



Hearts and Hands

Helping Seniors

Laurel Area Faith in Action



WORDS....WORDS...WORDS...ALL AROUND US WORDS!!!

The radio, the television, the newspaper, the mail, chatting with neighbors, talking on the phone...words are everywhere. With so many words being conveyed, how many of them are meant to inspire and uplift. Or are we trapped in a circle of demeaning, disrespect, and degrading drivel? I would like to issue a challenge to each of us. Beginning now, each of us will use our words to uplift, inspire, and encourage each other.

This time of year when it gets dark early and the glorious sun makes only limited appearances, many people struggle with seasonal depression, also known as seasonal affective disorder (SAD). This is a mood disorder that usually starts in fall or winter and ends in spring or early summer. These mood changes may affect how you feel, think, and act. According to an article published by the MAYO clinic, SAD may affect 11 million people in the United States each year, and 25 million more have a milder form commonly referred to as the winter blues, and then add on top the expectations of the holidays. For many people this is the time of year when they struggle the most.

How wonderful would it be if communication could be more positive and encouraging. A simple smile or a kind deed can completely change someone's day. My grandma used to tell me "If you see someone without a smile, give them one of yours."

Here are **10 positive words** to uplift and inspire someone and spread a little holiday cheer:

1. **Believe**—Trust in your abilities and potential and share with someone that you believe in them as well.
2. **Courage**—Embrace challenges with bravery and strength. Do not forget that sometimes having a partner makes the challenge easier. We have all heard that two heads are better than one.
3. **Hope**—Keep faith in a brighter future ahead, and share your hopefulness with someone who needs it.
4. **Resilience**—Bounce back from setbacks with determination. Offer a helping hand, a caring heart, and a listening ear to someone who needs help.
5. **Joy**—Find and share happiness in the little things around you.
6. **Growth**—Embrace learning and development. Sign up for a class with a friend.
7. **Kindness**—Spread positivity through acts of compassion. Kindness is free, but the dividends are huge.
8. **Strength**—Recognize your inner power to overcome. Look how far you have come. Thank those who have helped along the journey and be ready to mentor someone traveling the same path you have traveled.
9. **Dream**—Pursue your aspirations with passion and purpose. Remember, "A dream is only a dream until you decide to make it real."
10. **Gratitude**—Appreciate the journey and the lessons learned. Look around and be thankful for what you have. Let people know how much they mean to you. Practice an ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE.

Words...May the words you speak be filled with kindness and compassion and share the attitude of gratitude for all the blessings in your life. May the words you hear uplift you and fill your heart with joy.

Grace and peace,

Amy

Together, We Lift Up Our Seniors



As we enter this season of giving, our hearts are full of gratitude for the kindness this community has shown over the years. Your generosity has brought comfort, connection, and dignity to aging neighbors who rely on Hearts and Hands Helping Seniors. Every gift, whether large or small, directly strengthens the services we provide to our program recipients and helps ensure every senior we serve feels seen, valued, and cared for.

Your support is crucial to our efforts to improve the lives of our senior neighbors by continuing to provide the services that they rely on. We would love it if you could make a year-end tax-deductible donation to help us continue to provide the much needed services and achieve our mission of aging well, and living confidently.

