



Finke River Mission

Est 1877

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 2015

Above: Newly ordained Pastor Rodney Malbunka and family

Ntaria Rejoices!

Pastor Rodney Malbunka was recently ordained at Hermannsburg. Alice Springs historian, Josie Petrick, has known his family ever since Rodney's father, Evangelist Colin Malbunka, moved to Neutral Junction Station in 1962 where she ran the health centre and her late husband, Martyn, was the station manager. This is her story about Rodney and his family.

When Pastor Paul Albrecht told us that an Arrarnta speaking evangelist was coming to live there we wondered how he would fit in; the people of our Aboriginal camp, known as Tara, spoke Kaiditj? However, we had no need for concern as Colin and his family were readily accepted. A house was soon built for them, Martyn even managed for a church and meeting hall to be constructed.

Colin had a gift for singing and for teaching. Every evening, Martyn and I would sit in the garden under the starry sky, listening to Colin and the Tara people singing. He soon learnt the local Kaiditj, and also the Alyawarra language. Colin used images and stories from Aboriginal culture to convey the Christian message to his small congregations, as he travelled around the neighbouring camps. In the mid 1960's I often saw young Rodney when his mother Joyce would bring him to the health centre. He was a happy, friendly child. All of Joyce and Colin's children were a delight.



Above: Pastor Rodney and long time family friend Josie Petrick

WHAT'S INSIDE:

