



Congregational  
Church of Batavia

# THE TOWER

Congregational Church of Batavia

United Church of Christ

21 South Batavia Avenue, Batavia, IL 60510



June-July 2026

630-879-1999

[office@congregationalchurch.org](mailto:office@congregationalchurch.org)

[congregationalchurch.org](http://congregationalchurch.org)

[ucc.org](http://ucc.org)

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

## What's Happening?

♥ Our worship service on  
June 14 is at 9:30! ♥

June — Strengthen the Church  
offering\*

June 3 — Summer Adventure\*

June 5-7 — Gun Violence Awareness\*

June 10 — Poster making\*

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

June 16 — Summer Adventure\*

June 21 — Fathers' Day with ice  
cream\*

July 15 — Summer Adventure\*

July 21 — August Tower articles due

July 29 — Summer Adventure\*

August 9 — CCoB birthday  
celebration\*, Packing for Radical  
Love\*

August 26 — Summer Adventure\*

\*See related article

## Church Office Hours

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

Wednesday — 8:30-11:00

## From our Moderator...

Ahhh, summer. The anticipation of longer days, pool-side afternoons and firefly-filled evenings. The months leading up to this moment were a whirlwind of activity. We spent many of our evenings at end-of-the-school-year concerts, games, and shows. The stress of high school finals and projects loomed as the manic month of May wound down. I've been ready for slow summer days for months. But as I watched our summer calendar fill up before the season even arrived, my anxiety kicked in. A busy summer equals a quick summer, not a relaxing "ahhh, summer." Amidst my spinning, I remembered the importance of stillness. Finding a pause to acknowledge the present and the moments as we experience them keeps life from passing by in a blur. This is where I often find peace, awareness, joy. This is where I feel and hear the presence of God.

At CCoB, the summer days will be a bustle of activity as well. We have sessions planned in early June to share and hear discussion on membership. We will host a Pride service on Sunday, June 14, to celebrate our diversity and love with our community. There are many opportunities to volunteer at various Batavia events, like the Farmer's Market. CCoB has recently joined the Batavia Chamber of Commerce and Batavia Main Street, so look for even more local community activities and outreach to join in the future. As a church, we are a presence within our neighborhood, community, and beyond. I love to hear the ways we are showing up for others. We continue to grow in numbers. I love to see new faces mingle with the familiar.

If your summer days start to fill up and you feel like they're zipping by, consider taking a pause to settle your mind. Find something that brings you peace – a piece of nature, a memory of family or friends. Allow yourself to slow down, even for a moment, to find awareness in the stillness and sanctuary in the joy.

With peace and joy,  
Jen Larson Angelini, Moderator



Inside each of us is a  
natural-born storyteller,  
waiting to be released.

Robin Moore



## Church Life

**During May, memorial services were conducted for three of our members:**

**Linda Lanthrum — May 3**

**Phil Woolley — May 8**

**Art Zillgitt — May 22**

***“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”***

Jeremiah 29:11

Have you changed your address, email address, or phone number? Don't forget to update your information with the church:

[office@congregationalchurch.org](mailto:office@congregationalchurch.org)

or 630 879 1999.

## From Pastor Paige . . .

### A Sabbatical Second

In 2027, I am due a sabbatical. For clergypersons, this usually means three months away from ministry after anywhere between five and seven years at one congregation. In November 2026, as hard as it might be to believe, I will have been at the Congregational Church of Batavia for six years! Last winter, we spent some time talking about my sabbatical, at the annual meeting, in announcements at church, and in a handful of smaller group meetings after worship. I think it might just be time to recap a bit, and bring everyone up to speed about where we are on the process.

I plan to take my sabbatical in the first quarter of 2027, January, February and March. During this time, I will be riding the rails! Leaving Union Station here in Chicago are a number of named (and rather well-known) train routes across America. They are:

- The Southwest Chief, which goes to Los Angeles, CA.
- The California Zephyr, which terminates in San Francisco, CA.
- The Empire Builder, which takes one to Seattle, WA.
- The Texas Eagle, heading to San Antonio, TX.
- The Floridian, going to Miami, FL.
- The City of New Orleans, which, not surprisingly, goes to New Orleans, LA

I have already had the opportunity to travel the Southwest Chief, the route that actually sparked my interest in train travel. I propose to take the other five in my time away, with some time in between to do laundry and reflect.

