



CHRIST IN THE CENTRE



What is the Church? Where can we find it? Who is part of it?

*This is what 40 women gathered to consider on the banks of the Areyonga (Utju) Creek.
By Suanne Tikoft*

They came from all around central Australia to share in a weekend of Bible study, worship and fellowship. They travelled from seven different communities. They drove over bumpy roads, packed into a variety of vehicles, bringing their bedding, hymn books and their willingness to learn.

Friday night was settling-in time. Saturday began with an after-breakfast walk followed by bible study and singing. Harvesting the famous Utju pitjuri was the chief preoccupation of any spare moments. In the late afternoon many women sat down to capture their learning and their faith on posters. Sharing their artwork around the campfire in the evening was a special time.

Our studies (led by Deb Myers) taught us that the church is where Christ is present in word and sacrament. We find it wherever the important truths of Scripture are proclaimed. We recognise it when Christ is worshipped as truly God and truly human, who died and was raised for our salvation. This is the rock we hang on to, the solid ground on which we can make a safe camp – and the test by which we decide whether any particular group is Christian or not. So we need to know

very clearly what the Bible teaches about Jesus and why God sent him. The Lutheran church has some strong teaching which helps us to understand this well.

One of the women remarked: "We really like studying the Bible in our own language, and dividing into different language groups, so we can hear and share God's word more deeply."

Sunday morning we worshipped with the Good Shepherd congregation in Areyonga – appropriately, as it was Good Shepherd Sunday. After we celebrated Holy Communion, everyone sang table grace in the church yard. To cap off the morning (pardon the pun!) we shared a huge bag crammed full of colourful beanies, sent as gifts of love from the Lutheran Women of SA. They were really appreciated. Much laughter was heard as people tried on various beanies to see which one suited them best. We encouraged everyone to pray for the women who had knitted them.

Thanks to all those who helped over the weekend, and to Lutheran Women of Aust. and SA for their generous support.

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Left: Judy Trigger from Mutitjulu and Daphne Puntjina from Areyonga studying their bibles.

New FRM Admin./Business Coordinator



FRM now has a new Admin./Business Coordinator. His name is Wayne Beven and he is based in Alice Springs at the 'Mission Block'. Wayne brings a wealth of experience in the areas of building and construction, business and project management.

Isolation and travel are not strangers to Wayne. Growing up in Broken Hill, he became a boilermaker and worked for a few years in the trade before switching to hospitality, managing the Broken Hill Musicians Club and the Roxby Downs Hotel (as an owner operator.). After renovating this hotel it received the Best South Australian Regional Development Award.

With a resourcefulness that befits many young people growing up in the country, and an empathetic wish to help people less fortunate, Wayne has offered his services voluntarily over recent years in many different countries. He has worked with Houses for Habitat in India, Sri Lanka and Fiji. This experience led him to apply to work for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea (ELCPNG) as the building and construction advisor, supervising projects including the construction of houses for the Lutheran Health Service in Ampo.

Wayne is now happy to be back in Australia and is enjoying serving his Lord once again by working for Finke River Mission in central Australia.

With Sincere Thanks from the Ingkamala family.

The relatives of the late Pastor Ingkamala sincerely thank all those who have sent their condolences and sympathies to the family at Kwale Kwale, near Jay Creek. Your comforting messages and prayers of hope have really been appreciated and have helped to support them during their time of sadness following his death in September 2013. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die" (John 11:25)

Life Profile - Rod

Baker, builder, painter, welder, evangelist,

Rodney was born in Alice Springs in 1965, a son of faithful missionaries working in Neutral Junction, just north of the infamous Barrow Creek pub. His father was Pastor Colin Malbunka. Kaytetye is Rodney's first language but he also speaks Arrarnta, Pitjantjatjara, Luritja and English. Rodney is married to Fay; they have 5 children and many grandchildren.

In 1970 the Malbunkas moved to Hermannsburg where Rodney has been ever since. Rodney's parents encouraged him to consider the ordained ministry from an early age. Since his father's death in 1977 Rodney has been learning and testing his calling as a pastor. He went to his first Bush Course (training camp for Aboriginal pastors) in the seventies at Docker River. He went with Pastor Nahasson Ungkwanaka. Pastors Paul Albrecht and John Pfitzner were the teachers.

