



Sanbornton

Congregational Church

UCC

Belfry



The Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC, situated in Sanbornton, NH 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! Please join us any Sunday.**

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 church denominational heritage is Congregational, where congregations are independent and autonomous.

2026

FEBRUARY

NEWSLETTER



Join us any Sunday and experience the love and comradery we share, just as Jesus teaches us to do.

# FROM THE MODERATOR



1771 - present

Happy February,

We just held our 255th Annual Meeting of Sanbornton Congregational Church and the meeting went very well.

While running the meeting, we were aware that the Super-

bowl play-off with the New England Patriots and the incoming blizzard calling for more than a foot of snow that afternoon was competing for everyone's attention, but we covered everything on the agenda with ample time for questions and answers.

Attendance was also great with a room full of people down in the Community Room plus 4 or 5 more people attending from as far away as Florida and San Francisco on Zoom!

Kim also did an amazing job of remembering those who are no longer with us by sharing photos and brief bios on each person, bringing back some wonderful memories. It was also great to have both Richard Slater and Louise Bastille joining us that morning.

Is it just me, or are we experiencing weather that seems to be a lot colder than last year? One of our church services was recently cancelled over weather concerns, and we will continue to put everyone's safety as our first priority during times of inclement weather. Even if we are having the service, remember to stay home if you feel unsafe traveling to church. You can always go to You Tube and catch the service streaming live!

Our AV position is now being posted on Linked in to fill the current vacancy and I look forward to seeing the response we receive. I want to thank Sue, Clif and Phoebe for filling in here and there to keep the streaming service active for now!

We also have a few vacancies remaining on our Church Council. Those include Ministry of Worship and Ministry of Outreach. If anyone is interested in helping out with these positions, let me know and I can send you a position description.

And let's remember Minnesota and the recent tragic events that have been happening there. Minnesota was my home when I was in college and I still have family members there who are choosing to stay off the streets now due to the current violence and unrest. My parents lived in Minnesota for decades, and we always joked about the similarities between the people in Minnesota and New Hampshire. They would say that New Hampshire is just another Minnesota, but with hills! It is unfathomable to me what is occurring there and in other parts of our country now, so please keep them all in your prayers.

I also want to mention that this article was entirely written by me and only me! I just had some AI function pop up with a summary and another pop up for AI Copilot volunteering to improve the readability of one my sentences, but I won't go there! Stay real!

Moderately speaking,

Dave Henderson, Church Moderator



# THE CHILDREN'S WORD a.k.a. a lesson for the young and / or "young at heart"

We also had a very entertaining Children's Word where some of Rhu's friends joined us to try and explain a Bible story about when Jesus went to the river to greet his cousin, John, where He experienced a "BATH-TISM". Chicken, an enthusiastic, frequent visitor to our church, tried to explain this watery emersion to Michael, the Walrus. In his usual laid back manner, Walrus wasn't really buying all of this. Rev. Slater came along and was able to calmly help Chicken understand that BAPTISM wasn't about being clean on the outside but about being clean from within, and Jesus was humble and glad to be BAPTIZED by his cousin, John the Baptizer, who had done as God commanded announcing the coming of the Messiah, at great risk to himself.



Thank you, Rhu & Company and Rev. Slater for helping us understand Baptism in a better way.



## GETTING TO CHURCH



We have several folks who would love to come to church for Sunday worship but have no way to get here. If you have the desire, the time and the ability to help with this need (even for just one Sunday), please let Sue Long know. You can let her know in church or by emailing her at [administrator@uccsanbornton.org](mailto:administrator@uccsanbornton.org)

\* Thank you in advance for an offer of transportation! \*

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### **Let your CREATIVE juices flow - Get ready for our next activity**

**On February 8th**, after the church service, youth and "young at heart" will gather in a small group or groups and try to capture some winter photos around our church to use in future church YouTube services. Dress warm !!! Bring cameras and / or cell phones.

Just a reminder that **every second Sunday** our church service includes a message for **the young and young at heart** (the adults enjoy this part of the service as well !) So . . . EVERYONE is welcome to enjoy from your seat OR better yet, come up front and join in. Invite a friend or a whole family to "come and see" and enjoy our service.

