

**Weddings at the Sanbornton Congregational Church,  
United Church of Christ  
Church Policy**

(Updated: February, 2020)

We are delighted that you are considering having your wedding here at the Sanbornton Congregational Church, United Church of Christ! As an Open and Affirming congregation we welcome all couples who seek to be married in our church. Our beautiful sanctuary, in the heart of Sanbornton, NH, can comfortably seat 200 guests. It is best to contact the church early to reserve your date as part of your wedding planning. You may do so by contacting the church at: 603-286-3018 or by sending us a message through our church website ([www.uccsanbornton.org](http://www.uccsanbornton.org)) or our Facebook page: [sanborntonucc.org](http://sanborntonucc.org). The Pastor's email is listed on our website.

In the meantime, please review the information below, as that may answer many of your questions. We look forward to hearing from you!

We are pleased you are considering the Sanbornton Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, and its ministry for your marriage ceremony, and we encourage you to attend our Sunday worship services to help you become better acquainted with us. Please call the church office at 603-286-3018 to check on the worship time (10 a.m. except July/August, 9:30 a.m.)

A marriage ceremony is a sacred event for the couple, for their families, and for their friends. Therefore, the Pastor will work closely with you to make sure your marriage ceremony is a meaningful service for you as well as an appropriate service of worship for this church.

In the Protestant tradition, marriage is not a sacrament of the church. We do believe, however, that marriage is "sacramental." It is the recognition that the love shared by the couple is a gift from God, to which they respond by seeking their marriage become a witness for this love. We seek such a "sacramental" quality for every marriage that takes place within our church.

As you begin this new journey, know that our thoughts and prayers go with you. If there is any way we may be of assistance to you, do not hesitate to contact us. We hope the information in this policy will be helpful to you.

**MARRIAGE SERVICES AND GUIDELINES**

In general, the Church offers its facilities, its staff, and its ministry to those who are contemplating marriage. All marriage services conducted here will be Christian services of worship and respect and honor the traditions and life of this church.

**The Pastor**

Customarily, the Pastor of the Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC, will officiate at marriage services within the church. However, guest clergy are welcome to share in the service, in consultation with and at the invitation of the minister. In addition, if the Pastor is unavailable to officiate at the wedding due to another commitment, we do have a list of United Church of Christ clergy who can step in to perform the service. If you wish to have another ordained minister co-officiate, you need to request permission from the Pastor before submitting your wedding application.

### **Pre-Marital Counseling**

The couple shall meet with the Pastor a minimum of two times, with the first session to be scheduled by couple soon after your application has been sent. These sessions will provide information that will be helpful for properly preparing for Christian marriage.

### **Wedding Fees**

\$300-- Church building (No charge for church members)  
(check made payable to "Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC")  
\$250 – Pastor (check made payable to the Pastor officiating)  
\$100 – Sexton (check made payable to current sexton)  
Organist fees – to be arranged with the organist

### **Music**

Music used with the ceremony should be in keeping with the sacredness and the dignity of the wedding service. You must make your own arrangements for the music you wish to have with the musician(s) involved. The regular organist of the Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC, has the right of first refusal.

### **Photography**

No flash pictures may be taken during the ceremony by guests or the professional photographer. The photographer may take flash pictures during the processional and the recessional only. Still pictures and a video tape of the marriage service may be taken discreetly without flash or extra lighting from the back of the church.

It is the responsibility of the couple being married to remind the professional photographer of the policy of our church. It has been found that if the wedding party is willing to return to the sanctuary following the service, excellent posed pictures may be taken under the close direction and supervision of the photographer. This is also an opportune time for guests to take pictures. Please do not stand on the pews to take pictures. The ushers will be instructed at the rehearsal to inform guests who arrive with cameras of the church's policy.

### **Pew and/or Window Decorations and Flowers**

Please use ribbon ties, or plastic-covered wires, or plastic clips, or pipe cleaners, no tape of any kind, to attach ribbons or flowers to pew ends or other locations. No nails or screws of any kind may be used. Please instruct your florist accordingly. Real flowers may not be strewn in the church.

Flowers may be left in the church for the next worship service if you wish. Such a plan provides flowers for both occasions and is an appropriate way to share and extend the joy and appreciation of your wedding day. Or you can take the flowers to the reception site. If you would like to leave your flowers, please let the Pastor know at your earliest convenience.

### **Celebration Materials**

Rice, confetti, and other materials may NOT be used at the church.

### **Intoxicants**

Alcoholic beverages of any kind are prohibited on the church premises. This includes limousines and the church parking lot. Please also note it is expected that the members of the wedding party will refrain from the use of intoxicants of all forms preceding both the wedding and the rehearsal. The Pastor has the right to refuse to conduct a ceremony when it is in any way apparent that either the bride or groom have been drinking, no matter how small an amount may be reported to have been consumed. Smoking is not permitted in the church buildings.

### **Animals**

Animals are prohibited in the sanctuary except for service animals.

### **Wheelchair and Accessibility**

A wheelchair is available for use (to the right of the sanctuary door), and an outside wheelchair entrance is located behind the church building.

### **Parking**

Our church parking lot is available for all vehicles. There is also parking available at the side of the town hall. There is a handicap parking space at the back of the church between the church and the library, with easy access to the rear wheelchair accessible entrance. Please park only on the west side of the church driveway to allow emergency access.

### **The Wedding Rehearsal**

Because of schedules and the number of people involved, it is very important that the rehearsal and the marriage service be held at their appointed hour. The Pastor will review the service very carefully at the rehearsal and arrange a schedule for arrival times for the actual service. It is very important that all members of the wedding party, including the ushers and the parents, be at the rehearsal, and on time.

Please bring with you the marriage license and any special items to be used. Fees are due and payable at this time in separate envelopes, one for the church, one for the Pastor, one for the sexton and one for the organist (or any other musician). Allow one full hour for the rehearsal.

### **Exceptions**

Only the Pastor in conjunction with the Board of Worship can authorize exceptions to the established Wedding Policy. Requests for such exceptions must be made to the church in writing at least thirty days before the scheduled service.

**Sanbornton Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
P.O. Box 126, Sanbornton, NH 03269  
(603) 286-3018**

**Wedding Application**

**Contact Information:**

**Name(s) of Couple:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Wedding Information:**

**Wedding Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rehearsal Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Arrival Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rehearsal Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Departure Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(including clean-up)*

**Number of People Expected:** \_\_\_\_\_ *(no greater than 200 people for sanctuary)*

**Wedding Fees:**

\$300-- Church building (no fee for church members)

\$250 -- Minister

\$100 -- Sexton

Organist fees – to be arranged with the organist

**Note:** Fees help defray the cost of utilities and custodial services. All fees are due prior to building use. Those who use the facilities are expected to remove or clean up the items that they have brought for the wedding. The Board of Property and Finance reserves the right to assess additional fees for custodial services, if the facilities are not left as they were found. Contact the Pastor or Board of Worship for possible waivers, adjustments or

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