



IRCA eNews April 2026

Verse of the day

Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them.

- Ephesians 5:11

Voice of the day

The cross is part of the mission. The imperialist occupation of the world is disrupted from within; the violence that until now has been the law is unmasked. The poor, imprisoned, and rejected Messiah descends into the darkness of death, yet in so doing He brings a new creation to light.

- Pope Leo XIV

Prayer of the day

Sun of Righteousness, you have broken through the veil of death. Uphold your light as we continue to confront the depravity of those who still champion it.

Sojourners, 8 April 2026

Welcome to this edition of our occasional newsletter.

Our key focus this time is preparing for IRCA 2026 in Sibiu in late July. In these very uncertain times, planning is continuing, with a number of people applying for visas. Others are waiting patiently to see if it will in fact be possible to travel,

with the major travel hubs in the Gulf States in a state of limbo. One assurance we have is that the conference will be available on ZOOM, and material will be recorded, so it is effectively open to all who are interested.

Before that - in fact very soon, some regions will be gathering for prayer. The Americas will hold a Prayer ZOOM in this week, Bishop Prasad is gathering Asia members on early on 22 April, and Oceania holds its Network ZOOM on 23 April (see details below).

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear IRCA Family,

As we continue to celebrate and remember Christ's resurrection and the hope we have, the world around us is in chaos. It seems that each new day I am greeted by news of another challenge facing people who are part of IRCA, from weather related damage or flooding, to economic or political uncertainties and concerns about travel. In a world where people talk about closing borders and treating others with suspicion, I am consistently reminded of the blessing of being part of IRCA, an association of people who are sharing stories and praying for one another across borders and boundaries.

Over the coming weeks, there are opportunities to join with IRCA regional groups supporting one another through global prayer Zoom gatherings. You can register to join the global prayer Zooms through the links below. Each one offers an opportunity to hear what God is doing in local places and pray for the wider IRCA network and upcoming conference.

In March I had the privilege of travelling to Romania to meet with the on-the-ground team and I am excited about welcoming people to IRCA 2026. It is difficult to know what impact the world's political and economic situation may have on our gathering as people are applying for visas and making travel plans, but we sincerely hope and pray that God will remain faithful and provide a way.

We know that there are many people who will not be able to physically join us in Romania and we are committed to live-streaming

or recording as much of the conference as possible to ensure it is accessible for those who cannot travel. I encourage you all to think about the possibilities of a 'sequel' conference in your local places. If you are unable to travel (or even if you are), think about when you might gather with other rural people in your region or country and share some of the resources or discussions. What does it look like to have a regional gathering? To build relationships and encourage one another in local places as well as international places?

As the countdown to IRCA 2026 in Romania continues, I pray you will all know God's presence, provision and peace in the midst of our chaotic world.

Blessings, Heather

Images below from Heather's recent visit to Sibiu: standing between Roger Parvu and Dietrich Galter, bringing greetings at the local church; outside the church with Dietrich.





Dr Heather Major shares a message from Romania, when she visited recently in preparation for IRCA 2026 20-25 July.

Link to this [youtube video](#)



IRCA CONFERENCE 2026

The conference theme: 'Roots, Faith and Identity: People and Communities Living on the Land' reflects the deeply embedded nature of faith and history in Europe. As we face an increasingly complicated global situation and wrestle with questions of identity and relationships with land and each other, the conference aims to provide opportunities to share our stories as we build relationships and walk through life together as an international and ecumenical community.

Inviting the world to Sibiu and the wider region of Transylvania – whether in person or remotely – will offer conference participants an opportunity to experience the deeply rooted nature of history and identity in Romania, while also introducing participants to a wide variety of cultures, ethnicities, languages and churches.



The provisional schedule for the conference is firming up, with many of the details waiting for more clarity about who and how many will be able to attend.

This is what we know for sure - as much as we can be sure of things in the current global situation!

The Conference

Arrive on Monday, 20 July from flights, pre-conference trips, or other activities. Accommodation will be available from early morning, as a number of flights land in Sibiu between 0100 and 0230. Transport will be arranged as required. Note: It is important to email your flight details to Robyn as soon as you have them so we can make arrangements for transport and accommodation.

Opening Worship and Welcome in the church at 1800 with a Welcome Meal and Drinks Reception to follow.

From Tuesday to Friday participants will enjoy a mix of keynote speakers and panel discussions, alongside Family Group time, local outings and informal time

to mix and chat over meals. Family Groups will be formed with a mix of people from around the world.

