



Congregational
Church of Batavia

THE TOWER

Congregational Church of Batavia

United Church of Christ

21 South Batavia Avenue, Batavia, IL 60510

August 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.



Our worship service on
August 9 is at 11:00!



What's Happening?

August 2 — Hymn Sing

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

August 25 — Tower articles due

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

Swimming, One Day in August

Mary Oliver

*It is time now, I said,
for the deepening and quieting of the spirit
among the flux of happenings.*

*Something had pestered me so much
I thought my heart would break.
I mean, the mechanical part.*

*I went down in the afternoon
to the sea
which held me, until I grew easy.*

*About tomorrow, who knows anything.
Except that it will be time, again,
for the deepening and quieting of the spirit.*

Mary Oliver's reflections on August welcome us to a deepening and quieting of the Spirit in these final days of summer. Though we may not have a "sea" here in Batavia to dip our toes into, we do have the quarry, Lake Michigan, backyard pools, (perhaps even still-flooded basements from July's deluge!), and places to frolic in the water at our favorite vacation spots. Summer provides a break from the school year rhythm where we may have solitude to reflect on our spiritual well-being in a way that is meaningful...soulful.

In this moment, where are you seeing the Spirit move? How is the Spirit opening your eyes to new ways of being? In what ways is the Spirit comforting you, guiding you, enlivening you, refreshing you? Are there times when the Spirit feels far away or silent? What are new places you'd like to explore with the Spirit? Is there a word of peace you've received from the Spirit?

As the winds blow and the Spirit moves, my prayer for all of us at the Congregational Church of Batavia is that we would embrace a deepening and quieting of the Spirit this August. I am reminded of the encouragement found in 2 Corinthians 3:17: *wherever the Spirit walks, freedom follows!* May Spirit-infused freedom be yours, my siblings.

Amy N. Allan, Vice Moderator



*Words are like bees — some create
honey and others leave a sting.*

Unknown

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

office@congregationalchurch.org
or 630 879 1999.



Just a Click Away!

Our worship services are live-streamed and then available for viewing on YouTube. You can find the link for the current worship service in the weekly e-news which is sent out every Tuesday and Friday, on the [church website](#), and on the [online calendar](#). When using the online calendar, simply click on "Worship Service" on any given Sunday to open a window containing the stream link. Our past services are available on the [church YouTube](#) channel.

Send your September Tower articles to
bzillgitt685@gmail.com
by Tuesday, August 25.

From Pastor Paige...

Hope from the Hospital Bed

I have to admit, it's been a really rough year for me and my family. Last June, I landed in the hospital with a serious staph infection in my left hand. In March of this year I slipped on some black ice on my front patio and seriously messed up my left ankle, requiring surgery. And here at the end of this June, my car was hit head on by another car, totaling my beloved CR-V and sending me back to the surgeon, this time for my right ankle. And that doesn't even count the hospitalizations both Michelle and Liam had during the same time period. Like I said, a really rough year.

And so, as I find myself once again mostly confined to the hospital bed set up in our living room as I recover, I also find I'm feeling more than just a little bit sorry for myself. I'm sad and discouraged, restless and anxious, angry and frustrated. But all I can keep thinking to myself, as these very real emotions hover around me, is that I don't have the right to feel them, ***"Because other people have it worse than I do."*** And they do...I know they do, and a whole lot of them at that. So now, on top of feeling sad and discouraged, restless and anxious, angry and frustrated, I also feel ***guilty***.

I can't tell you how many times I, as a pastor, have heard these exact same words from the mouths of folks going through their own set of challenges... health issues, financial issues, relationship issues, issues that are all a part of what it means to be human. And generally when that happens, I say to them that it is not only ***okay*** to feel what they are feeling, it is ***necessary***. These emotions are authentic reactions to difficult situations, and moreover, they are a part of the human experience. To stifle or deny them can mean that they are never dealt with in a healthy manner, and if not, we can get stuck in the valley of darkness with them...stuck, unable to move on into a more positive and joyful place. I remind them that Jesus himself was no stranger to the darker emotions of human life, and that he allowed himself to experience them along with the "good" emotions, as they are all part of the palette of feelings we know in life. This is good, solid theology, as well as being good, solid psychology.

I know these things to be true. I also struggle to live them. And so I am trying to be a kind host to these feelings, if not to even make friends with them. Because they are real. Because they are human. Because they demand a bit of my attention. Because they must be compassionately embraced before they can finally be sent on their way. It's not the most comfortable work, but it is essential to good mental, emotional, and spiritual health. So, I persist.

