



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

SUMMER 2012/13

Volunteers in

Mission

Finke River Mission
Est 1877



Above: Bush Course at Papunya, August 2012. Geoff and Margaret Starick centre front with the Support Workers and Community Pastors and trainees. Pastor Stephen Pietsch, Australian Lutheran College Lecturer, is at the back left.

During August and early September, retired couple Geoff and Margaret Starick from Burnie congregation in Tasmania, made their way to Central Australia where they kindly offered to do some volunteer work for Finke River Mission. While in Alice Springs, they did a fabulous job of cleaning and painting the little cottage on the Mission Block where staff and visitors often stay. They also painted the living room of the FRM house at Ti-Tree which is 200 km north of Alice Springs. Whilst visiting the Centre they found time to travel with Pastor Ray Morris to Laramba Community, attend a Bush Course at Papunya, and help out at the Hermannsburg Store for several days.

With them they brought around 70 beanies from members of the Burnie congregation. In Margaret's "spare" time in Alice, she stitched crosses on each of the beanies. And so the "Baptism Beanie" was born. Some of these were gifted to around a dozen Yirara College students who were travelling to the snow. Others

were handed to Aboriginal pastors and students who attended a Bush Course (a pastor's training course) at Papunya, a couple of hours west of Alice Springs. As the temperatures had dropped to below zero at night, the beanies were much appreciated.

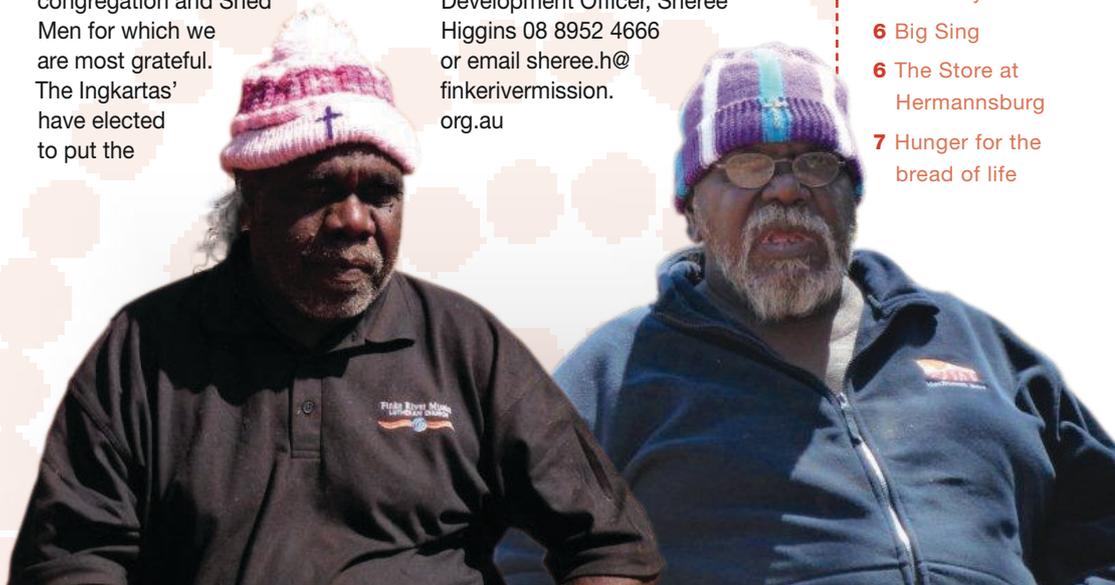
Geoff and Margaret also brought with them a generous financial donation from the Burnie congregation and Shed Men for which we are most grateful. The Inkartas' have elected to put the

donation towards the purchase of hymnbooks and service orders for the Haasts Bluff and Papunya congregations.

Finke River Mission is very appreciative of the time given so freely, the financial outlay and the work completed by volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering for Finke River Mission in Alice Springs please contact the Development Officer, Sheree Higgins 08 8952 4666 or email sheree.h@finkerivermission.org.au

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From the
Executive Officer

It has been a very full and exciting year within Finke River Mission. We continue to receive more requests for worship services, sing-alongs, pastoral support, training camps and other community engagement opportunities than we can often manage. As you might imagine this is both a joy and a frustration.

As a result we have put a particular emphasis on growing our resource and personnel base. I am very pleased to welcome Sheree Higgins as our Development Officer with a focus on growing our profile and donation base within the LCA and broader community. Also the impending arrival of Pastor David Kuss will help fill a large gap in the Arrarnta and Alyawarr language areas.

We plan to increase the number of Bush Training courses next year to 3 Men's and 2 Women's courses. This is at the request of our Ingkarta's for more opportunity to learn and hear God's word. We are thankful for the request and blessed to have the opportunity to respond. We look forward to the arrival of our new 'tucker trailer' to aid in our endeavours of improving the quality of food and other provisions at bush courses.

