



Congregational  
Church of Batavia

# THE TOWER

Congregational Church of Batavia

United Church of Christ

21 South Batavia Avenue, Batavia, IL 60510



October 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

The theme for October is "Harvest".

## What's Happening?

**October 4 — World Wide Communion;  
Neighbors in Need campaign begins\*;  
Stewardship Campaign begins\***

**October 6, 13 — Death, Grief, and Living  
the Good Life adult ed**

**October 7, 21, 28 — Primer on Christian  
Nationalism**

**October 21 — Taizé service\***

**October 20 — Tower articles due**

**October 24 — Batavia Batfest & Trunk or  
Treat**

**October 25 — Reformation Sunday,  
Gospel of Thomas adult ed**

**November 1 — All Saints Sunday\*,  
Gospel of Thomas adult ed**

**November 8 — First Nations Sunday\***

**November 11 — Taizé service\***

**November 15 — Gift Festival, Gospel of  
Thomas adult ed**

**November 26 — Thanksgiving potluck\***

**November 29 — Beginning of Advent**

**December 21 — Longest Night service**

\*See related article

## Church Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday,  
Friday —

8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Wednesday — 8:30-11:00 a.m.



## From Our Moderator...

There are so many beautiful, ordinary pieces of October. The crisp fresh air. The color of the leaves changing to vibrant reds and oranges. The layering of cozy sweaters and sweatshirts to keep us warm. The smell of burning leaves and fire pits that lingers in the air.

None of these moments is extraordinary. Yet these ordinary parts of our day invite us to stop and notice.

Perhaps faith is like that, too. We often look for God in the big moments — the answered prayer, the milestone, the celebration. But God is present in the ordinary as well: a conversation after worship, a child's laughter, a shared meal, a connection with your neighbor, a walk on the river path, or a quiet moment of gratitude.

October reminds us that beauty doesn't always grandly announce itself. It also simply unfolds, quietly, in the midst of an ordinary day.

So this month, perhaps we practice noticing the moments. An open window to enjoy the fresh air. Your first taste of warm chili. Our neighbors around us: those we know and those we don't. Watching the rain from a comfy space. The ordinary moments that make us smile, that bring us joy, that offer Light and Hope on the dark days.

And in those ordinary gifts, may we recognize the extraordinary grace of our God who is present with us, always.

*Jen Larson Angelini*



*Do one thing every day  
that scares you.*

*Eleanor Roosevelt*



## Church Life

**On September 4, Pastor Paige married Ryan Leen & Mathew Giffin.**

**On September 6, Pastor Paige baptized Mateo Martinez, son of Guadalupe Vargas & Jose L. Martinez.**

**On Sunday, September 13, we welcomed these new members into the life of CCOB.**

**Katherine Anderson & Laurie Geschrev:** Katherine retired from careers in sales and health care. Laurie retired after careers in business, hospice, and senior housing.

**Carol Patterson** is happy to be returning to CCOB.

**Steve & Susan Cromwell,** parents of Lucinda Page, have been attending CCOB since Covid and plan to move to Batavia in a few years.

**Cameron Simpson & Kayla Baumgardner:** Cameron works for an insurance brokerage and is a lifelong crafter. Kayla has been playing with the Praise Band, and loves making music, reading, writing, and art.



## The Start of Stewardship 2026

Our annual Stewardship Campaign will run through the month of October, which is appropriate as this year we are embracing a harvest theme. *We Gather Together: Community, Blessing, Generosity* will explore some of the ways in which we gather:

- We gather regularly as followers of Christ, a faith community, to worship, to learn, to plan, to do good in the world, and sometimes, just to have a good time.
- We gather the blessings God has for us as part of this thing we call the Church, blessings both material and spiritual, personal and communal, as we experience the grace of God.
- We gather our own gifts to offer to God to use in the mission and ministry that we claim and enact as part of this faith fellowship.

Each week in October, we will look in depth at each of these themes as we celebrate Community, Blessing, and Generosity. But more on that as the month unfolds.

What I want to talk about now is how your pledge goes to work on behalf of the Congregational Church of Batavia. A pledge is simply the amount you believe you can give to the church in the next year, an estimation of your gift, not a binding contract that the Finance Team will hold you to. We know things can change, but a pledge allows us to estimate how much we will have in the coming year, and is essential as we create a budget. And that budget contains all the things that are necessary for us to do the mission and ministry into which we understand Christ to be calling us. It covers such things as caring for our *physical building*, paying *staff salaries*, funding *education* for all ages, and allowing us to *reach out* to our community in acts of *charity and giving*, as well as *fellowship and neighborliness*. Our annual giving allows us to have a *music ministry*, *decorations* for the sanctuary, *fellowship meals* throughout the year, a *mission trip* for our youth, *bulletins*, *heat, air conditioning*, and *online worship* each Sunday, just to name a few of the things we do with our gifts.