I share these thoughts with you today because I know I am not alone in this liminal space. We all find ourselves there at one time or another. So, let's walk the path before us together, knowing that Jesus Christ, who was a stranger to nothing human, walks with us, too. We're in this humanity thing together, and that is good for us to remember.

Yours from the hospital bed,
Pastor Paige



***Gracious words are a honeycomb,
sweet to the soul and healing to
the bones.***

Proverbs 16:24

Membership: What We Said, and What's Next

So, you may be wondering, what was all that hullabaloo about membership? I filled out the survey (or meant to), but that was WEEKS ago! Weren't there some in-person meetings? I know it's summer and all, but what's next?

We shared some major themes from the survey at the end of May, and here's a quick reminder:

- Commitment and Service
- Community, Family and Welcome
- Active Participation
- UCC Theology, Belief, Mission, and Growth in Faith
- Social Justice and Inclusivity, Open and Affirming

When Council started discussing "membership," it was pretty basic. How do people feel about the word "member"? Is it welcoming and inclusive, or does it sound exclusive? Do we need new language? Is our process open and affirming? What about our record keeping? Are all our records aligned with one another? How confident are we in our reported numbers? We know we need a quorum for voting, and what is a quorum anyway?

So, we surveyed, we met, and learned a LOT!! First, most folks don't have any problem with the word membership. But we acknowledge that there can be an unintended message that feels exclusive, especially for those who have had difficult experiences in the past.

We learned that many who have chosen to become members wanted to publicly show their commitment to the church. Others wanted a path to being a more active participant. Some joined because CCOB was their local church, they were raised in the UCC, or had been attending a UCC church and moved here. Our message of welcome, social justice work, and status of being open and affirming were important.

Membership signals that we are a church family, and it is important to us that we welcome and include all, regardless of whether they have made the decision to join formally. That said, there is also agreement that membership indicates a level of commitment and accountability, and participation in making decisions about the church, managing our finances, and leading the direction and operations of the church — this is highly important.

We want membership to be a joyful invitation! *The overall goal is to be an active, healthy, and growing community of faith.* So here's a question: What helps people stay active, connected, and growing their faith within our church family? What inspires people to want to be members?

To start finding some answers, we have some beginning activities — and (surprise!) we will be asking for folks to join in the effort.

- We are assembling a group to work on a definition, or perspective on membership, specifically communicating what that means for us as a congregation. We want it to be an extravagant welcome, an invitation to belong.
- We will review and update our membership policy and processes. I have a history of how it has looked in our constitution, starting with 1902 and up to today (someone was at the archives again!). Good news: we don't need to rewrite the constitution itself, so feel free to volunteer!
- We also want to gather ideas about what more we can do to help more folks feel connected, have more opportunities to be active, and grow our church as a place of welcome, acceptance, and love. We have some ideas already on the to do list, but are looking for more.

I can FEEL your excitement from here!!! So, if you feel that whisper in your ear that says "you have great things to contribute to this effort", please let me know! You can reach me at clerk@congregationalchurch.org to:

- Volunteer for the group to create our statement or definition of membership
- Chime in and give feedback about our processes (I'm happy to share any or all of our historic Constitutions from the Archive)
- Have a favorite activity from the past you'd like to see again, a new idea for an activity or fellowship, or a way to help us reach out, and feel connected

Or shoot me an email if you just have an opinion. If you forgot about the survey, or couldn't attend a meeting. I'm always up for a chat over a cup of coffee.

Jean Deptolla, Clerk



*It is not how busy you are, but
why you are busy — the bee is
praised, the mosquito is swatted.*

Unknown



Worship Ministry Team



WE'RE HAVING A PARTY....A BIRTHDAY PARTY!!

Come celebrate our church's 191st birthday on Sunday, August 9! The day will begin at 11:00 am (**note the later time for this day**) in Paxton Hall as we worship and share in Communion. Then it's time for food, fun, music, and activity.

- We will provide fried chicken and birthday cake. Please bring a dish to share.
- Listen to music by Acappellago, Averling and members of our Praise Band (Jean, Greg, and Kayla)
- Help decorate and fill Snack Bags for local school children.

See you there!

In August, our summer worship series, "Storytime," will resume as Pastor Paige connects our favorite childhood storybooks with relevant Bible passages.

Join us at the next Worship Team meeting (via Zoom) on Tuesday, August 11, 6:30 p.m. as we plan worship services and activities for the rest of 2026. We are always looking for people and their ideas to be a part of our team! Just contact the church office, Pastor Paige (pastorpaige@congregationalchurch.org), or Judy Jablecki (judyjablecki@comcast.net), and we will send you the meeting link!