Every Sunday, there is always a "small desk & chair" at the back of the sanctuary with some quiet activities for young ones to do. Many times there will be someone sitting nearby to guide youth in the use of materials supplied there.

From the desk of Matt Timmons, for Christian Education and Faith Formation

# FROM THE CHURCH HISTORIAN

Did you know that Fannie Runnels (daughter of our Rev. Moses Runnels) was a poet? She wrote many poems (publishing 3 books) about her home, the church and even Lake Winnepesaukee!

The following is an excerpt from her writings about the church and our country's Constitution. The date is estimated to be around 1896, possibly for our church's 125th anniversary. More of Fannie's work to come in future articles!

In Seventeen Seventy-One,  
At our church's natal time,  
The simple greatness of Washington  
Shone its steadfast prime.

Not a score of years didst end  
Ere his sacred pledge was won,  
"To preserve, protect, defend  
The Constitution" begun.

Often dark the way he trod,  
Yet he rose above despair,  
Never losing faith in the sons of God,  
In courage, or constant prayer.

Our Church be our Constitution!  
Our Christ, her strength and head,  
From all earth's destitution  
Visibly upward led...



Photo of Fannie Runnels Poole, circa 1900  
Courtesy of "New Hampshire's History Blog"  
(photo retrieved from cowhampshire.com)

Submitted by Karey Caldwell, Church Historian

I have delivered “Stewardship Moments” before, from the Lectern and credited either Dave or Lee Hart for the wonderful guidance I have received over the years on Stewardship matters and ideas. Carol Hart recently delivered to me a folder from the Hart Archives. Upon opening it, right on top I found a Stewardship Moment that Dave Hart had delivered from our church lectern in 1999. I had planned to redeliver it, as a Stewardship Moment because I think much of it still applies today. However, I thought it might be better received as a Belfry article, where one can read it at their leisure. Thank you, Carol for finding this additional collection of papers, as you were sorting through your Mom and Dad’s files. I got a little emotional reading it, as I miss them both, but I thoroughly enjoyed Dave’s perspective on Stewardship. I also enjoyed your father’s voice next to me in our church choir for many years.

Lee brought me onto Stewardship Committee when I was a new member 2004. I also can remember her enthusiasm over “Green Church” issues and a convention we attended together in Burlington, VT, where Lee presented her research on how to make a smaller Carbon footprint, by making our church and our members more environmentally healthy. Jointly, I presented a play I’d written, “The Garbage Monster” (about recycling) which our Sunday School kids performed here in our church. Glad and thankful for the many Stewardship ideas given to me by both of them.

So . . . This month’s STEWARDSHIP article is compliments of Dave Hart Please enjoy !

### **A Moment for Stewardship November 28, 1999 Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC**

Our *Stewardship Committee* is working ! Two weeks ago Kyle Nickerson, [Kim Bossey’s brother] a member of that committee, asked me if I would give a *Moment for Stewardship*. I am glad to do so.

Lee and I have been members of this church less than six months, so we are not too well known to the members of our congregation. I want to share with you some of the influences that have formed my outlook regarding money, giving and of course, church budgets !

I grew up in Syracuse, NY and was a member of an American Baptist Church. Theologically, it would be described as a little left of center. I was the youngest of three sons in a traditional family. Father was the sole breadwinner, Mother was the consummate care giver. The parenting was jointly shared. As I came of age in the early 1940’s, what did I learn in this family atmosphere about money giving and church budgets ?

**I learned that Good Giving is systematic.** In sorting through some papers of my late parents, I found a copy of their church covenant. My father had underlined the word “systematically” in the phrase “Contribute systematically to the expenses of the Church.” My mother and father practiced systematic giving very faithfully. The Sunday pledge envelope was part of our family life. Every Saturday night it was prepared and laid on the little table by the door, to be taken as we left to walk to church the next day. It was still the days when a suburban family could walk to church ! But here is the amazing thing: neither the Depression of the 1930’s nor our family income derived 100% from commissions on my father’s sales of life insurance, defeated their commitment to systematic support of the church ! In a worldly context, how understandable it would have been for my parents to say, perhaps in a whining voice) “Well, we can’t make a pledge to the church. Being on commission, we don’t know what our income will be.” Those words were never uttered in our home. I am thankful to my parents for this lesson in good giving - take a risk and affirm one’s faith ! I continue today to believe in systematic giving. I have pledged a regular weekly sum throughout my adult life. If you are not yet a systematic giver, you can become one.