INSTALLATION OF PASTOR DARRYL MATTNER 2

A NEW CHURCH IN THE DESERT 3

OPENING OF AREYONGA EXTENSIONS 4

WOMEN'S BIBLE COURSE 5

LCC PROFILE 6

THE YIRARA MIX BOOK 6

VOLUNTEERS 7

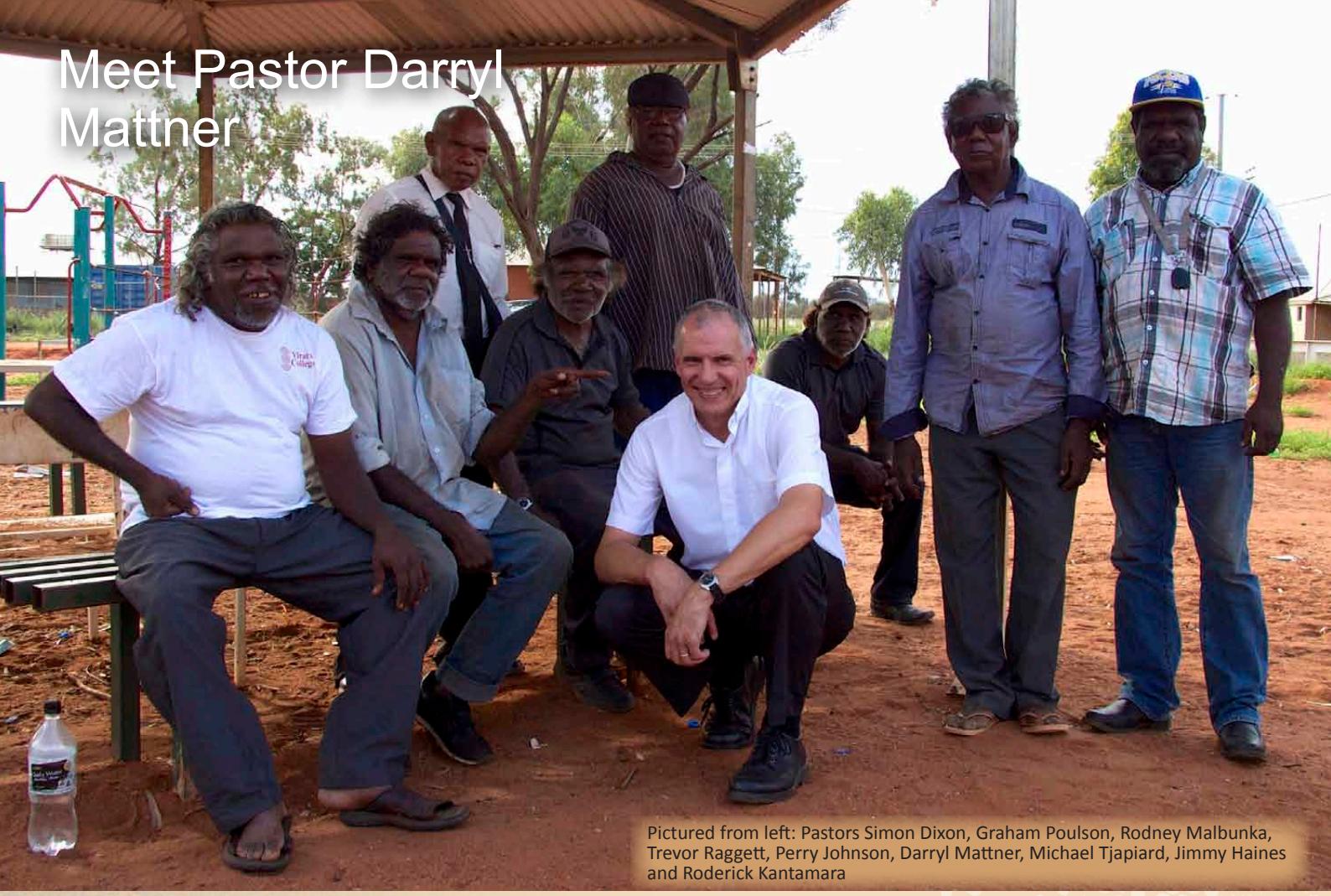
EASTER WEEKEND HAAST'S BLUFF 8

FOR YOUR PRAYERS 8

After Colin was ordained in 1971, his brothers wanted him to return to his own country, Gilbert Springs, near Hermannsburg. So, Colin became pastor to people living in 'out-stations' West of the mission. Joyce was sad when she told me the family would be leaving Tara. Sadly, Pastor Colin died at Hermannsburg in 1977. Since then Rodney married Faye Ratara and they have three children. The FRM Store Manager at Hermannsburg, Selwyn Kloeden, said that Rodney, as head baker, was a great example to the Hermannsburg community: "He's always first at the bakery in the morning, and runs it well."

Rodney's parents would be very proud of all their children and particularly of Rodney who has followed in his father's footsteps and become a Lutheran pastor.

Meet Pastor Darryl Mattner



Pictured from left: Pastors Simon Dixon, Graham Poulson, Rodney Malbunka, Trevor Raggett, Perry Johnson, Darryl Mattner, Michael Tjapiard, Jimmy Haines and Roderick Kantamara

Where is your work with the FRM and what do you do?

My work is in the Anmatjere and Alyawarr region. The area is about three hours north-west, three hours north and about four hours north-east from Alice Springs.

As a Support Worker, I believe my role is to:

Find new men and mentor them to be pastors.
Train these new men and also the existing pastors through bush courses, mini courses and one to one teaching. **Sustain** existing pastors by supporting and encouraging them to be a pastor to their people in their community

Tell us about your family.

Married to Sonia. Two children Caitlin (17) and Ryan (15). Toby our dog completes the family. Caitlin has remained in Adelaide to complete Year 12.

What is your favourite AFL team?

West Coast Eagles

What are your hobbies?

Playing sport – particularly hockey, reading, travelling, watching movies

Where were you born? Tell us a bit about your background.

I was born in Balaklava (SA) and had moved three times in SA by the time I was five. My family then moved to Narrogin (WA) and we stayed there for 15 years until my various jobs moved me all over Australia and overseas.

What languages do you speak? What languages would you like to speak?

English. I would like to learn Anmatjere.

When and why did you become a Pastor?

I was nearing the end of nine years in the Air Force

and felt God calling me to do something different. I looked at other jobs/careers but didn't find any peace. It was only when I thought about being a Pastor I found the peace that I was looking for. The rest, they say, is history.

What's the best thing about being a Pastor?

Being the agent of God's wonderful mysterious gifts and blessings.

What's the worst thing about being a Pastor?

