



Sanbornton Congregational Church Belfry

*The Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC, situated in Sanbornton, New Hampshire is a Church for Peace and Justice. We declare ourselves an Open and Affirming member of the United Church of Christ welcoming people of every race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, age, economic class, physical or mental ability. **All are welcome!***

Founded in 1771, the church has been a cornerstone of faith in this small community and the surrounding area through the generations since. We are a congregation of the United Church of Christ which was created by a merger of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed churches. Our denominational heritage is Congregational, where congregations are independent and autonomous.

April 2025 Issue



The Moderator

Happy April!

March came and went by fast, but it sure didn't go out like a lamb!

This continues to be a very exciting time for our church as spring is almost here! Easter is arriving this month (along with the Easter Bunny) and it is one of my favorite holidays of the year. Not just because it involves chocolate but it is also really fun to see some of the beautiful hats people wear that Easter morning!

Be sure to attend the Easter service but mark your calendars to come early at 8:00 a.m. to join us for our annual Easter Breakfast. Frank Baker has been co-chairing this breakfast with me for over 20 years now and we are ready to do it again! We will be putting out a sign-up sheet soon if anyone would like to bring any items to the breakfast. There will also be a free-will offering that morning which will be donated back to the church.

Our church property committee has also been working diligently to come up with a plan for property improvements this year based on input we received at the 2026 Vision Meeting. Kitchen Improvements was at the top of the list with 19 votes! The committee is now meeting every other Sunday to formulate a plan with prioritized items and also to estimate pricing to address the wish list that was created at our Vision 2026 meeting. We plan to hold a follow-up Vision meeting later this spring with the whole church to further discuss some of the ideas that the committee has come up with.

Lastly, I just wanted to mention that the Search Committee is now meeting again with our NH Conference leadership to talk a little more about where we are and where we are going. Numerous churches across America find themselves without a Pastor still, yet, we continue to be a very strong, faithful and vibrant church. Our current revised structure and plan is working brilliantly while our pastoral search continues!

Have a happy Spring! That means flower gardens and baseball games are coming back soon! I hope to see you at the Easter Breakfast!

Faithfully,

David Henderson, Church Moderator



The Season of Lent 2025

The Season of Lent began on Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2025 with a gathering in the Undercroft: Fourteen people met and shared a simple meal, followed by a brief service, led by Reverend Slater and assisted by Marg Whedon.

The Season continues throughout March and into April:

Sunday, April 13, 2025 Palm/Passion Sunday

Thursday, April 17, 2025 Maundy Thursday

Friday, April 18, 2025 Good Friday

Sunday, April 20, 2025 Easter Sunday

Be sure to watch your email and check our CALENDAR for details.

This year we will once again create a community garden on our altar for Easter Sunday. We ask anyone who is willing to bring in potted spring flowers for use on the altar for Easter Sunday. They can be dropped off at the church between Sunday, April 13 through Saturday, April 19. At the end of the Easter service, please take it home with you to enjoy. These plants can be ones you purchase for the occasion OR one that you have nurtured at home and want to share for the day. Thank you for helping to create our Easter Sunday Garden.

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

One Great Hour of Sharing, part of Our Church's Wider Mission, is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis. The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water, food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency relief and rehabilitation. One Great Hour of Sharing also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response.

Sanbornton Congregational Church will take this collection on March 30, 2025. If you would like to contribute before March 30, please send your contribution to Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC, PO Box 126, Sanbornton, NH 03269 attention: Financial Secretary.



New in the Kitchen

The foldable table that used to occupy this space in the kitchen has been replaced with these donated lower cabinets and topped with a custom fitted top (thanks to Clif's skill, his ReStore shopping and his attention to detail). This may be a temporary addition to the kitchen; it certainly makes the space a bit more functional!



A New Light

If you are one who walks to the end of the hallway to use the restroom, your walk will be well lit thanks to the new overhead light Clif installed!



Crafters

Our CRAFTERS have been busy "hatching" some adorable little chicks! We are so happy to create these as part of our partnership with Sanbornton Recreation Department and their Easter Egg Hunt. These fluffy cuties will fit right in the eggs that will be scattered around the field at the Town Park on Saturday, April 19, 2025. We hope these gifts bring just as many giggles to the families of Sanbornton as they have to the crafters who have been making them!



Got Lunch! Sanbornton

Our summer program to provide children with healthy lunches is fully funded for 2025! In early March we received grant money from the Children's Auction. We will soon be receiving a large contribution from a program called "Lend a Helping Can." This program is sponsored by The Morning Buzz, a radio program that airs from Salem, NH. This program sends money to virtually every Got Lunch! Program in New Hampshire. If you have any questions concerning these grants please speak with Laurie Greci or Mary Ruth Scott.