In order to do all of this, I gathered a Sabbatical Team, and we wrote a grant for the Lilly Foundation's Clergy Renewal Program. It required us to take into consideration not just my time away, and how that would benefit me, but also the congregation during that time, how you all might spend that time in a way that helps us in the next six years we have together. The idea is to engage in the church's past, present, and future, with things like a history night, an "Annual Report: Live" event, and all reading the same book during the month of March. .

I submitted that grant to Lilly on March 18.

We won't hear anything back until August 28.

That seems like a long time, but the weeks have been flying by. As we wait together to hear about the result, we are also lining up folks to preach those three months I will be away, a plan to make sure we have pastoral care for members during that same period, and beginning to work on the activities for the congregation itself. In the meantime, we wait... and I promised to keep you posted as this process moves forward.

Peace,

*Pastor Paige*



***Stories make us more alive,  
more human, more courageous,  
more loving.***



Madeleine L'Engle



## Connections over the Summer

Summer has officially started, now that Memorial Day is past. It is a busy season for many, and Connections is no exception.

The ongoing Connections work that Karen Kosky does, keeping greeters and coffee hour staffed, has built to a point where we have a goodly group willing to help, so no one needs to feel burdened, which is wonderful. Thank you, Karen, for staying on top of this, and thank you to all our volunteers!

Connections also exists to facilitate our connections to each other in other ways, such as the annual birthday party. I would like to start other group fun, perhaps more pot luck or picnic meals, or movie nights or game days or ...? If you have an idea for an activity you'd like to see happen, let me know.

And enjoy your summer, everyone!

*Susan Price* for Connections Team

Send your August Tower articles to [bzillgitt685@gmail.com](mailto:bzillgitt685@gmail.com) by Tuesday, July 21.

## IT'S SUMMER!!!

...time to sit back, take a breath and listen to or read some of our favorite childhood books (stories). "Storytime" is this summer's sermon theme. Be sure to check in each Sunday to hear a favorite story and how it has a connection to our faith!

Want an easier way to sign up to bring altar flowers, host a coffee hour, greet everyone on Sunday mornings as they enter for worship? With many thanks to Laura Bernabei, you can now sign up online by clicking on the link near the top of each eNews! This link will take you directly to the signup calendar. Find the Sunday of your choice (click on the arrow at the top to the right of the dates for additional Sundays). Opportunities are listed on the left. Each box indicates the number of people needed and who may have already signed up. Click on 'Add' and enter your name. Simple....and we thank you in advance for volunteering!

**PRIDE Sunday is June 14 at 9:30 a.m.:** We are excited to host Batavia's very first Community PRIDE WORSHIP SERVICE with music by our very own Praise Band and the participation of other churches in the service. Please note that for this Sunday we will be starting the service at **9:30 a.m.** This will allow time for fellowship after the service as well as ample travel time for those heading out to be a part of the Aurora Pride Parade. At Coffee Time after the service, we will be providing to-go cups of beverages and water, as well as pre-packaged snacks. Mark your calendar now — **9:30 a.m., Sunday, June 14.**

**Father's Day is June 21,** and we will continue our tradition of celebrating during coffee time with ICE CREAM!!! Join us in Paxton as we celebrate all those who fill the role of father figures in our lives.

Looking ahead — This year we will celebrate our church's birthday on Sunday, August 9, with worship, musical entertainment, and .... FOOD. On this day worship will begin a bit later at 11 a.m. Watch July eNews updates as well as the August *TOWER* for all the details!

Worship Team will next meet on July 14 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom. YOU ARE WELCOME! It's a wonderful time to share ideas about worship. If you want to attend, contact Pastor Paige ([pastor@congregationalchurch.org](mailto:pastor@congregationalchurch.org)) or text Judy Jablecki (630-292-3976), and we will send you the meeting link!

*Judy Jablecki*



*The purpose of a storyteller is not to tell you how to think, but to give you questions to think upon.*



**Brandon Sanderson**



## Church-Wide Mission Project in August

A local organization, Radical Love, provides snack bags to several local schools and housing complexes, including the Batavia Apartments. These families need a little extra help with food to get through weekends, sometimes even just the day. They distribute 350 snack bags each month.

In August, as we celebrate the church's 191<sup>st</sup> birthday, we will decorate paper lunch bags with pictures and words of encouragement (you've got this, thinking of you, you are special, you are important to me), because friendship and love help bring a smile to the face of the receiving child.

