



Congregational
Church of Batavia

THE TOWER

Congregational Church of Batavia

United Church of Christ

21 South Batavia Avenue, Batavia, IL 60510



November 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?

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

November 7 — Prayer class*

November 8 — First Nations Sunday

November 11 — Taizé service

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

November 17 — Ribbon cutting for the
solar array*; articles for the December/
January Tower due

November 22 — Pizza lunch &
decorating*

November 26 — Thanksgiving potluck

November 29 — Beginning of Advent

December 6 — Children's skit*

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 Vice Moderator...



*Today we have gathered and we see that the cycles of life continue.
We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony
with each other and all living things.
So now, we bring our minds together as one
as we give greetings and thanks to each other as people.*

The Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address opens with a celebration of gathering as a community and our responsibility to promote balance and harmony with all our Mother Earth, Father Sky, and human relatives. Throughout October, the theme of gathering has been central in our worship and sermon series. In this season of gratitude, we continue to gather together to ask the Lord's blessing.

We give thanks for Pastor Paige, Laura, Vicki, Suzy, John, Caleb, Basil, Lily, Lisa, Megan, Lisa, and Pam for their presence on our church staff team and their heart for the ministry of CCoB.

We give thanks for the countless volunteers who generously offer their time, skills, investment, and commitment to enliven the ministry impact here at church and throughout our world.

We give thanks for the land, sky, plants, and animals where CCoB exists and how their wisdom and beauty empower us to promote peace.

We give thanks for the changing seasons that encourage us to echo the falling leaves in releasing what is no longer beneficial and embracing the restorative rest of winter's upcoming hibernation.

We give thanks for sufficient food and shelter and the ability to help those in need.

We give thanks for our ancestors in the faith who gathered to create this new community of Christ-followers in Batavia 191 years ago.

We give thanks to Creator for love that knows no bounds, for the gift of life, and for the call to participate in activated compassion on this good path.

May November find us gathered together with hearts overflowing with thanksgiving.

Amy Allan



*When you are grateful, fear disappears
and abundance appears.*

Tony Robbins



Church Life

A memorial service for Katie Jones was held in our sanctuary on September 26.



Worship Ministry Team

The holidays are fast approaching and we are preparing....

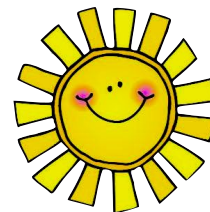
With a little tweaking to the title, this year's theme is "Back to Basics....An Analog Advent," and with that we will start our preparations on Sunday, November 22, with a pizza lunch after the service. This will give us a lot of energy to begin 'decking the halls' of CCoB. We hope you will join us for lunch and stay to sing a few carols and decorate the sanctuary. Watch for more details in the eNews.

The bells are ringing!!! Were you at church or did you watch the service from home on October 18? We had three bell ringers accompany Lily on the opening and closing hymns. Does playing bells sound like something you might be interested in? We would LOVE to recruit a few more people (no experience necessary...we will show you how) so we can play pieces without accompaniment. Contact Vicki Linich or anyone who you heard ringing on Sunday (Rosemary Henders, Judy Jablecki, or Susan Price) Our goal is to ring several times a year.

Just a reminder — our monthly Taizé Service will be on Wednesday, November 11, at 6:30 p.m.

From Pastor Paige...

Celebrating Solar



I believe it was our dear friend Rick Lathrop who first suggested to me that the Congregational Church of Batavia should invest in solar panels. I can't remember when exactly this was, but I do remember we were standing right outside Paxton Hall. For those of you who didn't know Rick, he was very involved in not only our Justice and Witness Team, but also in working to express the Christian faith in concrete ways in the world. And to him, solar energy only made sense. "It would reduce our carbon footprint, and be a witness to our values and our faith in this community." He was right, of course. We can talk all we want about a Biblical theology of creation, but in a time when climate change is manifesting in disturbing ways all around us, action is required.

