



PASTOR RADKE INSTALLED

by PASTOR BEN PFEIFFER

BASED IN ALICE SPRINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH, PASTOR STEPHEN RADKE WILL FOCUS ON MINISTRY IN THE ALICE SPRINGS TOWN CAMPS AND ACROSS OTHER CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES.

The installation was conducted by Pastor Rob Borgas, a former Pastoral Support Worker in the Pitjantjatjara language area and a current member of the Finke River Mission (FRM) board. Pastor Borgas represented bishops Paul Smith and Andrew Brook, who were sadly unable to attend. Marcia Hoffmann, Chair of FRM, introduced Stephen, highlighting his return to Central Australia and his dedication to the mission. The service was supported by pastors Rodney Malbunka, Ben Pfeiffer, and Paul Traeger.

Stephen and his wife Ondre are returning to Central Australia after a long hiatus. Stephen had previously vicared at Alice Springs Lutheran Church and served for three years at Papunya in the late 1980s. His message was about the 'one thing needful' – gathering at Jesus' feet, together, to learn from him. His message resonated with the congregation.



The service was followed by a community lunch, a joint celebration of fellowship and connection.

This installation marks a significant movement for Alice Springs Lutheran Church and the broader FRM community. With Stephen's extensive experience and passion for ministry, we have eager anticipation and hope for the future of our Central Australian communities. He will be focused on training Aboriginal leaders and church workers, aligning with the mission's goals of fostering local leadership and nurturing faith-based initiatives. We look forward to seeing Stephen's contributions and the growth of the ministry in this region.

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A JOYFUL CELEBRATION

by PASTOR BEN PFEIFFER

ALICE SPRINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH HELD ITS LONG-AWAITED CONFIRMATIONS ON 23 JUNE 2024. FIVE YOUNG WOMEN CONFIRMED THEIR CHRISTIAN FAITH: RHONDA BOB, SHANILLE BRAYBON, ELLA AND JORDYN WILLIAMS, AND MARIAH MEURANT.

Each of these had completed their Confirmation studies over the past 12 months.

Rhonda attended school at Yirara College years ago but missed the opportunity to be confirmed at that time. She was grateful to finally start receiving communion in the Lutheran Church. Shanille, Ella, and Jordyn grew up together at Hermannsburg (Ntaria) and are now boarders at St Philips College in Alice Springs. Mariah also attends St Philips and was recently baptised at the Lutheran church.

The service was well-attended by family and friends, adding to the joyful atmosphere of the women's faith journey.

The confirmands shared Bible readings together, prayers and songs, showcasing their dedication to, and enthusiasm for, the faith.

Ella and Jordyn's aunty, Cassandra Williams, led some of the singing, and during holy communion, the traditional Arrarnta confirmation hymn, 'Take Thou My Hand and Lead Me', was played.

It was a joint celebration of gratitude and praise. The church community expressed their gratitude to God for guiding these young women in their faith journeys, and all prayed for the continual growth of faith among young people in Central Australia.

This confirmation service was not just a significant milestone for Rhonda, Shanille, Ella, Jordyn, and Mariah, but also for their congregation. It highlighted the importance of faith, community and the support of loved ones in the spiritual journey.

Overall, the confirmation service at Alice Springs Lutheran Church was a heartfelt and memorable event. The service was a testament to the power of faith, the bonds of community, and the importance of guiding and nurturing the next generation of believers.

Above: Pastor Ben Pfeiffer is present with confirmands Rhonda Bob, Shanille Braybon, Ella Williams, Jordyn Williams, and Mariah Meurant.



MT LIEBIG CHURCH RENEWED

by PAUL TRAEGER



THE AMUNTURNGU MOUNT LIEBIG CHURCH BUILDING WAS COMPLETED AROUND THE YEAR 2000. AT THAT TIME, IT WAS JUST A LARGE SHED, SERVING THE COMMUNITY'S BASIC NEEDS FOR A PLACE OF WORSHIP AND GATHERING.

Over the years, improvements were made, such as the addition of fans and a few new furnishings, making it a bit more comfortable and welcoming for the congregation. However, it was not until late 2023 that the church underwent a major renovation and upgrade, transforming it significantly from its humble beginnings.

