



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

# CHRIST IN THE CENTRE



NEWS FROM **FINKE RIVER MISSION** OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

**WINTER 2012**

**Desert** hunger for

## God's hope and healing

For almost 18 months due to a variety of reasons, there has been very little worship or Christian fellowship at **Laramba (Napperby) community**.

This community has been through and is still experiencing a lot of pain due to murders and ongoing payback. Even local Lutheran Pastor Ronnie McNamara has been the subject of personal attacks.

However, recently FRM Board Member Pastor Gus Schutz and Executive Officer Mr Brenton Schild, attended to the rededication of repairs to the Church. Christ in the Centre spoke to FRM Support

Worker Pastor Ray Morris who participated in the community's regular Monday night sing-along last month.

*"Before the sing-along/Choir, Pastor Ronnie McNamara and I provided an activity and story for around 20 children", he said, "Then the children had a sing-along before going home. This was followed the adults with their singing time".* The "sing-alongs" have been initiated by a lady with no Lutheran connections. Through her love for the community and relationship with FRM, this community event has been possible. *Pastor Ronnie is now conducting regular Sunday services and daily morning and evening devotions.*

Only eighty kilometres down the road, the **Mt Allen community** has also commenced Lutheran worship services and teaching again after almost 10 years. At the recent Palm Sunday service so many Baptisms were conducted that Pastor Ray ran out of Baptism Bears (see separate article).

*"Even the 'whitefellas' in the community are seeking out the support of FRM and appreciate the message and help we provide. As a small example of this, last week I helped construct painting frames for an upcoming art show in Alice Springs",* Pastor Ray said, *"All of the FRM Support Workers have similar great experiences in the more than 30 remote communities that we visit regularly".*

*We continue to give thanks to God who continues to work in and through the lives of His people. FRM continues to play a significant role in God's plan.*

Picture above: Pastor Ronnie McNamara with Baptismal families, Palm Sunday service at Yuelamu (Mt Allen)

### WHAT'S INSIDE:

SUMMER IN **BETHLEHEM 2**

BAPTISM BEARS **3**

OUR SUFFERING **SAVIOUR 4**

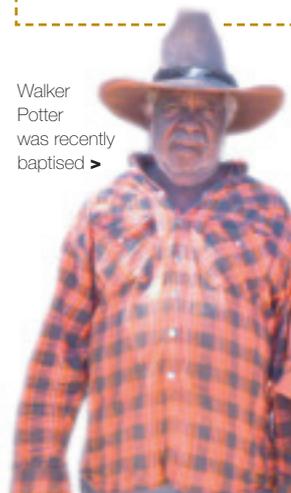
**YIRARA COLLEGE** HANDS ON LEARNING **5**

**TIMMY WATSON** HEYWIRE WINNER **6**

BOOK LAUNCH **FRIEDA** KEYSER **7**

FINKE RIVER **MISSION 8**

Walker Potter was recently baptised >



< Baptism Bears presented to children being baptised.

# Summer in Bethlehem

## A letter from Pastor Astrid Stephan



Sponsored by the Protestant Church of Hesse and Nassau in Germany and at the invitation of the FRM, I was able to serve at Hermannsburg / Central Australia, working for the Bethlehem Lutheran Congregation.



Although it was a very new and different experience for me to live in a remote outback Aboriginal community, I could still feel the old German traditions coming through in the Sunday service liturgy. Many of the hymns sung by the congregation at Hermannsburg are still being sung in Germany today. So, it didn't take long for Bethlehem church to feel more like home than I expected.

Christmas was very interesting for me because of the hot weather and the traditional Aboriginal ceremonies being conducted near the community at the time. In the New Year, I started getting to know a lot of wonderful people: Pastor Marcus Wheeler and his family, who tried hard to look after the congregation without a support worker, Selwyn Kloeden and all the other staff from the Finke River Mission Store who do a great job. Not only do they run the store efficiently but they do it with Christian ethics and a strong desire to help improve the community of Hermannsburg.

We had a lovely time together with a lot of laughter and funny moments. Even in that short time I became part of the community and congregation. They gave me a big farewell and it was really hard to leave new friends and family behind.

