

## Lanark Helps Initiatives To Expand Community Support

Christ Church, Lanark has been involved, along with other churches and organisations, in setting up "[Lanark Helps](#)" - a new local helpline that aims to provide practical and emotional support for those impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdown.

Having met its initial goal of assisting vulnerable people with food and medicine deliveries, Lanark Helps has now expanded the support it offers with a new funding award. Since Christ Church's popular Memory Lane Café has been unable to meet during the lockdown, we wanted to find a creative way of helping those living with dementia at home. Lanark Helps submitted applications for local and national government funding to address those additional needs. We were delighted to learn last week that Lanark Helps had been awarded over £30,000 (£25,538 from the Scottish Wellbeing Fund and an additional £5,000 from the South Lanarkshire Renewable Energy Fund), a substantial part of which will be spent to buy resources for those who would normally visit Memory Lane and other local dementia community groups.

The Rector of Christ Church, the Rev Canon Drew Sheridan, said: "We are over the moon to be receiving this boost to what we do in the field of dementia support and care. Up until now, we have been a self-funding group and, therefore, limited in what support we could offer during the lockdown. This grant will enable us to deliver the very best in dementia-friendly jigsaws, painting pads, books, puzzles and films to homes across Clydesdale, extending our much-needed provision to those with memory conditions who may be feeling isolated. We also look forward to Memory Lane resuming post lockdown with this new range of materials to be enjoyed."

Christ Church's Memory Lane was also recently awarded a Regional Growth Fund grant from the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway to purchase a new musical keyboard, laptop and other technology, which will help Memory Lane to continue offering generous hospitality and engaging musical entertainment. The congregation is very grateful to the Diocese for this financial support; it is going a long way to help them engage in mission in Lanark.

The six projects supported by the new Lanark Helps funding are:

- **Dementia Support:** Working with DAGS (Dementia Alzheimer Group Support Lanark) and Memory Lane Café in Christ Church, the project will provide a library of professionally produced activities (Games, reminiscence cards, puzzles) that will be loaned to families for a week, delivered by a Lanarkhelps volunteer.
- **Healthy Minds:** The project will provide a library of jigsaws that will be loaned to people in the community, particularly the elderly and others who do not have access to online methods of purchasing to alleviate boredom. This project will also purchase mindfulness colouring books and pencils to gift to individuals seeking stimulation and are at risk of developing, or have, poor mental health.

- **Growing Hope:** Lanarkhelps will provide an activity for families to work as part of a community to grow hope and colour in a dark situation with around 2,500 plants being potted by individuals in their homes. Plant pots, bags of compost and seeds will be placed outside key public venues and shops allowing people to collect as they pass on their daily exercise.
- **Family Activity & Support:** A monthly activity pack (4 in 12-weeks) will be collated and distributed to 100 children who otherwise would have little opportunity to engage in creative work due to their family situation. These packs will be made up and distributed by members of staff and volunteers from Healthy Valleys. The staff members will also be engaging in regular telephone support calls to the affected families to ensure that children are safe, well looked after and, where necessary, provide support and signposting to other organisations.
- **Community Check In:** The project will employ staff to make phone calls to identified residents within the community who are on their own, isolated, vulnerable or suffering from poor mental health to ensure that they are well, looking after themselves, and provide a listening ear.
- **Suicide Prevention:** Working with Hear for You, Lanarkhelps will provide extra capacity for counsellors to work with individuals on the phone and in person, providing counselling and care to those considering taking their own life. As people emerge from lockdown when mortgage holidays, furlough and employment issues surface the project seeks to provide good quality support available. This funding will allow 10 at risk individuals to each receive 10 hours of counselling.

Your church community might be eligible for a grant from [the Scottish Wellbeing Fund](#) to support people who are facing additional barriers or have increased requirements as a direct result of the coronavirus pandemic - **applications are due by noon on Friday 22 May.**