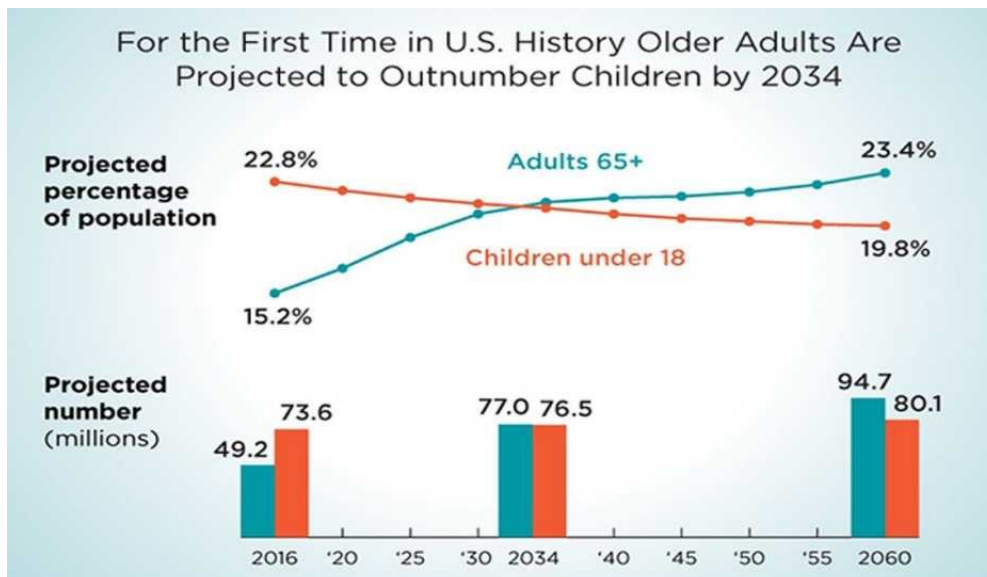
There is still time to make a charitable gift in 2025, including options such as a traditional donation, directing part of your RMD, or planning a future legacy gift. Thank you in advance for your contribution. Your donation will go toward helping us remain ready to provide necessary services to the ever increasing population of seniors who live in our communities.

Here are ways you can help:

1. Donate online at **LaurelFIA.org**. (<https://laurelfia.org/donate>). You can choose to make a **one-time** donation, or simply set up a **recurring monthly** donation. Whichever works best for you.
2. Send a **check** made payable to **Hearts and Hands Helping Seniors** and mail to PO Box 854, Latrobe PA 15650.
3. Do not forget about the **RMD** (Required Minimal Distributions), those can be donated directly to Hearts and Hands Helping Seniors.

Your belief in our mission is the foundation upon which we continue to build a future where no senior has to miss an appointment due to no transportation or sit alone wondering if they have been forgotten. Together we can create a lasting change that lives on for years to come.

Thank you for the real and lasting impact you continue to make in the lives of the seniors we serve.



**LAUREL AREA
FAITH IN ACTION**



Filling Your Cup So You Can Give to Others

Reflection for Fall Newsletter 2025
Taylor Ramezan, Marketing Director

November always brings a quiet invitation to pause. The days grow shorter, life slows in subtle ways, and we naturally begin to look at where we've been giving our energy and where we've been receiving it. It's a season filled with gratitude and generosity, yet many of us forget one essential truth. We can only give well when we're willing to fill our own cup first.

Filling your cup is not selfish. It is responsible. It is sustainable. It is the foundation that makes any form of giving meaningful instead of draining. Too often we imagine generosity only in its biggest versions. Writing a large check. Volunteering for long hours. Hosting, organizing, planning, serving. Those contributions matter, but they are only one part of the picture. The heart of generosity often shows up in smaller, quieter ways that are within reach for all of us.

Filling your cup can be as simple as reclaiming a small moment of calm in your day. Five minutes of breathing before the house wakes up. A short walk after work. A warm cup of coffee that you drink sitting down instead of rushing through the morning. These tiny pockets of care help settle your mind and restore your energy. When you tend to yourself with intention, even briefly, your presence becomes steadier and your capacity expands.

Once your cup begins to refill, your giving naturally becomes more thoughtful. It becomes lighter instead of heavy. You start noticing the meaningful gifts that cost very little yet matter so much. Checking on a neighbor. Leaving a note of encouragement. Sharing a meal you already planned to make. Holding space for a friend who needs to talk. Listening without rushing to fix anything. Smiling at someone who looks like they're carrying a lot. These small gestures ripple further than you realize.

Generosity is most powerful when it is personal. When it comes from a place of feeling grounded and whole rather than depleted. The people in your life don't need you to be perfect. They need you present. They need you steady. They need you to show up as someone who has taken time to care for themselves so they can care for others without losing themselves in the process.

As we move through November, consider what genuinely fills you. Not what looks impressive or productive, but what helps you breathe more easily. What brings you back to yourself in the middle of busy days. What reminds you that you are human and deserving of care.

When you honor those needs, your giving becomes more authentic, more joyful, and more aligned with what truly matters. You begin to see that generosity is not measured by size. It is measured by sincerity. It is measured by intention. It is measured by the heart behind the act.

This month, may you fill your cup and allow it to spill over in small and meaningful ways that strengthen not only your spirit but the people around you.



