



The Uniting Church Maffra Congregation

MONTHLY - NEWS

August 2026

Dear Friends in Maffra Uniting Church,

As we move through August, we begin to sense a subtle shift in the air. The mornings are still crisp and cold here in Gippsland, but underneath the quiet earth, life is beginning to stir. August is often a month of waiting, a bridge between the stillness of winter and the promise of spring. It's a wonderful time to pause and reflect on who God is as our Creator.

When we read the creation story in Genesis, we often focus on the grand scale of it all. But what makes the biblical story of creation so radical is *how* God creates. In the ancient world, power was understood through force, conquest, and dominance. Empires believed the world was born out of conflict, and that the strong were meant to rule over the weak. Our story reveals something completely different. God did not create the world through violence or coercion, but out of pure, overflowing love. Creation is an act of God making room, restraining power so that life, freedom, and beauty can flourish. God spoke into the darkness, brought order out of chaos, and looked at the world with delight, declaring it "very good."



If the world was spoken into being by God's loving breath, then nothing around us is accidental or cheap. The land we walk on, the air we breathe, and every person we meet carries the touch of the Creator, and to believe in the God of Creation means living with deep gratitude and respect, caring for our environment and honouring the dignity of every neighbour. This is closely tied to something else Genesis tells us: that we are made in the image of God. This isn't about physical appearance, but about purpose, and we are called to reflect God's nature into the world. In a culture that often values speed, productivity, and competition, we're invited instead to reflect God's gentle, space-making love, offering patience, hospitality, and grace to those around us.

There's a third thread worth holding onto as well, especially in a month like this one. Winter can sometimes feel long, both in nature and in our personal lives. But the God who created the whole universe is continuously at work, bringing life out of cold ground and hope out of quiet spaces. Even when we cannot see it

immediately, God's creative, redeeming love is actively pursuing us, holding us, and renewing us.

May this month of August be a time of quiet noticing for you. As you catch sight of early blooms or feel the winter sun on your face, may you be reminded that you are held by a loving Creator who knows you, delights in you, and calls you good.

With that in mind, I'd love to invite you to bring this noticing into practice together. Perhaps you might take a short walk this month and simply notice one small sign of life stirring, or reach out to a neighbour you haven't spoken with in a while, as a small act of the space-making love we're called to reflect. And if you'd simply like to talk more about any of this over a cuppa, my door is always open.

Blessings

Your minister, Rev. Paul Ryu

Friendship Group

to meet at 1.30pm at the Hall on the 13th August, then over to Sale Uniting Church to listen to the visiting singers at 3pm. Transport has been organised. Contact (Dot Berryman).

Thank you!

Sincere thanks to my Church family for your thoughts and prayers after the passing of my sister Melva from Avondale Heights.

Dot Berryman.

Church Council Report for August Monthly News

Two new Ministers in the Gippsland Presbytery

Rev. Deacon John Tansey commenced 0.8 at Wonthaggi – Inverloch in May 2026, and

Rev. Linley Liersch will commence at St John's Cowes in August 2026.

Safe Church Training

David Lancey, Paul Ryu and Jeanette McNamara completed their Safe Church Training at Bairnsdale on Saturday 20th June. The training was led by Fiona Morrison (Gippsland Presbytery Chair) and Chris Rowney (Gippsland Presbytery Resource Minister, Mission, Strategy and Education), with Vic Heyward (Gippsland Presbytery Minister Pastoral Care) contributing. It was very practical and an enjoyable learning experience. I highly recommend the training led by our own Presbytery Ministers for those who need to update their Safe Church training over the next 12 months or couple of years. Remember that the Safe Church training needs to be completed every 3 years.

Internationally Acclaimed Korean Choir

Internationally acclaimed Korean Mission Singers to perform at the Sale Uniting Church on Thursday August 13th pm as a Currawong event. Thank you to Paul for facilitating this. Posters up in the church and hall.

Property

The driveway for 7 Pearson St will have to be completely redone. Three quotes have been received and the concreters contacted to enable this to occur as soon as possible.

Positive comments received regarding our Essential Services Measures' compliance.

Congregation Meeting

There will be a Congregation meeting held on August 9th directly after the Church Service

New Bins

FOGO bins – one FOGO is at the back of the church to put dead flowers in. and one FOGO bin is in kitchen for morning tea food scraps.

2 red lidded bins One will be at the back near the storage area and one red lidded bin at the front of the church.

All green waste will go in the green lidded bin.

Hall Hire

The hall will be hired for a couple of special events by locals on August 23rd and October 17th, as well as being used for the November 28th State Election.

We will be having a cake stall and BBQ in our garden at the same time.

Next Sunday August 9th Peter Morris will be leading our service as we haven't seen him for quite a long time.

Jeanette McNamara

Church Council Secretary

Faithful Futures Roadshow – from Chris Rowney, Gippsland Presbytery Minister and member of the Faithful Futures Synod committee.

Opportunities and Possibilities - Gippsland Faithful Futures Roadshow

Dear friends,

The Faithful Futures Roadshow is coming to a place near you! - A relaxed gathering designed to bring the Faithful Futures Project to life through conversation and participation.

Why come along?

