidence.

Two older Scouts began their Eagle projects this month. Carter Restaino is cleaning, painting and adding shelves to Marmion Academy's baseball equipment shed. Kye Hill is removing and rebuilding the dumpster enclosure at Congregational Church of Batavia. We're very excited to see these projects get going and then for the end result of each!

Please help get the word out about our troop. We meet from 7-8:15 in Paxton Hall on most Monday evenings. We welcome boys ages 10-16 to visit a meeting and consider joining! Please see <https://www.troopwebhost.org/Troop43Batavia/Index.htm> for more information



Children & Youth Ministries

Summer Adventures



Wednesdays in May, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

May 6: Pizza and Board Games and More

May 20: S'mores and More

Wednesday, June 3: Bring your own picnic to the [Sculpture Park](#) in St. Charles! Let's meet by Humpty Dumpty at 6:00 p.m. [Park Map.](#)

Tuesday, June 16: We will visit the [Batavia Food Pantry](#) at 916 1st St. from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

For these summer sessions, parents and siblings of all ages are welcome to join us. Please note that unless otherwise specified, food will not be provided; however, everyone is encouraged to bring their own snacks or meals.

Other summer dates are as follows:

July 1, 15, & 29

August 12 & 26



Summer fun isn't just for Wednesdays. **Sunshine Sunday School** this summer means spending time outside as well as doing mission projects to bring some sunshine to others.



Growth is painful. Change is painful. But nothing is as painful as staying stuck somewhere you don't belong.

Mandy Hale

Celebrate!



May Birthdays

Amelia Schneider	2
Rebecca Doranski	3
Mike Miller	5
Leigh Tracy	5
Dylan Knanishu	7
Jan Sprague-Williams	7
Jeff Crane	8
Art Doty	9
Rick Lathrop	9
Jean Dennis	11
Chloe Daly	12
Marge Olllearis	12
Mike Kosky	16
Katie Olllearis	16
Andrew Pearson	16
Stu Grant	17
Carrie Schafer	17
Bill Schrader	18
Katie Van Dame	20
Diane Blodgett	22
Maddy McDonnell	22
Michael Palmer	22
Naomi Churney	24
Anna Malay	28
Leia Perri	28
Lauren Weigt	29
Emerson Mecum	30
Olivia Behary	31

May Anniversaries

Aiden & Gabby Osterby	13
David Eddy & Gaye Peterson	15
Kim & Doug Hoffer	18
Steve & Shirley Starzyk	19
Ellen & Bob Huxtable	22
Timothy & Marie Aguilar	30



**Planning an event?
a meeting?
a special mission?**

Let **Lisa Youngdahl**, our Communications Manager, know! She is our go-to person for promoting all church programs and activities, but she can't help you unless you let her know what's being planned. We don't want anyone to miss out on any of the wonderful things that are happening at CCoB.



Batavia Nursery School

We kick off May with our year-end program. The kids will be singing many songs that we have been learning over the past six weeks. It is always such a special evening, with so many family members attending and our little ones taking the center stage. Two of our classes visited Elderday to sing them their songs and participate in a craft with their clients. We are so pleased that this partnership has re-blossomed! May also finds our older classes enjoying a field day and picnic at Engstrom Park and our last visit to the Batavia Library, followed by lunch at McDonalds and ending at the Riverwalk Park.



It seems like just yesterday that these kids were walking through our doors, and now we are wishing them well as they get ready for kindergarten or welcoming them back into our four-year-old programs.

We are preparing for five or six weeks of summer camp with many fun activities and crafts to keep these kids busy. Many families send their kids to camp because they are familiar with us, they have made many friends that will also be attending, or they want their child introduced to the building in anticipation of coming here in the fall.

I would like to thank everyone for supporting us this past year through fundraisers, kind words, handyman help, and sharing our name with those looking for a preschool. Sunshine abounds over here, even on the gloomiest of days!

Pam Foelske, Director



*Some of us think holding on
makes us strong, but
sometimes it is letting go.*

Hermann Hesse



Wednesday Morning Women's Bible Study

Wednesday, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.

We come together on Zoom to catch up, pray, and study a book. If you are interested, please be in touch with the office, or just follow this [link](#) on **Wednesday morning**.

We would love to have you join us!

Men's Bible Study

Saturday, 8:00 a.m., on Google Meet

We welcome all men to join us for discussion and prayer as we come together in unity and grow in our journey with Christ. Our study includes books of the Bible and Christian books recommended by members. Men who desire to learn more about the Bible and our faith are welcome. Please email Bob Huxtable at rocketjs59@gmail.com for more information and the meeting link.

Pastor: Paige Wolfanger

Director of Children's Ministries:
Laura Bernabei

Director of Youth Ministries: Suzy Daly

Director of Music: Vicki Linich

Office Manager: Laura Bernabei

Communications Manager: Lisa Youngdahl

Organist: Lily Li

AV Manager: Basil Bevard

Batavia Nursery School Director:
Pam Foelske

Janitorial Service: John Halters

Nursery Attendants:
Megan Behary & Christy Roberts

Council:

Moderator— Jennifer Larson Angelini

Vice Moderator — Amy Allan

Treasurer — Annie Barsch

Clerk — Jean Deptolla

Members-at-Large —
Judy Jablecki • Jeff Crane

Connections: Susan Price

Decorating: Ann Alexander

Facilities: Dave Hummel

Finance:

Chair — Lynne Potter

Treasurer — Annie Barsch

Financial Secretary — Matt Wicks

Ellen Field • Larry Grant • Becky Hall

Sarah Greenhagen McCrea • Lane Severson

Justice & Witness: Ann Alexander

Outreach: Judy Lutz • Don Smith

Worship: Judy Jablecki

Archivist: Larry Grant

Systems Administrator: Phil Woolley

Tower Editor: Barb Zillgitt

Women's Connection

Sunday, May 17, 2026

6:00 p.m.

Church library

Rosemary Henders will lead a discussion of *The Wild and Dark Shore* by Charlotte McConaghy.

If you have any questions about this book discussion group, call Rosemary Henders, 630-308-9269.



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

a just world for all

*United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace,
we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.
We are the United Church of Christ.*

United Church of Christ NEWS

Check out these two links to recent news articles connected to the UCC:

[The rise of Christian nationalism](#) “What we are experiencing in this moment is being fueled by misinformation and disinformation and that has put Christianity at yet another defining moment. As Christian nationalism is touted, lauded, and applauded, we ought to be questioning what this means for a faith that is rooted in love and compassion.” *Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson*

[Funding for HIV care and prevention](#) Nearly 20 states have imposed restrictions on assistance programs that help people access HIV medications, and other states are weighing such changes.

Information taken from the UCC website: ucc.org



*Every season is one of
becoming, but not always one
of blooming. Be gracious with
your ever-evolving self.*

B. Oakman