Hearts & Hands
HELPING SENIORS

"
AS YOU GROW OLDER, YOU WILL
DISCOVER THAT YOU HAVE TWO
HANDS — ONE FOR HELPING
YOURSELF, THE OTHER FOR
HELPING OTHERS.
"

— AUDREY HEPBURN



HAPPY FALL VERSUS NOT-SO-HAPPY FALLS!



As we age, we are much more likely to experience a “not so happy fall”. One in four people aged 65 or older fall every year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The risk for serious injuries and fatalities from falls increase as well. Falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries for older adults. Falls are the top cause of injuries in seniors, including head injuries, fractures, and even spinal cord injuries, warns Dr. Brown director of gerontology, geriatrics, and palliative care at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Unfortunately, bouncing back is not always so simple.

Whether you have previously fallen, are worried about your balance, or feel generally steady on your feet, it is never too early to talk to your doctor about your fall risks. Falls can be prevented, for the most part, but they are not inevitable!

Ideally, you and your doctors should talk about falls. They can watch you walk, consider your medications and other factors that might affect your risk of falling. Speak up! If your doctor does not know you have fallen, they cannot help you.

In addition to keeping the lines of communication open with your doctor, there are some simple steps you can take to safeguard your home and reduce your risk of falls on the go. Follow these simple guidelines to stay safe and active.

Step #1: Identify the Top Home Hazards

While a fall can happen anywhere, certain places invite more danger. Beware the bathroom. “I ask my patients to tell me one soft place they can land in their bathroom if they fall,” Dr. Brown says. “All have answered that there are not any.”

Dr. Brown recommends installing grab bars in the shower or beside the toilet. It is also smart to use a nonslip mat in the shower. If you rent, simply ask your building manager or lessor to install them for you. If you own your own home ask your insurance company for assistance with getting this safety equipment installed.

Stairs are another place where a fall can lead to a significant injury. Make sure you install handrails on both sides of any staircase-and make sure you use them!

Step #2: Take a Walking Tour

Walk through your home and look for fall hazards. Answer these questions as you tour your home.

- * Are the pathways clear from clutter?
- * Is there room for you and an ambulatory device like a cane or walker if you have one?
- * Are there loose rugs you can trip over?
- * Is the lighting bright enough so you can see anything in your way?

The Silver Sneakers Home Safety Checklist is a wonderful resource to identify areas in and around the home where simple changes can help prevent falls.

Step #3: Ask for Safeguarding Help

If you need ambulatory devices like canes or walkers, ask your doctor to request one from your insurance coverage.

If you need assistance installing grab bars, railings, or other safety guards, check with building manager if you rent or with local community organizations for assistance.

Step #4: Give Yourself a Steady Foundation

Footwear can make a difference in avoiding falls. Shoes with good support, low heels, and a back, no slip ons are best.

Even if you spend most of your time at home, what you have on your feet matters. Bare feet, socks, and slippers can increase your risk of falls. Wearing supportive shoes can help keep you steady.

Step #5: Improve Your Strength, Balance, and Flexibility

Staying strong is critical to fall prevention. People experiencing weakness are four times as likely to fall as people who are strong. Simple exercises, like trying to stand from a chair without using your hands, can help build strength in your leg muscles.

Cannot stand all the way up? Push up a couple of inches. Once you feel some tension, release and sit back down. Even with this small range of motion, you will strengthen your legs, hips, and core.

Your doctor may recommend balance exercises and simple stretches. If needed, your doctor can refer you to a physical therapist who can teach you exercises to do in your home to gain strength and stability.

Step #6: Do Not Live in Fear

After a fall, many people develop a fear of falling, which makes them more cautious. While being cautious is good, fear can interfere with your lifestyle and harm your health in other ways. You may become afraid to leave your home which leads to feeling lonely and isolated.

Share your concerns with your doctor. Use cane or walker for added stability if this becomes necessary. Stay strong and active to enjoy many more Happy Fall Seasons!

Be Grateful

By Edgar A. Guest

Be grateful for the kindly friends that walk along your way;
Be grateful for the skies of blue that smile from day to day;
Be grateful for the health you own, the work you find to do,
For round about you, there are those less fortunate than you.