Most of the renovation work was done inside the building. The old corrugated iron walls were replaced with white ones, giving the interior a fresh, clean, and modern look. Newly varnished pews were installed, enhancing the overall aesthetic and comfort. The sliding garage doors that were once a feature of the church are now mostly gone, replaced by more suitable and permanent structures that provide better security and insulation.

These changes have made the church almost unrecognisable from its previous state.

Outside, a cement verandah has been added, providing a shaded area for gatherings, socialising and possibly even outdoor services. This new space is a valuable addition, offering a comfortable place for the community to come together before and after services. A toilet block has also been constructed a short distance from the main building, addressing a long-standing need for better facilities and improving the overall functionality of the church grounds.

During the construction period, church services, including funerals, were held outdoors in the community singalong area. This arrangement demonstrated the community's resilience, adaptability and unwavering faith. The work was finally completed in late 2023 without major fanfare. The local FRM support worker only found out about the project once it was well underway!

The entire project was funded by lease money, pooled from contributions by the whole community. In total, the renovation involved two years of meticulous planning and building, a testament to the hard work, perseverance and commitment of everyone involved.

This renovation project is a shining example of the community's ability to work together effectively. It also expresses the importance of God's church and the gospel to the people of Amunturrngu. The newly renovated church stands as a symbol of their faith, unity and dedication. We expect it will be several decades before another major renovation is required, ensuring that this beloved community space will serve many future generations.

Above: Fresh, new woodwork, carpet and white walls in the recently-renovated Mount Liebig Church.

200 YEARS

by PAUL TRAEGER

NEXT YEAR (2025) MARKS THE TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF A SIGNIFICANT EVENT IN AUSTRALIAN HISTORY, PARTICULARLY FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.

In 1825, the boundary of the British-claimed territory in Australia was adjusted from 135 degrees east to 129 degrees east. This change shifted the boundary from just west of modern-day Coffin Bay and other locations to its current position as the eastern boundary of Western Australia. This boundary has remained unchanged since.

At first, the impact of this boundary adjustment was minimal for the local residents. However, the implications began to emerge when explorer John MacDouall Stuart traveled north in the 1860s on behalf of the South Australian Government. As white governments extended their control, the different rules in each jurisdiction created confusion among the indigenous people, who traditionally viewed the law as unchanging and universal.

This cultural confusion was particularly pronounced for the Western Desert people, who lived in the Central Ranges where Western Australia, South

Australia and the Northern Territory intersect. The straight line of the 129 degrees longitude border cuts through geographical features and traditional lands, such as the Pintupi people's heartland. The residents of Kintore and Kiwirrkura, who see themselves as interconnected, are legally divided by this border. Additionally, the border has demarcated time zones since 1894, leading to further complications.

Today, different states and territories have varying school and public holidays, police forces, courts and government departments. This diversity increases bureaucracy for Indigenous people, who often have limited English proficiency. This bureaucracy exacerbates frustrations for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal administrative workers as they navigate conflicting rules and communicate with local people.

FRM support workers, familiar with Aboriginal culture and language, frequently act

as intermediaries in these situations, which can be time-consuming and challenging.

These issues are rarely highlighted in mission letters or media but are a constant reality for people in border areas like Docker River.

When praying with thanksgiving for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-2), remember the policymakers, bureaucrats, and on-the-ground workers in these border regions. Appreciate the organizations that cooperate across borders, such as the combined WA/NT police station at Kintore. Pray for Aboriginal people in these areas, that they may see these bureaucratic challenges as part of their God-ordained trials but not a reflection of their value to Him.