Connections Team



August is the anniversary month of the formation of the Congregational Church of Batavia. This year we will celebrate the church's 191st birthday on August 9, with a service at **11 am** (note time change!) followed by a potluck lunch and music from our favorite musical friends: Acappellago, Aeverling, and Jean and Greg. And also birthday cake. Because a party without cake might as well just be a meeting, right?

Oh, and September is right behind August, so you might start thinking now about linking up with some of the connection activities within the church: obvious connection activity like greeting, coffee hour hosting, and providing meals to individuals or families needing our physical – and emotional – support. The meal effort widens at the need to the provision of luncheons or desserts for memorial services or other church events. I do have about a dozen people I can contact for these, but I would really like to develop a list of folks willing to bring a meal to individuals, couples, and families facing challenges – whether misfortunes such as illness or the good stress of a new baby in the family.

Also, choir and other special music starts up again in September. Vicki is always looking for new choir members – and you don't need to show up every week, just let her know what weeks you won't be around on Sunday. But if that much commitment is too burdensome, she has a men's choir and a women's choir a couple of times a year, and that only takes showing up for one rehearsal and the following Sunday. Or, if you want to dip your toes into choral music with lots of rehearsal for one performance, talk to Vicki about being part of the Christmas music program. Rehearsals for that usually start in mid- to late October.

If you're interested in any of the non-musical activities I've mentioned, contact Laura in the church office or Pastor Paige, and they will let me know, or contact me directly. And my continuing thanks to all who have jumped in as needs have come up in the past year or so.

Susan Price, Connections

susannprice@gmail.com



*Bees are indicators of the
health of our planet. If they
are well, we are well.*

Silvia Goren



Justice and Witness

Hallelujah! Our J&W grant proposal was approved!

Thanks to a generous \$10,000 check from Christ Church of Oak Brook, (and the assistance of Bob Huxtable) the Congregational Church of Batavia will be hosting a monthly community dinner. We will invite and welcome those in the area who may be struggling financially, as well as those who may be lonely.

The dinner will not only provide good food, but our team will have the chance to ask attendees, **“How can we help?”** Based on responses, we should be able to expand our outreach program. This grant will enable us to help with needs like gas, groceries, school supplies and limited emergency rent assistance.

We will also use these dinners as an opportunity to connect people with other Kane County agencies that provide services such as simple home repairs, rides to appointments, etc.

There are 10,400 households in Batavia alone with approximately 600 at or below the federal poverty line. Our school system serves at least 100 students experiencing homelessness. We know there is need in the Fox Valley for benevolent support.

We need to connect with other churches who provide similar meals to coordinate the best day of the month, as well as seek advice on how best to get this ministry up and running. **This is an amazing opportunity and challenge to make a difference.**

I pray the entire CCOB church family will partner with Justice & Witness to make these monthly dinners an ongoing success.

Ann Alexander, J&W chair



Outreach Ministry Team



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 191st birthday, we will decorate paper lunch bags with pictures and words of encouragement, e.g. *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 ***non-perishable and nut-free*** snack items. 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. The Outreach Team is providing drinks for the bags. We will have paper bags, markers, colored pencils, crayons and staplers available.

For the information, please read [this flier](#) we have been provided about assembling the snack bags. The snack bags will be delivered to Radical Love by September 1 to be distributed in September. Watch for updates in the E-news!

Volunteers are needed to work at the Batavia Interfaith Food Pantry the third Tuesday of the month from 12:45 - 3:00 p.m. Join your fellow CCoB members to help clients shop for food. This is a great opportunity for high school students to earn volunteer hours. Please contact Judy Lutz (Judy.lutz@comcast.net) for more information.



*As the bee gathers the juice of
the flowers without damaging
their color and perfume, so the
wise dwell in the world.*

Buddha





Troop 43



Greetings from Troop 43! July has been a whirlwind of excitement.

July saw not one, but TWO Eagle Board of Reviews resulting in Troop 43 adding Kye Hill and Carter Restaino to our Eagle roster. This means filling in the last name on one plaque and adding a whole new plaque to our wall in the Pine Room.

The Philmont Crew returned after a once-in-a-lifetime trek up the Tooth of Time mountain near Cimarron, NM. The stories continue to roll in about the activities, service project, and literally breathtaking views. Well-done, all!

The last third of the month sees a contingency led by Scoutmaster Frank Downey off to the National Jamboree at Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia. Like summer camp on lots of Mt. Dew, there will be thousands of Scouts from all over the nation converging for adventures and patch exchanges.

We welcome back our two summer camp counselors, Matt Wicks in Missouri and Nate Grohe in Michigan.