Rodney is a hard worker and has always been employed. He has worked in the building industry alongside FRM/ Hermannsburg legendary builders such as: Glen Auricht, Colin Jericho, Colin Schwarz, and Eric Schmidt. Rodney is a competent welder and painter. Presently, he is employed at the Finke River Mission Store as the chief baker.

Rodney came to a crossroad in his life when he was involved in a serious car accident. He was involved in a roll over and was pinned under the car. Nothing could be done to move the car. Rodney prayed and was "pulled out by Jesus". Since that moment he has earnestly wanted to be a Pastor. Alcohol abuse was the cause of the accident and many other bad situations. Rodney lost his licence for a record 10 years for consistently driving under the influence. In May this year he gets his licence back after proving he has not drunk a drop of alcohol for 7 years. Rodney acknowledges God's hand in his recovery from alcohol abuse.

This year Rodney attended a reading course at Nungalinya College in Darwin. Rodney soon learned that there is still a lot of work to be done in translating the entire Bible into Arrarnta. FRM also sent two ladies from Areyonga as well. All enjoyed the chance to study and be a part of the worship and study regime.

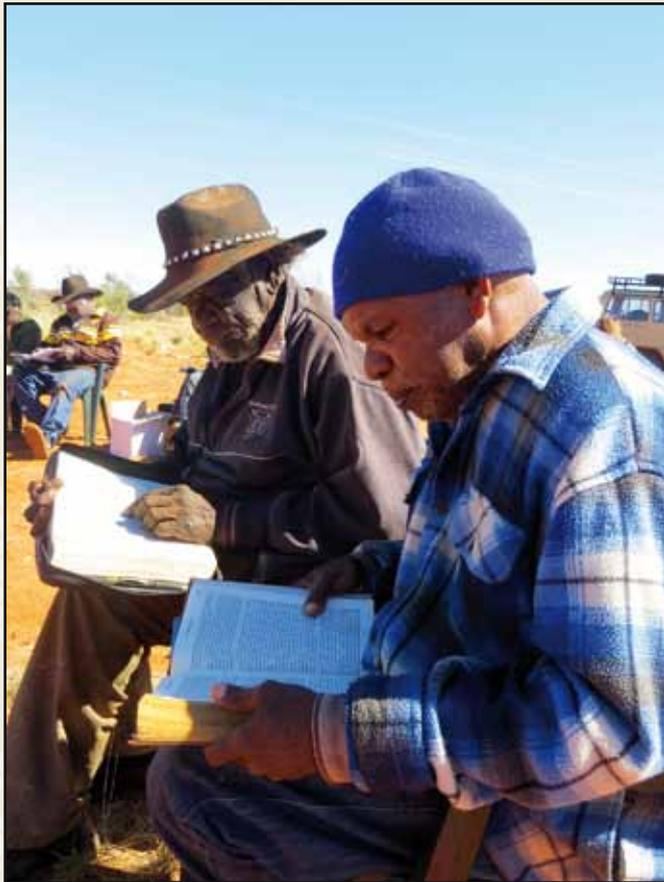
Rodney enjoys his family and loves spending time at the Malbunka family outstation at Gilbert Springs. He is also passionate about preparing for worship. Rodney knows all the readings, "off by heart", at least a week in advance. He is able to prepare sermons with many original insights which come from his faithful preparation. Rodney believes that "all Ingkaartas should know the sermon text off by heart".

God willing, Rodney will be ready for ordination later this year. He will have completed two certificate courses at Nungalinya, and all the FRM academic requirements very successfully. His dream is to be ordained and serve the small outstation communities around Hermannsburg.

Pastor David Kuss and Evangelist Rodney Malbunka

ney Malbunka

and candidate for ordination.



Easter with John 20:1-23

After reading John 20:1-23 in Arrarnta for the seventh time Rodney appeared a bit weary. I encouraged Rodney by reminding him that each community are hearing the message for the first time this year, and for some, the first time in many years. This lifted Rodney's spirit and he read with more passion than ever. Pastor Dave Kuss and Rodney held Easter services in 12 communities over Easter travelling over 1300 kilometres.

Our Easter message was about sacred stories. Just as Aboriginal people hold sacred stories and share them with the right people at the right time, so we too as Christian people hold the sacred story to be shared. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe". Jesus words remind us that believing comes from the message, the story (Rom 10:17). Our job in growing the faith is to share the sacred story with our kids, family, and friends.

