



Congregational  
Church of Batavia

# THE TOWER

Congregational Church of Batavia

United Church of Christ

21 South Batavia Avenue, Batavia, IL 60510



September 2025

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.

The theme for September is:

Say What?

Peculiar parables of Discipleship

## What's Happening?

September 10 — Wednesday  
Evening at Windy Acres\*

September 23 — October Tower  
articles due

October 25 — Batfest\*

November 2 — All Saints Day

November 9 — Christmas Gift  
Festival\*

November 23 — Hanging of the  
Greens

November 30 — Beginning of  
Advent

\*See related article



## Church Office Hours

Monday through Friday  
9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

## From our moderator

It's hard to believe summer is coming to an end! With fall will come an exciting season of dreaming, planning, and preparation in our church. As we begin budgeting for next year, kick off our stewardship efforts, and prepare for the start of our capital campaign, there's an energy in the air that's hard to miss. It's a time to come together as a congregation to decide what we want to prioritize, nurture, and expand in the coming year — and years.

Last year was my first time seeing the annual budget come together in the fall. What an amazing process to see! It's inspiring to see so many helping hands working together. Staff and leaders from across the congregation share their goals and needs for the year, highlighting areas that could benefit from growth and extra care. It's an opportunity to pause and ensure that we're meeting both the current and future needs of our community. The Finance, Council, HR, and Ministry Teams, employees, and others dedicate time and energy to build the budget together.

Also coming up is the annual focus on stewardship. This focus has a financial component, but it's about so much more! It's about connection and finding ways that *everyone* can contribute to the mission of bringing Christ's love and hope to the world. For some, that means greeting visitors on Sundays; for others, it's tackling church maintenance needs during the week or representing the church at a community event. There are endless ways to plug in. I guarantee there's a way we need *you* and your unique gifts!

This fall will also mark the start of the capital campaign: a unique opportunity to dream big, and dream long-term. It will challenge us to think about how our efforts today will create a space of welcome, acceptance, and love for those who will walk through our doors in the future. This is our chance to lay the groundwork for something lasting — a building, a community, and a legacy that will reflect God's grace for generations to come. Our Capital Campaign Team has been hard at work for many months, preparing for the official kick-off this fall. It's going to be great to see all that work come to fruition!

Fall will be a season *full* of opportunity — not just for the year ahead, but for the next decade and beyond. Together, we are a loving, dedicated church family, and I can't wait to see what we will accomplish as we step forward in faith and purpose.

Let's dream, plan, and build together!

Lucinda Page



*The influence of a good  
teacher can never be erased.*

Unknown



### Prayer for Teachers

Dear God, Grant our teachers an abundance of Your wisdom. Prepare their hearts to welcome and love our loved ones, and may we make sure to show them love and respect in return. Give them grace as they help students who aren't thriving, the courage to say what needs to be said, tools and knowledge on how and when to speak love, and strength when they feel weak. When they feel unseen, remind them that no moment goes unnoticed. They are shaping the future in one million small — yet incredibly important — ways every day. We are overwhelmed with gratitude for the gift of learning they share with our children. Bless them, Lord, and may they see even just a glimpse of how their faithfulness will forever impact generations to come. Amen.



## From Pastor Paige

### Peculiar People, Precious Gifts: Stewardship 2025

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood,  
a holy nation, a **peculiar** people,  
in order that you may proclaim the excellence of the one who called  
you out of darkness into this marvelous light.*

1 Peter 2:9

The Gospel passages prescribed by the Lectionary Cycle this fall are a series of parables about discipleship from the book of Luke that are tricky, difficult, challenging...frankly, quite **peculiar**. But, if we're being honest, discipleship itself is a peculiar kind of thing, as we put aside the shiny, vacuous promises of Power, and Money, and Fame, and follow our humble Messiah, Jesus. By the standards of this world, it is a peculiar calling...disciples are a peculiar people.

The author of 1 Peter certainly thinks so, using this very language in verse nine of the second chapter of that book. There he doesn't mean strange, or odd so much as he means something like unique, distinctive, **set apart**. And he is clear that we are set apart for a purpose, the purpose of shining God's light and love into a dark world.

From September 7 through October 5, as we study these challenging parables from Jesus, as we discover what is so peculiar about discipleship, we will also engage in our annual Stewardship Campaign, **Peculiar People, Precious Gifts**. Because it is precisely in our unique, distinct, precious gifts that the Church is made strong, and the world a little bit brighter.

We will spend some time in this season looking at CCoB's needs in the year to come, as well as some of its vision, its dreams, its plans to shine in Batavia and the world. Then, together, we will give, of our material assets, yes, but also those precious gifts that set us apart... musical talent, a penchant for art, a love of hospitality, an administrative mind, a questioning spirit. And we will pledge these gifts to the work God is doing here, in this place, in the year to come.

