



CHRIST IN THE CENTRE

WARNING: This publication may contain photographs of Indigenous people who are deceased.

NEWS FROM FINKE RIVER MISSION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

SUMMER 2017



NEW PARISH WORKER installed at Docker River

On Sunday 17th September, 2017 Marlene Abbott was installed as a Parish Worker at Docker River Lutheran Church to help resident pastor Roy Yaltjanki with regular Sunday services. "People were worried about Roy getting old so they encouraged me to help him because I could read the bible and the liturgy well," said Marlene. 80-year old Pastor Roy was quite happy to get a break every second Sunday to travel more with his wife and see her relatives in SA.

Marlene truly believes that, "At Docker River we are one congregation, serving our Lord Jesus Christ together like a team." And that's why she has also been helping her husband, Ronald, to read the bible because he wants to become a pastor one day, along with

other evangelists at Docker River such as Bernard Maiwarra.

Besides church duties, Marlene leads a busy life looking after her children and grandchildren, and she is also community chairperson and member of the MacDonnell Regional Council.

FRM has a proud history of empowering women in ministry. Previous parish workers installed include Rita Okai at Mutitjulu and Daphne Puntjina at Areyonga.



Marlene greets Papunya evangelist Justin Allen at the front gate



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New Lutheran Church opened at IMANPA

Images: (Left) Working Group member, Tanya Luckey, is very proud of the new church she helped to organise.

(Right) Local Imanpa men preparing the foundation of the church.

Imanpa is a community of about 1-200 people about 270km South-West of Alice Springs on the Lasseter Highway. Church services have been held in the vicinity on cattle stations from Angus Downs to Henbury Station for almost 100 years since 'Blind' Moses Tjalkabota made his first evangelising journey to the Pertame (Southern Arrarnta) speaking people at Henbury in 1918. Churches have been built here in the past on Angus Downs and Erldunda cattle stations, but later dismantled and reassembled in other areas like Maryvale as the people moved for various reasons.

Imanpa community was established in 1978, after an excision of land was made from Mount Ebenezer cattle station to make a home for the station's stockmen and their families. Church services have been held regularly at Imanpa since the 1970s by various Indigenous pastors and evangelists and also FRM support workers; often held outside in the past, but more recently in the local women's centre.

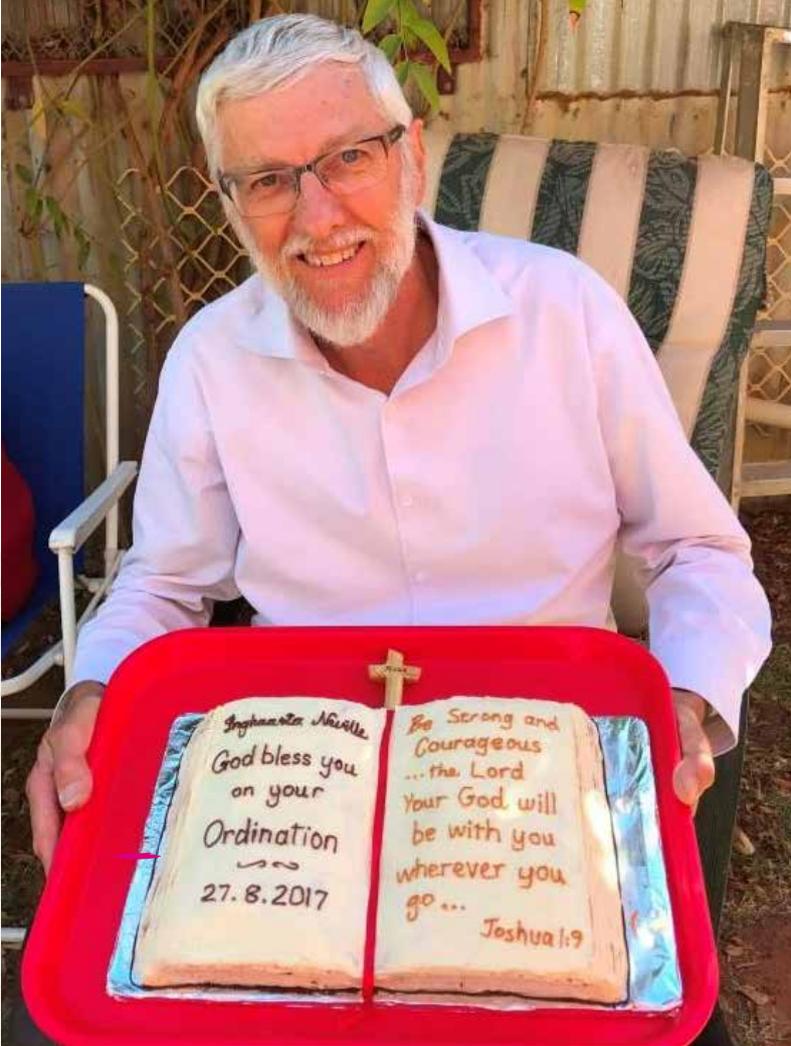
After seeking funds and planning for many years, a new Lutheran church at Imanpa was finally opened in the name of the Triune God on Sunday 22/10/17 by Pastor Robert Borgas. Rover Pumpjack cut the ribbon to

open the church. A memorial plaque for his father (an evangelist at Imanpa for many years) was then unveiled by 2 grand daughters (Kathleen and Cynthia), and finally all the great grand children carried the processional cross into the church.

