



The Uniting Church Maffra Congregation

MONTHLY - NEWS

Church Office (Ph. 5147 1325)

Vol. 26. No.3

MINISTER'S LETTER

April 2026

Dear Maffra Uniting Church family,

I greet you with a grateful heart as we step into April on the other side of Easter.

These past weeks, I have noticed a striking contrast between two very different kinds of leadership.

On one side, we have the most powerful and wealthy nation on earth, led by a man with enormous authority.

That power, it seems, has not been used to lift others up.

Tariffs and trade wars are unsettling the global economy.

Long-standing agreements between nations are being torn apart.

The poorest and most vulnerable are often the ones who feel it first and hardest.

Power used only for the benefit of the powerful does not bring peace — it brings fear.

On the other side, we have Jesus.

He had no army, no palace, and no treasury.

He walked dusty roads, touched the people
no one else would touch, ate with sinners, and
welcomed the outsider.

And when the moment came, he did not use his power to save himself.



He gave his life — for us, for the world, for every person who has ever felt lost or forgotten.

That is the kind of king Jesus is.

Not a king who demands, but a king who serves.

Not a king who takes, but a king who gives.

Jesus himself said:

“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:43–45)

These words are not just nice ideas.

They are the very shape of the life Jesus lived — and the death he chose.

Easter has happened, the stone has been rolled away, and now we face a choice.

We can be swept along by the way the world does things — through power, fear, and self-interest.

Or we can re-affirm our allegiance to the Servant King and choose, again, to follow Jesus.

That choice is not made once.

It is made every morning, in every conversation, and in the way we treat one another.

Here in Gippsland, we may not hold the levers of global power, but we hold something just as real — a community of love, kindness, and welcome.

A meal shared, a hand held, a door left open — that is exactly what Jesus celebrated, and it is exactly what the world needs more of.

May we follow the Servant King — closely, faithfully, and together.

Blessings,

Rev. Paul Ryu

Your Minister

Street Stall Success

An enormous thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of our Street Stall held on Friday, 27 March (with some follow-up selling the next day outside IGA) in the coldest, wettest conditions we have had for a long time. To those who baked, prepared jams and preserves or helped on the day - we couldn't have done it without you. It really was a team effort.

The final tally was:

Raffle	769 (There were 8 Easter hampers thanks to your donations of all things chocolate!)
Cake Stall	1077
Jams and preserves	209
Donations	180
GRAND TOTAL	\$2,235

Quite remarkable, when you think about how few of us there are these days. Well done everyone! It was so heartening to see just how generous our local Maffra community was in supporting our efforts.

Raffle winners were: Lois Ramsey, Gwen Van Der Linde, Alice Ryrie, Jenny Gieschen, Lorraine Prout, Sam Luxford and Nathan from Fehst on Meats, Lyn and David Lancey

Palm Sunday Walk 29 March

It was great to be able to join with our friends from St Mary's Catholic Church and St John's Anglican church to share in the Palm Sunday Walk. Thank you to our representatives from Combined Churches Committee (Isa and Lois) who helped coordinate the activity and to those who made our palm crosses. Thank you to John and Geoff Little for putting up the palms around our church. Thank you also to Jude who organised the music and sound system.

Upcoming Events

April 9—Thursday
April 9—Thursday
April 23— Thursday

Friendship Group
Quilt Group 10-3
Quilt Group 10-3

May 17— Sunday

Isa's Memory Walk



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Rosters



ELDER	
April	Isa Taylor
May	Jude Walker
BIBLE READER	
12 & 19 April	Lois Ramsey
26 April	Jeanette McNamara
3 May	Sue Poynton
DOOR STEWARDS	
5 & 12 April	Duncan & Kathy Malcolm
19 April	John Little & Elaine Clements
26 April	Gwen Van der Line & Jude Walker
3 May	John Little & Elaine Clements
LAWN MOWING	
20 April	Frazer & Sue Burnett
4 May	Duncan & Kathy Malcolm
FLOWERS	
19 & 26 April	Jude Walker
3 & 17 May	Jeanette McNamara