Please note, that this is not the same thing as our upcoming Capital Campaign. You've heard plenty about that in the preceding months, and you will hear a whole lot more come October...it will be an exciting time, as we work to ensure the strength and mission of our church for the decades to come, building on the legacy that has preceded us. But before that, in September, we will focus on the stewardship campaign, our Peculiar People and Precious Gifts. Questions? Email me at [pastorpaige@congregationalchurch.org](mailto:pastorpaige@congregationalchurch.org). Together, we can do amazing things.



*A teacher is one who makes himself  
progressively unnecessary.*

Thomas Carruthers

**Want to make the  
congregation aware of  
your event?  
Use the  
Marketing Rule of 7s.**

Have you ever heard of the Marketing Rule of 7s? This is the theory that your audience must see a message at least 7 times before an action is taken. It means presenting a message multiple times, and in a variety of ways.

You might not think of an announcement of an event at church as marketing, but marketing is communications and communicating an awareness of what our church offers creates interest. Following the Rule of 7s, we already use a variety of channels to spread our messaging. Among members we have the eNews and The Tower. To reach a greater audience beyond membership, we use several social media applications, press releases, print media, and build in-person connections at community events. All of these are examples of outbound marketing by which we reach out to the public. The church website is considered inbound marketing, where a potential visitor might find more about us through their own research. The more ways we can potentially reach our audience, and the more times, the more effective our communications will be.

Whatever you might be helping plan at church, consider the Rule of 7s in your marketing. You can reach out to me, and as Communications Manager for our church, I can help you with this. I will post on social media, our website, design a flyer, send information to news media, even brainstorm new possibilities. Contact me directly, otherwise I might not be aware of your project, or that you need my help.

Lisa Youngdahl, [Communications Manager](#)



**Flowers for the altar!** Thank you to those of you who have signed up and provided fresh flowers for the altar on Sunday mornings. There are plenty of Sundays available for the rest of the year so if you have a special reason to bring flowers or would just like the fruits of your flower garden to grace the altar, please sign up on the bulletin board near Pastor Paige's office or call/email the church office.

**Justice and Witness**



A **Fellowship Luncheon** with the Islamic Center is tentatively planned for **September 14 or 19**. Sadly there was no Iftar Dinner this year due to Mazher Ahmed's serious stroke last December. Mazher is now doing quite well. She and Hamid stopped by during coffee hour recently and proposed this fellowship luncheon to be held here at church following our Sunday service. The rough plan is she provides some Indian dishes and we bring a few salads and deserts. Details will be determined at the J&W meeting August 31.

The other topic we are discussing at that meeting is our ongoing support (Blessing Boxes, etc.) of **New Day Community in Hanover Park** (not Hoffman Estates as mentioned in the last *Tower!*). We had talked about opening up our **Blessing Boxes** food collection to the whole CCoB... Karon Van Gelder suggested we enlarge the project to also include **Elgin's Centro de Information Food Pantry**. This organization offers many services, and is a great resource for immigrants who live in fear. We will be considering whether our church could be a drop-off spot for food donations from the whole city of Batavia — definitely food for thought.

The "Immigration Letter", signed by seven churches (including ours) and five ministers, commending law enforcement for following the Illinois Trust Act (protecting law abiding immigrants from illegal ICE detentions and deportations) was sent to local police/sheriff departments, Fox Valley mayors, and Kane elected officials. The feedback has been very encouraging. A second Zoom is scheduled for September 3, to discuss our next steps to protect and support immigrants.

I attended a **Fox River Valley Initiative Listening Session** on Saturday, August 23. Sixteen members from numerous churches met at St. Charles Episcopal to discuss their most pressing local concerns. Key issues include affordable housing, cost of child care, mental health, public transportation, and of course the immigration situation. Members of FRVI are encouraged to form focus groups to consider strategies that might lead to resolving these problems.

*Ann Alexander, Justice & Witness chair*



*It is the supreme art of the teacher  
to awaken joy in creative  
expression and knowledge.*

Albert Einstein

## Batavia Apartments

The Batavia Apartments are in need of supplies for their store to help residents who have limited income. Please consider donating the following items:

- Kleenex
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Cleaning supplies

Thank you for helping our Batavia neighbors!



## Batfest returns to Batavia on Saturday, October 25.

Make sure you are free to join us for the Trunk-or-Treat in the parking lot from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon! Think about recruiting a friend to hand out treats with you, sign up will be coming soon!

The Batfest Reptile Show will be held in Paxton Hall.

More fun will be at the Peg Bond Center and around downtown.

Send your October Tower  
articles to  
[bzillgitt685@gmail.com](mailto:bzillgitt685@gmail.com)  
by Tuesday, September 23.