The Ordination of Paul Traeger at Papunya on Sunday 28 October was a special day and we pray for God's blessing and guidance over Paul's ministry through the Western Desert area.

We were pleased to welcome our first FRM Expeditions and Grey Nomad volunteers during the year. Those attending enjoyed the unique opportunity and insight their experiences offered. One tour group attended the confirmation service of 28 young Lutherans at Kintore. The service went for over 3 hours and there was not a single complaint from anyone sitting outside in the cold desert winter.

I ask each of you to remember the Finke River Mission in your prayers. We only exist by the Grace of God and your generous support.

Yours in Christ

Brenton Schild
Executive Officer

Baptismal Celebration *at Yirara*



It was a time of great joy and celebration at Yirara College when teacher, Kylie Hoff and her daughter Claudia were baptised during one of the College worship services.

Baptisms are always a happy time of celebration. Pastor Simon Dixon and Chaplain Neville Doecke officiated at the baptism.

The baptismal font is a coolamon. It is carved from wood and traditionally used to carry things, usually food and sometimes a young baby.

This is a fitting reminder of how God cradles us in his care through baptism, and that he supplies all our needs: physical and spiritual, throughout our lives.

We pray God's richest blessings on all who are baptised and join God's family of believers.

Neville Doecke
Chaplain
Yirara College



Ordination *in the Desert*

Support Worker, Paul Traeger was ordained as a Specific Ministry Pastor on Sunday 28 October 2012. The service at Papunya Lutheran Church was attended by people from across central Australia and was officiated by the District President, Pastor David Altus, who travelled from Adelaide for the occasion.

Pastor David's address was based on Hebrews chapter 7: 23 – 28. Paul translated the address into the Luritja language. Christ is the high priest and pastor in charge of the church. Other pastors will come and go. But Christ will always be there for his people. So pastors can find comfort, knowing that Christ shoulders the most difficult work of ministry; he has born people's sins, and is now preparing a place for them in heaven. Pastors, including newly ordained Ingkarta Paul Traeger are his representatives.

Paul translated his ordination vows into Luritja and distributed copies to the congregation to enable them to follow along while Pastor David questioned Paul in English. Paul later told the people to take the vows home and ponder their meaning. He was gratified that not one copy of this Luritja translation

was left behind in the pews at the end of the service. Paul said, "I am pleased that many people came and later said that they had enjoyed being there."

In the days leading up to the ordination service congregation members decorated the church and made banners for the occasion. Following the service Finke River Mission hosted a BBQ for all in attendance.

Paul has lived at Papunya and worked with the Luritja people for the past 11 years immersing himself in the culture and Luritja language. Often accompanied by his wife Mei-li, Paul spreads the word of God travelling to the surrounding communities of Haasts Bluff, Mt Liebig and Kintore and as far west as Kiwirrkura which is across the Western Australia border.

Aboriginal visitors travelled from Kintore, Haast's Bluff, Mt Liebig and Alice Springs to attend the ordination service. Finke River Mission Chairman, Tim Stollznaw and past Finke River Mission employee, Pastor Max Stollznaw travelled from Adelaide. Also attending were Alice Springs congregation members, Yirara College, Lutheran Community Care and Finke River Mission staff.

We thank God for Pastor Paul Traeger and for the special gifts Paul has in teaching. Paul will continue to support the Indigenous Ingkarta's of the Luritja language area.



Pastor Paul Traeger



Pastor Paul Traeger with his wife Mei-li



Papunya Church altar



Front: President David Altus, Paul Traeger, Roderick Kantamara, Lindsay Corby. Back: Max Stollznaw, Simon Dixon, Trevor Raggatt, Rob Borgas, Graham Poulson.

Picture this:

By Suanne Tikoft

Side by side in the mulga, crowded around the warmth of campfires, Christian women cluster in swags and tents. Stories circulate. Under a blanket of stars, hymns in harmony drift through the dark. Finally, only the night noises sing.

It's a Friday night not far from Papunya, and Indigenous women from Central Australia have come together to study God's word, share fellowship, worship, learn from the experience of Lutheran churches around the centre, and support each other in prayer. All through Saturday, and on Sunday morning, they joined in a multi-language study of prayer in the New Testament, led by Joy Wurst who travelled from Toowoomba especially to lead the Women's Bush Course. Her long-standing relationships with many of the women encouraged open participation in the readings, discussions, worship and singing.

There was such great support from many people. A special thanks to those who led studies and worship, prepared delicious meals, made travel arrangements and drove buses. Thanks also to the Indigenous language readers, song leaders and speakers.