So, I hope that you can join us each Sunday for this exploration of what it means to harvest, to gather. But I also hope you prayerfully consider what you can give this year, how you can give, so that the Congregational Church of Batavia can continue the ministry it began 191 years ago, a mission of God's grace, love, and justice.



*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God.*

Isaiah 41:10

## INVITATION TO SUPPORT KAY ANGEL CHILDREN'S HOME

I invite you to join in continuing our 16 years of support to Kay Angel Children's Home in Jacmel, Haiti, providing a home for 13 abandoned children and raising them to responsible adulthood. Gala Calisto, the home's director (and Mom) recently wrote with an update.

- Three young ladies have just graduated from high school; two are pursuing careers in nursing and social work.
- Three other students continue their high school education.

**This good news is due in part to the support you have provided.**

The family has also had severe medical challenges due to lack of medical resources and prescription medicines. Gala writes, "The medical system is a threat to my family, and I am tired of seeing my family suffer. I am on a mission now to build a lab and a proper pharmacy. My family needs this... and my community needs this."

**You may read Gala's full update [here](#).**

**As in past years, this special offering is running jointly with Men's Bible Study. Please help continue our church's support of Kay Angel, now through October 15.**

### **Here's how to give:**

1. Text **"CCOB MBS" to 73256** and follow the prompts.
2. Give a gift online:  
<https://onrealm.org/CCBatavia/give/MBS>
3. By check, noting "Men's Bible Study" in the memo line.

Thank you.  
*Bob Huxtable*



Do you know the church emails  
updates and news every Tuesday and Friday?  
Are you getting them?

If not, would you like to?

Make sure the church office has your preferred email address by emailing the office at [office@congregationalchurch.org](mailto:office@congregationalchurch.org), calling the office at 630-879-1999, or writing your email address next to your name when you log in your attendance on Sunday mornings.

Outreach Ministry Team



## Neighbors in Need

**The UCC Neighbors in Need Campaign is scheduled  
for October 2026 at CCOB...**

The **Neighbors in Need** offering supports ministries of justice and compassion, with one-third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two-thirds supporting UCC justice ministries. In 2025 the Neighbors in Need Offering supported 26 grant recipients across the UCC who were engaged in projects of direct service and advocacy. In 2026, at Congregational Church of Batavia, **October 4**, through the month of October, will be our special collection for this wonderful giving opportunity. If you wish to donate, please make your check out to **Congregational Church of Batavia** (Marking NIN on the memo line), use the link on Realm for Neighbors in Need (<https://onrealm.org/CCBatavia/give/NIN>), or scan/text the link below.

Thank you for your support and generosity for our 2026 Neighbors in Need Campaign.

*Don Smith*



*Peace is what I leave with you; it is my  
own peace that I give you. I do not give  
it as the world does. Do not be worried  
and upset; do not be afraid.*

*John 14:27*



## Sunday Mornings Opportunities!

We are looking for people to help with greeting, A/V, coffee time, and flowers through the end of the year. You can sign yourself up through this [Realm link](#) or contact the office.



## Church Treasure Hunt!

We are looking for a copy of the church cookbook from the 1950's! If you have one, please let Jean Deptolla or Laura Bernabei know. We'd like to borrow it to make a copy.



Send your November Tower articles to [bzillgitt685@gmail.com](mailto:bzillgitt685@gmail.com) by Tuesday, October 20.



## Justice and Witness



At our September 20<sup>th</sup> meeting following church, it was decided to set up a restricted “**J&W Community Aid Fund**” to safeguard our \$10,000 grant. Jeff Crane will check with Annie Barsch on how to make this happen. The money will be used for our **Community Dinners**, as well as a monthly allocation to the **Care and Share Fund**, which is yet to be determined. Pastor Paige and Laura Bernabei will come up with a suggested amount based on recent and projected demands.

We still plan to host a **pot luck mid-day meal on Thanksgiving (November 26)**. Pastor Paige will check with the Ministerial Association to see if pastors can provide lists of people that might appreciate celebrating Thanksgiving with others who might be lonely or struggling. Several members of the J&W Team have agreed to organize this event, and of course they will need help.