My last wish for everyone I came to know at Hermannsburg was: Be strong in faith and no matter how hard life gets, never give up caring for each other no matter how hard life gets! God will always carry you through.

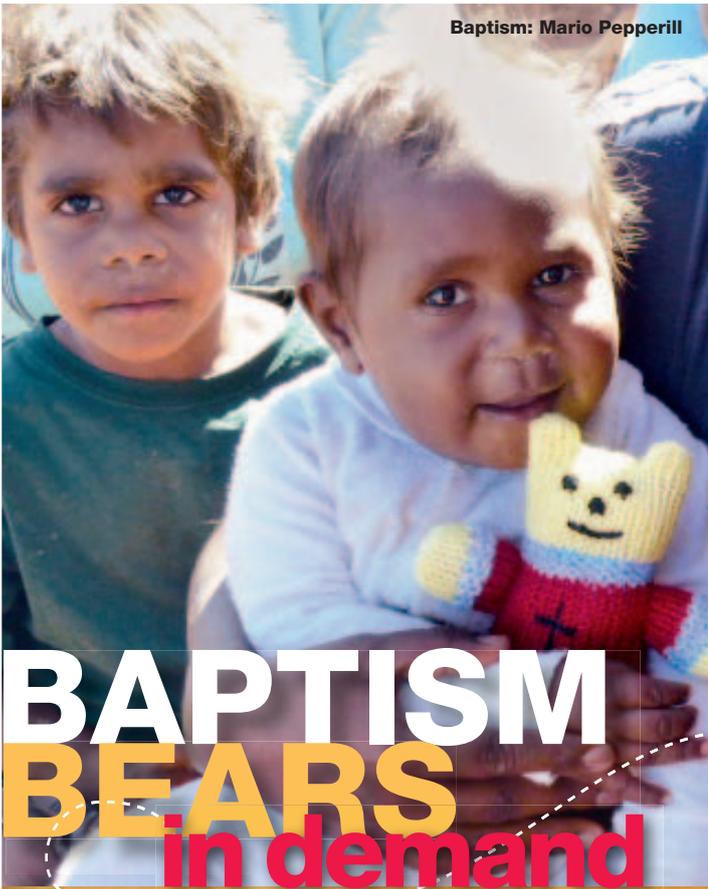
Special thanks to the Finke River Mission Board who gave me the opportunity to work in the 'Red Centre' - very special thanks to support pastor Robert Borgas, who fulfilled the duties of the vacant Arranda Support Worker's position at the same time as he looked after the Pitjantjatjara area. Rob also took me for one week to visit the Mutitjulu Congregation at Uluru where I came to know and appreciate more strong believers in Jesus Christ.

*Astrid Stephan*

Pastor Marcus Wheeler with Astrid and Bethlehem congregation members



Baptism: Mario Pepperill



Baptism: Kesharney Tilmouth

# BAPTISM BEARS in demand

**There has been a fantastic response to the 'Baptism Bears' article which appeared in the last edition of 'Christ in the Centre'.**

The first of the donated knitted Baptism Bears were presented to families at Six Mile on Sunday 25th March 2012.

An explanation was given before the service about their donation and a how they could be used to be a helpful reminder to teach the children about the

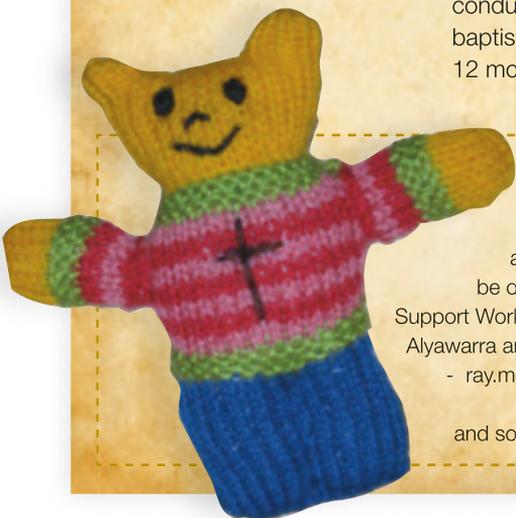
importance of their baptism - referring to the cross on the bears.