Imanpa working group member, Tanya Luckey said: "We wanted a place to hear the word of God.... Old people have been asking for a church building for many years now because they knew that it would help strengthen and unite the community"

FRM truly thanks the past members of Kimba Lutheran Church for donating seating for the new church, and especially Keith and Kay Braendler who freely delivered sacred furniture (from the now closed Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Padthaway) donated by St Paul's Lutheran church in Naracoorte. Woodside Lutheran church also donated \$1000 for new Pitjantjatjara hymnbooks, Bibles, Children's Bibles, and literacy materials to help Imanpa people read Pitjantjatjara so they can lead worship in their own language, in their own church. In the words of Maria Coulthard, "We will use the new church at Imanpa to help us teach our kids Christian stories in their own language"





Ingkaarta Neville's Ordination - Hermannsburg

Sunday 27 August was a very happy day for Hermannsburg, visitors and family who gathered to witness the ordination of Ingkaarta Neville Doecke.

Bishop John Henderson officiated and fellow pastors Marcus Wheeler and Rodney Malbunka led the service in Western Arrarnta.

Fellow FRM pastoral support workers, pastors and evangelists all laid hands on Neville, who has been the Arrarnta Pastoral Support Worker since November 2015. The Ntaria choir enriched the service with harmonious hymn-singing and Neville's son and daughter (Timothy & Melissa) gave a musical rendition of "Jesus Shepherd Be Thou Near Me" as a prayer.

Neville believes that, "God really works in amazing ways!" As a young person he always wanted to be a pastor. However, God first used a lifetime of teaching in Lutheran schools to prepare and train him for the ministry. It was also wonderful that Neville's 88 year old mother, Gladys Doecke, could be present to celebrate the occasion.



May God bless Neville as he continues his ministry in the Centre.



The Song Keepers



August 6, 2017 marked the world premiere of a new film about the Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir entitled *The Song Keepers*.

Receiving multiple standing ovations at two packed viewings, the 90 minute independent documentary is more than just a chronology of their 2015 tour where German Christian songs brought to this country 140 years ago by Lutheran missionaries were returned 'like a boomerang' back to Germany in the languages of the Pitjantjatjara and Arrarnta speaking Lutherans. The film celebrates the living culture of the singers that has survived 'invasion' and colonial rule, yet it also challenges the notion that Christian missions did more harm than good.

Pastor Leo Kalleske's wife Lydia receives special tribute from choir member Theresa Nipper for saving her as a baby from tribal infanticide because her father was a white man. "People don't understand. They just think the missionaries came and took over...but they don't see the other side of the missionaries. They saved a lot of children's lives."

Daphne Puntjina also explains how she fled from the 'old women' who considered eliminating her newborn



son after her husband was accidentally killed in a tribal fight soon after she fell pregnant. Fortunately a staff member and his wife gave them shelter until they were later accepted back by the tribe. She reflects on the event: "I've thought about this a lot in my life. I still strongly value and practise my culture. I understand that (the practice of infanticide) was one law in the old days. We don't practise this culture any more."

Regardless of the faults of the culture they have inherited or the Christian faith they have learnt from the missionaries, all members of the choir still practise both. Pantjiti McKenzie explains: "My culture and my faith: I believe in both ways and it makes me stronger. On Saturdays I take the young girls out bush. I teach them traditional dance and singing. And then later, the choir gets together to sing hymns in the church. I don't feel like I have to choose between them. They're both equally important to me. We stand by both."

The Song Keepers will be shown in limited release throughout Australia in 2018. FRM will keep you informed about future viewings.





2017 Finke River Mission Women's Bible Study Camp

On June 25 ladies from six different communities got together for the 2017 FRM Women's Bible Study Camp at Ti Tree, 200 km north of Alice Springs. Continuing the 2016 theme of retelling bible stories, participants considered how to help children understand, practise and remember them. Local Lutheran Seraphina Presley works at Ti Tree School. She liaised with the principal, who kindly allowed us to use the school facilities for the weekend. Here is her story:



Every year since the Women's Bible Study Camps began, the ladies from Ti Tree have been asking me: 'What about us? Take us too!' They couldn't find anyone to drive them to Simpson's Gap last year. I felt sad about it. But I said to them, 'Don't worry. It will happen! They'll come to us sometime.'