Maybe that some people think that as 'the Pastor' I have all the answers. Sadly, that is not the case.

What other jobs have you done in the past?

Tyre Fitter with Beaurepaires
RAAF Communications Operator
Pastor at Grampians Lutheran Parish, Victoria
Military and Industrial Chaplain

What is your favourite bible verse?

Psalm 139

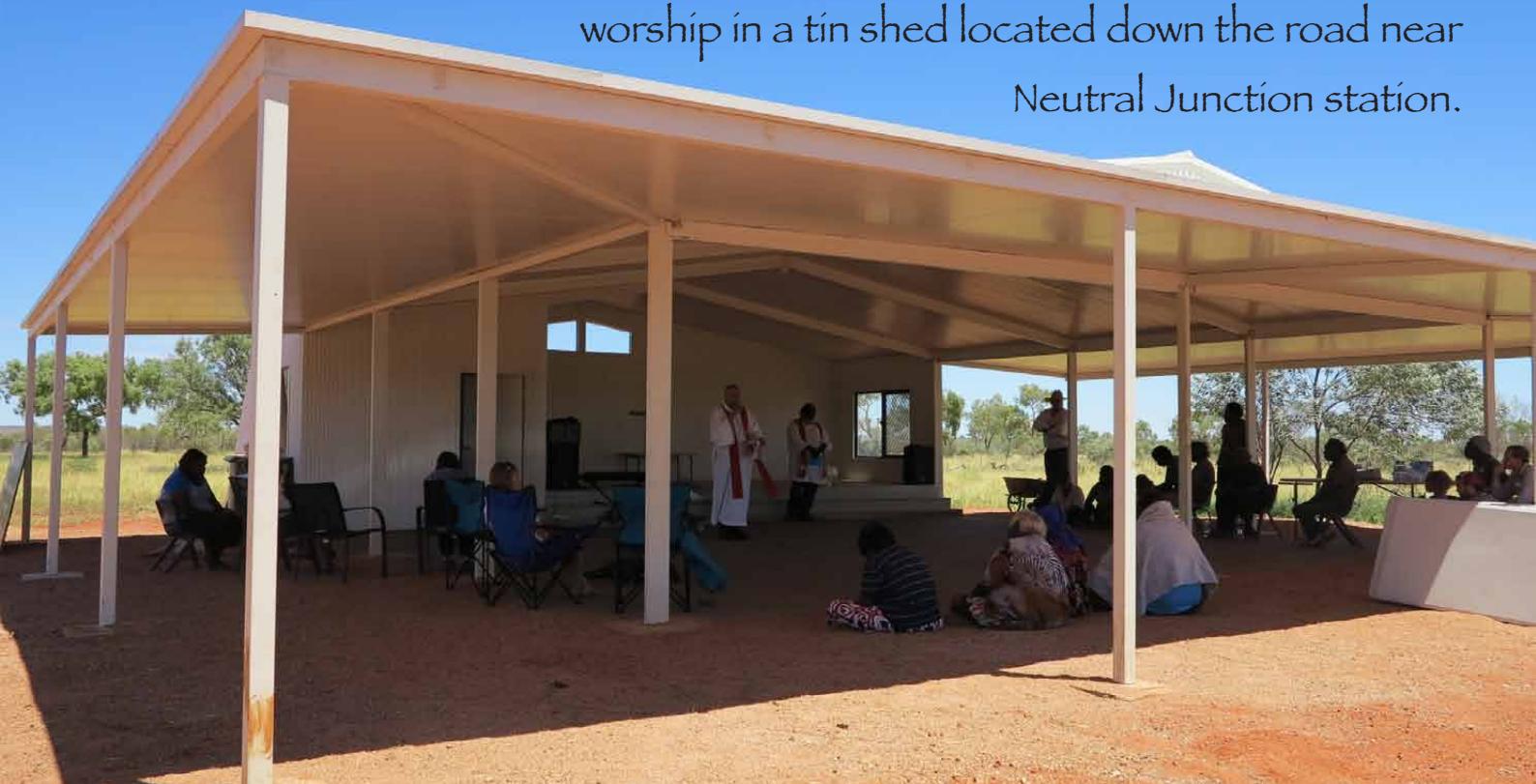
Short story about your installation day!