Then we will fill the bags with snack items. Snack items going into the bags **MUST** be *non-perishable and nut-free*. Some ideas: Utz Pretzels, Barnums Animal crackers, Graham crackers, Skinny Pop original popcorn, Veggie Straws (Sensible Portions Sea Salt ONLY), Nabisco Ritz Original, Made Good bars, small boxes of cereal, meat sticks, and raisins. Please try to avoid sugary items. We will begin collecting snack items in July

The snack bags will be delivered to Radical Love by September 1 to be distributed in September. Watch for updates in the E-news!



Outreach Ministry Team

The **Share and Care Fund** at CCoB is designed to help our brothers and sisters in Christ who may have some unmet, urgent financial need. Generally, Pastor Paige is approached by someone who needs some financial help. It may be needing to buy gasoline or even supplies at the pharmacy. At Pastor Paige's discretion, Share and Care money can then be distributed.

If you wish to contribute to Share and Care, you may go to Giving on Realm and use the pull down menu for "Share and Care." You may also write a check to Congregational Church of Batavia ( write "Share and Care" on the memo line) or place a gift in the little church outside the sanctuary with your wishes shown. Thank you so much for your consideration of this opportunity.



## Strengthen the Church

During the entire month of June, we'll be having our annual **UCC Strengthen the Church** campaign which supports congregational growth, youth ministries, and leadership development through conferences and national ministries.

Strengthen the Church, through the UCC:

- Plants new churches
- Awakens innovative ideas in existing congregations
- Fosters spiritual development

If you wish to contribute to the Strengthen the Church Campaign, you may use the pull down menu on Realm Giving, write at check to Congregational Church of Batavia (noting Strengthen the Church on the memo line), or make a contribution by placing it in the little white church collection box outside the sanctuary and writing your wishes on the envelope.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this very worthy UCC giving campaign.

The Outreach Ministry Team



*When you tell a story, you spark a connection. That is the power of storytelling.*



Jay O'Callahan

## *A Summer Blessing*

*May you walk with God  
This summer  
In whatever you do  
Wherever you go*

*Walking with God means...  
Walking with honesty  
And with courage,  
Walking with love  
And respect  
And concern for the feelings of others*

*May you talk to God  
This summer  
And every day and  
In every situation*

*Talking with God means...  
Praying words of praise  
For the beauty of creation  
Saying prayers of thanks  
For friends and good times,  
Asking God's help  
In all your decisions  
Expressing sorrow  
When you have failed*

*May you talk with God  
Every day. Amen.*

*Author unknown  
From [xavier.edu](http://xavier.edu)*



## Justice and Witness

Our church is a contributing member of the **Fox River Valley Initiative (FRVI)**, a non-profit organization consisting of 21 religious and civic institutions organized across Kane County, Illinois. **FRVI** is an affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), part of the oldest and largest network of broad-based citizen organizations in the country, with over 65 organizations in the USA, the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, and Australia.



As a member of this organization, we join with other institutions in strengthening a nonpartisan, nonprofit that serves families across Kane County. Over the past year, the **Fox River Valley Initiative** has been rebuilding, focusing on the issues that most affect our communities.

Last November, community members gathered in Elgin to secure commitments from local and state officials to expand affordable housing, reduce barriers to development, increase public funding, and reopen the Crisis Stabilization Unit in Aurora. **FRVI** is continuing this work in the year ahead. We have an energetic, dedicated **FRVI Organizer, Mary Kim**, who is leading this resurgence. She is a pleasure to work with.

As a nonprofit, **Fox River Valley Initiative** relies on financial support to sustain and grow this momentum. They have launched a campaign to meet their expanding needs with a goal of raising **\$40,000** this year.

As you consider your charitable giving, please consider making a donation to support the work of **Fox River Valley Initiative**.

- Online at <https://frvi.org/donate>
- By check made out to DuPage Sponsors- Fox River Valley Initiative, 41 North Park Blvd., Glen Ellyn, IL, 60137

Thank you for being a friend of the Fox River Valley Initiative!

**Gun Violence Awareness:** Don't forget 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.

**PRIDE Sunday: June 14, 9:30 am: Please make note of the time change for this Sunday.** This is a community service and our doors are open to all. Invite your friends, your neighbors, — anyone — as we worship together.