All FRM pastors travel great distances, especially at Easter. We thank you for your prayers, for good cars, and your support.

Pastor David Kuss



Tim Stollznow, FRM Board Chairperson, and Rev. Dr Traugott Farnbacher signed the new volunteer agreement at the Mission Block on the 16th of May.

Via Marra Inthorrra (good big news)

Rev Dr Traugott Farnbacher, Secretary for PNG, Pacific and East-Asia, of Mission OneWorld of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria recently visited Central Australia. He spent most of his time observing the work that the FRM does in communities in the Pintupi-Luritja area with Pastor Paul Traeger. But, the main reason for his visit was to 'catch up' with 3 volunteers from his church who have spent their 'gap-year' working at Yirara College and also the FRM store at Hermannsburg (see more about the volunteers below on p7).

This voluntary project has been so successful that Mission One World and the Finke River Mission have decided to sign a special agreement so that the project can continue smoothly into the future. All expenses are covered by Mission One World, except for accommodation and food, which is provided by FRM.

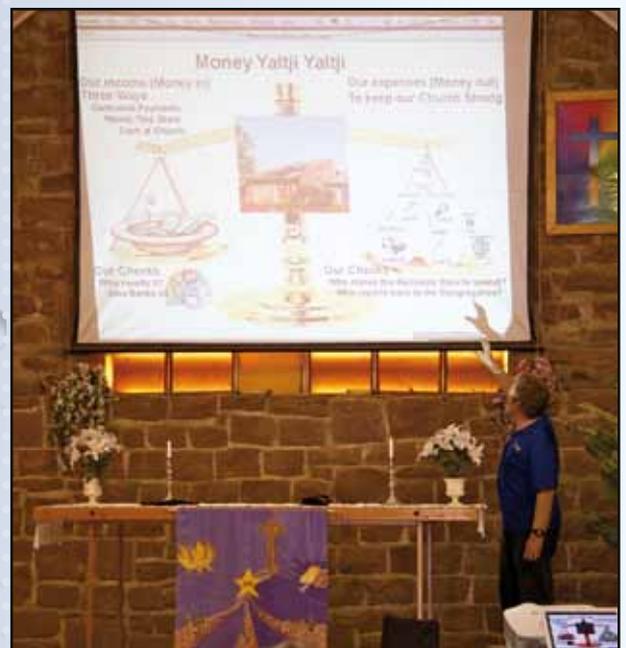


In John chapter 4, Jesus offered 'life-giving' water to the Samaritan woman at the well.

In the desert we appreciate water more than anything God provides. The Finke River at Hermannsburg is normally dry. But recent heavy rain at our bush course caused the river to flow for the first time for more than three years. Four days later these two boys caught some fish in what was a dry river bed. Where there is water there is life! Finke River Mission is committed to bringing the gospel to all Aboriginal people in central Australia. Just as the recent rain miraculously produced these fish, God's word also produces the miracle of faith and love: "Out of the believers hearts will flow rivers of living water" John 7:38

Please continue to support and pray for the work of the Finke River Mission as we take God's 'life-giving' word into the desert.

Pastor David Kuss.



Pastor Paul Traeger teaching about how to manage church offering money at the recent Ntaria Bush Course.

Where there

In Australia, the driest continent on earth, we know how precious water is. When visitors from overseas look at maps of central Australia, they are amazed at the number of rivers that flow through the desert. What they fail to realise is that almost all of these rivers only flow every few years, and in some cases they only flow every ten years or more. That's why maps warn us about taking enough water when venturing into the 'bush'. Many travellers, from early explorers down to present day outback adventurers, have died from lack of water. No water, no life.

This is exactly why Aboriginal people memorised the location of every water hole in central Australia. From one generation to the next, they

If It's Flooded, Forget It!

Bishop John Henderson came to support pastors in training at the recent Hermannsburg bush camp. He encouraged them with his words and relaxed with them in the evening. However, as the flood waters began to rise we sent him packing with other FRM store staff who also had to catch plane flights. New FRM staff member, Wayne Beven, successfully negotiated a rising Ellery Creek just before the road was officially closed. His Papua New Guinea experience proved invaluable.