## Outreach Ministry Team

### Christmas Gift Festival



The Outreach Ministry Team will be holding its annual Christmas Gift Festival in November. This event, beginning with presentations from three not-for-profit agencies during worship Sunday, November 9, will be followed with displays by agency representatives and treats in Paxton Hall. Our Outreach Team members will be on hand to accept donations and distribute special cards for you to inform friends and relatives of donations made in their honor.

The organizations will be announced soon, so mark your calendars for this wonderful giving event. You will also be able to make donations on November 16 and 23 in Paxton Hall.

Thank you so much for your continued support of mission giving at our church.



## So, What's Happening with the Capital Campaign?

Does it feel like nothing's been happening since we decided to proceed last spring? It's true that the current parts of the process have not been visible -- and part of that is by design because so many folks are less available over the summer. However, having secured the services of Walsh & Associates, and in particular Aaron, to guide us through the upcoming capital campaign, The Capital Campaign team is now in the necessary planning phase, which will include recruiting helpers, for the active fundraising phase, to kick off in October.

Pastor Paige will be tying the peculiar parables in her early fall sermon series to the larger concept of stewardship — not just monetary gifts, but all the ways we offer ourselves to the work and life of our church. This should help us start thinking about the balance between stewardship pledges (annual giving for the day-to-day running of the church) and capital funding pledges (committing to extra giving over three years to fund large but necessary projects to enhance the ability of our church to serve us and our community going forward, and to pay off debts already incurred in this process). So, stay tuned.

*Your Capital Campaign Team*



*The task of the modern educator  
is not to cut down jungles,  
but to irrigate deserts.*



C. S. Lewis



# Celebrate!

## September Birthdays

Kimo Hemmes	1
Susan Price	3
Pam Foelske	4
Judy Miller	4
Judy Jablecki	6
Jeff Potter	7
Valerie Young	8
Bella Linde-Marin	9
Riley Rea-Dorn	10
Jayne VandenHeuvel	10
Andrea Goudy	11
Susan Blair	14
Katie Jones	15
Alan Offenbecher	15
Sarah Plamondon	17
Dave Hummel	18
Gretchen Schrader	18
Jeff Palmquist	19
Kristin Wicks	21
Jill Huber	22
Taylor Churney	23
Steve Daunheimer	23
Jose Gonzalez	24
Penny Tracy	25
Sean Osterby	27
Joshua Kosky	28

## September Anniversaries

Andy & Cherie Poulos	10
Jean & Karl Deptolla	13
Alan & Kristen Beth Offenbecher	13
Julie Crane & Rob Knanishu	20
Bryn & Eric Nelson	20
Carrie & Scott Schafer	27

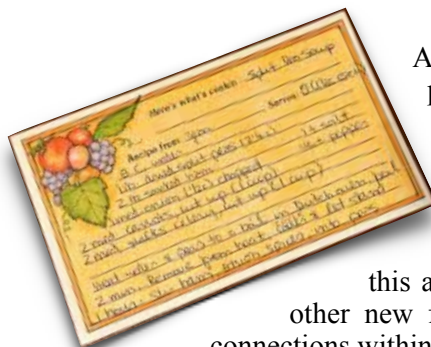
If your birthday or anniversary is missing or incorrect, please contact the church office: 630 879 1999 or [office@congregationalchurch.org](mailto:office@congregationalchurch.org)

## Connections



### We want your favorites!

As part of our summer worship series, we paired a recipe with each sermon's theme. For the CCOB birthday potluck this year, we asked attendees to bring the recipes for the foods they brought. And now, I am asking for "heritage" recipes to fill out a CCOB cookbook for publication this autumn. The idea is not only to offer each other new food experiences but also to deepen our connections within our church family.



The recipes I'm hoping for can be steeped in family history (like my dad's shortbread recipe from his Scottish mother) or a modern tradition started with your own family within the last decade, but now beloved and either a staple or a special treat (my quinoa variant on traditional tabouli). You can drop printed recipes in the church office or email them to me at [susanneprice@gmail.com](mailto:susanneprice@gmail.com).

*Susan Price*, Connections chair



## Growing the Sound Team

Each Sunday we have a small group of sound soldiers who make sure that microphones are on and working and that the sound is going to the live video feed, so that folks in the building and watching online can hear the service. Over time this team has gotten a little smaller and some of our volunteers are not as available. And every so often we have a Sunday when someone turns the system on, and we hope for the best. We would like to make that better!

We need to grow our team. If you are interested in learning how to work the sound board, we have people to teach you! If you already know how and can volunteer either on a regular basis or just every so often, we would love to have you! Please contact Bernie at [office@congregationalchurch.org](mailto:office@congregationalchurch.org) or fill out this quick form: [Sound Team Volunteers](#).