Be grateful for the growing trees, the roses soon to bloom,
The tenderness of kindly hearts that shared your days of gloom;

Be grateful for the morning dew, the grass beneath your feet,
The soft caresses of your babes and all their laughter sweet.

Acquire the grateful habit, learn to see how blest you are,
How much there is to gladden life, how little life to mar!
And what if rain shall fall today and you with grief are sad;
Be grateful that you can recall the joys you once have had.



As we are entering into the season of thankfulness and gratitude,
may we all count our blessings and realize how fortunate we truly
are. As we reflect on the ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE, may we
change from focusing on wants and appreciate all that we have
been given.



AUTUMN



Q L W E J M E D I R Y A H K Z B N U T C V P
H N P G I B T S C U E T S O R F D R O S A M
R B S A Z D E P Q N J W I V G X T L E K F H
Y Q U I L T K J F U B H O A E C O L Q D B S
A K X L C V N R E D I P S L M R B H U Z I F
V W D O E J A P B G Z R Q H F A S M I T Y C
M O G F T W L E V S N B R U T N I A N P H Q
X R V R A K B Z J C H I L E P B U F O G W N
T C E J R H S A U Q S Y G W L K O S X H D M
D E H A G L I U M T F E B N O S R N E J P U
S R J C I Q P N O H V L U C A D M E F O K T
G A F K M J D L T U C S E O N H L P B I X U
U C R E T A E W S P D F M Z I B C O H N R A
J S M T P N F C Z R O I W Y A Q H D I L U E
I D Y U N S E V A E L Z C R H P O K M Q S B
B Z R A K E Q H D M X N R E S J P I C E T O
E I L S H Y C B G U K O P T D M F L A R L Z
P F R Q Y R O T X Z W J N B U L A S E M I D
W X B D O J H A R V E S T P C I O Q Y S N L
L H Z M S I J F W O R C A Q Y N K B P U G X

apples

autumn

birds

blanket

bonfire

changing

cider

colorful

cozy

crow

deciduous

equinox

flannel

foliage

frost

harvest

hayride

jacket

leaves

migrate

orchards

pumpkin

quilt

rake

rustling

scarecrow

season

spider

squash

squirrel

sunflower

sweater

trees

vegetables

wheelbarrow



Guess who is turning 25 in 2026.
WE ARE!

Look for the latest updates on our
Facebook page and our website.



What do we do!

Recipients 60 years and older who reside in Latrobe, Unity Township, Ligonier, Ligonier Township, Derry and Derry Township may receive program services for an average of two hours per week. All services are provided free of charge and may include the following by screened and trained volunteers:

TRANSPORTATION—Receive escorted rides to the doctor, store, and other destinations.

*Service is dependent upon volunteer availability and traveling distance.

CORRESPONDENCE AND REFERRAL ASSISTANCE—Get help with completing forms, writing letters, and referrals for services.

TELEPHONE REASSURANCE—Receive a friendly phone call from a volunteer because everyone needs a friend!

HANDYPERSON—Get assistance with special projects for yard work (does not include weekly maintenance, light plumbing, and more...

TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE—A volunteer will help you set up your cell phone, computer, internet, or TV.

GROCERY SHOPPING—A volunteer will go grocery shopping and deliver groceries for you. *Please call for service details. Conditions apply.

FRIENDLY VISITOR—Getting restarted!

WE ARE HERE TO HELP! Hearts and Hands Helping Seniors (LAIVC) is a wonderful resource that is available to YOU free of charge! We are here to help and willing to assist you. Each person holds a piece to the puzzle of life. **Please do not be shy, even if you just have questions about the program.** You may not need services now, but someday you may...so please do not hesitate to reach out and inquire about our program.

Please know that for the safety of volunteers and recipients, LAIVC does not provide anything medical or handle medications. Additionally, we do not provide cleaning services. Available services are subject to volunteer availability.



Visit our website for more
information at
www.Laurelfia.org or scan
the QR code



LAIVC is a United Way Partner Agency and has received a grant from the Non-designated Community Impact Fund. **LAIVC designation #1462314.**

LAIVC is an independent 501 C 3 nonprofit corporation. Our Tax Exempt number is 20-438-0836. The official registration and financial information may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll-free within PA 1-800-732-9999.