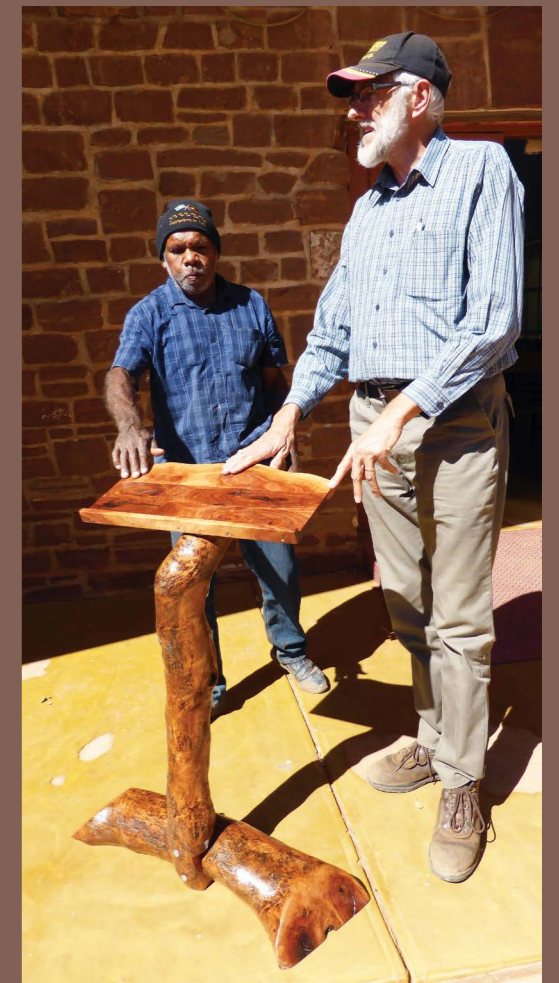
Remember, access to heaven does not depend on bureaucratic hurdles—Christ has already provided a universal, eternally valid ID.



HERMANNSBURG VISITORS' BOOK

by INGKAARTA NEVILLE DOECKE

THE COVER OF THIS CHERISHED BOOK IS ADORNED WITH A DESIGN PAINTED BY TALENTED LOCAL ARTIST CLARABELLE SWIFT IN 2016. HER WORK HAS TRULY CAPTURED THE ESSENCE OF OUR CHURCH, AND WE EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT THANKS TO CLARABELLE FOR THIS BEAUTIFUL COVER.



At Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Hermannsburg we take great pride in our 'visitors' book', which is rapidly nearing its final pages.

Recently, I took the time to peruse the entries within the visitors' book. It is fascinating to see the diverse names, congregations, towns, and even countries from which our visitors have come. Some had informed us in advance of their visit, while others were spontaneous guests. The comments left by these visitors offer a glimpse into their experiences.

Many who attended our worship services left remarks such as, 'beautiful singing', 'very spiritual feeling', 'heavenly music' and 'stunning harmonies'. These comments reflect the deep impact our services have on those who join us in worship. Additionally, some visitors

simply walked through the open door of our church on any given day. They described their experiences with phrases like 'peaceful', 'a beautiful quiet place', 'impressive silence' and 'a great place to rest and enjoy the stillness and harmony of this place'. Such feedback highlights the value of keeping our church open for people to connect with the divine in their own way.

One touching entry was from Renate, who wrote, '48 years have passed and here I am again!' Another memorable note came from Pastor Seliger, who remarked, 'from Hermannsburg, Germany to Hermannsburg, Australia... great experience! Danke!'. We also had the pleasure of hosting the Muehlhnikel family from Lutherstadt, Wittenberg, and a number of overseas pastors, including a bishop

and a pastor from the ELCA in America, as well as a priest from the Swedish Lutheran Church.

Our visitors' book represents a rich tapestry of experiences from 19 different countries, with Germany notably contributing the largest number of entries, totaling 50. Additionally, visitors from all Australian states signed the book, including several groups from Lutheran Colleges.

We are happy that many visitors who travel through our community can join us in worship or just step into the open church and experience Psalm 46:10.

"Be still and know that I am God..."

Right: The beautiful stand for the Hermannsburg Visitor's Book, made from desert oak timber from country west of Hermannsburg.



SPIRITUALITY SHOWN IN ART

by DAVID STRICKLAND

RECENTLY WE HELD TWO ETHNO-ARTS WORKSHOPS, THE FIRST IN ALICE SPRINGS AT THE BAPTIST CHURCH AND THE LATTER AT TI TREE.