Please help with this very important program that your church sponsors. We will need volunteers to pack and deliver bags on Monday mornings during the school summer vacation. You may help one day or many. Come for the camaraderie with fellow church members and volunteers from the community. Many hands make idle work and it's lots of fun! Spread the word.

GotLunch! Sanbornton's first planning meeting of the season will be at **11:30 am, Sunday, April 6, 2025** in the Undercroft.

Thank you, Laurie and Mary Ruth



Moon Trivia

The Pink Moon will occur on April 12th.

"[Genesis 1:14](#) - And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years..."

Native American tribes often used moon phases and cycles to keep track of the seasons and gave a unique name to each recurring full moon. These names were used to identify the entire month during which each occurred. The early European settlers in America adopted the Native American habit of naming the moons and even invented some names of their own.

The Pink Moon will occur on April 12th.

This name came from the herb moss pink, or wild ground phlox, which is one of the earliest widespread flowers of the spring. The early spring rains awaken the plants and trees, and brings forth the renewed life of nature and spirit. Seeds are waking and the world begins to wake with beauty as farmers prepare. This is a time for Growth! For these same reasons, April's moon is also called the Seed Moon. This name is meant to indicate the season most appropriate for planting the seeds of that which you hope will flourish in the coming season of growth and fertility.

The Choctaw tribe of the Southeast US refers to the April full moon as the Moon of Blackberry when the berries begin to appear in that southern climate, while the Cherokee use the more general but very spring-appropriate Flower Moon name. The southwestern Apache tribe often uses the name Moon of the Big Leaves to indicate how trees are flourishing in April. Other names for this month's celestial body include the Full Sprouting Grass Moon, the Egg Moon, and among coastal tribes, the Full Fish Moon because this was the time that the shad swam upstream to spawn. This is also the first full Moon of the spring season, so it's also known as the Paschal Full Moon.

Did you see the Blood Moon Lunar Eclipse a few weeks ago? Check out this awesome photo (used with permission) taken in Portsmouth, NH on March 14th, and shared by Karla DeVincent.



From the Historian

With all the activity going on in the undercroft lately, I thought I might share this history of the creation of our favorite church gathering place! This photo is of a report prepared by one Warren H. Wilson, who was the apparent supervisor of this project in 1974, some 50+ years ago! Check out that group effort!

Submitted by Karey Caldwell, church historian

Project "Excavation"

The year 1974 has been a banner year of physical activity for our church, as most everyone knows.

It all started with the decision to purchase a new furnace, which when it arrived, posed the problem of installation - being too large for the bulkhead, etc. This necessitated opening up a new and larger entrance to accommodate it. This phase was completed early this year with the financial help of many.

Then, as so often happens, one thing led to another. Once it was seen how much available space there could be under the church, yankee thrift would not let it be wasted and so the long range program was begun.

A bulldozer and shovel were hired to finish the undermining and then the fun began. October 27th saw a planning crew meet under the church to map out the strategy and November 3 was the first Sunday of united effort when the gang gathered after church to fill the drainage ditch which had been previously dug by a willing and able crew.

Willing helpers continued to show up every Sunday for a total of six weeks before the completion date of December 8th was reached. A few statistics might be of interest. Materials used:

47 yards gravel	16 yards cement
94 tons sand	17 bags Mortar
765 cement blocks	300 feet drain pipe

Plus many other items too numerous to mention. Approximate hours donated:

8 hours backhoe	13 hours loaders
8 hours bulldozer	35 hours masons
41½ hours trucks	812 hours labor

Approximately 200 meals served, as well as coffee breaks a.m. and p.m.

All provided through the generosity and cooperation of many, some of whom were unable to participate in strenuous labor.

All in all a most satisfying experience for all concerned, and it is hoped that we may all participate in more joint endeavors as time goes by. At this point the effort must be concentrated on getting out of debt and hopefully build up the account for future advancement.

In the coming year it is hoped that the north sill can be replaced, a-not-to-expensive item, with donated help.

"Supt. of the Works"

Warren H. Wilson



Stewardship

"Jesus didn't turn people away, neither do we."

When you're bold enough to make such a statement, it's not always easy to make good on it. Following Jesus' lead, the United Church of Christ strives to keep doors open to all.

