



The Uniting Church Maffra Congregation

MONTHLY - NEWS

June 2026

Dear Maffra Uniting Church family,

June is a quiet, gentle month.

The days are shorter now, the mornings crisper, and there is something about a Gippsland winter that invites us to slow down, sit closer together, and pay attention to what really matters. In the life of the Church, June is the beginning of Ordinary Time — the long season of Sundays after Pentecost. Ordinary Time is where most of life actually happens, and it is where God does some of His finest work.

Just a few weeks ago we celebrated Pentecost — the day the Holy Spirit came rushing in like wind and fire and changed everything. The disciples who had been hiding behind locked doors suddenly found the courage to walk out into the streets and speak. That same Spirit is alive in us today. These Sundays after Pentecost are our invitation to ask: what does it look like to live in that Spirit, not just on a special Sunday, but in the ordinary moments of every week?

June holds a special milestone. On 22 June, the Uniting Church in Australia turns 49 years old. In 1977, three traditions — Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian — made the brave decision to come together as one. It was not a perfect union, and it has not always been an easy road, but it was a Spirit-led act of faith, and we are the fruit of it. As the UCA has been running a national season of prayer called '30 Days, 30 Voices, One Church in Prayer' right through to that anniversary, I encourage you to join in, even in your own quiet way at home. We are a small congregation in Maffra, but we are part of something beautifully alive across this whole

country.

On 5 June, the world marks Environment Day. Living here in Gippsland, surrounded by rivers and farmland and open sky, we do not need much convincing that the earth is a gift worth caring for. The Genesis readings this month take us back to the very beginning — to the story of God creating, blessing, and trusting us with this world. Stewardship of creation is not a political position; it is a faithful response to a generous God.

I also want to say something from my heart. I know that for some of you, winter is a hard season — the cold, the quietness, the aches and worries that seem louder when the world goes still. Please know that you are not alone. The church is here. I am here. And more than anything, God is here. The Psalmist wrote, 'Even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day' (Psalm 139:12). There is no corner of your life where God is not already present.

So as we step into June, here is my invitation to you:

In the spirit of Ordinary Time, look for God in the small, everyday moments — a conversation over the fence, a phone call to someone who is lonely, a meal shared with a neighbour.

In the spirit of the UCA anniversary, give thanks for the community of faith you belong to — imperfect, faithful, and still going.

In the spirit of creation care, step outside this winter and simply give thanks for the world God made and placed us in.

May God's warmth find you in the middle of this winter, and may you find His grace in every ordinary day.

Blessings,
Your minister Rev. Paul Ryu

MAY CHURCH COUNCIL MONTHLY NEWS REPORT 2026

New Church Councillor

Thank you to David Lancey who was nominated and unanimously voted in as our new Church Councillor by the congregation after church on May 17th. We then welcomed David Lancey to his first Church Council meeting on May 19th.

David and I will be completing our Safe Church training on Saturday June 20th at Bairnsdale from 10.30 am until 12.30 pm. If anyone wishes to join us for the training, please let Jeanette know and we can travel together.

There is another Safe Church training session at Koo Wee Rup on Saturday 27th June from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm. If anyone wishes to attend that one instead.

Safe Church training needs to be completed every 3 years by everyone with a leadership role within the church.

Financial

Our church funds are quite healthy at the moment but we have some large bills, like rates, insurance and land tax, coming up. Remember that our church depends on the funds donated by congregation members each week, the interest on our accounts, funds from the hall hire, and the money received from our 2 rental properties. We don't receive any money from Synod or other places unless we apply for grants. If congregation members reduce their donations or don't support the church then we have less capacity to run and upkeep the Church and Hall, and to pay for a minister.

Hall

The church hall leaks sometimes when there has been heavy rain. It has been investigated by the plumber, and is only a small leak but it will be quite expensive to repair. We were just a bit too late to apply for a grant to fix the leak this year but plan to apply for the grant next year.

Stretton Park and McDonald Wing services

Once a month we lead a short service at Stretton Park and also one at McDonald Wing. Lois has been leading these regularly with assistance from others now and again. If you are interested in assisting Lois, with these, please let her know.

Thank you Lois for providing these services for those of our members who can't attend Church in person anymore and to other people at Stretton Park and at the McDonald Wing who also like to participate.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

There was a very small attendance at St Johns of 14 people then there was a lovely gesture in acknowledgement of Nell and Gwen, who have sat at the same seat for many years of services, by lighting a candle for Gwen.