**I learned that good giving is proportional.** While growing up, it was only by regularity of my parent’s pledge envelope that I absorbed the feeling that it was something significant. Only recently did I learn just how generous was that gift, when I discovered from their old IRS returns that their giving ranged from 8% to 17% in have various years. Over time Lee and I have matched the lower end of that range and some years we have managed to biblically tithe 10%. We have tried to give back to God with the same abandon with which God has given to us, that is in proportion to our resources.

**When does proportional giving become sacrificial giving ?** I have to turn that question back to you, for you to wrestle with it in light of your own ethical value system and your own financial circumstances. “Give, trust, risk, give,” seems to be one key to sacrificial giving.

Here is an example of sacrificial giving: I have kept in contact with a college friend who has just retired as a local Pastor in Jamaica Plains, Massachusetts. Some years ago an arsonist set fire to the church. For restoration, a heavy mortgage was required and the church has been paying it off ever since. Yet, when a sister church in Lawrence, MA suffered a major accidental fire a few years later, the Jamaica Plains church sent a monetary gift! That is sacrificial giving! Giving of ourselves, giving from our substance rather than our surplus, is another key to sacrificial giving.

Finally, Good Giving is giving consistent with one’s faith. As you understand your faith, is your giving true to that faith ? It was during the Depression that my home church was short of funds for coal to heat the church. Four or five members quietly took out a personal loan at the local bank to purchase coal and let the church’s program go forward. This is the kind of risk taking that touches our spirit - because there are no predictable results of the outcome in terms that worldly wisdom can provide. These members’ faith guided them to make a commitment for the good of the church. This is giving that is consistent with one’s faith.

**Now we can see that Giving is Four Square: Systematic, Proportional, Sacrificial, and Consistent with one’s faith.** These are the principles that will make our Sanbornton Church budget come to life! Can we apply these principles in light of St. Paul’s remarks to early Christians of Corinth? In second Corinthians Paul writes, *“God will provide the seed for you to sow. He will swell the harvest of your benevolence, and you will always be rich enough to be generous.”*

2 Corinthians 9: 10, 11

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Don’t forget: Please let us know on **PAPER** or **ONLINE**, what you might be willing to do in the way of volunteering your talents to keep our church forging onward. Paper copies of “What I Like to Do” can be found at the back of the church, requested by phone at 603-286-3018 (leave a message, someone will mail you one), or requested via email: [administrator@uccsanbornton.org](mailto:administrator@uccsanbornton.org) Once completed, please mail it to: P O Box 126 Sanbornton, NH 03269 or bring on Sunday and place it in the passing collection plate. Would you like to fill one out online ??? The online version is at this link: <https://forms.gle/H3J2Wtjvqgmoh3to9> or scan this **QR Code**

Filling it out online will quickly tally up things like: How many people are willing to read a Bible verse(s) or how many might cook or bake or who might be willing to send cards or visit home bound. EITHER WAY you choose to respond is much appreciated. If you haven’t filled one out - we would love to hear from you as soon as possible. It greatly helps our planners for 2026.

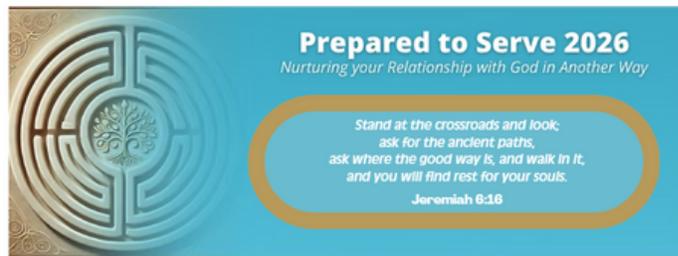


# MUSICAL NOTES



Our choir is already learning and preparing music for LENT with our choir director, Dennis, Rev. Slater and our organist, Laura. She loves choosing challenging instrumental pieces for Prelude, Offertory, and Postlude. And we enjoy this spirit filled music so much that we can't help but to applaud at the end of the service.