Our welcome embrace to both those that participate in our gatherings on a regular basis, and to those outside our church out there in our community, (sometimes not part of any spiritual or religious group), is what His Word truly called for. How wide will our welcome be? If someone comes here dressed in shabby clothing and only puts loose change (or nothing) in the collection plate, do we wish they hadn't come? It's not all about the money. If someone is grumbly and opinionated, do we wish they wouldn't cross our path? Or do we realize that they are just keeping us on our toes about our thought processes on any decision we might be making?

Any time of year is a good time to celebrate truly loving your neighbor, perhaps inviting them to come and join you some Sunday to visit our church. No pressure, just come and enjoy what we enjoy here. No hard feelings if they decide, this is not for them. However this is an especially good time to reach out to others, in the Springtime, as we make our way through the season of Lent, watching and waiting for the re-birth of nature, watching and waiting for us to re-experience Jesus' story and ultimately his resurrection. The receptive factor out there in our larger circle of community is probably higher right now (and that seems to happen at Christmas time as well). It is not hard to notice that the church has a fuller attendance at Easter and Christmas. Good stewardship on our part would be to spread that feeling to others in subtle but noticeable ways, out there in our community. The key is to notice an opening in a conversation, notice an opportunity to make a pleasant gesture or to say something that has just a little spiritual impact. Everyday, we interact with grocery store employees, postal and delivery people, and other people that we really don't even know. How do we know if they might be seeking something that seems to be missing in their life?

The winter world is shedding its blanket and is giving us glimpses of the warmth to come. And then, a fresh wet 5 - 6 inches of snow re-blankets the earth, and we are reminded to not become too complacent. As of this writing, in all the areas that get the most sun, we have again started to see bare ground, trees and flowers budding and more sunlight hours, only to hear from the TV or online weather person that another blanket of snow is about to descend upon us. Then it does. Don't be angry with the weather forecasters. They are just preparing us for what is to come. So . . . let's spread our warmth in another way, perhaps a smile toward someone who didn't expect it, a helping hand to someone who is struggling in some way. Bless those around us with a cheerful attitude. Sing for God. It doesn't have to be in tune. It doesn't even have to be musical. Some kind of warm approach just needs to happen out there, with every encounter. We never know if we are talking to someone who either doesn't know God or doesn't know God very well. We just might be speaking to someone who is searching for that "something" that they are missing in life. That is the other meaning to Good Stewardship.

I once heard someone say, "he or she who sings to the Lord . . . prays twice." I recently attended a funeral, where the sister-in-law of the deceased sang special music, during the service. I saw her afterward at the gathering, where I complimented the beauty of what she had done . . . and I repeated the above. Her reaction was warm, heartfelt and she loved the thought of "praying twice". And then she asked, "Where do you go to church?"



Search Committee

The New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ, has done some redistribution of responsibilities recently. Previously, our Conference Minister, Rev. Gordon Rankin, was our contact during our search process. Rev. Sara Marean, our Associate Conference Minister, has just been given the duties for Search and Call.

Things have changed since the original submission of our church profile. We have the addition of an administrator position, taking care of the many tasks that fall on a pastor. We also have a Chaplain. There are now new profile questions written by the conference with a new model hoping to streamline profiles.

Your Search Committee met with Rev. Marean in the last week of March. She was very excited about how we were handling continuing on as a church. Rev. Marean assured us we have been doing "everything right" and are in a much better position than the many other churches searching for a settled pastor. We need to remember to celebrate that!

We have been blessed beyond measure for the continued presence and worship leadership of Rev. Richard Slater each Sunday. We are also fortunate to have Rev. Louise Bastille committed to serving as Chaplain to our congregants. She has provided care to several members.

We are more visible now through our website and online presence, as well as through local media with our continuous advertising in newspapers and regional booklets. We have ongoing collaboration with events through Sanbornton groups such as the Sanbornton Library, Historical Society, the Baptist churches, Old Home Day Committee, and the Sanbornton Recreation Department. Congregation members still serve meals through "Bread and Roses", and we support the "First Fruits Pantry", "Got Lunch", and our sister church Checheche, Zimbabwe. We are a very active church!

Being flexible and creative is the new direction of churches nationally with the current shortage of ordained ministers. We are not alone! Your Search Committee would like to have an informational meeting or a series of meetings with the congregation with an open discussion about how we proceed into the future.

Your Search Committee will be meeting again during the first week of April. Please stay tuned for more information about upcoming meetings.

As always, your ongoing prayers and support are greatly appreciated, and we thank you.

Laurie Greci, David Henderson, Sue Long, Clif Mills, Polly Mills

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Bossey
Chair