As we began to talk about the possibility of a capital campaign a number of years ago, the idea of installing solar panels on the roof of the church became a major priority for this congregation. We talked about it. We researched it. And before we even **started** the capital campaign, we took a leap of faith by shouldering a loan so that we could make this dream a reality. It turns out there were a lot of hurdles, a lot of red tape, a lot of work to be done. (Many thanks to Karen Kosky, Dave Hummel, and Mark Weiss for digging into a lot of that work.) But it happened. The roof was reinforced, the solar panels were installed, and recently, everything came alive, online and working. (Okay, there are still a few glitches, but those are being fixed.) Our faith has become something we can see, and touch, and use to help make this world a little bit better.

So, we're going to celebrate the vision, the hard work, the investment of so many that made this minor miracle happen. On Tuesday, November 17, at 4:00 PM, there will be an official ribbon cutting ceremony here at church. Because even in a congregation that is over 191 years old, there are still new things to be discovered and explored, new ways to walk in the way of Jesus of Nazareth. Join us on the 17th if you can for this exciting celebration. And thank you for making it happen.



Prayer Class

**Saturday, November 7
10:00 to Noon
Pine Room**

Have you ever wondered what it means to have an active prayer life? Come join us for this exciting and eye opening class that will strengthen and expand your prayer life. Prayer is a skill that improves with practice. We will explore ways to pray as taught by Jesus, how to deepen your own prayer life, and grow into the blessing of praying with others. All are welcome!



I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

John 10:10



Justice and Witness

The Justice and Witness Team met after church on September 18 to discuss our \$10,000 grant plans to invite people who might enjoy some fellowship and a free meal. We hope to get our feet wet with a mid-day potluck meal on Thanksgiving Day (11/26). This event can only happen if we have enough enthusiastic interest and willingness to help.

A quick survey was emailed to the membership to find out who might be willing to help and sign up for various time slots and/or what food they might provide. Based on the survey feed back, we'll decide at our next meeting on October 25 if this is a go. Time is of the essence!!

Regarding our monthly Community Dinners, to get started we are joining forces with Bethany Lutheran. Under the direction of Pam Foelske, that church has been serving community dinners on the last Friday of each month for years. They are willing to alternate these dinners with us. We help with their dinners every other month, and they will help us with ours when it's our turn.

We can prepare the food in their wonderful kitchen and bring it back to serve in Paxton. Jeff and Irene Crane, and perhaps others from CCOB, helped out at Bethany on Friday, October 30. What a great way to learn the ropes, and how fortunate we are to have Pam willing to share her expertise! A link to Community Outreach will be provided to sign up for various shifts each month.

Our own kitchen will be needed as well, so we are grateful to Gayle Bridger, Jean Deptolla, and Laura Bernabei for their current challenge — getting rid of useless stuff, giving away things no longer needed, and organizing everything else. This goes for the Pine Room kitchen as well. Thank you, ladies!

Ann Alexander, Chair J&W

“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



Leadership Opportunities

Several of our church leaders' terms are ending this year, and some ministry leads are ready to step out of their leadership roles. Open positions include Council, Finance, Justice and Witness, Facilities, and Worship Team.

We each bring unique gifts and have varying levels of availability. Thankfully, there are many ways to contribute to the life of CCOB. If you're open to a meaningful, hands-on opportunity to serve, we invite you to prayerfully consider stepping into one of these leadership roles.

Below are some brief words from current and past leaders of positions that will be open for 2027. If any of these stand out to you, please reach out to the individual listed, Pastor Paige, Jennifer Larson Angelini, Lucinda Page, or Steve Collins for more information.

Vice Moderator: Amy Allan has enjoyed getting to know new friends at church. Much of her time as Vice Moderator has been spent collaborating with other church leaders and overseeing human resources.

Finance Team Members: Past members have expressed the enjoyment of working with such a wonderful, capable group of folks on the Finance Team!