I was installed on Sunday 18th January 2015 at a small community called Pmara Jutunta (AKA '6 mile'), which is about 190km north of Alice Springs. Local Pastor Jimmy Haines led the service and Pastor Rob Borgas installed me in the presence of my family, other Lutherans from Alice Springs, plus about 60 locals. It was a very special and memorable day that I will remember for many years to come. I am deeply honoured and privileged to be a Support Worker for FRM and pray that I can faithfully support the Pastors and people in the Anmatjere and Alyawarr area.

Tara

A New Church in the Desert

Back in the 1960s the Tara people gathered for worship in a tin shed located down the road near Neutral Junction station.



Local Lutheran, Selma Thomson, can't remember when that happened however she knew the names of the pastors who have served the people of Tara since then: "The first pastor was Colin Malbunka, then Immanuel, then Davey Inkamala, then evangelist Michael Price. Now we have two pastors, Christopher Tjanima and Michael Tjapiard.

Selma also remembers the community meeting in 2013, when the Central Land Council asked the people of Tara what to do with some recently acquired lease money. Some people wanted the money to go toward a community bus. However, Selma suggested: "The money should go towards a new church". At the time the community had no church building and had

been gathering for worship in various 'open-air' locations. So she said to those voting that day, *"If you want a community bus then stay over there. But, if you want a new church, then come and stand by me."*

The rest, they say is history.

Tangentyere Contructions were given the task to build the new church at Tara and some locals also helped. On Saturday 7th March 2015, the new church at Tara was officially opened by FRM Pastor Darryl Mattner and local pastors Christopher Tjanima and Michael Tjapiard. People from the community, together with station owners and local government officials, attended the grand opening that was a day to remember and celebrate with the community of Tara.





Pastor Charlie Chirrup giving the post communion blessing with Parish Worker Daphne Puntjina.

Renovation Rescue at

Areyonga!

For many years FRM has been offering congregations in each language area resources and training. At the same time FRM has encouraged congregations to support their own pastors and to build and maintain their own churches. This is beneficial because it produces the most resilient and vibrant worshipping communities.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church at Areyonga is a fine example of a strong and proud congregation. Services are held each Sunday, the choir is active, the church is cleaned regularly and well maintained, and Sunday school and bible study (even bible translation work) are commonplace. And according to local parish worker Daphne Puntjina:

"When the church is strong, the community is also strong."

In 2013 Areyonga leaders met with Central Land Council staff to decide how to spend some of the lease money that resulted from the NT National Emergency Response (so called 'Intervention'). The first item they placed on the shopping list was a church extension.

The work has finally been completed. With much joy and celebration local church treasurer, Margaret Poulson exclaimed: "Now we have room to fit everyone in the church. People don't have to sit outside anymore."



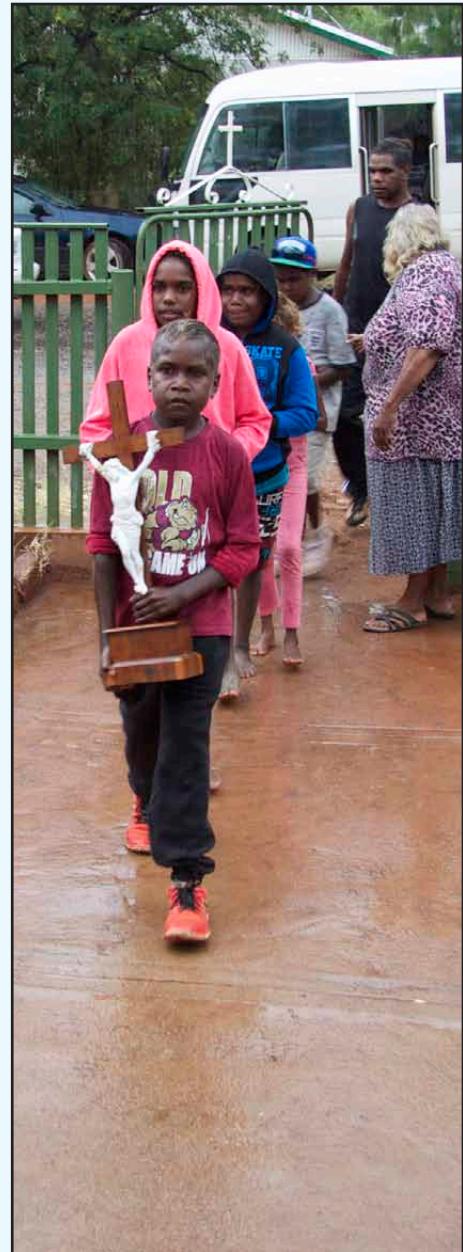
On February 22nd, local pastor, Charlie Chirrup, performed the first baptism in the renovated church, and retired pastor, Djala Andrews, helped dedicate the new furniture and other sacred items that were proudly received from an opening procession of local children.