We are very thankful for the care and love that has gone into making the all of the Baptism Bears that have been sent through which have now been presented at more than a twenty baptisms. We also hear that one lucky Baptism Bear is now resident in the office of SA / NT District President Pastor David Altus.

For the record, Lutheran Pastors in central Australia conducted well over 100 baptisms during the last 12 months.



Baptism of Mario and Kesharney



For anyone else that may be interested in knitting a bear, the pattern can be obtained from the FRM Support Worker for the Anmatjere / Alyawarra area, Pastor Ray Morris - ray.morris@lca.org.au 'Bear one another burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ'



Pastor Don Presley and Gordon Presley (brother)

# Our Suffering Saviour



**BENT METAL RODS, SHARP, POINTED NAILS AND CREATIVE YOUNG HANDS HAVE COMBINED AT YIRARA COLLEGE TO ENHANCE THE EASTER CELEBRATION OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY.**

Mr Mark Bensted and fourteen students doing Design and Technology for their term one Experience Subject, combined to create a sculpture of Jesus carrying his cross to Golgotha.

**Tyrell Swan**

Students measured the lengths of arms, legs, torso and heads and from their whiteboard design

then cut metal rods to be progressively welded together. Nails were welded to make a crown of thorns. A rough wooden cross was crafted to fit neatly over Jesus stooped body with a red cloth hanging over his shoulder.

***"I worked out and made the body and feet of Jesus. It was good."***

**David Okai**

focus of meditation on Jesus' place as 'Our Suffering Saviour'.

During the singing of 'Jesus Dying on the Cross', a group of Year 7 students nailed 'sins' to the cross. These were in the form of thin wooden chips onto which students

had burnt 'sins' with hot wires. The sound of hammering during worship brought home the reality of Jesus suffering.

Of course the surprise and real excitement of Easter was the dropping of a huge Easter egg to reveal a very empty inside! Praise and thanks to Jesus 'Our Suffering Saviour' who triumphed victoriously over sin, death and the devil.

***Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed!***

**By Tony Qualischefski**

***"I enjoyed learning how to MIG weld the pieces and then bolting it all together to finish it. I felt proud of myself"***

**Brayden Philomac**



Adrian Roper Brown (Mataranka)



Simon Ronson (L) (Santa Teresa), Brayden Philomac (R) (Elliot)



Tyrell Swan (Camooweal)

# Yirara College

Year 10 students at Yirara College are once again preparing for a block of Vocational and Educational Training in Schools (VETis). During this time, Yirara students join with those of other secondary schools in Alice Springs for a one week block of intensive training at a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) in a vocational area of interest to them.

*"It's good to do some hands on work, like landscaping and working on projects like the vegie garden. You can feel proud of something that you've helped make."*

This block (in most cases) forms part of a four week program spread over the course of the academic year. Certificate courses that students have enrolled in this year

include: Automotive, Construction, Horticulture, Primary Health, Retail, Meat Processing and Sport and Recreation.

Tyrell Swan from Camooweal is working towards a Certificate II in Automotive. "I like fixing cars," Tyrell says, "and it might help me get work on a

cattle station one day when I'm finished school."

Annetionette Kelly from Broome enjoys working outdoors and is enrolled in a Certificate I in Horticulture. "It's good to do some hands on work, like landscaping and working on projects like the vegie garden. You can feel proud of something that you've helped make."

Such programs not only provide students with valuable life skills that they can take back to their communities but also a real taste of industry and the life of work. For students continuing with Stage 1 and Stage 2 studies, completed certificates also provide credits towards their attainment of the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET).

After having completed key competencies, students may be deemed work ready by their trainer and given the opportunity to take part in work placements within businesses and organisations throughout Alice Springs.