And join us for **Pride Poster Making Night, Wednesday, June 10, at 6:00 p.m.**

*Ann Alexander, Chair J&W*



**Stories create community, enable us to see through the eyes of other people, and open us to the claims of others.**



**Peter Forbes**



**Troop 43**



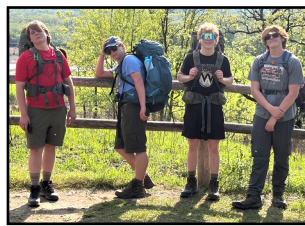
*Thank you to everyone who helped to make Art's memorial service and meal such a special event for me, Art's family, and all of our guests. So many things went into the day: setting up Paxton Hall, donating food, arranging the service and bulletin, providing sound and streaming services, serving food, cleaning up, and much more. Thank you also for your constant support and friendship. I am grateful.*

*Barb Zillgitt*

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

Greetings from Troop 43! May-cember has lived up to its name, keeping everyone in Troop 43 quite busy! This summer likewise seems to be filled with great adventures.

Our May “campout” ended up being a day trip to Chinatown in Chicago. We had a great tour organized through the Chinatown Cultural Institute that included stops inside and out, with interesting notes, and a delicious lunch — some of the best green beans some of us have ever had. We also enjoyed free time that included shopping, exploring, and partaking in bakeriy, and ice cream! Until we can manage an overseas trip, aren't we lucky to live close to the magnificently multicultural metropolis of Chicago!



The Philmont group continues to train hard, with an overnight near the Kettle Moraine Ice Age Trail. The group managed to hike 15 miles, learning a lot, and realizing that the one day was harder than anything they'll experience at Philmont — feeling prepared for the big event in July!

Several Scouts will be attending the Order of the Arrow (honor society) campout the last weekend of May — some for the first time, others as leaders now.

June will begin our more relaxed meetings like the annual Disc Golf & New Summer Camp Parent meeting at Wheeler Park in Geneva. That gives families two weeks to finish preparing for another summer at Camp Owasippe in Michigan, nearly making this Troop 43's “home” summer camp. We'll even have one of our older Scouts as a camp counselor there all summer!

July will likely be quieter as a complete troop, but will see 9 Scouts and 3 adult volunteers travel to New Mexico to walk up a mountain and back over the course of the week. A different group will be traveling with Scoutmaster Frank Downey to Virginia for the 2026 National Jamboree: like summer camp amplified so much they can only have it every four years! We are also wishing our Org. Rep., Matt Wicks, well as he travels to Missouri to work for six weeks this summer at his childhood Scout camp. We can't wait to hear and share all the summer adventure stories in a few months!!

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



***The human species thinks in metaphors and learns through stories.***



**Mary Catherine Bateson**

# Celebrate!



## June Birthdays

Hunter Freeman	2
Barb Mahood	2
Teddy Thomas	2
Steve Doty	4
Michael Doranski	6
Sally Kabbe	8
Pat Hummel	9
Finn Plamondon	9
Kristin Lasta	12
Karen Staulcup	15
Karl Deptolla	17
Charlie Thomas	18
Jean Stone	19
Kristen Fischer	22
Julie Sayers	22
Liz VanCleave	22
Michelle Moritz	24
Barb Zillgitt	24
Sue Prokop	25
Ali Schneider	26
Shirley Starzyk	26
Adam Greenhagen	29
Ray Kernler	30

## June Anniversaries

Mark & Kris Luedtke	1
Cari & Gordon Sindelar	3
Susan & Jake DeKoyer	9
Marnie & David Mamminga	13
Chris & Jeff Palmquist	24
Jason & Lauren Schneider	24
Barb & Mike Mahood	26
Cindy & Craig Neader	26
Jayne & Lisa VandenHeuvel	27
Karen & Mike Kosky	30
Natalie & Ryan Mecum	30



## Children & Youth Ministries

### Summer Adventures

6:00 - 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted



June 3 - Meet at [Mt. St Mary's Park](#) in St Charles, meet near the main parking lot. Plan to bring a picnic meal or snack for yourselves.

**Tuesday, June 16** is our field trip to the Batavia Food Pantry and Clothes Closet. [Meet at the Food Pantry.](#) Sign Up to go [here](#) by June 11.

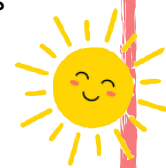
July 1 - Will you be in town or available to meet? Let Suzy or Laura know if you think we should meet on this day.