The choir voices boomed in the 'new' church as the fine old acoustics remained due to the incorporation of the original roof and central structure into the extension design.

We rejoice with the people of Areyonga and with God's grace the renovations will serve this long established congregation for another 65 years!

Left: Pastor Charlie Chirrup baptising Sharita Windy with her parents Belinda and Gerald looking on.

Children proudly bring in the sacred items for dedication at the beginning of the service



Women's Bible Course

Have you ever lost anything - or anyone - really precious to you?

God has - us. But he didn't let us stay lost. He came and found us.

by Suanne Tikoff

Lost and found – this was the theme of the Finke River Mission women's Bible Study camp, held this year at the Mission Block in Alice Springs. Around forty women from communities in Central Australia met to learn from the Old and New Testaments how God acted to save his lost people, and what this means for us today.

Each of the five studies centred on a well-known hymn which has been translated into Aboriginal languages. Various communities led a devotion to open the study, and after a brief teaching time, we sang, discussed what we could learn from the hymn, studied related Bible passages, and prayed together – all in our preferred languages. The women expressed their faith and their learning through art works they created to take home to their communities, and took turns sharing these with the whole group. In our final session we wrote words in Anmatyerr, Arrarnta, Luritja, Pitjantjatjara and Warlpiri to the Taize chant 'Jesus, remember me'.

It wasn't all hard work. On Friday evening we watched the movie 'Amazing Grace', and on Saturday we sang



Marion Swift, Seraphina Presley and Susan Abbott singing.

for the Heritage Week visitors to the old church. This came with a bonus: sharing their German lunch of sausages, sauerkraut and kuchen! The rest of the time we organised our own food (supplied by FRM) under the watchful eye of our faithful 'cookie'. We are all thankful for the practical help FRM staff and others (too many to name) gave us, for the women who travelled to the camp and joined in so enthusiastically, and especially to God for a wonderful weekend of multi-lingual learning and fellowship.



FRM & LCC - Lutherans Caring Since 1877

Lutheran Community Care (LCC) worker Wendy-Lea Lechleitner has deep roots in the Lutheran Church so when a position came up for a Money Worker on the 'Mission Block', she jumped at the chance.

"I like teaching people how to manage money," Wendy-Lea says. "I love seeing the moment a client's eyes light up with understanding."

The Lechleitner family has strong links to the Hermannsburg Lutheran Church, as Wendy-Lea's father Ken Lechleitner explains:

"Right back at the beginning, on my mothers side, when the early missionaries arrived, they worked together developing the Hermannsburg Mission by learning each others languages, connecting through the spirit of good will and understanding between the two groups of people." Ken said. "We went to church on Sundays, it was a special day that allowed many families to come together and worship and mingle afterwards. Everyone was all dressed in their 'Sunday best'. I remember as a kid mum making sure that we were all clean, dressed and ready for the church service on Sundays and every second Sunday was communion. The kids would all play on this big bell shaped swing at the Mission Block, it was fun."