Bush courses are only made possible through generous financial donation to Finke River Mission. Particular acknowledgement and thanks is given to the Lutheran Women of Australia. They very generously offer ongoing financial support to ensure Women's Bush Courses are possible.

50 ladies came from Utju, Ti Tree, Titjikala, Papunya, Ntaria, Mt Liebig, and Alice Springs. Many of the women feel they have grown stronger in their faith and plan to attend the next women's camp in May 2013. God cared for us: he spoke to us through his Word; gave us his Holy Spirit to help us pray, worship and build relationships; and cared for everyone as they travelled. We thank him most of all.



Lily from Ntaria:

“It was good to get together to learn about God's word. That's how we become stronger. Good for the women to share together and get to know each other as Christians. I'd like to see more young ones coming to learn with us and be encouraged. Singing brings people together as one. We all have different gifts from God. We need to use these to help each other, especially young people, and not keep these gifts to ourselves. We should start sharing when the kids are really young, and teach the children at home.”

Kapanani from Papunya:

“We encourage ladies to join with Christ to be as strong as a rock. We want to make a timetable to meet together, get used to reading God's word and learn Christian songs.”

Nyinta from Alice Springs:

“I came here to learn more and listen about prayer so that I could learn to pray for my children, grandchildren and husband. The Holy Spirit is there in our hearts to help us pray. (At the end of the camp) I wrote a prayer in Pitjantjatjara for my grandson.”

Janey from Titjikala:

“We came to the camp to learn how to pray and ask God for help so that when we go back home we know. I work at the school and I often pray for the children there.”

Margaret from Titjikala:

“The learning and singing and reading about God were really good.”

Seraphina from Ti Tree:

“The camp helped me to meet other people. At first I felt shy, but they were friendly. I like to share the problems that we have because then we can come together and pray about them. The Holy Spirit works with us when we pray. He was working here at this camp too. This camp has really helped me. I'm going to go back to my congregation and share what I've learned.”

Doris from Ti Tree:

“It was good to come to this camp and learn. Last year I went with the ladies to Mutitjulu.”

Noreen from Alice Springs:

“Marra inthurra camp nhanha naka. Arrkutja mapa arrkana naka. Nurna antja wutha pmara arrpunhanga pitjitjika pepa nhanga ekuraurna. This camp was really good. The women were happy. We want to come together again from different communities for worship and Bible study like this.”

Rita from Mt Liebig:

“This is the first time I've come to this study to learn more things about God. It was good to hear stories from other people and to share, because I like to share God's story with women from other communities as well as my own.”

Judy from Utju:

“We were happy to come here to join with other ladies. We enjoyed singing too! We brought young ladies with us to learn about God's word. Ingkaarta Kalleske and his wife taught us really well years ago. Sometimes we have forgotten about Bible Study and gone our own ways. Now we've come back to Bible study it's a good opportunity to pass on knowledge about God to young people. Now we can help Daphne, Margaret and Ingkaarta Charlie to work in the church, and help our young people.”



BIG SING in the desert

The BIG SING choir camp was recently held at Ross River Resort, 85 km east of Alice Springs. 105 singers from every state across Australia, including 35 singers from Central Australian Lutheran congregations, came together to sing, share and learn new songs over four days. Some of the participants had been singing all their lives and some had just begun.

"Singing is just so good for the heart, the soul, the spirit...it's a wonderful thing to share across cultures and across generations. This weekend has brought us all together as one voice." said one choir member who was visiting central Australia for the first time.

Singing is just so good for the heart, the soul, the spirit ... it's a wonderful thing to share across cultures and across generations. This weekend has brought us all together as one voice.

Support Worker, Pastor Rob Borgas helped Lutheran Indigenous singers from many different Central Australian communities take part in the BIG SING choir camp. They came from Docker River, Mutitjulu, Hermannsburg, Areyonga, Laramba, Papunya and Alice Springs. The ladies shared beautiful hymns in local languages with the rest of the group.

Singing is a great way to build communities and break down cross cultural barriers between people. The BIG SING leaders are passionate about valuing and helping to preserve the beautiful hymn singing of the Central Australian Lutheran choirs. *"Palyalingku.*

Do more. This was a fantastic weekend. Music was fantastic," commented Alison Anderson from Papunya.

BIG SING was organised by choir leader Rachel Hore, who fundraised through her choir and singing networks across Australia to help raise money for Indigenous sponsorship. There was an overwhelming positive response, raising funds that covered the costs of the course, accommodation and food for the 35 Indigenous Lutheran singers.

Finke River Mission generously supported the BIG SING by providing transport and logistical support, and encouraging many of the women to attend.



"The Store" at Hermannsburg

The Finke River Mission Store is an integral part of the Hermannsburg community. Hermannsburg is situated 130 km west of Alice Springs on the banks of the Finke River in the magnificent West Macdonnell Ranges. It is home to approximately 800 Western Arrarnta people.