**Tony Qualischefski**  
Pathways Co-ordinator



Horticulture  
Annetionette Kelly  
(Broome)



Nina Oliver (L) ( Santa Teresa),  
Teagan Malthouse (R)  
(Hermannsburg)

# Hands on Learning

# Timmy Watson

## Heywire Winner

**Earlier this year, senior student, Timmy Watson, travelled to Canberra as a winner in the ABC's national Heywire competition for 2011.**

Winners are selected on the strength of their written entry in the competition, giving them a chance to raise and discuss issues affecting young people in regional and rural Australia.

Timmy's strength of character is not only a testament to his commitment to education but an inspiration to others, who, like Timmy, are often torn between two countries – two worlds.

**Read Timmy's winning entry >**

"I grew up in Hodgson Downs but have to board hundreds of kilometres away in Alice Springs during school term.

Being a teenager back home in the top end is really good.

You can have lots of fun playing sport, hanging out with friends and spending time with your family going fishing and hunting.

Sometimes we'd drive for two hours to Katherine for shopping, I love living at Hodgson Downs.

But there is a problem.

If you want to finish your education then you have to leave your family and community to go to a senior college hundreds of kilometres away.

When I finished year 10 at the school in Hodgson Downs, I went and did a one year course at the cattle station we call Wallabaroo near Minyerri.

We did nearly every kind of cattle work and started learning other kind of work like engineering and mechanics.

I was getting really good at the cattle work by the time I graduated last year.

After that my mother sent me to St John's College in Darwin but I quit after two terms.

So I went to board at Yirara College in Alice Springs but boarding in central Australia, you sometimes get homesick and you miss your family.

There's only one thing that can change your homesick life and that is to go and do something that's not boring.

When you do that you can enjoy yourself but when you're doing boring things then your homesickness will get worse and worse.

This is my life now, living at two different countries but when I finish senior college I want to go back home and work on a cattle station.

Being a cowboy you do so much more that just cattle and horse work.

You learn first aid, go out bush, build dams and poison dingoes.

Every time we go back home for holidays, Dad and the station manager come to the community and pick me up. They take me to the cattle station so that I can make money to pay for my school.

I love it out bush. This is what I want to do for the rest of my life, live with my family and work with cattle, like my Dad and Grandpa."

*"many Central Australian aboriginal people are here today only because of the work these missionaries did in the early years".*

# Book Launch

## The Tale of Frieda Keysser

By John Strehlow

On Sunday afternoon 12th February the book, *The Tale of Frieda Keysser* by John Strehlow, was launched at Australian Lutheran College by Ms Alison Anderson, Member of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. Her electorate of Macdonnell in Central Australia includes all the lands covered by Finke River Mission.

today only because of the work these missionaries did in the early years".

The Lutheran missionaries were concerned about the health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal people, while other Europeans thought they were a dying race. Frieda and Carl showed that with love and attention the lives of the people could be saved and they could take their place in the new way of life that was being thrust onto them by British rule. "By 1922 the mission had been transformed into a thriving outpost," she said.

She was critical of those anthropologists who "wanted to keep the people unspoiled", and she thanked the mission for assisting the people to adjust to the changes in Australian society. "This book provides the lesson for anthropologists past and present," she said.

"For me this book rings true with what I knew from my own childhood ... For those of us who grew up within the mission history of Central Australia, there is never a bad word said about the missions. We are still grateful for the opportunity they gave us."

At the launch John paid special tribute to the "Lutheran faithful", who had supported the Finke River Mission from one generation to the next.

### John Strehlow with Alison Anderson

After speaking first in her own language of Arrernte, Ms Anderson acknowledged the life-saving work of Frieda and Pastor Carl Strehlow at Hermannsburg, the home town of her childhood. She said that "many Central Australian aboriginal people are here

### The Tale of Frieda Keysser

can be purchased from Lutheran Archives, 27 Fourth St, Bowden SA 5007 Phone 08 8340 4009 Email [lutheran.archives@lca.org.au](mailto:lutheran.archives@lca.org.au) The price is \$90 + postage (\$10 in SA, \$15 interstate).

Photography: Ivan Christian



Alison Anderson with Pastor Max and Rosemary Stollznow. Pastor Max confirmed Alison during his time as a missionary at Papunya in the 70's and 80's



John Strehlow with South Australian MP Vickie Chapman



Minna Sitzler with Pastor Paul and Helen Albrecht. Paul and his sister Minna grew up at Hermannsburg. Paul and wife Helen spent over 40 years with FRM.