Wendy-Lea recalls her own childhood, going to Sunday school at the Alice Springs Lutheran Church, where LCC now runs the Kwatja Etatha playgroup.

"At Sunday school we would do bible readings and get gold stars for how well we were able to understand the morals being taught. I loved getting a gold star," she said.

Ken says he is proud of Wendy-Lea's work at LCC and the support the organisation gives to the community: "It shows that we as Lutherans have put up our hands to help each other. We care for others and teach the skills needed to live today. It's not just talking; it's about trying to live a caring Christian life that allows people to help themselves as well."

To learn more about the work LCC does at the 'Mission Block', visit www.lccare.org.au or call 08 8953 5160.



Wendy-Lea Lechleitner teaches her father Ken a thing or two about saving!

The Yirara Mix Book

On the 20th of March students and staff from Yirara college and members of the wider community celebrated the launch of 'The Yirara Mix Book', a book of stories and poetry written and illustrated by a young group of students boarding at Yirara College and coming from remote communities in the NT and WA.

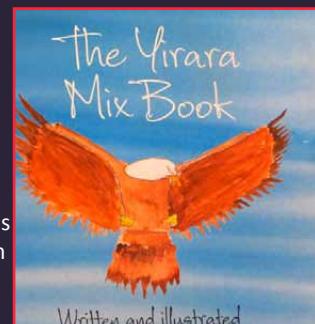
In 2014 Yirara College entered a partnership with the Pamela Loft's Bequest for Literacy and Learning. This came about from a generous bequest from the estate of Pamela Loft (well known illustrator of 'Wombat Stew') to the Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF).

A mentoring programme was set up to give promising young writers the opportunity to work with established authors in order to foster confidence and see the possibilities that can arise from their writing and story-telling abilities.

The book was launched by award-winning poet Ali Cobey Eckermann, who along with Lionel Fogarty and Lorna Munro led the workshops with the students.

The launch took place at the Alice Springs Public Library, whereby the students took turns in reading their short stories and poems - from the sombre 'The Dark Dream' by Melton Armstrong of Jay Creek to the uplifting 'God's Children' by Crystella Campbell from Robinson River. Finally they read together a group poem, 'Jealousy' which roused much laughter, cheering and clapping.

The young authors then took their time chatting, selling and signing their books. For more information on how to get your hands on 'The Yirara Mix Book' contact Yirara College on 08 8950 5644.



'The Yirara Mix Book' authors from left: Melton Armstrong, Jennicka Inkamala, Gloria Inkamala, Tara Kelly, Mentor - Ali Cobey Eckermann, Trephina Campbell, Crystella Campbell and Mark Fordham. Absent: Anne Marie Abbott

THE DORCAS OF MONTO

TEN KILOMETRES FROM THE SMALL CENTRAL QUEENSLAND TOWN OF MONTO, A SEWING MACHINE SOFTLY PURRS.

By Desley Kuhn

Several years ago we closed our church and gave the furniture, banners, etc to FRM, and I suddenly had no "church" sewing to do. I contacted Pr Rob Borgas - "we don't use banners out here," he said "however we could do with some bags for pastors and evangelists to carry their gowns around, so they don't get quite so dusty".

Semi-retirement arrived and we headed for the Territory. "Would you like to knit some baptismal bears? I can give you the pattern," Pastor Rob asked, when hubby mentioned that I knit in the car. Further chat led to - "Could you make some more clerical gowns for the pastors? We're run out of the last lot you made and they're expensive to buy." So, a pattern was cut on the manse's kitchen table.



Photo is of Desley Kuhn, busy sewing gowns for FRM Aboriginal pastors

I rescue dolls in Op shops, and numerous Barbies find new homes in the Centre. Small crochet crosses for gifts were welcomed. It gets cold out there, knitting is welcome.

So, no matter where you live, you can serve God in many ways, just by using the talents He has given you. It brings Doug and I great joy to know that we

have contributed to God's work by making gowns for many Aboriginal pastors.

Like Dorcas of Joppa in Acts 9, Desley Kuhn has been a wonderful blessing to the FRM just by doing what she does best. If you think you can help the FRM in any way with your talents, please contact us on 08 89524666.