Can't say enough how proud we are of all our Scouts, for achieving through Summer camps, High Adventure, Jamboree, and advancements through Eagle. Please look out for details on the return of the Corn & Brat event, which we're hoping to host in conjunction with a neighboring troop late-summer/early-fall.

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

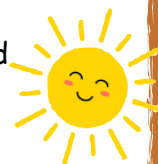
Summer Adventures

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



August Youth Group Wednesdays:

We planned to meet on August 12, but Batavia Schools start on Aug 13. INSTEAD, plan to come to our birthday worship and mission project on **Sunday, August 9, at 11 a.m.** This will be followed by brunch, music in Paxton Hall, and child/youth activities and games in the Pine Room.



On **August 26**, we will meet at Windy Acres Farm to enjoy time together exploring the farm—complete with apple cider donuts. The whole family is invited. We do need a headcount, so please RSVP to children@congregationalchurch.org with your name and the number of people attending, by August 23.

Upcoming dates include: September 9, 23;
October 7, 21; November 4, 18; December 2, 16.



Consider the bees: they gather honey from flowers and have no need for gold. All creation speaks of the glory of God.

Ecclesiasticus 11:3

Celebrate!



August Birthdays

Scott Schafer	1
Bryn Nelson	3
Harrison Schneider	3
Irene Crane	4
Olivia Mecum	8
Dawn Clanton	14
Marnie Mamminga	15
Jason Schneider	17
Maya Malay	19
Randy Forman	20
Laurie Buyer	21
Carole Larson	22
Samuel Offenbecher	23
Nate Schafer	25
Bill Cooper	26
Laura Jocson	26
Pat Vidlak	27
Annabelle Greenhagen	28
Nico Lasta	29
Troy Malay	29
Bob Van Dame	30

August Anniversaries

Carolyn & Stan Oke	3
Sue Prokop & Dave Jungels	4
Bill & Sue Blair	6
Lane & Laura Severson	6
Laura & Chuck Bernabei	8
Chris & Paige Vanko	9
Judy & Mike Jablecki	10
Andrew & Corinne Stontz	19
Carol & Ed Plamondon	30
Carolyn & Ed Werneke	30

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
 or 630 879 1999.



**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



Summer camp bike races

August finds us finished with our five summer camps that ran a variety of weeks starting in June. Kids had a great time doing crafts, hearing fun stories, and singing silly camp songs! August also finds the education wing a busy place as we get our classrooms set up, our bulletin boards hung, all toys cleaned (and that is a HUGE amount of cleaning!!), crafts prepped, and curriculum ready to get our year started.

We are heading into our 52nd year filled with anticipation to introduce new families to our wonderful school, as well as welcoming back returning families. We still are looking to fill a few open spots, so if you hear of anyone looking for a preschool, please send them our way!

Pam Foelske, Director



*Bees are proof that we can
have a positive impact on the
world, regardless of our size.*

Sylvia Earle

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

The Men's Bible Study group is a vibrant community that enjoys fun fellowship and engaging study. We spend our time together exploring the Bible and Christian books that help us live more intentionally. We also support each other, pray with each other, and cultivate meaningful friendships. So, grab your cup of coffee: we warmly invite you to join our weekly Saturday morning online meetings. Contact the church office (office@congregationalchurch.org) for the meeting link or if you have any questions.

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, August 16, 2026

Lynn Smith will lead a discussion of
*The Officer's Daughter: A Memoir of Family
and Forgiveness* by Elle Johnson

If you have any questions about this book discussion group,
contact 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.

UCC Help for Venezuela

On June 24, 2026, two 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude earthquakes struck northern Venezuela. Significant damage has been reported across northern Venezuela, including the capital city Caracas and the government of Venezuela has declared a state of emergency. Immediate impacts include loss of shelter, infrastructure, disruption of basic services, and psychosocial distress. Long-term impacts are expected to include prolonged displacement and loss of livelihoods.

The Global HOPE team is working with its partners [one of which is the UCC] through ACT Alliance and Global Ministries to accompany those most deeply impacted by this tragedy. Members of ACT Alliance are working to provide shelter, mental health and psychosocial support services, food security and nutrition support, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) support in the immediate future and plans are being developed for long-term accompaniment and recovery support.

While communication remains slow due to collapsed infrastructure, we will continue to provide updates as we receive them. We invite you to please continue to keep all those impacted in your prayers.

From the UCC website: ucc.org



*Bees do not discriminate against
flowers. They collect nectar from
all plants and create beauty. There
is much we can learn from them.*

Jane Goodall