Thanks, Lois, for liaising with the other churches for all the services, food etc.

Friendship Group

6 people attended a games afternoon. Dot, thank you for the great job you are doing leading the Friendship Group.

Justice in Mission

We have decided at Church Council to participate in the Postcard campaign re Fewer Gambling, Alcohol and Unhealthy Food Ads. The cards should arrive shortly. Please collect a card from the narthex when you enter church, read it and if you wish to complete the postcard, please do so, and give it to Jeanette who will collect them all and send them away together. Thanks.

Jeanette McNamara

Maffra Uniting Church Secretary

AN UNBELIEVABLE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

Many of you know that I make Tomato Sauce for the church to sell. The limiting factor on how much I make, is sourcing the bottles. The preferred size for the buyers is the 300 ml Schweppes mixer bottles. They are now part of the deposit/refund scheme and are not as available as they were.

So..... here is the investment opportunity. If you are willing to forfeit the 10c deposit on the bottle, I will fill it with sauce and sell it for \$4.50, with all proceeds going to church funds. That is an almost incalculable return!

Bottles with caps please! Please leave them in the supper room.

Jude

Friendship Group to meet on the 11th June 1.30pm at the Church Hall.

Guest Speaker will be Police Liaison Officer Kim Kell talking about keeping us safe in and around our home.

Please make an effort to come and make it worthwhile for her.

All welcome Male & Female.

Contact (Dot Berryman)

Vale

Gwen Vanderlinde

Gwen Vanderlinde was a quiet, shy member of our church family. She was always among the first to arrive Sunday morning, ensuring the heaters were on for us on those chilly mornings. Gwen sat in the back pew and was the first to leave at the end of the service! Gwen was not into meetings or staying for morning teas but if she was on door duty or open plate collection, or asked to light the church candle, Gwen would conscientiously do so. Sometimes she even read our opening prayer. She faithfully attended our church every Sunday forever. It didn't matter if it was freezing cold or raining heavily, Gwen would be there. She would decline an offer of a lift saying she had a raincoat and would be fine.

Gwen and her much loved dog Jilly would be up early in the morning looking for cans and plastic bottles. Over the past few years, she (and Nell Langley) enthusiastically collected hundreds and hundreds of these cans which were then taken to Maffra Vinnies where they were cashed in at the recycling depot in Sale. Nearly two thousand dollars has been raised as a result of their efforts - money which has been used to provide welfare support within our community.

Gwen worked tirelessly in our church gardens. When Nell was no longer able to help, she doggedly kept on caring for the garden as best she could. She told me that it gave her a purpose to her day and she really enjoyed working in the garden. She would rake up the fallen autumn leaves and bag them up ready for collection. At the ripe old age of 87, she was still mowing her own lawns! She never looked for recognition or praise. She truly was a quiet and humble achiever.

Gwen loved animals and was very kind. She lost the tip of her finger when protecting Jilly from an aggressive dog off its leash but insisted the dog wasn't put down. If you visited her late in the afternoon, there would be dozens of birds eagerly waiting in her front yard in anticipation of feeding. Sometimes she would have a small plate of mince in her pram and she and Jilly would feed the birds when they were out having one of their walks.

When undergoing twelve months of cancer treatment for a melanoma on her arm, I never heard her complain once. Gwen led a simple life, firm in her faith. I so enjoyed her company and like many of you, will miss her smiling face very much.

Gwen's daughter Yvonne asked me to thank everyone who contributed to Gwen's afternoon tea following the service. She and her family were so appreciative. I'm sure Gwen would have been overwhelmed to see just how much she was loved by our church family. Rest in peace, Gwennie!



Contributed by Sue Burnett

Currawong Team Leadership Camp

As you would all be aware, Rev Paul provides shared ministry to Sale, Maffra and Stratford Uniting Churches - the Currawong Team. Rev Paul initiated a two night leadership camp in Lakes Entrance with representatives from Stratford (Margaret Warnock, Don Macraill), Sale (Wendy Phelen, Helen Day) and Maffra (Jeanette McNamara and myself). Although we have met regularly over these past eighteen months since Paul's induction, this was a great opportunity for us to get to know each other better, learn more about each other's churches and talk about the future direction of this shared ministry. Presbytery Resource Minister, Chris Rowney, spent a full day with us and provided a very worthwhile morning and afternoon workshop where we discussed in more detail the VicTas Uniting Church's "Faithful Futures" and its implication for the Currawong Team. It was a time of reflection and optimism as we discussed the challenges and hopes for each congregation and for the Currawong Team. We will discuss this in more detail at our next Congregation Meeting but there was a very positive feeling and enthusiasm within the Currawong Team at the conclusion of the camp. Thank you to Rev Paul and Rev Chris for their organisation and guidance.