This Season, Choose Simple Meals That Nourish and Comfort

Eating well does not need to be complicated, expensive, or time-consuming. Many people today are stretching their dollars and their energy, which can make healthy meals feel harder to manage. But nourishing your body can actually be simple when you focus on small, steady habits and meals built from basic ingredients. The goal is not to prepare elaborate dishes every day. It is to create meals that are warm, comforting, affordable, and easy to put together.

One of the most helpful things you can do is keep a short list of budget-friendly staples on hand. Ingredients like oats, rice, canned beans, eggs, frozen vegetables, canned tuna or chicken, and potatoes can be turned into dozens of quick and nourishing dishes. These foods are inexpensive, last a long time, and pair well with simple herbs or seasoning to bring out flavor without adding cost.

Frozen produce is often an overlooked treasure when cooking on a budget. It is picked at peak ripeness, retains its nutrients well, and often costs much less than fresh produce. A handful of frozen spinach in scrambled eggs or a cup of mixed vegetables added to a simple soup can instantly turn a light meal into something heartier and more satisfying.

Another way to make eating well easier is to cook small batches. You do not need a huge pot or a full day in the kitchen. Even preparing two or three servings of a soup, casserole, or grain bowl at a time gives you ready-to-eat meals throughout the week without added stress. This also helps stretch your grocery budget and reduces food waste.

When your energy is low, meals do not have to be hot or time-consuming. A bowl of yogurt with fruit, peanut butter on toast, or tuna mixed with a little mayonnaise and celery still offers protein, fiber, and healthy fats. Simple foods are often the easiest to digest and the quickest to make.

Most importantly, be gentle with yourself. Nourishing your body is not about perfection. It's about small choices that help you feel cared for and supported. A warm meal—no matter how simple—can make a noticeable difference in your energy and your overall well-being.

Here are a few easy, budget-friendly recipes to help you get started this season!

Simple Breakfast: Cinnamon Oat Bowl

Ingredients:

½ cup oats
1 cup water or milk
Dash of cinnamon
1 teaspoon honey or brown sugar
Optional: raisins or chopped apple



Instructions:

Combine oats and liquid. Cook on the stove or microwave until soft. Stir in cinnamon and sweetener. Add fruit if you'd like.

Easy Dinner: One-Pot Vegetable and Bean Soup

Ingredients:

1 can mixed vegetables or 1 cup frozen vegetables
1 can beans, drained
2 cups broth or water
Salt, pepper, and garlic powder to taste



Instructions:

Combine everything in a pot. Simmer for 10–15 minutes. Adjust seasoning. Serve with crackers or bread.

Snack: Peanut Butter Banana Toast

Ingredients:

1 slice whole grain bread
1 tablespoon peanut butter
½ banana, sliced
Sprinkle of cinnamon



Instructions:

Toast the bread. Spread peanut butter. Top with banana slices and a little cinnamon.



If you belong to an organization, club, church, or business and would like Hearts and Hands Helping Seniors (LAIVC) to speak with your group, we would love to join you. Simply call us at **724-539-4357** or email **faithinaction@msn.com** to schedule a visit.

Our team is always grateful for the chance to share who we are, the services we provide, and the many meaningful ways to volunteer and support our mission. We look forward to connecting with you



BY THE NUMBERS

January 1, 2025 to November 1, 2025

New Recipients:	29	Donations:	
New Volunteers	12	2025 Spring Appeal\$	6,320.00
		General Support	\$ 17,200.00
Total Recipients	328	Grants	<u>\$ 85,000.00</u>
Total Volunteers	251	Total	<u>\$108,520.00</u>
Recipients Deceased	24	Total Needed for Budget:	\$139,200.00
Volunteers Deceased	6	Donations to date:	<u>\$108,520.00</u>
Hours of Service	8,025	Deficit Amount:	\$ 30,680.00
Number of Services	3,084		



5 Simple Mood-Boosting Ways to Feel Better as the Days Get Shorter

As the weather cools and daylight fades earlier, it's normal to feel your energy dip a little. The good news is that small, easy habits can lift your mood and help you stay steady through the winter season. You don't need special equipment, long workouts, or big lifestyle changes. A few simple moments of care can go a long way.

Here are five easy ways to brighten your days, no matter your activity level.