The Store stocks a wide range of products including groceries, clothing, bedding, electrical and hardware items but more importantly takes an active role in community activities, providing employment for locals, sponsoring events and sporting teams, assisting people in interpreting government documents, participating on local committees, and providing encouragement, sympathy and Christian support where needed.



Front L-R: Nicolle Pope, Alicia Entata, Georgina Malbunka, Lois Horn, Jodie Scholz.
Back: L-R: Rodney Matuschka (Assistant Manager), Klaus Horn, Belinda Taylor, Peter Niejalke, Selwyn Kloeden (Manager).

Hermannsburg is 1 of 20 designated 'Growth Towns' in the Territory meaning the Federal Government has a special focus on developing the infrastructure needed in a functioning town. Future development plans include an early learning centre, secondary school and adult training facilities, a credit union branch and a multifunctional youth centre.

There are opportunities available for volunteers to help at the Finke River Mission Store. All skills and talents are appreciated. Assistant Manager, Rod Matuschka says, *"Come and experience community life and the beauty of Central Australia. It is an interesting and vibrant place to live and work - I love it!"*

Hunger for 'The Bread of Life'

Support Worker, Pastor Ray Morris recently coordinated and led a **mini bush course** at the Irlutja community, 350 km north east of Alice Springs. Pastor Ray says: *"I am constantly encouraged and inspired by the faith and hunger for 'The Bread of Life' by people living in remote communities of Central Australia."*

Ministering and providing pastoral support to the people of the Anmatjere and Alyawarr language areas can be challenging at times: great distances to travel, ever changing plans and sometimes no basic home conveniences such as a shower or toilet. Despite these challenges, God's hand is always evident in Finke River Mission's day to day work.

The course took place over four days with eight regular attendees and many others listening in on some sessions. Each day began with devotion and bible study. Teaching covered topics such as the Lord's Supper, Baptism, funeral

services and the 10 commandments. The 'young fellas' helped with interpreting. The evening movie sessions brought the whole community together at the 'mini drive-in theatre.'

The course was a great opportunity for community leaders to discuss future hopes for the development of their church. Sunday School, sing-alongs and women's courses are some of their priorities. *"Children's Bibles and Catechism books will help our grandchildren to learn God's story."* said Gracie Ross. Many asked, *"When are you coming back?"*

The course concluded with a Service with Holy Communion which was attended by 100 community members and several baptisms were also conducted by the local Pastor, Frank Turner. Baptism bears were once again presented to the families that were baptised. Thanks to all who have been busy knitting bears. These gifts are appreciated and are finding plenty of good homes!

80 baptisms in 3 months!



There were 21 baptisms at the Stirling community and 32 at Neutral Junction last month. There have been 80 baptisms in the past 3 months in the Northern communities!

Please see the donation slip on the back page if you would like to contribute to small catechisms and Children's bibles for Indigenous congregations.



Give me a home among the gum trees!



Finke River Mission



With lots of bush tucker, an emu or two and a kangaroo, a clothes line out the back, verandah out the front and an old BBQ...

Finke River Mission provides basic accommodation to its support workers. But this accommodation is in need of some tender loving care. Repairs, maintenance and improvements to our aging accommodation facilities are long overdue. Help make a house their home.

For just \$5 a week ...

you can make a difference to the standard of accommodation we are able to provide our support workers. Practical conveniences and basic comforts, such as floor coverings, heating and cooling, are longed for and

appreciated after camping in the bush for several days and driving on endless dirt roads to reach congregations in isolated communities.

Please consider offering your support by making a \$5 or more regular deposit to our **Building and Facilities Fund** Westpac – Alice Springs BSB 035 303 Acc 370 092

More information:

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Call to action

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

SUMMER 2012/13

Yes! I want to help Aboriginal congregations of central Australia receive love and forgiveness through God's word.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Signed _____

I want to commit to a weekly gift by direct deposit of: \$5 \$10 \$20

I want to help by giving a gift to be used for children's ministry resources:

Small Catechism \$5 Children's Bible \$30

I want to help by giving a gift to be used for the ongoing work of Finke River Mission:

\$ _____

Please indicate your preferred method of gift giving:

By direct deposit to: Westpac Alice Springs, BSB 035 303, Acc 370 092 By posting a cheque

Online: www.lca.org.au/finke-river-mission Please charge my credit card \$ _____

Card Type _____ Name on Card _____

Card Number _____ Expiry ____ / ____

Post to Finke River Mission PO Box 2129 Alice Springs NT 0871 or email frmoffice@bigpond.com

For further information phone Finke River Mission: 08 8952 4666

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.



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