Profile

Anna (Ana) Malkic

I was born in 1954 in a small village called Selenca, Serbia in what was then called Yugoslavia. My father used to look after people's cows in the fields from early in the spring to the autumn. I had two brothers – one was apprenticed as a baker and the other worked on the land for the government. I worked on the land as well, harvesting in autumn and weeding during the spring. I was twenty years old when I came to Australia and my brother who was already living in Australia, sponsored me. I met my husband at "Happy Bistro" in Springvale. It was a Yugoslavian restaurant and lots of Slavs gathered there and that is where I met my husband Zlatko (but everyone called him Sam) in 1976. We met just before Easter and were engaged shortly after and were married in September. My husband was a labourer in the factories. Our first home was in Noble Park. Neither my husband or I could speak English. When I was in Grade 5 in Serbia

, we started to learn Russian, but never English. Growing up we spoke Slovak. I only started to learn English from the people I worked with in the factory. If it was someone from Italy or Greece or another country trying to teach me English, it was REALLY hard because they didn't have an Australian accent. When someone would point to something and say what it was in English, I had to translate it back to my language to understand. It was very hard. I had to teach myself how to write English which was very difficult because Slovak is written in the Latin alphabet and is very different from the English alphabet.

My eldest daughter was born in Queen Victoria Hospital in Melbourne. My husband and I went with our daughter to Queensland looking for work. We settled in Wynnum West in Brisbane and Sam got a job in a meatworks factory. Another daughter was born and after a couple of years we came back to Melbourne and we had a son and lived in Springvale.

We sponsored my parents to come over but it was hard for my father to get a job because he was over fifty. Eventually he got a job working in a cardboard factory. My mother got a job in a plastics factory. They had no English as well.

They stayed for a few years and then they went back to Yugoslavia. I was in Melbourne with four children, no English and no family support.

My children grew up with me speaking Slovak, my husband speaking Croatian and they didn't learn English until they went to school. I learnt my English from them.

We bought a house in Dandenong and lived there for a couple of years but then decided to move back to Serbia and regretted that decision after a few months and came back to Melbourne. I'm very happy we came back to Australia because the civil war started a few years later and it would have been terrible living in Serbia.

My husband had an accident in the factory where he was working and he could-

n't work anymore because he was badly hurt. I had to look after my husband and four children as well. Life was very hard. I was working in a Kambrook factory before the accident for four years.

We moved to Sale and lived there for ten years. I worked as a house-keeper/cook for the Catholic priest at St Mary's. Then we sold our house again and moved back to Gatton in the Lockyer Valley, Queensland, because my husband's sister was there. My husband couldn't stay in one place. We lived there for twenty-three years. Sam passed away in 2010. After he passed away I started volunteering for the Seven Day Adventist Church packing food hampers. I also worked in their soup kitchen for nine years.

Last year I decided to come back to Victoria. One of my daughters was living in Briagolong. My son, Josef, came with me to Maffra and I bought my house in McAdam Street. My other daughter is staying with us for the time being.

In Yugoslavia I was brought up as a Catholic, but one day I was walking past the Anglican church in Gatton and liked what I heard the minister preaching. They were very welcoming and helped me a lot when my husband passed away. When I came to Maffra, I was looking for the closest church and that happened to be the Uniting Church and I am very happy coming to that church!

(As told to Sue Burnett)

Friendship Group to meet at the Church Hall on 9th April at 1.30pm. Bring along your 1st childhood book or postcard & maybe a congratulatory telegram you may have received in your younger years. Dot.



Gippsland Event

You are invited
by Synod UCAF Council to a
Gathering & Reunion for past and present
UCAF people

Wed 22 April 26

10am to 2pm

Leongatha Uniting Church

16 Peart Street Leongatha BYO lunch



The purpose of the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship is to promote the ministry of adult fellowship, support, and friendship among members.