

**A Brief History of the
Lutheran Church
in Esperance**

1958-1974

The Esperance congregation started with the migration of the Schultz family from Ceduna in South Australia which was followed by a steady influx of Lutherans, farmers and others from the east.

The family Schultz started fellowshiping together in their home on Sunday nights and inviting others to attend in 1958.

Not long after this Pastor Peter Mattiske began travelling from Albany to preach. Pastor Alf Lienert who was based in Northam also made the trip via Kalgoorlie and Norseman on a regular mission circuit.

During 1962 to 1965 Pastor Cyril Bartel travelled from Albany to Esperance every 6 weeks to conduct services, first in the Schultz home and later in the Gibson Hall. This meant a round trip of 800-1000 miles depending on who he visited on the way.

In early 1966 the congregation moved to the newly built St Andrew's Church of England, Esperance with services held fortnightly. A pastor was still travelling from Albany for preaching once a month and the other service was led by a lay-reader.

In April 1971 the manse block was obtained and an option on the church block.

March 1972 a decision was made to press strongly for a new WA Parish of Esperance/Kalgoorlie. In November 1972 the Esperance congregation was given the go ahead to re-align the parishes in Western Australia and to call a minister for a 3 year trial period.

Pastor David Schulze, freshly graduated was the first Pastor to be installed to the new Esperance/Kalgoorlie Parish in February 1973. This is when services began to be held every week with three preaching services and 1 reading service to be held on the weekend that Pastor David travelled to Kalgoorlie.

The manse was completed in September 1973 and the Foundation stone for the current church building was laid in January 1974.

Barbara Schultz had this to say at the Church opening in 1974.

“But, folks! This is not the ultimate goal, but the beginning of a new phase. Now we must go and tell the Good News even more fervently than before, as God has placed this responsibility with US, in graciously giving us these blessings of pastor and church, and furthermore, it is our desire and privilege to be up and doing the Lord's Work while it is still day.”

1974-1984

Now in a new building with a permanent pastor the church had a chance to grow from its home base. Some of the events are included below:

- Sunday school with all the resources in a permanent place
- Vacation Bible school – January 1975
- WA Districts' 8th convention hosted here in 1976
- Christmas street pageant 1976
- Easter banners project in 1977 turned into banners being made for all the church seasons
- Church was used by the community for musical afternoons and piano practices and recitals
- Ministers Fraternal used the church during 1979 for High school Christian Education Seminars for Year 11 and 12
- WAY'79 Rally held in June 1979
- 1983 saw 11 young people to be the first confirmed in St John's history
- WA Districts' 8th convention hosted here in 1984

In 1977 the Kalgoorlie congregation offered to financial contribute towards the Parish budget.

Pastor Schulze left in early 1978. He was replaced by Pastor David Buck who was single when he arrived by married in 1980 in Canberra and the congregation held its own wedding reception one Sunday after service.

Pastor Buck left in May 1981. Pastor Lienert and others visited to preach until January 1982 when Pastor Andrew Kowald was installed.

In 1983 a shed was erected at the rear of the church, rain water tank and BBQ area prepared.

1985-Present

1985 was the time that two things that the parish had been striving for come to fruition; now a self-supporting parish, no longer receiving a subsidy from the WA District and the opening of the newly built St Paul's Boulder.

The congregation then took on the task of supporting others; they pledged \$2000 annually to the high school chaplain and began quarterly appeals for projects outside the working budget.

In 1989 the congregation purchased a block of land adjoining the church and had it amalgamated on the same title as the original land holding. This block would contain the Multi-purpose building which would provide Sunday school rooms/community rooms for the congregations use and give the Community Four-year old Kindergarten a home. The multi-purpose building was opened in November 1990.

Here are some other activities that were happening during this time:

- Men's Retreat
- Two adult weekly Bible studies in town
- One Bible Study held fortnightly and two meeting monthly in the country
- "Know Your Bible" ladies group used the church to meet
- Other groups using the church;
 - Four AA groups
 - Penguins (public speaking)
 - Pregnancy Help
 - Children's Community Choir

In 1991 it was decided to paint a mural on the southern wall of the Church building and this was one of the last things that Pastor Kowald helped with before leaving in July 1991.

Pastor Martin Freund arrived in August 1991 as an interim pastor during the call process, he stayed for 3 months before moving to Kalgoorlie and travelling to Esperance once a month for services. The other services during this time were conducted by lay readers.

In April 1992 Pastor Michael Mayer was installed in Esperance and the following month Pastor Martin Freund was installed as Associate Pastor in Boulder.

In 1992 the church hosted Lutheran Youth of WA for the Anzac weekend and in 1993 the church once again played host to the WA District Convention this one was the 25th.

In 1994 the 20th anniversary of St John's Church building was celebrated.

Pastor Mayer left at the end of 2000 and in 2001 Pastor Ron Buchold started his time with us. He left in early 2002 and we were served by Pastor Rodney Beh as an interim Pastor.

In 2003 Pastor Brian Keller was installed and served until 2007.

In 2004 the Parish hosted the WA District Convention with some of the Kalgoorlie-Boulder people coming down to help and participate.

Pastors since the start of meetings in the Esperance Area

1958-1961	Pastor Peter Mattiske served from Albany
	Pastor Alf Lienert served from Northam
1962-1965	Pastor Cyril Bartel served from Albany
1965	Pastor Max Mueller served from Katanning
1966-1970	Pastor Norm Bergen served from Albany
1970-1972	Pastor Theo MacKenzie served from Albany
1973- early 1978	Pastor David Schulze first to live and serve in Esperance
1978- May 1981	Pastor David Buck
1982-1991	Pastor Andrew Kowald
1992-2000	Pastor Michael Mayer
2001- early 2002	Pastor Ron Buchold
Mid 2002	Interim Pastor Rodney Beh
2003 – 2007	Pastor Brian Keller