Sue Burnett (Chairperson - Maffra Uniting Church)

PENTECOST LUNCH 2026

Hello everyone,

As one of your representatives to the Maffra Combined Churches Committee, I would like to say a very big Thank You to all at St Andrews for your support to the recent Shared Lunch.

Sunday May 24th, Pentecost Sunday we gathered at Geoff Webster hall St John's for soup, sandwiches, slices, cuppa and fellowship. St Andrews provided soup and bread sticks, thank you makers and donors.

We had 40 plus join together, speaker Trevor Fogarty from St Mary's gave us background on St Vinnies in our community, and the support it provides to those in need. Trevor made a special mention of the contribution made by Gwen Van de Linde and Nell, collecting cans and the monetary

contribution provided, in the order of \$2000.00, this was timely as we had just had her funeral on the Friday.

The day realised \$549.00, rounded to \$550.00 which goes to St Vinnies, staying in Maffra continuing to provide support to those when and where required.

Thank you

Lois Ramsey

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2026

This year the week commenced Sunday May 17th, with St John's service Monday 18th 10.00am, and cuppa following.

Wednesday 20th at 2.00pm St Mary's turn, Friday 22nd St Andrews, 10.00am again with cuppa to follow. We are fortunate that ecumenism is strong in our community.

The services averaged approx. 16-18 attending, and this year the theme was –“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling” – (Ephesians 4:4). The service title ‘Light from light for light’ was prepared by our friends from the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church.

We were fortunate that Sue and Fraser had visited Armenia and so were able to amend the service to share with us much of what they saw and experienced and bringing us a greater understanding of Armenia. Many of their photo's Sue used to support the service message, and many of those from the other Churches attending commenting on. Combined Churches has a time of recess from now until preparing for Advent season, thank you all for the support St Andrews offers.

Lois Ramsey

C'tee Rep

EDITOR'S NOTE:

You may notice that the format of this month's Monthly News has changed. This is because the old program that we have been using, Microsoft Publisher will not be available after October. I will be experimenting with the new format over the coming months. Any feedback will be received.

Jude

Gippsland Presbytery Minister, Chris Rowney visit

Last Sunday, we had the pleasure of a visit by Chris Rowney, one of our Gippsland Presbytery ministers. He is in charge of Pastoral Care and Mission and Learning. He spoke very interestingly about the Trinity as a concept and its application throughout many parts of the Bible. After the service, he joined with 19 members of the congregation for morning tea, explained his role within Presbytery and Synod and answered questions.

Thank you Chris for your service for the Gippsland Presbytery, leading us and your support for our congregation.



Profile- Lyn Lancey

I am the eldest of four children. I spent my childhood and early teenage days in and around Heyfield. I attended St Michael's School in Heyfield with my three brothers, then secondary school at Our Lady of Sion, Sale. Our family moved to Sale before my brothers started at St. Patrick's College as it was known as then. My first job was with G. J Coles where I worked on the footwear and hosiery counter before progressing to the office. After five years there I went to work at the hospital in the pay office.

I continued to work there and in that time married my first husband, Danny. I left when I was pregnant with our first daughter, Liz (Elizabeth). Cathryn came along twenty months later. My idea to be a stay at home mum was shattered when Danny was diagnosed with cancer. I went back to work part time for a few months then full time. My working life spanned over fifty years in total.

After fourteen years Danny lost his battle. It was a very difficult time but we were surrounded with love and support from our family, friends, work colleagues and strangers who later became friends.

Several years later a work colleague invited me to go to the Sale Old Time Dance. She was persistent and after several failed attempts I started going. A few weeks later I met David who didn't seem to mind my lack of co-ordination on the dance floor!

Dancing led to romance and then marriage! Life took a different path then! David's passion for steam and old diesel trains saw us moving first to Warragul for six months while I continued to work in Sale then to Knoxfield where I worked in Vermont. David joined a heritage railway group in Newport. After two years living in Knoxfield we moved back to our own home in Wurruk and I worked at Ashleigh House in administration roles.