Pastors and Evangelists attending the Bush Course at Ntaria include (Pictured from left at back): Hezekial Tjingoon, Bernard Bell, Desmond Raggett, Trevor Raggett, Tony Eggley, Charlie Chirrup, Graham Poulson, Perry Johnson, Matthew Allan, Arnold Nipper, Paul Traeger, Justin Allen, Rodney Malbunka, Gary Mumu, (front) Ashley Reid, Billy Bourke, Donald Peterson, Simon Dixon and Mark Reid.

is water there is life...

sang songs that were like maps of their country. In these 'song-maps' the precious water holes were prominent. They treasured water; it meant life.

Fresh water also meant life in the Hebrew Bible. It symbolised the life that God gave people in the present for their crops and livestock, and also the new life promised in the future. This was known as the 'messianic age', a time when the great divide between heaven (where God lives and rules with justice and abundance) and earth (where God often seems absent and there is much suffering and injustice) will disappear bringing about something completely new. Revelation 21:1-6 envisages this time so vividly.

But as Paul reminds us in 2Corinthians 5:17, this new life is not merely waiting for us in the future. God has already made us part of his new creation when he joined us to Christ in the waters of baptism. Even though we still have to endure many struggles and hardships, God's Spirit is constantly changing our lives every day, making all things new through his word.

One of the specific ways God's Spirit changes us is through the weekly Divine worship services that are held in our congregations each Sunday. Wherever God's word is heard and the sacraments administered, there our Lord Jesus Christ is present with the church on earth, bringing down God's gifts of forgiveness and life from heaven. At our recent pastors course at Ntaria, that wasn't the only gift that God gave us from the heavens. We also received around 100mm of rain in the local area that caused significant stream rises.

Regardless of the hardships we all had to endure travelling to, setting up, and even leaving the course, 20 FRM church leaders still attended to learn more about Divine service. Pastor Linards Jansons from the Australian Lutheran College bravely led us over the four days, even though he must have wondered at times if he was ever going to leave Ntaria because of the persistent rain. Thanks be to God that we all arrived home safely, truly enriched by our time spent together, the teaching that was offered, and of course, the wonderful rain.

Pastor Rob Borgas

(Photo: Rain on Missionary Plain near Hermannsburg, May 2014)

LCC Graduation

Ten staff from Lutheran Community Care (LCC) have graduated with nationally recognised qualifications from Swinburne University on Thursday, 15th of May.

LCC has operated in Alice Springs for five years now, and the demand for its services has increased significantly in this time. In July 2013 they expanded their office premise to include the old Mission Block Store, and this shop front site has contributed to an increase in clients accessing their services.

LCC offers a range of services and support to the community as a whole regardless of language, culture, ethnicity or religion. Their financial services range from simple tips on budgeting, money management and prioritizing bills, to helping people deal with severe debt issues. Their early childhood services provide a supportive learning environment for families of young children through various playgroups.

The employment strategy adopted by LCC is a reflection of their inclusive policy of offering their services for all: the majority of their 22 staff members are Indigenous, others are recent migrants to

Australia, and many of these are now classed as long term employees.

“The benefits of having Indigenous people as part of our team are obvious. They are able to converse with clients in a variety of local languages, which helps to make our clients feel more comfortable and eliminates the need for interpreters” said central Australian manager Robyn Richter.

Ongoing training is essential to LCC’s employment strategy and all staff are encouraged to undertake

further study and study time is also provided.

Ms Richter also adds that “LCC is extremely proud of our entire team and in particular the ten staff members who have graduated. They have put in a great effort to study and continue their work within the community. For more information about the work that LCC does, and the services they offer within central Australia, please contact them on 08 8953 5160 or visit their website at www.lccare.org.au



Graduates from left: Lachlan Thompson, Stephen Axten, Rachael Swan, Maggie Gleeson, Diana Molano, Cleopas Chinyadza and Amy Collins (Absent: Rikkisha Collins, Anne Lynch, and Lisa Lewis)

Pastor Simon Dixon Town Camp, Hospital and Prison Ministry

Pastor Simon Dixon ministers to residents of the town camps, scattered in and around Alice Springs. He prays for the sick in hospital, renal, aged care and alcohol rehabilitation centres. And, he also visits people in jail. Simon says that:

“Matthew 25:35-36 is my favourite Bible verse because it shows the work I do. I pray for the sick in hospital and I visit people in jail. Our Lord Jesus has called me to do this work because he cares about those weak ones who suffer. When people are suffering they often feel alone, like Jesus himself did on the cross when he cried out: My God, my God, why have you left me? (Matt. 27:46) They are often left to suffer alone without family or friends. But our Lord Jesus wants his followers to show these suffering people that he is truly with them through his word and our actions.”

