



## **Our Mission**

To make Church on the Hill's Meeting House, a community landmark, into a community resource.

## **The Context and the Opportunity**

Rising on the hill above the town, the Meeting House is one of the most distinctive buildings in Lenox. Dedicated in 1805, the Meeting House draws frequent visitors, especially those interested in exploring the nearby cemetery, and it is frequently photographed and depicted in art. The Meeting House marks the northern gateway to the Lenox Cultural District, and its recently restored clock and the bell sounding the hours are beloved features of everyday life in the town.

The Meeting House hosts Sunday morning worship services from springtime through December, but it is often empty and generally underutilized. It offers great potential to benefit the wider community as a venue for all kinds of events, activities, and performances. Although Lenox features other sites for community gatherings, few are affordable to permanent residents; fewer still combine the historical significance, beauty, and exceptional acoustics of the Meeting House.

## **The Plan**

Making the Meeting House into a community resource entails renovating and preserving the building for future generations, as well as opening it to new audiences for new purposes. Several years ago, Church on the Hill retained Foresight Architectural, a nationally renowned firm specializing in historical renovation, to develop a master plan to improve the accessibility and versatility of the building. The principal modifications involve the interior spaces.

Since approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the master plan preserves the historical character of the Meeting House, which will continue to house regular worship services. For the building to attract new users—as a venue for gatherings ranging from community meals to family reunions, holiday celebrations, concerts and dances, theater productions, craft fairs, farmers' markets, and beyond—the pews will become moveable on new flooring. A full kitchenette will be added, along with more efficient heating and lighting, and new entry stairs. The building will become ADA-compliant, with a fully accessible bathroom, as well as a new entry ramp and lifts to provide access to the front stage and balcony.

## **The Goal and the Timing**

The cost to revamp and renovate the Meeting House is approximately \$1 million. Once construction begins, the project can be completed in less than a year. Organizers [including "Friends of the Meeting House," a fledgling 501(c)(3) nonprofit] are presently mounting a campaign to raise the necessary capital with the unanimous support of the congregation as well as of many community leaders. The successful completion of this project will preserve the Meeting House as a community landmark while also making it welcoming to the wider public as a vital community resource.