**One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world.**

**Malala Yousafzai**



## Troop 43



Greetings from Troop 43! August began quietly but has erupted into quite a bit of activity!

Our fundraisers kicked off and this year we will be selling hot sauce and meals at storefronts throughout the area our scouts live in. On August 16, Troop 43 Scouts were selling outside Walgreens in Batavia. They will sell again at the end of August, at the Creamery in September, and at Walgreens in Warrenville, where about 6 of our Scouts live, in October. Please look for us out and about.

Our Monday night meeting on the 18th was held at the VFW so we could prepare, alongside Troop 21, to support local Cub Scout packs through training and games. Scouts learned how to present some of their key camping skills to the Cubs, like tent set up (NOT under trees) and fire safety.

Troop 43 Scouts presented the skills on Thursday, August 21 to Pack 153 at JB Nelson and again to Pack 103 at AGS. We hope to see Den Chiefs come from this, so Cubs know how much fun and learning can be had if they continue in Scouting.

Monday, August 25, Scouts filled the Scout positions of leadership for the next 6 months through elections, while also selecting next summer's camp location. It is great to see the boys lead the troop, as is the intention.

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 [troopwebhost.org/Troop43Batavia/Index.htm](http://troopwebhost.org/Troop43Batavia/Index.htm) for more information.



## Children's Ministries

It's time to start thinking about Sunday School, our midweek programs, and the upcoming school year!

Registration for 2025-26 School Year programs is open. Please use [this form](#) to register children and youth for Sunday School, nursery, elementary, and middle school midweek programs and Smallies. Sunday School begins on September 7.

The Midweek program "kick-off celebration" is on September 10 at Windy Acres. [Registration](#) is required by Sunday, September 7. Windy Acres is located at 37W446 Fabyan Pkwy, Geneva, IL 60134. Children preschool through high school and families are invited to join us from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Windy Acres Farm to explore and play in the attractions area. We will also sample apple cider donuts and cider. You are invited to stay the whole time, or come and go as able.

Our meetings at the church begin on September 24. Please contact Laura with questions about programming up to 5th grade and Suzy for middle and high school students.



## Batavia Nursery School



We have started our 51<sup>st</sup> year! We have kept the same staffing as last year: six teachers running five classrooms and we are looking forward to a fantastic year filled with new ideas and energy. We jump right in with a field trip to one of our favorites, Windy Acres, for apple picking and lessons on bee keeping. The Srail family has done an amazing job providing this wonderful programming on their beautiful farm! Later in the month, we will begin our monthly story hour in the youth service department of the Batavia Public Library. Again, it's another outstanding program for our older students. Stop over any Sunday morning and take a look at our inviting classrooms and hallway bulletin boards!

*Pam Foelske, Director*



*Teachers are people who start things they never see finished, and for which they never get thanks until it is too late.*



**Max Forman**

## 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 Zoom

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:** Bernadine Matthews

**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— Lucinda Page

Vice Moderator — Jennifer Larson

Treasurer — Annie Barsch

Clerk — Jean Deptolla

Members-at-Large —

Kristin Lasta & Judy Jablecki

**Connections:** Susan Price

**Decorating:** Ann Alexander

**Facilities:** Dave Hummel

**Finance:** Jim Otepka — Team leader

Treasurer — Annie Barsch

Finance Secretary — Phil Woolley •

Sarah Greenhagen • Becky Hall •

Carlene Hougén

**Justice & Witness:** Ann Alexander

**Outreach:** Judy Lutz & Don Smith

**Worship:** Judy Jablecki

**Archivist:** Volunteer needed

**Systems Administrator:** Phil Woolley

**Tower Editor:** Barb Zillgitt

## Women's Connection

6:00 p.m.

Church library

**Sunday, September 21, 2025**

Kristina Shumaker will lead a discussion of  
*The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah.

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



## UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

a just world for all

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



Did you know that UCC ministers coined the phrase “environmental racism” and played a leading role in giving birth to the environmental justice movement in the 1980s?

Today, the United Church of Christ continues the work begun in the 1980s by seeking to activate and equip congregations across the country for environmental justice ministries that have become a core part of the denomination's DNA.

From the birth of the environmental justice movement in the 1980s to the local ministries of churches throughout the country today, the United Church of Christ has been making a profound difference in caring for God's creation. Learn more about our history, the Creation Justice Church program, Earth Day resources, the Pollinator newsletter, Creation Justice Webinars, and the work of the UCC Council for Climate Justice by clicking [here](#).

Information taken from the UCC website: [ucc.org](http://ucc.org)



*Good teaching is more a giving  
of right questions than  
a giving of right answers.*

Josef Albers