Regarding our **Community Dinners**, Jeff Crane and Pam Foelske, from Bethany Lutheran, have suggested a good plan to ease into our monthly dinners. We can join forces with Bethany as we are “learning the ropes.” For many years they have hosted a community dinner on the last Friday of every month, and would be willing to alternate each month with CCOB. Jeff will be our point person to coordinate with Bethany.

Bethany Lutheran has an industrial-sized kitchen, and they are happy to let us prepare our meal “next door” and bring the food over to serve at our church. We can handle the dinnerware/setup/cleanup. When they host, we will provide extra volunteers, and vice versa, when we host the dinner in Paxton. Stay tuned for many volunteer opportunities.

**Fox River Valley Initiative** continues to work with mayors and city planners and altruistic developers to find suitable locations for affordable housing. With several other FRVI leaders I am meeting with the head of Mercy Hospital (now owned by for-profit Prime Health) to see if there is a way to reopen the **Crisis Stabilization Unit** that FRVI helped create. We continue to work toward helping establish other mental health facilities.

*Ann Alexander, J&W chair*



*Courage is resistance to fear,  
mastery of fear,  
not absence of fear.*

Mark Twain



# Celebrate!



## October Birthdays

|                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| Steven Cromwell          | 1  |
| Kristen Beth Offenbecher | 1  |
| Eric Nelson              | 4  |
| Lynn Smith               | 4  |
| Abby Weiss               | 4  |
| Hallie Crane             | 5  |
| Jim Kurczek              | 7  |
| Kristin Srail            | 7  |
| Lisa VandenHuevel        | 7  |
| Alexandra Warta-Collins  | 7  |
| Jake DeKoyer             | 8  |
| Mark Luedtke             | 8  |
| Greg Youngdahl           | 9  |
| Brian McDonnell          | 10 |
| Morgan Chesney           | 11 |
| Kim Hoffer               | 11 |
| Stan Oke                 | 11 |
| Rebecca Palmquist        | 11 |
| Shannon Hemmes           | 19 |
| Zak Nelson               | 19 |
| Susan Brauhn             | 20 |
| Everett Palmer           | 20 |
| Marjie Grischow          | 22 |
| Warner Jocson            | 23 |
| Don Smith                | 23 |
| Lynnea Van Dame          | 25 |
| Matthew Scavo            | 26 |
| Amanda Srail Thomas      | 26 |
| Sarah Greenhagen         | 27 |
| Ed Plamondon             | 29 |
| Gabriella Aguillera      | 31 |

## October Anniversaries

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| Adam & Lucinda Page   | 1  |
| Art & Diane Blodgett  | 12 |
| Katherine Anderson    |    |
| & Laurie Geschrey     | 16 |
| Dick & Ellie MacFeely | 20 |
| Irene & Jeff Crane    | 25 |
| Kristin & Nico Lasta  | 25 |



## Worship Ministry Team

What a busy time of year we are entering!

### Reformation Sunday — October 25

This Sunday recognizes the beginning of the Protestant Reformation and of who we are today as acknowledged in the UCC Statement of Faith

### All Saints Sunday — November 1

On this Sunday we remember and honor those no longer with us. Their passing may have been recent or perhaps years ago, but they remain close to us in spirit. We read their names, light a candle, toll a bell, and offer a silent prayer in their memory. If you have someone's name you would like to include, please contact the church office.

### First Nations Sunday — November 8

We are honored to have as our guests in worship Terry and Darlene Wildman of the First Nations Version of the Psalms & New Testament

### Outreach Gift Festival Sunday – November 15

### Thanksgiving Sunday – November 22

Advent begins November 29 — “Back to Basics — An Analog Christmas”

## Connections and Taizé



I've been organizing Taizé service since before I was Moderator, let alone before the Connections Team was a thing. But I happen to think Taizé is a perfect example of how our church can connect, with each other and with the community. Each service is only 30 minutes, but it's 30 minutes of relative quiet, a time to reset in the midst of a busy week.

We sing some simple choruses, multiple times (so you have a chance to catch the tune and rhythm). Woven between the songs are a scripture reading, a time of silent meditation, and a time of guided prayer. We have a couple of folks from Bethany Lutheran attending as well as a handful of others — but we'd love to share the Taizé experience with more of you, and I encourage you attend and invite a friend — even someone who's not ready for the usual hour of church. Taizé is normally at 6:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month, but the November Taizé will be on the second Wednesday. We will have a longest night service instead of Taizé on December 21. Please put these dates in your calendar now, and join us October 21.