Always looking for new voices to add to our harmonies. The Three Kings from the East who joined us a couple of weeks ago, had to be on their way to another engagement, but they knew "Those who sing to the Lord, pray twice." If you like to sing, the commitment involved in our church choir is a 1-hour choir practice almost every Thursday evening and come an hour early for church on Sundays for a ½ hr. warm-up practice before the service. Our choir is "off duty" during the summer months and invites contributors of special music of many different styles to enhance our summer services. Just Email our church administrator at: [administrator@uccsanbornton.org](mailto:administrator@uccsanbornton.org) if you might like to add to our summer services or would like to try singing in our choir. Our choir director and organist offer some of the best vocal and musical training you could hope for!!!



**February 28, 2026** 8:00 am - Lunch included - 4:00 pm at **Pembroke Academy**

Many WORKSHOP choices - Scheduling offers time to participate in up to FOUR different workshops at a cost / registration fee of \$52 per person for the whole day.

Our church was well represented at this event last year and are hoping for similar attendance this year. All who went last year came home with a fresh outlook and new ideas to encourage church growth and also some ideas for personal growth.

We encourage everyone to take a look at the course offerings.

If you are interested in attending, register before February 13, 2026 at 11:59 pm.

After this date, registration is only available in-person on the day of the event.

Registration, up to date information and Workshop Descriptions can be found at

[www.nhcucc.org/events/pts-2026](http://www.nhcucc.org/events/pts-2026)

If the cost of registration is preventing you from attending, please let us know.

Scholarship money is available to help offset the registration fee.

# CAC - Church of Another Chance

On February 15<sup>th</sup> we will host a guest church who will be offering our Sunday Service. All are invited to come and see what they are about. Church of Another Chance / NH is taking “church” out of a building and bringing it to where people are hurting: jails, prisons, and on the streets. They help find housing, work, clothing, cell phones, medical and dental care, and provide ongoing mentoring as people who are or have been incarcerated, are homeless / living on the streets or living in inadequate housing, or recovering from addiction, try to improve their lives and get back on the right path.

Our former Sanbornton Interim minister, Paula Gile has been active with this church, based in the Meredith / Laconia area. CAC had a wonderful workshop at the Prepared to Serve 2025, which I attended. I learned about how they realize sometimes there are just too many obstacles for people trying to recover from addiction, being down and out, or trying to return to life after incarceration. Sometimes the hope of “another chance” as they find and follow Jesus, is the help they need. CAC is making it their mission to listen and help flatten some of the hurdles they encounter in trying to do so. The ministers and mentors at CAC also do not forget to have empathy for the the victims of crimes or difficulties they have encountered due to the actions of those who have served their time and are truly trying to find a better path.



Please join us at Sanbornton Congregational Church on Sunday, February 15<sup>th</sup> and welcome Rev. Scott Jamieson, Rev. Paula Gile and several from Church of Another Chance, who want to help others understand the need for “another chance” at life.

Submitted by Marg Whedon (with information from CAC Website / Facebook Page)  
Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC

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**Read our history, listen to our organ, keep up to date on events and re-watch a service.**



[www.uccsanbornton.org](http://www.uccsanbornton.org)



[www.facebook.com/sanborntonuccchurch](https://www.facebook.com/sanborntonuccchurch)



[www.youtube.com/@Sanbornton  
CongregationalChurch](https://www.youtube.com/@SanborntonCongregationalChurch)

# FEBRUARY SKIES & MOON

"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..."

The Algonquin tribes from New England to Lake Superior had a great effect on European settlers who adopted their habit of naming the full moon for their season. Amid the cold and deep snows of midwinter, many called February's full moon the "Snow Moon".

Some tribes also referred to this Moon as the Full Hunger Moon, since harsh weather conditions and deep snows in their areas made hunting very difficult.



photo credit: Sarah Hitchmoth

Some of the early settlers in North America even invented some of their own moon names that have been passed down through time. Other names for February's full moon include Trapper's Moon, Budding Moon, Bony Moon, Little Famine Moon, Moon of The Raccoon, Moon When Trees Pop, Moon of Ice and Storm Moon.