When the day finally came for the workshop at Ti Tree School there were three women at Six Mile (Pmara Jutunta)

Community who were very full of energy. They didn't wait for me to pick them up. They decided to walk. I didn't know that – I got the school bus and went to Six Mile and said: 'Have you seen those ladies?' People said: 'No, they've already gone – they've walked to Ti Tree (10km). They really wanted to get there!'

Pastor Darryl Mattner planned the Sunday worship service at Six Mile to include women from the Bible Study Camp. They read the bible texts in Aboriginal languages, chose the hymns, led the singing, sang as a choir, and Seraphina led the children's address:

'I felt a bit nervous, but as I started teaching I just concentrated on what I was doing and the nerves went away. I asked myself, 'How am I going to speak?' I decided to speak some Anmatyerr and some Warlpiri, because there were Warlpiri kids there too, and some English. And I just did it and kept on going. I thank God for helping me because I haven't done anything like that before. Later on I asked my husband, 'How did I go?' He said, 'You were right!'

The Ti Tree ladies really want this to happen again. They are keen to go to other communities and find out what is happening in the churches there. They really love singing! They are also hoping that someone from the choir will go back and teach them to sing in harmony, starting with the songs they already know. When they sang hymn 241 it really lifted their spirits right up! They were really happy.

Thanks to Lutheran Women of Australia for their ongoing support of FRM women's ministry.

Seraphina Presley and Suanne Tikoft



YIRARA INTRODUCES EARTH TEC PROGRAM

Yirara College is a boarding school in Alice Springs for Indigenous students from remote communities. Many students arrive at Yirara College with vast educational gaps and lack hope for successful education outcomes and employment opportunities.

We are increasingly focusing on education with purpose and developing skills that will lead to real employment for students by creating innovating ways for students to learn that are fun and purposeful and fostering a love of lifelong learning.

Our recent relationship with Civil Train in delivering the new Earth Tec program to students has been highly successful. We started with a simulator, created a space for training and negotiated with the NT Education Department for a training package in Resources and Infrastructure. Out of the starting group, eight young men were successful at completing the units delivered, including; White Card, Working at Heights, Confined Spaces, Operate small plant and equipment as well as other units covering OHS and planning work. All students were enthusiastic with tasks set, challenged each other, and celebrated group success. Student engagement and participation was high because

they could see the purpose of the training and loved the practical tasks. Teachers also noticed the students involved have increased their desire to learn in class, with students from lower grades begging to join in.

Yirara would like to acknowledge Thiess, Civil Train, McMahon Services, and NT Department of Education for helping get this new program off the ground. Donna McAskil (Pathways Coordinator).





FOR YOUR PRAYERS

God's care and guidance for Ntaria & Yirara College confirmees.

Those tempted to follow Christian sects and other religions.

Comfort for those who have lost loved ones.

That the Holy Spirit will raise up more men willing to be trained as pastors.

The staff, students and families of Yirara College.

All FRM staff and supporters.

Engawala (Alcoota) Bush Course: July 2017

People at Engawala felt the calm presence of the Holy Spirit over the community knowing that the FRM Bush camp was close by, especially when the pastors came in at night to share the camp theme of the 500th anniversary of the reformation. One local remarked: "After showing the Luther movie they taught us about his strong commitment to Christianity. Later when the band played gospel songs in language some were crying tears of joy while singing along into the late hours of the night."

The week finished with a Holy Communion worship service (almost filling the basketball court) in both Arrarnta & English languages, leaving behind a very happy community.

Pastor Darryl Mattner started leading regular monthly worship at Engawala in late 2014. But for many years Engawala didn't have a local pastor or visiting FRM support worker and the Mormons have been able to establish a presence there. Please pray for pastor Darryl Mattner as he continues leading worship there and the people at Engawala that God will raise up a local leader to be trained as a pastor to preach the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

We need your help

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Our Indigenous leaders in central Australia desire the skills, resources, support and opportunities to serve their growing congregations.

They are asking for more Christian teaching and training, resources in their own language, equipment to run singalongs, and personal support than we have the capacity to give. We need your help!

Tax deductible donations of \$2 or above can be made as follows:

You really can make a difference

Online: finkerivermission.lca.org.au

Mail Cheque Credit Card details: Visa Mastercard

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Name _____ Name on card _____

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Phone _____ Mobile _____

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Send your donations to: FRM, PO Box 2129 Alice Springs, NT, 0871. For regular donations please phone FRM on 08-8952-4666 (Alice Springs) or send an e-mail to frmoffice@bigpond.com

All information is kept strictly confidential in accordance with the LCA Privacy Policy and is used only to inform you of the work of Finke River Mission.



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