*Susan Price*



*If you're never scared, or embarrassed, or hurt, it means you never take any chances.*

*Rosalyn Drexler*



**Troop 43**



Greetings from Troop 43! September sees us all settling into new but familiar routines.

Our semi-annual elections were held with a bit of a delay the last Monday in August. Scouts submit themselves for various positions of responsibility in the troop and vote for each other. While adults help organize, this is another element of our Scout-led troop.

Our latest Eagle Scout project, by Matthew Culbertson, involved the construction of new rocking chairs for special needs students, to be used in the courtyard of Alice Gustafson School. As an alum of the school, I'm very happy to see Matthew giving back to something close to his own home.

This quarter's Court of Honor saw a dozen advancements, including our two latest Eagle Scouts in Kye Hill and Carter Restaino. This pushes the troop to four Eagle plaques in the Pine Room, with two more hopefuls before the year is done. Kye's Eagle Project was the construction of the new enclosure around the trash and recycling bins at church.

September's campout will be at Camp Big Timber in Elgin, celebrating 100 years of adventure! Our Scouts know the camp well, as most of them have done day camps, campouts with the troop and/or Council, Order of the Arrow events, and much more. Cheers to 100 more years of supporting Scouts!

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's Ministries

In August as we celebrated the CCoB's 191<sup>st</sup> anniversary, we assembled 100 snack bags for local schoolchildren. Our church family decorated the bags with colorful designs and affirmative statements and then filled them with great snacks. Thank you to all who participated in decorating, assembling, and donating snack items. The Outreach Team provided juice boxes and water bottles for the bags and helped deliver them to local schools.

### Wednesday Youth Group is back!

Our Wednesday program is for elementary and middle school students, and we meet from 6 to 7:30 p.m.. Our time together includes fellowship/food time, Bible Story and discussion, and various activities. We plan our sessions so that we learn of God's love and care for all, practice caring for others as God calls us to do, and grow in our own faith.



## Batavia Nursery School

Fall brings with it many changes, and our little ones are spending their days discovering the beauty of this new season. All of our classes have gone on a nature walk around the neighborhood looking for signs of fall. October is Fire Safety Month, so along with that unit, our older classes will be visiting the Eastside Fire Station. Our kids are always thrilled to sit in one of the engines and see a firefighter slide down the fire pole (from the original fire station on Shumway Ave.).



Our first enrichment class of the year, Fun with Food, has begun with many others to follow. We will again be having our fall fundraiser with muffins, pizzas, and cookie dough during this month, so please look for flyers on the table outside of Paxton Hall. If you place an order, the products will be put into the church freezer for pick up. Thank you in advance for supporting BNS!

If you are around the building at the end of the month, be on the lookout for little ghosts, fairies, princesses, and firefighters as we will be doing two Halloween parades through Paxton Hall on both October 29 and 30.

*Pam Foelske, Director*



*If your dreams don't scare  
you, they're not big enough.*

*Ellen Johnson Sirleaf*

## 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](mailto: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:** Caleb Serrano

**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 — Lane Severson

Treasurer — Annie Barsch

Financial Secretary — Matt Wicks

Ellen Field • Larry Grant • Becky Hall

Sarah Greenhagen McCrea • Lynne Potter

**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, October 18, 2026

Jean Stone will lead a discussion of

*Tom Lake* by Ann Patchett

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.*

## Our Beliefs

We believe in the triune God: Creator, resurrected Christ, the sole Head of the church, and the Holy Spirit, who guides and brings about the creative and redemptive work of God in the world.

We believe that each person is unique and valuable. It is the will of God that every person belongs to a family of faith where they have a strong sense of being valued and loved.

We believe that each person is on a spiritual journey and that each of us is at a different stage of that journey.

We believe that the persistent search for God produces an authentic relationship with God, engendering love, strengthening faith, dissolving guilt, and giving life purpose and direction.

\*\*\*\*\*

We believe that all people of faith are invited to join Christ at Christ's table for the sacrament of Communion. Just as many grains of wheat are gathered to make one loaf of bread and many grapes are gathered to make one cup of wine, we, the many people of God, are made one in the body of Christ, the church. The breaking of bread and the pouring of wine reminds us of the costliness of Christ's sacrifice and the discipleship to which we are all called. In the breaking of bread, we remember and celebrate Christ's presence among us along with a 'cloud of witnesses' — our ancestors, family and friends who have gone before us. It is a great mystery; we claim it by faith.

*Taken from the UCC website. For the entire article click [here](#).*



*For I am the Lord your God who takes  
hold of your right hand and says to  
you, Do not fear; I will help you.*

Isaiah 41:13