On the final day there will be time for regional and country group reflections - ideas for IRCA at home and in our regions, rounding off with a focus on IRCA and Visions for the Future.

The themes of keynote addresses and panel discussions are:

Roots, History and Identity of IRCA

Faith Culture and Identity,

Stories of Restoring Churches

Training and Equipping for Rural Ministry

Family Group discussions:

History and Telling our Stories

Land and Home - climate change vulnerability, food fragility

Communities and Families - exploring relationships within the community - families, newcomers, migrants

Global Issues - shared issues and learning from one another

Local outings will showcase Romania, its diverse people, places, languages, and history, and going to places of centuries old history.

Pre-Conference

Details are still being confirmed. Possibilities depend on numbers of participants. ***Please confirm your participation in the pre-conference trip by 15 May.***

It will be based out of Brasov and participants need to arrive in Brasov by 1900 on 17 July. Current plans include a visit to Mini-Transylvania, where participants can learn more about the history and architecture of Transylvania. The main accommodation for the pre-conference is in Illieni. Sunday will include participating in local churches and other activities, hosted by Laszlo, a minister in Sacele.

On 20 July, the morning will be spent in Illieni, travelling to Sibiu after lunch.

Tentative cost for the pre-conference is 250 Euro (based on shared rooms), although this may vary based on numbers.

Post-Conference

A day trip on Saturday 25 July.

Join with local church communities on Sunday and travelling home on 27/28 July.

Share with Church Contacts Globally

Please share the information about IRCA 2026 Sibiu with your church contacts world-wide. There could be many who are interested, but are not aware the International Rural Churches Association.

Invite them to go to irca.online/irca-conference-2026/ and scroll down to see the full details.

There are still spaces for people from Europe, and from the Americas and Oceania regions, who have a visa waiver for travel to Europe.

There are no limits on spaces for connecting to the conference online and you can register for the Zoom link through the conference page on the website.

Pray for Visa Process

Please pray for those who are going through the process to attend IRCA 2026 in Romania, the majority of whom are currently applying for visas.

It is no small task, especially with the need to travel for an interview, often to another country. There can be complications with timelines and schedules and there are no guarantees that visas will be granted.

There are many people from Africa and Asia who have been unable to be included in the quota of conference attendees from their regions and we encourage all who are interested, but unable to travel, to sign up for the ZOOM link to participate remotely.

Click [here](#) and fill in the form on the page.

GLOBAL PRAYER ZOOM

ASIA

Wednesday 22 April

at 5am in India

[Time Zone Converter](#)

The invitation is to join this time of early morning prayer with and for rural churches across Asia and to pray for our world in a time of deep distress.

Contact Bishop Prasad lbdprasad6@gmail.com for details on how to connect.

THE AMERICAS

Hosting a 5 hour Prayer ZOOM

Thursday April 16

(this week)

@ 1300 ET

[Time Zone Converter](#)

During this, we will showcase the different Rural Ministries across the Americas, ask questions, receive information, and then take a few minutes to pray for that specific ministry. It takes place on ZOOM. You can join us and learn.

Start in Western Canada at 1 pm (ET):

- Greetings from Romania by IRCA President Dr. Heather Major.
- Bernon from STU – Lay leadership learning
- Shawn and Kevin – Rev. Dr. Joyce Sasse.
- Sun Do – CIRCLE M Grant – providing rides.
- Peter – Saving your church Computer (WHY?)

Move to Eastern Canada (around 3 pm ET):

- Martin – Handwriting Scriptures
- Catherine – Rural Routes Through the Holy.
- Eric - Collaborative Ministry.

Move South - USA (around 4:30 pm ET):

- Rural Chaplain's Association Learning Events.
- United Methodist Rural Advocates.
- News and reflections from Latino in US

Each presentation will have up to the half hour time slot, sharing information on the important work people are doing, a time for questions, and a time for prayer for the work being done and lifting up the people and area represented.

You will register directly at ZOOM, and will be sent the link before the Prayer Zoom Event.

Register here

OCEANIA

Thursday 23 April

1630 ACST

1700 AEST,

1800 VUT and SIT

1900 FJT and NZST,

2000 TST and SST

[Time Zone Converter](#)

This ZOOM session next week is linking our regular Network hui with IRCA Leadership's plans to try to pray around the world in the lead up to the IRCA Conference in Sibiu, Romania in July.

With the current global situation our combined prayers have an even greater significance.