- Hear about the Faithful Futures project, with time for your questions
- Share your own experience and ideas in a World Café conversation
- Take part in imagining together what our Presbytery could look like in 5 to 10 years

- Be heard: everything gathered on the day is collated, themed, and shared back across the Presbytery, with real next steps

Each session is invitational and open to everyone in Gippsland Presbytery - you don't need any background in strategy or governance to take part, just a willingness to talk and listen.

The workshops will take us through a range of activities to uncover the stories of what God is already doing with the church, and to explore together some questions which might help us discover even more possibilities.

Location	Date	Time	Venue
Lakes Entrance	August 8th	10am-2:30pm	Lakes Entrance UCA
Fish Creek	August 22nd	10am-2:30pm	Fish Creek UCA
Wonthaggi	August 29th	10am-2pm	Wonthaggi UCA
Warragul	August 29th	10:30am-2:30pm	Warragul UCA
Leongatha	September 5th	10am-2:30pm	Leongatha UCA
Morwell	TBC	TBC	Morwell UCA
Maffra	October 10th	10-2:30	Maffra UCA

PLEASE NOTE ON 29th AUGUST Wonthaggi is the 10-2 session and Warragul is the 10:30-2:30 session.

They are free, but for catering purposes please register for the workshop you would like to attend.

Register your intention to come here <https://events.humanitix.com/faithful-futures-gippsland-presbytery>

Or get in touch with sec.ucagipps@gmail.com 0408 499 046 to register.

Watch this space,

The Gippsland Faithful Futures Roadshow team

Rev. Chris Rowney

Gippsland Presbytery Resource Minister

– Mission, Strategy & Education and eLM

Uniting Church in Australia

0407 881 260

mserm25.ucagipps@gmail.com

FAITHFUL FUTURES Roadshow

Each workshop is a relaxed, informal session to hear about Faithful Futures, share what matters to you, and help imagine what our churches could look like in 5-10 years.



The Uniting Church in Australia
PRESBYTERY OF GIPPSLAND



Coming soon to a
town near you!

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I can do things you cannot,
you can do things I cannot;
together we can do great
things.' Mother Teresa

Grounds Maintenance

Church Council discussed at length the presentation of our church grounds at our July meeting. We acknowledge with much gratitude the love and care Nell Langley and Gwen Vanderlinde showed our gardens over many years. For the past couple of years, Gwen has been looking after the front garden beds all by herself - a remarkable feat considering she was 87 years old! With her passing, the gardens have become more and more neglected and overgrown.



At the Sunday service on July 26, we discussed our options with the congregation who were unanimous in the decision to remove most of the weed-infested rose garden beds and enlist the support of the Community Work Crew from Fulham Correctional Centre for some much-needed garden maintenance. A group of eight very obliging men worked wonders in just a few hours the next day. We could not have done what needed to be done, without their assistance. John Little provided his truck and the men were able to load all the green waste on to it for us. It would have taken us hours and hours of hard physical work (which none of us are capable of anymore) to achieve the same result.

Thank you to John and Frazer who then disposed of the green waste at the tip. We understand that some people may feel sad to see much of the garden gone, but with no-one willing to maintain the gardens any longer, we were left with little choice. A neglected garden bed is also very sad. Thank you for your understanding and support of this decision.

Morning Teas

Many people enjoy staying for a cuppa after our church service each Sunday. It's a special time of friendship and fellowship. Thank you to Eleanor Delaney who replenishes the tea and coffee and purchases the biscuits, as needed. Eleanor has been using the money from our 2025 Pancake Tuesday evening, but funds are getting very low now.

On a spur of the moment, we provided morning tea to the Fulham Community Work Crew when they helped us with our huge garden maintenance task last week and they were so ravenous, they ate everything in sight! (Plus the extra biscuits I went and bought them!) They were very grateful to have been made to feel welcomed and appreciated by our church.

We were wondering if people might be prepared to purchase a packet of biscuits (with a long "Use by" date) every now and then to keep our pantry well-stocked? It would be so helpful.

Thank You

Many thanks to Alan and Christine Clyne who organised a gardener to poison the capeweed in the lawns between the church and the hall. Hope Springs eternal that it will disappear completely!

Speaking of Hope ... Korean Hope Choir

If anyone is needing a lift to hear the Korean Hope Choir perform at Sale Uniting Church on Thursday, 13 August, please contact Sue Burnett. We are hoping to organise some car pooling so that no one misses out on this great musical opportunity. The concert will go from 3:00 p.m. to about 4:00 p.m.

Sue Burnett

On behalf of Maffra Uniting Church Council



Rosters

ELDER	
August September	Isa Taylor Lois Ramsey
DOOR	
2 & 9 August 16 & 23 August 30 August & 6 September	Alan & Christine Clyne Lois Ramsey & Isa Taylor Eleanor Delaney & volunteer
BIBLE READER	
2 & 9 August 16 & 23 August 30 August & 6 September	Sue Burnett Duncan Malcolm Jude Walker
LAWNS	
10 August 24 August	Geoff Little & volunteer Frazer & Sue Burnett
FLOWERS	
August September	Vacant Vacant

QUILT GROUP

Will meet 13th and 27th August 2026.

10 until about 3

Contact: Jude Walker 0412 778707