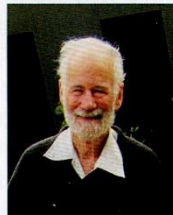
In March this year we celebrated our twenty eighth wedding anniversary. Although there have been some challenges over the time mostly with David's health life continues on. We downsized to a unit in Sale last year so there is less to do and time to enjoy life.

I am privileged to be mother to Liz and Cathryn, grandmother to Liz's children –Grace and Jack, step-mother to Madeleine, Andrew and Peter also step- nanna to Honey, Ellamae, Jack, Chani, Matilda, Thomas and Alexander.

Deb's dahlia awards gain attention of AusPost

Sammy Stamp's helpers have other lives, of course, outside of the Thursday morning meetings.

As well as being a keen philatelist, regular volunteer Deb Collett cultivates beautiful dahlias. She generously gives bunches to each of the volunteers when they are in season.



Every autumn, Deb excuses herself from our company for a month or so, to compete and judge in the various dahlia shows around Victoria and interstate - at which she has been quite successful.

**by Allan
J Clark**



Recently, Deb was approached by Australia Post to act as a consultant to help design a set of three stamps depicting dahlias, which were released on May 19, 2026.

Now to move to more mundane items...

To the end of April 2026, sales reached about \$20,009 (same month last year, \$9,084.)

No more grant applications have been received or approved, so total grants approved so far this year remain at \$12,000.

If any parish or organisation has a proposed or ongoing project that helps their community, please contact me on 9557 1008 to see if it fits the criteria to receive a Sammy Stamp grant.

Thank you once again for the piles of philatelic items, coins, etc. that have been pouring in lately. They are very much appreciated.

Cont. on page 5

Cont. from page 4

Deb Collett was featured in the March 2023 Net Work when Lencie Harding paid a visit to Sammy Stamp.

Lencie took this fabulous photo of her, saying: "Deb is a lady of many talents, among them, growing beautiful dahlias."

Allan Clark adds that Deb has won awards for her dahlias and, believe it or not, these dahlias in the picture are the 'seconds' from her garden!



The above article was originally published in the June 2026 Network Magazine.

Maffra Uniting Church seeks to comply with Federal Government National Privacy Legislation.

Articles in this publication may not be copied or distributed beyond our reading list for any purpose without the express permission of the author or the Editor.

Time to Pray

I got up early one morning
and rushed right into the day;
I had so much to accomplish
that I didn't have time to pray.

Problems just tumbled about me,
and heavier came each task.
"Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered.
He answered, "You didn't ask."

I wanted to see joy and beauty,
but the day toiled on, gray and bleak;
I wondered why God didn't show me.
He said, "But you didn't seek."

I tried to come into God's presence;
I used all my keys at the lock.
God gently and lovingly chided,
"My child, you didn't knock."

I woke up early this morning,
and paused before entering the day;
I had so much to accomplish
that I had to take time to pray.

Author unknown

NICKNAMES FOR LAZY COWORKERS

Cordless

- Only works for 2 hours

Kitkat

- always taking a break

Muffler

- always exhausted

Seaweed

- just floats around all day

Sensor Light

- only works if someone walks past

Wheelbarrow

- only works when pushed

E.T.

- always want to go home



Rosters

ELDER	
June	Lois Ramsey
July	Jude Walker
BIBLE READER	
7 June	Jude Walker
14 June	Chris Clyne
21 & 28 June	Sue Poynton
5 & 12 July	Isa Taylor
DOOR STEWARDS	
7 & 14 June	Alan & Chris Clyne
21 & 28 June	Isa Taylor & Sue Poynton
5 & 12 July	John Little & Elaine Clements
LAWNS	
15 June	Duncan & Kathy Malcolm
29 June	Geoff Little & Volunteer
13 July	Frazer & Sue Burnett
FLOWER ROSTERS	
7 & 13 June	Lois Ramsey
21 & 28 June	Kathy Malcolm
5 & 12 July	Isa Taylor

UPCOMING EVENTS

11 June	Thursday	Friendship Group 1.30pm
11 June	Thursday	Quilt Group 10-3
20 June	Saturday	Safe Church Training -Bairnsdale
25 June	Thursday	Quilt Group 10-3