Volunteering in The Alice



Monika and Wilbur Klein enjoying their long service leave - in service to FRM.

Wilbur and Monika Klein normally live and work at Tjuntjuntjara, a remote community 660km East of Kalgoorlie WA where Wilbur is the principal of the school: "It's a wonderful community, the children all speak Pitjantjatjara as their first language and the adults keep their culture strong. But it's a big challenge for us to use their traditional knowledge as a link to teaching western literacy and numeracy more effectively."

In 2014 they decided to use their long service leave volunteering with Finke River Mission for the first 6 months of 2015. "Alice Springs is a huge metropolis compared to Tjuntjuntjara! We can swim in the town pool, walk or ride our

bikes to beautiful places." Monika also thinks that Wilbur has re-discovered fine culinary skills that she hopes will continue next year back at Tjuntjuntjara.

While enjoying themselves they've also achieved a lot for FRM. They've painted, cooked, repaired, driven, talked, learnt, mowed, whipper snipped, swept, blown, camped, sewn curtains and cleaned. "We really think that we are the ones who have received great blessings living on the Mission Block, being a part of this wonderful branch of God's extended family here in Alice Springs."

A highlight for them has been helping the Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir prepare for their trip to Germany. It's been a huge, but vital logistical exercise getting 40 women from 6 communities up to 8 hours away into Alice Springs to rehearse together. "Driving a small bus on a dirt road in the moonlight with majestic ranges towering alongside, listening to the dulcet harmonies of mothers and grandmothers singing a capella was truly uplifting for the soul."

They've witnessed church extensions being blessed at Areyonga, camped by the creek where the sheer rock face echoed the calls of the community donkeys (a bit like the vuvuzelas of World Cup soccer), and attended the ordination of Pastor Rodney Malbunka at Hermannsburg. They've celebrated Easter at Haast's Bluff with 300 others; Wilbur even cooked for the Inkarta's Bush Camp at Areyonga. "The church's work in central Australia, spreading the gospel to people of all cultures, is a wonderful thing. Volunteering with FRM has been an amazing time meeting many people, sharing their lives and being blessed. Praise God!"

Memory Weekend at Haasts Bluff

by Monika Klein

As the full moon rose, so did the smoke wafting from campfires on the evening before Easter Sunday. Several hundred people had gathered from the communities of Mt Liebig, Haast's Bluff, Kiwirrkura and Papunya with their families to celebrate Christ's resurrection.

Family groups had set up camp close to a special place, just out from Haast's Bluff marked with a cairn. It's the place where the Hermannsburg evangelists and missionaries preached God's word for the very first time to the people living in the Pintupi-Luritja area.

Children and young people sang action songs together in their own languages, and then the singing of hymns continued until midnight, lulling the many campers off to sleep. It began

again at dawn, the ladies singing a cappella as campers climbed out of their swags greeting one another with "He is Risen!"

Easter morning was a time of joy and celebration as ten young people were confirmed and twelve infants were welcomed into God's family through baptism. Each and every confirmand and baby were individually blessed and their families were beaming with pride and happiness.

A group of pastors presided over the Easter Sunday celebrations. The congregation of over three hundred Indigenous people shifted with the shade of the trees, or found relief from the heat in vehicles corralled around the tent where the PA and microphones brought the good news to God's people; all in the same place the first evangelists once shared the same message many years before.



The choir sings as families are brought together to celebrate Easter.
The majestic Haasts Bluff is seen in the distance.

We need
your help

NEWS FROM FINKE RIVER MISSION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

WINTER 2015

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:

Online: www.lca.org.au/finke-river-mission

Mail Cheque Credit Card details Visa Mastercard

Card Number _____ Expiry _____ / _____ CCV _____

Name _____ Name on card _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Phone _____ Mobile _____

Signed _____ Amount \$ _____

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

You really can make a difference



Christ in the Centre Team:

Kriss Borgas
krissborgas@gmail.com

Rob Borgas
rob.borgas@bigpond.com