And Pastor Simon is rarely alone when he does this work. In Mark 6:7 our Lord sent out his disciples ‘two by two’. In the same way



The Pintupi-Luritja Gospel Band plays at an Easter concert in Alice Springs. From left: Justin Allen (Guitar), David Brown (Keyboard), Pastor Simon Dixon, Dulcie Kelly and Norma Kelly.

Pastor Simon is often assisted by a faithful evangelist or two, just for company, and also to train and mentor them in this important work. One of these evangelists, Justin Allen, also accompanies Simon in his gospel band (the Pintupi-Luritja Band), along with David Brown and others. Together they visit various communities sharing God’s word through

the songs that the band plays, mainly original words and music that have been written by Simon and Justin. Hopefully Justin will soon be ordained so he too can carry on with the work God has called many people from the bush to do in Alice Springs. Simon asks you all to pray for his ministry and the people of Alice Springs.

One Family - God's Family

by Lorena Mack, Magdalena Scheuerl and Dorothea Engel

In August 2013 we came to central Australia to volunteer at Yirara College for one year. We are Lorena, Magdalena and Dorothea and are also known as 'the three German ladies'. Our organization, Mission EineWelt (MEW) is located in the town of Neuendettelsau, Bavaria. Our service project was created by MEW in partnership with the Finke River Mission. The connection between these two Lutheran mission organisations reaches back to the late 1800s, beginning with the first missionary sent to central Australia from Neuendettelsau, Carl Strehlow.

For the last ten months we have worked at Yirara College, as classroom assistants in the morning, and in the afternoon we help with the girls' boarding program. We help the students by answering any questions they might have about their work, so the teachers can continue the lesson without too many interruptions. Working with Indigenous students is very exciting because you get to know them and learn about their culture in a very real way, rather than by talking to other people or reading books.

We didn't know what a school with Indigenous students would be like. In Germany we have just finished high school and we thought it might be similar. Well, we now know that it is completely different: The work is sometimes hard and challenging, but when you build a good relationship with the students it is much easier.

It is difficult working with students who are at many different education levels. You need to know that they come from many different places and speak many different languages. We are not used to that because in German schools the students often come from the same small region where there are no different languages and cultures.

Every day after school in Germany, we used to go home to our family. Here at Yirara we are like the students who are

also away from their family for a long time. This helps us understand why the motto of Yirara College is "One family - God's family". Family is so important and it is always great to have family around. It is wonderful to have our family back home in Germany, but also good to have another family here at Yirara.

During the school holidays we also worked at the Finke River Mission store. We made sandwiches, cupcakes, filled the shelves with supplies and worked as cashiers. To walk through the red dust every morning and come back in the afternoon with some chats in between gave us the feeling we were integrated into the Hermannsburg community. From time to time we saw some students from the college roaming around because it was in the holidays and the school was closed. We had a chat with them, saw some of their family members or just smiled at each other. This smile is like saying: "Hey, I know who you are but I'm feeling shame to talk to you." The time at Ntaria was very exciting because we got to know a lot of people and we learnt more about life in a community.

We are looking to the last months of our voluntary service with a little bit of sadness because soon we will have to go back to our home country. But all in all we are really thankful to MEW and FRM for the wonderful time we have had here in Alice Springs and also at Hermannsburg.



Bountiful Beanies! by Lyn Schultz

As many know, the nights in central Australia often reach sub zero temperatures during Winter. Here's an inspiring story about women with big hearts and busy hands...

After a talk with Pastor Ray Morris from FRM in November 2013, Melva Schumacher from Trinity congregation, Pasadena, Adelaide, took up his suggestion to make beanies for central Australia. But before the craft group started making the beanies, they first thought they should find out how many were needed. After checking with Pastor Ken Schultz in Alice Springs they realised that there are over 6,000 Indigenous Lutheran brothers and sisters living in central Australia. Melva contacted the women's fellowships in South Australia to ask for their help to make beanies and have them ready for the start of Winter, 2014.