1. Let in as Much Natural Light as You Can

Open your curtains as soon as you wake up. Sit near a window during meals or while reading. Even a few extra minutes of natural light can help regulate your internal clock and support a more balanced mood. On brighter days, step outside for a little fresh air if you're able. Those small moments add up.



2. Move Your Body in Gentle, Safe Ways

Movement lifts your spirits, improves circulation, and helps your body stay warm, but safety always comes first. Try slow stretches, light chair movements, or a few steps around your home. Hold onto sturdy furniture for balance and take your time. This isn't about strenuous exercise. It's about choosing movement that feels comfortable and safe for you.

3. Stay Connected With Someone You Enjoy

Conversation is one of the strongest mood boosters we have. If talking on the phone helps you feel grounded, call our office and we will set you up with a telephone reassurance volunteer. These calls are warm, friendly, and meant to brighten your day. If you'd like to give back in a meaningful way, becoming a telephone reassurance volunteer is a wonderful option. It's not a huge time commitment, and even a short weekly call can make a big impact.

4. Create One Simple Daily Ritual

Rituals bring comfort, structure, and a sense of calm. Pick something small and repeatable. Enjoy a warm drink in your favorite chair. Listen to music you love. Write down one good moment from the day. These little routines help anchor your schedule and give you something positive to look forward to.

5. Add a Touch of Warmth to Your Evenings

Shorter days can feel heavy, but warmth has a way of softening the early darkness. Wrap up in a soft blanket, switch to a cozy lamp instead of bright overhead lights, or watch something uplifting before bed. A warm, calming environment helps your body relax and eases the transition into nighttime.

As winter settles in, these gentle habits can brighten your days, support your mood, and help you feel more connected and cared for. Even the smallest steps can make a meaningful difference.

Can you make a difference?

Our senior neighbors count on our services to stay safely in their homes as they age. We depend on your generosity of your time talents and treasures so that we can continue to be here when our neighbors need us.

Helping others brings as much to ourselves as it does to those we help. Scan the QR code to be directed to our website to see what is happening. If you would like to volunteer, simply print out the application, fill it out, and mail it in. **You can make a difference.**



AUTUMN IS BACK!!

FIND THE WORDS AND THE MYSTERY MESSAGE





A huge THANK YOU
to the Saint Vincent
College students
who helped with our
Fall Rake and Run!
Alpha Lambda
Delta, the Fred
Rogers Scholars, and
the Office of Global
Engagement teamed
up to rake leaves at
four recipients'
homes, and their
energy and kindness
made such a
difference. We're so
grateful for you!





FLANNEL & FELLOWSHIP EVENT



Thank You Event Sponsors!!!

Daniel B. DiCola, MD (Silver)

Linda McDowell (Bronze)

Mullen Refrigeration Services, Inc.
(Bronze)

The Spru Crew (Bronze)

Quatrini Law Group (Bronze)

Congratulations to the winners of our Fall Raffle Drawing:

Pam W.
\$2,500.00 1st Prize

Dacie B.
\$500.00 2nd Prize

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our Flannel and Fellowship Fall Networking Event on November 7. Community members, friends, recipients, volunteers, staff, and board members came together for an evening filled with food, connection, and warm conversations. It was a wonderful opportunity for new guests to learn more about Hearts and Hands Helping Seniors—who we serve, what we do, and the many meaningful ways to support and get involved. We are grateful for each person who helped make the night so special.

Thank You

Do you have a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your retirement accounts?

If you've ever wanted to make a meaningful impact in the life of an aging neighbor, now is a wonderful time to do so. By directing your annual RMD or setting up a planned legacy gift, you can support the mission of Hearts and Hands Helping Seniors (LAIVC) while potentially reducing your tax burden. Ask your financial advisor about opportunities to save on taxes, avoid capital gains, or create a lasting legacy through charitable giving.

Planned gifts are contributions arranged through your estate or financial plans and are typically fulfilled after your will is executed. These thoughtful gifts help secure the long-term future of our organization and may offer significant tax advantages to your estate.

Take a step today that makes a difference now and for generations to come. Speak with your financial advisor or estate attorney, and feel free to contact us with any questions.



Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
Latrobe, PA
Permit No. 59

Hearts and Hands Helping Seniors, LAIVC
428 Main Street, 2nd Floor
P.O. Box 854
Latrobe, PA 15650
(724) 539-4357
faithinaction@msn.com