Justice and Witness Team Leader: Ann Alexander spends time working on special events and writing monthly *Tower* articles. She enjoys the entire J&W team and how everyone pitches in to help with whatever project is coming (this year: the start of our community dinners)

Worship Team Leader: Judy Jablecki says her favorite part of this role has been getting to know new friends at church and being a part of the exciting future of CCOB! Her role involves leading quarterly virtual meetings, following up on agenda items between meetings and working with Pastor Paige regarding worship plans.

Facilities Lead: Dave Hummel spends his time as lead working with contractors for annual inspections and performing minor repairs and maintenance. His favorite part of this role is using his knowledge to help the church. He also notes that the Facilities Team is small but mighty — very helpful and great to work with.



The thankful heart opens our eyes to a multitude of blessings that continually surround us.

James E. Faust

Connections



I'm excited about our theme of an Analog Advent/Christmas for our Advent booklet this year. Remember, Advent starts the Sunday after Thanksgiving, which means that I really need to have the books **DONE** by the week **BEFORE** Thanksgiving, so that they can be printed for the folks who prefer that medium to be able to pick them up on that first Sunday. This means I need to hear from ALL OF YOU **ASAP** because I have **27 days** of Advent-through-Christmas-Day to fill.

What says traditional, classic, and/or unplugged — an Analog celebration — to you? I want your memories, your favorite recipes, your ideas for Christmas crafts and homemade gifts, your favorite songs or Christmas videos (OK, that's not so unplugged, but it can certainly both traditional and classic — see, I can be flexible!), and of course I need the visuals — older or not-so-old photos of favorite Christmas memories, and art portraying a special aspect of Christmas (children *of all ages* are invited to submit scans or photos of other art, including drawings and paintings). Please let me know ASAP (susannprice@gmail.com, 630.362.6980) that you're planning to give me something (but no later than November 1, if possible) and try to get your art or written material to me **by November 8**. I need to get the finished book file to the church office the week of November 15, so Laura can have it printed before she leaves the office for her Thanksgiving holiday.

Also, we will be getting our Advent/Christmas event calendar postcards mailed out this month, and there will be extras, so please feel free to pick up a couple and use them to invite friends to join us for all the fun and wonderful events we have planned.

Susan Price



Outreach Ministry Team

Christmas Gift Festival



Don't miss the annual Christmas Gift Festival on Sunday, November 15, as we invite representatives from three local agencies to share the important work that they do in our community. This is an opportunity to learn about these organizations and donate to support their missions.



Chip In Batavia: Chip In provides help and support for students and their families in the Batavia School District who are homeless or on free/reduced lunch. Chip In provides clothing, food, rent/utility assistance, transportation, day care, furniture and more.



Hands of Hope: Hands of Hope is a non-profit community organization in Geneva, Illinois offering no-cost guidance and support for children, adults and families experiencing grief from a death loss.



Radical Love: Radical Love is a non-profit organization that helps resettle refugee neighbors in the Fox River Valley area and connect the refugee neighbors to helpful resources in our community.

The Outreach Team will be available to accept donations in Paxton Hall on November 15, 22, and 29. We will have special gift cards for you to inform friends and relatives of a donation made in their honor. It is a great gift for those “impossible to buy for” folks on your Christmas list!

Here are ways to make donations:

- Write a check to the church with “Christmas Gift Festival” in the memo line.
- Give online: <https://onrealm.org/CCBatavia/give/CGF>. Use the MEMO drop down to select the agency you wish to support, or simply give to the Christmas Gift Festival and your donation will be applied to each agency.
- Text “CCOB CGF” to 73256 to give using your mobile device.

Thank you for your support of our Christmas Gift Festival!



Abundance is rich relationships, rich experiences, a rich mind and rich ideas that provide you with a sense of meaning.