July 15 - Meet at the church where we will make some casseroles for Lazarus House and celebrate National Ice Cream Day early with some treats.

July 29 - Movie Night at the church! Bring a blanket/pillow to get comfy while we watch a movie and eat snacks. Send movie recommendations to Suzy and Laura.

August 12 - First day of Batavia Schools, we will take the night off! INSTEAD, plan to come to the church's birthday event on **Sunday August 9**. We'll switch things up a bit and all ages will work together putting together student snack bags for [Radical Love](#).

August 26 - An evening at Windy Acres Farm. **5pm - 7pm**



*Storytelling is the most powerful way to put ideas into the world.*

Robert McKee

# Celebrate!



## July Birthdays

Henry Sindelar	2
David Eddy	3
Mike Jablecki	5
Chris Vanko	5
Luke Schafer	6
Carol Plamondon	8
Tom VanCleave	9
Emilia Ollearis	11
Lane Severson	12
Gary Guenther-Wright	14
Erik Osterby	15
Steve Starzyk	15
Art Blodgett	16
Rob Luedtke	17
Andrew Coan	19
Basil Bevard	20
Tony Malay	20
Len Ollearis	20
Helen Thelin	24
Jim Huber	26
Veronica Kernler	26
Chris Palmquist	27
Phoebe Daly	28
Jim Schneider	30

## July Anniversaries

Kimo & Shannon Hemmes	11
Mike & Linda Straka	11
Randy & Eileen Forman	17
Jeff & Lynne Potter	19
Ken & Mary Jane McFee	25

We'd love to celebrate your birthdays and anniversaries with you and your family. If your information is missing or incorrect, please contact the church office:  
[office@congregationalchurch.org](mailto:office@congregationalchurch.org)  
 or 630 879 1999.



Back Bay Mission is a nearly 100-year-old mission site of the United Church of Christ, located in Biloxi, MS. Over the decades BBM has served thousands of people in need. This July our high school youth, chaperoned by Mike LeResche and Suzy Daly, will head down to serve wherever needed. We may paint, do minor home repair, serve the unsheltered at the Micah Day center, work in the food pantry, or serve food through Loaves and Fishes. We depart on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and return on the 11<sup>th</sup>. We would appreciate prayers for safe travel, work, fellowship, and fun.



## Batavia Nursery School



We ended our school year on a fun note with the end of the year picnic and our last field trip to the Riverwalk Park in downtown Batavia. We donated the money we have been collecting all year to the Youth Services Department at the library as a thank you for story hours they provided us during the school year.

Our summer camps begin in June, running five weeks throughout the summer months. It is always a fun way for some of the kids to end their time with us before heading to kindergarten and for the new students to get acquainted with the building for Fall. We will keep our fingers crossed for beautiful weather during these camps

In addition to the camps running, a couple of us will be working on scheduling field trips, planning fundraisers, and getting the curriculum in place for the upcoming year. All the teachers will continue to work towards the fifteen hours of continuing education required each year and/or updates on their CPR-First Aid training. A much-needed break over the summer months, but we all stay quite busy with things related to BNS!

We do still have openings for the upcoming school year if you come across anyone looking for a preschool spot for Fall. They can call the school office at 630-879-9470 or send an email [office@batavianurseryschool.org](mailto:office@batavianurseryschool.org).

Pam Foelske, Director



*People think that stories are shaped by people. In fact, it's the other way around.*

Terry Pratchett

## 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](mailto: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

**Tower Editor:** Barb Zillgitt

## Women's Connection

6:00 p.m.  
Church library

**Sunday, June 14, 2026**

Lynne Potter will lead a discussion of  
*The Alice Network* by Kate Quinn

**Sunday, July 19, 2026**

Judy Flury will lead a discussion of  
*Funny Farm* by Laurie Zaleski

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



# United Church of Christ NEWS

*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.*

The UCC provides many columns and articles exploring current issues and events. The links below will take you to some of these sites.

### [Getting to the Root of It](#)

Analysis and discussion of critical social justice issues

### [Encounters at the Well](#)

Stories about spiritual growth and connection

### [Reflexiones](#)

Reflections on faith, life and spirituality by guest writers

### [On My Mind Today](#)

Columns from Karen Georgia A. Thompson, the UCC  
General Minister and President



*Stories are memory aids,  
instruction manuals and  
moral compasses.*



Aleks Krotoski