



March 2023

It has been a year and a half since the Helping Hands of Round Pond regrouped, purchased the White Church (formerly a United Methodist Church), and renamed it the Round Pond Meetinghouse. Our vision to nourish the bodies, hearts, minds and spirits of our local coastal community continues the work begun by the earlier generation of Round Pond women who first began the group back in 1969. We are grateful today for the foundations they laid, and we know we are on the right path as we revitalize this important community organization that started many years ago but fell dormant as the founders aged.

The 2022 calendar year was our first full year as the reorganized Helping Hands. The Community Service Committee worked steadily to engage with the community, and their fundraising efforts raised nearly \$2500. The volunteers organized four food sales (February, April, October and November) and hosted a free community ice cream social in July. They welcomed new residents who moved into the village, and reached out to neighbors in times of illness and in times of celebration with letters and gifts, thanks to the efforts of volunteer cooks and the correspondence committee. They found new ways to communicate with village residents by posting on the sign board in front of the Meetinghouse, and by writing a monthly column in the *Lincoln County News*. They helped the village prepare for the Christmas holidays, putting up wreaths along the main road. The committee began the work of learning about other local organizations that do outreach, and they invited outside speakers to talk about the Caring for Kids program and the FISH program. Finally, towards the end of the year they gathered together to discuss a wishlist, and in the end they donated almost \$3300 to local groups and individuals that support our community, prioritizing food insecurity, energy relief, and organizations that serve Round Pond and support workers in the village. None of this would have been possible without the great ideas, varied talents, and hard work of the many members of the Community Service Committee and those on the baking and cooking lists.

In October 2022 the Helping Hands established itself as a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, and started accepting tax-free gifts. By December 31, 2022, we had accepted just over \$6300 in grants and donations. Our current goal is the renovation of the Meetinghouse - the former White Church - into a gathering place that will serve as a base for community events and occasional non-denominational services. Although the Meetinghouse structure has been in transition (currently lacking water, heat, and a full electrical system), in warm weather we still opened the doors to the community as we hosted three non-denominational faith services, one in each of the summer months, and a storytelling event in early October.

In the summer of 2022 we completed some preliminary electrical work and minimally updated the service so that the structure could be properly insured. In the meantime the Building Committee has its hands full these days, as members speak with contractors, obtain estimates, and establish priorities for the renovation project. Replacing the roof and controlling water damage is at the top of list - you can expect to see carpenters and roofers at work later this spring! The Executive Committee likewise has been busy. It recently finalized the Vision and Mission Statements for the organization, maintains the business end of the nonprofit with federal, state and local agencies, and keeps up our public facing communications online. We have also started exploring grants and organizing for the coming capital campaign. We are continuing in a quiet phase of fundraising, and will commence with our first public fundraising events early in the summer of 2023.

As we look to and honor the past we are also looking forward to the future, and finding new ways to help each other create a stronger community. Please spread the word to your friends in the village that the Helping Hands welcomes everyone. Our working committees include a Community Service Committee, a Building Committee, and a Program Committee – and there are other ways to be involved if you do not wish to attend committee meetings! Above all, please get in touch with us if you know of someone we can reach out to – even in a small way. The Helping Hands of Round Pond is a nonprofit organization working to serve the people of Round Pond.

Warm regards,
Nancy Evans, President
Jody McKenzie Harris, Vice President
Debbie Poland, Treasurer
Kristine Poland, Secretary
Kate Cox and Beth Billik, Members at large