These were held at the initiative of my wife Ming Fang, who had done fundraising for this purpose. Her vision was to encourage Indigenous folk to try their hand at painting stories from the Bible, which could be used to retell stories to their families. The theme chosen for these workshops was the healing of the paralytic in Mark 5:1-12, where the paralytic was lowered through the roof of Jesus' home in Capernaum, to Jesus. It was hoped to lead to a discussion of the forgiveness of sins, and to see whether such a spiritual concept may be rendered in art. The Bible story was carefully read in two languages before the painting started, and, every day for five days, the story was discussed or re-enacted.

At Ti Tree we had about 10 people participating, including a few young men, who were given the freedom to paint another Bible story if they wished. We carried it on for a couple of days and finished with a worship gathering on Sunday, when the paintings were displayed.

On Anzac Day we held a separate event at Ti Tree park, joined by seven women from Six Mile and the town area. We were also joined by a well-known local painter, April, along with her mother.

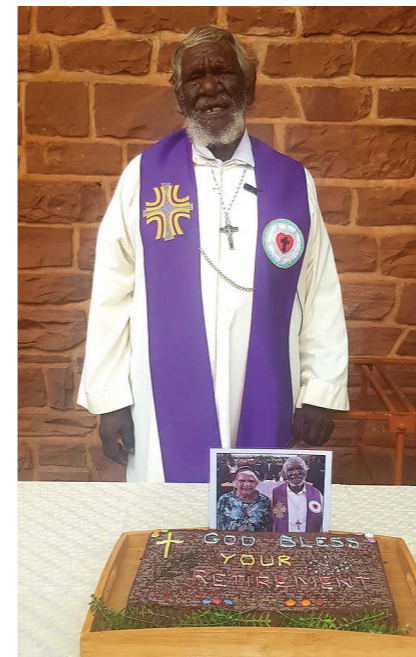
Then disaster nearly struck! We didn't allow enough for the wind in our risk assessment! A sudden wind gust came and picked up a heavy metal whiteboard and it missed the elderly Eileen by inches. We thank God that it missed her, or we might have had a disaster on our hands.

Both workshops were wonderful activities enabling Indigenous people to use canvas and paint and interact with the Bible stories in an unhurried, communal way. It was moving to see how peacefully they worked, and how contented was the atmosphere when Christian music was played, especially sung in their languages.

From top to bottom:
Travance with his painting at Nturiya.

Matilda, Pauline, Beryl and Marjorie at Ti Tree Park with Ming Fang in the middle.

Oshaya and Serena Presley holding their paintings.



A WELL-EARNED REST

by INGKAARTA NEVILLE DOECKE

PASTOR MARCUS WHEELER LED THE PALM-WAVING PROCESSION INTO THE BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH HERMANNSBURG ON PALM SUNDAY THIS YEAR, HIS LAST FULL SERVICE AS A PASTOR.

Over sixteen and a half years ago, in the very same church, Pastor Mike Semmler, then President of the Lutheran Church of Australia, had ordained Pastor Marcus. His ordination took place on 25 November 2007, a month after Pastor Marcus celebrated his 60th birthday.

The Rite of Retirement highlighted his steadfast dedication to our church, his relentless commitment to preaching, teaching, praying, administering holy communion, baptising and officiating at funerals for the Ntaria community. His service touched many lives, young and old.

The church community expressed gratitude for Pastor Marcus and his wife, Betty.

They recognised that, like all of us, Pastor Marcus is both saint and sinner – a man who strives to walk in the light of Christ, both cherished and forgiven.

His dedication to lifelong learning was evident in his regular attendance at Bush Bible Courses, where he sought to deepen his understanding of the Bible. Pastor Marcus travelled to other communities to lead worship services and conduct funerals, always with Betty by his side, supporting him and sharing in the long journeys over bush roads.