Iyanla Vanzant



Thanksgiving Prayer

For the laughter of the children, for my own life breath, for the abundance of food on this table, for the ones who prepared this sumptuous feast, for the roof over our heads, the clothes on our backs, for our health, and our wealth of blessings, for this opportunity to

celebrate with family and friends, for the freedom to pray these words without fear, in any language, in any faith, in this great country, whose landscape is as vast and beautiful as her inhabitants. thank you, God, for giving us all these. Amen.

Rabbi Naomi Levy



Our Church History: Beyond Thompson Paxton

For the past several weeks, your clerk and your historian have been poring through a treasure trove of artifacts and historical documents about CCoB. Our written history was last updated in 1985 and with our 200th birthday looming (only 9 years away!), and we are on a mission.

I have been reading the past 40 or so years of annual reports. To really dig in before the 80's will require another trip to the archive (ok, if I *must*). But I have noticed, when it comes to our CCoB forefathers and foremothers, we seem to talk more about the 1800's than the 1900's or 2000's. We know more about Thompson Paxton than Amelia Brown and John Gustafson.

For the record, I **LOVE** reading annual reports. There are so many stories! About what — and whether we had enough money to do what was needed. Our ministries and missions. What was Christian Ed up to and what were our fellowship activities. Our people. So, I thought I would give you a little taste of CCoB in the last 60 years.

- From June to August 1967, the Sunday service was moved to 9:30 a.m., with Vespers at 7:00 a.m. to accommodate golfers, picnickers, etc.
- 1972: the Pairables group (for couples, and “other interested parties”) started. A taste of their social activities includes a square dance, hayride, attending a play, volleyball, and a family swim. How about a Batavia Treasure Hunt?
- In 1976 we offered a community Sunday service “in the style of 1776” to celebrate the Bicentennial.
- January 1981— For the first time we considered making our building accessible to those with disabilities.

- 1983 — The idea of ceiling fans in the sanctuary was met with mixed reactions, specifically that they would be loud, ugly, and deface our historical building.
- In 1990 we added a second Sunday service and started “Children’s Church.”
- 1996 — The Dig This morning bible study program was started for high schoolers and adults, meeting at 6:00 in the morning.
- Spring 2002 — A contemporary service was started once a month at 10:30.
- September 25 to November 7, 2003: Our entire church participated in a book study of The Purpose Driven Life.
- February 1, 2015 — We voted to be an Open and Affirming Church (motion carried at 94%).
- March 2020 — September 2021: we did the COVID thing: recorded services, drive-through holidays, services in the parking lot, the beginning of live streaming, worship indoors with masks at 6-foot distance. And through it all we hired a new youth director and a new minister. Whew!

This list barely scratches the surface. My hope is to continue to share more along the line — big events, historical events, activities, ministries, people . . . the STORIES of our church. Amelia Brown and John Gustafson feel like old friends now. And with all due respect to Mr. Paxton, there is SO MUCH MORE to learn! Stay tuned!

Jean Deptolla





Update from the Capital Campaign Committee:

To begin work on capital projects, the church took out a loan of \$212,849, which was paid off in December 2025. The congregation pledged \$1.185 million to complete capital work on our historic building. Of the \$1.185 million pledged, \$906,867 has been received. This enabled us to pay off the loan and fund initial projects. Thanks to all who pledged and continue to send in their contributions. The committee is now working to implement projects based on congregational priorities.

To date the team has secured contracts for seven projects, and the amount paid for work to date on all projects is \$587,847. Projects we are working on now include the security system, tuck pointing and masonry, Paxton Hall HVAC, and ADA accessibility.

If you have questions or would like to join the team, email [Jen Larson-Angelini](#), [Dave Hummel](#), or [Karen Kosky](#).

For more details we'll soon have a display outside Paxton Hall.



Troop 43



Greetings from Troop 43! October has brought beautiful fall weather and temps, along with lots more activity.

As some of our Eagles do, Carter Restaino and his family held a stand-alone Eagle ceremony and party. Living nearby, passing it regularly, he chose the shelter at the top of Johnson's Mound. On a perfect day, with sunshine, surrounded by the trees, family and friends, we celebrated his path to Eagle and immense achievements along the way.