At the South Australia Lutheran Women's Fellowship convention in Kadina on the 1st May 2014, the beanies were blessed for service and presented to Mrs Lyn Schultz to take back to Alice Springs. The response was overwhelming. Three tables were filled with beanies. To date the number made is 5,550. Some have already arrived in Alice Springs and others are coming soon in cars, caravans and in luggage on flights to the centre.

The people who live here in the Red Centre would like to thank all the women who took the time to make these gifts of love.



Beanies being distributed at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Areyonga

Hermannsburg Historic Precinct News:



The Hermannsburg Historic Precinct is a popular tourist destination and significant historical site that was included in the National Heritage List in 2006. It currently attracts 10 000 tourists each year, many from overseas. The land and buildings are owned by the traditional owners of Hermannsburg through the Central Land Council. The precinct is administered by the Hermannsburg Historical Society.

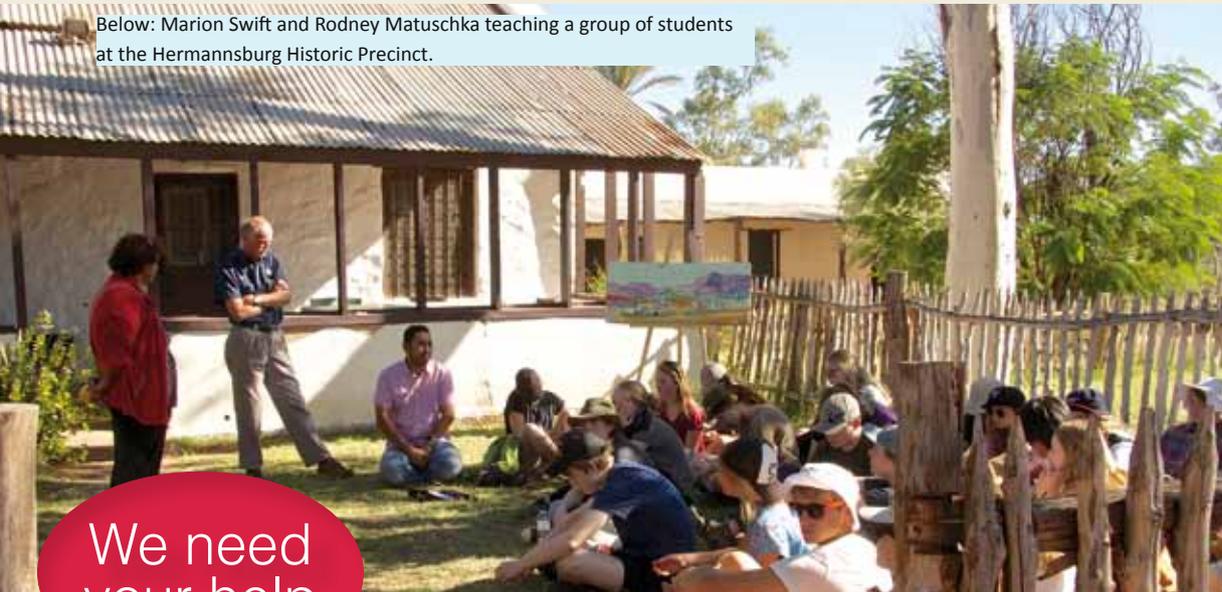
Following an expression of interest process, FRM was selected to manage the tourist operations of the precinct on behalf of the Hermannsburg community. FRM has been managing the operation since March, 2014. Any surplus funds from these operations will belong to the Hermannsburg community.

FRM is excited about this new project because it allows us to employ more local Indigenous staff, and also provides opportunities for

training them in hospitality and tourism in the future. All this is additional to the employment and training we are currently offering at the Hermannsburg Store in retail sales and at the bakery.

The Precinct serves as a testament to the faith and perseverance of the early missionaries, those Indigenous people they ministered to and trained, and all their descendants and co-workers in the gospel who have followed in their footsteps over the past 135 years.

Below: Marion Swift and Rodney Matuschka teaching a group of students at the Hermannsburg Historic Precinct.



We need your help

NEWS FROM FINKE RIVER MISSION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

WINTER 2014

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 ____ / ____

Name _____ Name on card _____

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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

You really can make a difference



Christ in the Centre Team:

Kriss Borgas
krissborgas@gmail.com

Rob Borgas
rob.borgas@bigpond.com