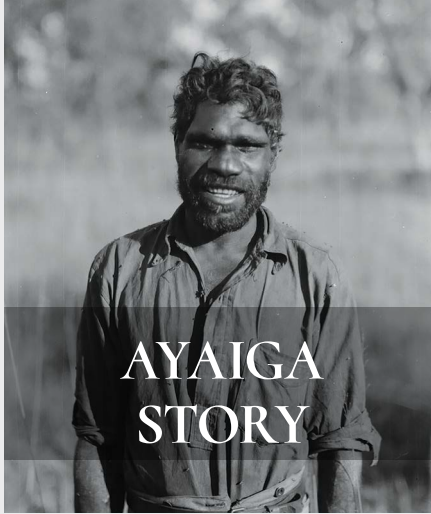
As Pastor Marcus transitions into retirement, he is taking a well-earned rest from his pastoral duties. When reflecting on his ministry,

Pastor Marcus shared that his most memorable moment was attending the ordination service of his nephew, Jeffrey Wheeler, at Mount Liebig Church.

The congregation asks for God's blessings on Pastor Marcus and Betty as they enter this new chapter of their lives. Although he is retiring from full-time ministry, Pastor Marcus will continue to provide assistance in particular areas of the congregation's ministry, ensuring his enduring presence and influence within the church community.

From left to right:
Pastor Marcus with his retirement cake during his retirement celebrations.

Pastor Marcus is prayed over by members of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church Hermannsburg community.



AYAIGA STORY

by PASTOR BASIL SCHILD

Each week at Yirara College, senior students lead the Chapel prayers and blessings. One time, one of the prayers highlighted the story of Ayaiga, an elder of the Alawa people from the Roper River Valley.

More than 100 years ago, in 1911, Ayaiga was arrested. While crossing the flooded Roper River, still in chains, he jumped into the river to save the life of the policeman who had arrested him.

The policeman had been knocked unconscious by his horse and was about to drown.

In 1912, Ayaiga was set free and awarded the Albert Medal, the British Empire's highest award for saving life.

Many Yirara students have come from the Roper Valley communities of Minyerri, Jilkminggan, Mataranka, Urapunga and Ngukurr.

Ayaiga is their ancestor.

Ayaiga's other name was 'Neighbour'. Just like the Good Samaritan.

Ayaiga Prayer

from Yirara College

*A long time ago
Ayaiga from the Roper
Swam down the river
to save the life of the man
who had put him in chains.*

*We give thanks
for all our ancestors
who have shown kindness and caring
across the generations*

*And we pray for all of our elders
in all of our communities today.*

Amen.

A QUICK TRANSLATION

by INGKAARTA NEVILLE DOECKE

After sitting through eight one-and-a-quarter-hour teaching sessions at a Bush Bible Course, the brain seeks a bit of rest and rejuvenation. However, at the recent Bush Course at M'Bunghara, linguist David 'Stricko' Strickland was talking with some Anmatyerr language-speaking young men. They decided to use their spare time to translate the lunchtime hymn, 'Spread our table Lord and Father,' into Anmatyerr. The hymn has just eight lines and a simple tune.

After about half an hour of serious effort to fit Anmatyerr words to the eight beats per line, someone suggested recording it on a mobile phone. The first recording revealed too many 'galloping words' to fit the beat, so they went back to the drawing board several more times, eventually recording a third version.

Everyone was pleased with the combined effort, but they considered the third recording a work in progress. It still needed to pass the ultimate test: the older, experienced Anmatyerr ladies listening to it and commenting on the correctness of the meaning and the suitability for the musical beat. Once approved, the Anmatyerr speakers can join in singing this lunchtime prayer in their own language. Well done, men!



FOR YOUR PRAYERS

- Pastor Roy Yaltjunki (Docker River), as he struggles with not being able to serve the Church as he would like due to his advanced age.
- Pastoral trainee, Bernard Bell (Docker River), as he assists Pastor Roy and that he will soon be ready to be considered for ordination.
- Pastoral trainees, Abraham Poulson (Areyonga) and Justin Allen (Papunya), that their ordinations will be able to go ahead this year.
- Pastoral trainee, Ryan Nelson (Ti Tree area), as he continues to learn and serve congregations in the Anmatyerr language area.
- Other young men in the Anmatyerr language area, that are keen to be trained as pastors – Gabriel, Nathaniel and Savior.
- Pray for someone to consider taking up the pastoral support role for the Anmatyerr area.
- Please pray that Dr Noel Due's teaching about families at the recent Mbunghara bush course will be of lasting benefit to many Indigenous people.



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