For those who are tennis players, please check out one of Batavia's many courts for Calvin Goliak's completed Eagle project. He cleaned up and repainted the backboards at Big Woods, Prairie Lathem, and Memorial Parks. Crisp and ready for more play!

Meetings have included welcoming visiting potential Scouts on October 5, during which Scouts taught the visitors how to make (and enjoy) M&M pancakes, an annual favorite add-on meeting October 12 for an outing to Top Golf, and closing with our annual costume meeting on the 26th.

Camping in October maintains a spooky vibe, sleeping at Adeline Jay Geo Karis Illinois State Beach Park for two nights, around a full day at Six Flags Great America Fright Fest!

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.



*Acknowledging the good that you already have
in your life is the foundation for all abundance.*

Eckhart Tolle



Email Check In: If you are not receiving our "E-news" emails on Tuesday and Friday, please check with Laura in the office. We know some email providers block emails sent through Realm. We can send you a separate email, allowing you to keep up with all of the church news.

And . . . Please make sure the church office has your preferred email address by emailing the office at 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.

Celebrate!



November Birthdays

Katie Kabbe	4
Cherie Poulos	6
Joey Knanishu	7
Gabby Osterby	8
Elliott Abeln	9
Michael Graves	9
Julie Crane	12
Doug Hoffer	13
Heather Hamilton	15
Megan Miller	15
Barb Mabbs	16
Ben Field	17
Emma Luedtke	21
Katie Bernabei	25
Ryan Mecum	25
Tim Aguilar	26



Children's Ministries

Please plan to attend the worship service on Sunday, December 6, to enjoy a brief skit from our children about the birth of Jesus — along with a few Christmas carols. If you have a child interested in participating, please let Laura know!



Batavia Nursery School



We are settling into our school routines and are happy to get out on the playground when the weather cooperates...not too many of those days left! Even with the library under renovation, the youth service department still is allowing us to visit for book check out and then the librarian walks back with us to Paxton Hall and does story time. A bit different routine this year, but still, something to look forward to!

Our field trip to Red Oak Nature Center is always a favorite, as we look for signs of the forest and its animals getting ready for winter. We always have a great time exploring inside their facility and end with a hike down to Devil's cave. We are running our second enrichment for the year: Super Science! These extra afternoon classes are always met with anticipation from our families. The third one will run after the new year!

It is at this time of year that we are so thankful for your continued support of BNS!

Pam Foelske, Director



True abundance isn't based on our net worth, it's based on our self-worth.

Gabrielle Bernstein

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: 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, November 15, 2026

Anne Eustis will lead a discussion of
Heidi by Johanna Spyri.

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.*

Like many denominations and faith-based organizations, the UCC has diversity in many categories, and truth be told, there has been no agreement to “agree to disagree.” Congregations are not the same in governance or composition. There are few assumptions that carry across the life of the denomination and can be held with consistency. Instead, the question of uniformity continues to be a challenge in the life of the church.

Every person is as unique as the fingerprints they have, coming into spaces where they are welcomed as they are, if expectations of receiving each person with dignity and respect are held, valued and met. The UCC has the opportunity to learn and grow together as a faith community across the settings of the denomination, and with the accompaniment of partners who are having similar experiences and asking similar questions about what it means to be diverse and how it can live with the tensions inherent with diversity.

Regardless of the differences each person brings to the church, commitment to care for and love one another is possible, if the choice is to hold the tension of diversity. If the interest in community is to create a space where all think and act alike, then the church is not the place because the diversity and differences are already present. If there is an interest in building the beloved community, then the church is the right place for transformative social change that can lead to Christian unity.

Taken from *We Are Not Alone*, an article by [Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson](#) which was published on October 13, 2026. Click [here](#) for the complete article.



*Abundance is about being rich,
with or without money.*

Suze Orman