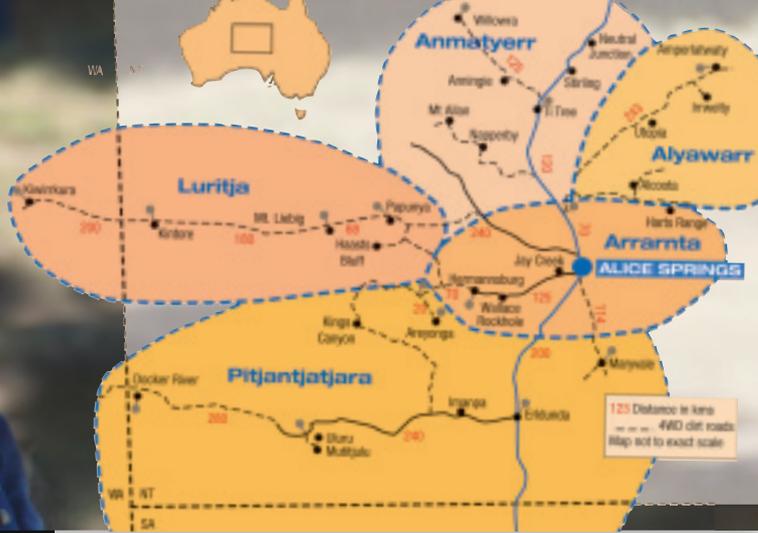


Alison Anderson with former Hermannsburg school teacher Ivan Christian



# Finke River Mission

who we are...



## get involved!

**Please don't forget our 135th Anniversary.**

If you, your Church or your School are interested in ways to commemorate 135 years since Lutheran missionaries arrived in central Australia please contact Irwin Traeger for information and activity ideas.

**Irwin Traeger**  
irwintraeger@hotmail.com  
or phone 08 8336 1141

### Our Mission

Live, promote, teach and nurture the proclamation of the gospel among the Aboriginal people of central Australia according to the Scriptures and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church.

### Our History

For well over century FRM has served the Aboriginal people in central Australia. During this time involvement has ranged from hospital and health, education and training, and distribution of food and clothes, as well as word and sacrament ministry and translation

activities including the Bible, hymnbooks, catechisms and Bible stories.

### Our Activities

Today the Lutheran ministry among the Indigenous Christians in central Australia covers the Arrarnta, Pitjantjatjara, Luritja, Alyawarr, Anmatyer and English language groups. Over 60 Aboriginal pastors and church leaders proclaim the gospel in about 30 remote communities in central Australia.

We employ ordained and lay fieldworkers who work actively in remote communities alongside Indigenous leaders to nurture Christian faith and assist with leadership development. Leadership is also enhanced through regular in-service teaching conducted by Australian Lutheran College whose staff provide theological and literacy.

Currently we are celebrating the 135th anniversary of the arrival of the first missionaries at Hermannsburg, located on the Finke River in central Australia. This was the beginning of the work among the Indigenous people in that area, which we know as the Finke River Mission of the LCA. [See details to the right >](#)

**We need your help**

NEWS FROM **FINKE RIVER MISSION** OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

**WINTER 2012**

More than ever the Aboriginal people of Central Australia want the love, grace and forgiveness that they receive through God's word.

We are constantly asked for more Christian training, services, singalongs and stories than we have the capacity to service, so financial support is critical to what we do.

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

- Online: [www.lca.org.au/finke-river-mission](http://www.lca.org.au/finke-river-mission)
- Mail Cheque    Credit Card details

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Send your donations to: FRM, 197 Archer Street, North Adelaide SA 5006  
Phone FRM at 08-8267-7300 (Adelaide) or 08-8952-4666 (Alice Springs)

**You really can make a difference**



**Editor:**  
Tim Stollznow  
tim.stollznow@lca.org.au

**Designer:**  
Ingrid Geerling  
ingrid.g@freelancegraphics.com.au