Since the lunar month is only 29 days long on the average, the full moon dates shift from year to year.

This month has several sky watching highlights, including a meteor shower, an annual solar eclipse (which will only be a partial eclipse in our area but more fully viewed in Mexico), six visible planets that will line up, and the Milky Way's bright core returning to view in the Northern Hemisphere. Add in the heightened Aurora / Northern Lights driven by recent solar activities. Jupiter will be visible shortly after sunset and will remain visible most of the night. Other planets seen in New Hampshire's night skies during early February: Venus, Mars, Saturn, and Mercury (visible only after sunset). Binoculars or a telescope needed to see Uranus and Neptune.

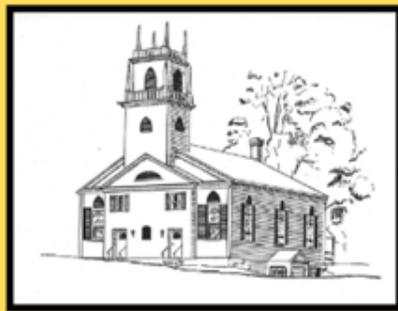
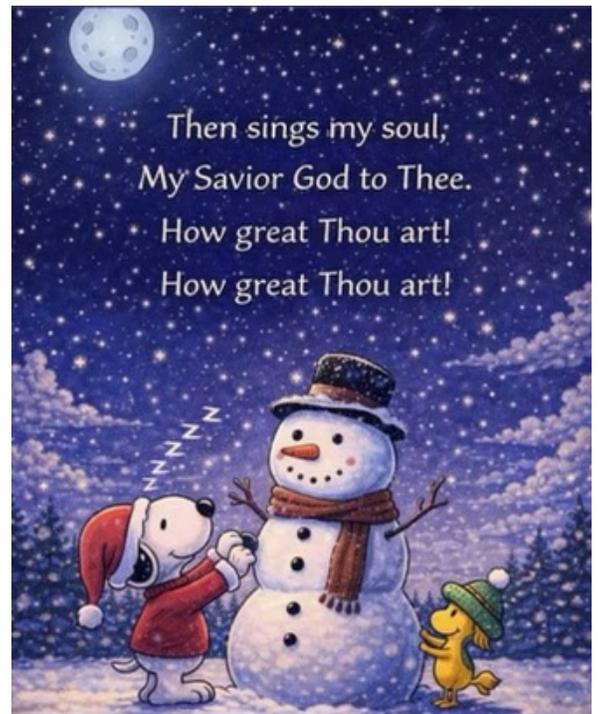
## The Full "Snow Moon" is on February 1st



Submitted by Karey Caldwell

Our offering plate is not only a place for financial contributions, but also a place where many folks have donated a book or a roll of stamps. These stamp donations have made it possible for us to continue to send our paper bulletins to folks who can't come to church in-person and even to those who we haven't seen in a while. Thank you for making this kind of connection and outreach possible! If you would like to help with this in any way or if you want to be added to the snail-mail list, just let us know!

Call and leave a message at church  
(603-286-3018) or  
send an email to  
[administrator@uccsanbornton.org](mailto:administrator@uccsanbornton.org)



## Reverse Craft Fair

Local crafters have supplies for you to purchase!

Come find your next creative inspiration.

**POSTPONED - Sorry**  
**New Date & Time - T B D**



Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC  
21 Meeting House Hill Road Sanbornton, NH  
[www.uccsanbornton.org](http://www.uccsanbornton.org)  
[www.facebook.com/sanborntonuccchurch](https://www.facebook.com/sanborntonuccchurch)

Contact information: [administrator@uccsanbornton.org](mailto:administrator@uccsanbornton.org)  
or leave a message at 603-286-3018.

### A Note From Your **Belfry** Editor:

Whether it be news that you'd like to share about recent happenings OR announce news about upcoming events, we truly appreciate any article that you submit. For our MARCH 2026 Newsletter, **please** send your articles to us on or before **February 25<sup>th</sup>**.

Your articles may be emailed to:

**[administrator@uccsanbornton.org](mailto:administrator@uccsanbornton.org)** OR

Open the google link sent to you by Sue & insert them there for the Belfry.



*Stay warm, Marg Whedon*