It has been inspiring to hear the words of Pope Leo and to read stories from Christians in the United States (e.g. Sojourners), plus many others. All around the world we are one in our Easter faith of love in the face of violence.

Please bring your faith and inspiration to our Oceania time of prayer. If you have music videos, photos and stories to share please get in touch.

It will be fine to come and go as you are available.

Email irca.oceania@gmail.com if you would like to join.

NEWS FROM IRCA AFRICA

Introducing an IRCA Family Member

From Tanzania

My name is Rev Damas Kazamaso Mbonigaba, the Founder and Senior Overseer of VISION MIRACLE CHURCH OF GOD TANZANIA. We are officially registered Church with the Government of Tanzania. I am married to one wife and seven children that God has blessed us with. I live in Dar es Salaam City, where I started the Church. But the Church is still young, because it was started in July 2024. But we started a Church in the Lake Victoria zone in Geita Region, where we have eight branches. All the branches are well established. I can take you around to see all branches. I am the main Leader and Founder of this work, I am not under anyone's cover.

We are Pentecostals we believe in Trinity, we baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. So if it pleases you and God, we can do God's work together here in Tanzania.

Thank you,

God bless you.

Rev. Damas. K. Mbonigaba General Overseer



NEWS FROM IRCA OCEANIA

Community Blessing of Broadwood Mosaic Garden Picnic Area

From Aotearoa New Zealand

Broadwood is a small rural farming community, in the North of New Zealand, with a great spirit of working and sharing the good and the sad times. It is on the Aotearoa Walkway and hosts the annual North Hokianga Agriculture and Pastoral Show and other events. It has the Mangonuiowae River passing through the village, on the banks of which there is a picnic area, cared for by the locals.

The Community was shocked to find the picnic tables stolen and the area violated; they looked at options for replacing the tables with solid structures which could not be removed. There is a group who meet monthly in different people's gardens, called the "Unorthodox Gardeners". At one of their gatherings, they were at the garden of Mosaic Artist, Jen Gay. In 1997 Jen had been involved in a long mosaic wall with inset seating in Kaitaia along the road frontage of the local Super Market, made with community volunteers of all ages. When in 2011 the Super Market moved location, the local council decided to turn the Carpark into a town centre recreation area, and they were going to move

the Mosaic wall to landfill; Jen fought to have them saved to be repurposed, and they were stored in a heap for the ensuing years. In discussion of the Broadwood Picnic area, Jen proposed the possibility of repurposing the Kaitaia Mosaic's into a Mosaic Garden Picnic Area in Broadwood.

Gay Semenoff and Jen gathered a team and worked hard to gain consent to incorporate the Kaitaia Mosaics into new tables and seating and raised gardens and sculptures at Broadwood. The relevant consents were obtained and the work of uncovering the Kaitaia mosaics and transporting them to Broadwood, then designing how they could be incorporated into a practical and artistic picnic area began with lots of community support. Then the local mosaic work began with members of the community and local school and anyone who wished to help, creating three separate picnic areas with raised gardens planted with flowers and dwarf apple trees. The Horticultural teacher at the school involved her students in the landscaping and gardening, and have further plans to restore native flora around the riverbank.

It was great to draw the community together to achieve the project and then to come together for a blessing and official opening on the 31 March, which I was asked to lead. We gathered at the entrance, had prayers, the cutting of the ribbon, and were called on by a kaikaranga [ritual woman caller] to enter the rest area, and walk around the structures, blessing them as we went. Then followed speeches, a closing prayer, and a barbeque and shared lunch, with the opportunity to try out the picnic furniture.

Closing Prayer

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Maker of the universe:

You have made the sun and moon and stars, the earth and all who live in it.

All glory and praise are Yours, O Lord our God!

Bless the people of this community and teach us to live together in harmony. Help us to use this Mosaic garden picnic area for our benefit and recreation.

All praise and glory are Yours, God our Father, for ever and ever. Amen

Christina Morunga, Presbyter, North Hokianga Community Church

Image below by Louise Mallett



World Council of Churches Easter Message

"One big source of hope in these troubled times"

The World Council of Churches Easter message reflects on how we can celebrate Easter in a time in which shouts of joy are so often drowned out by cries of despair. "So many victims of war, economic injustice, sexual violence, political oppression, climate disasters, and religious persecution are to be mourned," the message notes. "Can we authentically celebrate Easter without addressing these sufferings?"

Click on the title or the image for the link to the message.



A network of people with a passion for rural communities, based on
the Gospel of Jesus Christ

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