

A Brief History of the Lutheran Church in Kalgoorlie

1899-1914

The history of the Lutheran Church in Kalgoorlie begins with the visit of Pastor A. Stempel to WA. He was then pastor of the Hahndorf congregation, SA, and president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Australia for Lutheran Services in that state. At the convention of the E.L.C.A. at Lobethal in 1899 the request of these people was made known, and the matter discussed.

Pastor Stempel offered to travel to WA to investigate the situation. The convention accepted the offer, and following this he made the trip to WA. This took place in 1899. He visited Perth and Kalgoorlie, and held a number of services in both areas.

After this visit he made report of a favourable reception of his service in WA, and in keeping with a resolution of the Lobethal convention, Pastor E Fischer was called, and subsequently began work as itinerant preacher in WA. Pastor Fischer was called after he completed his training first at Concordia College in Murtoa, Victoria, then in Concordia Seminary St. Louis, USA.

He began to hold services in Kalgoorlie in May, 1901. A residence was provided for him in Perth. Besides preaching in the congregations which he gathered in Perth and Fremantle, he set out from his home base to conduct, on a regular basis, services in the country towns along the Southern line from Narrogin to Albany, building up at these centres organised congregations. He continued to visit Kalgoorlie regularly. He mentioned in his early reports that many of those he visited there lived in tents. However, gradually the living conditions improved, the services were well attended, and the congregation decided to build its own house of worship. The members bought a block of land in the town measuring 66 by 200 ft. the measurements of the building are also mentioned in the report, namely 33 by 24ft., height 22ft. it was built of the iron and wood. There was room at the rear end, measuring 24 by 20 ft. the church was provided with a fine organ, and was opened debt free.

This church was dedicated on the 29th of June 1902, at 3pm. Pastor Fischer, who was the only pastor present, and who performed the ceremony of dedication, must have had great joy and satisfaction on this happy occasion, and a heart filled with thanks to God. The report of the day assures us that the same could be said of this, the St. Paul's congregation. At the dedication the church was well filled. Almost a year later, on Palm Sunday 1903, eleven young people had their confirmation. This was the first in our church in WA. Pastor Fischer continued to hold services in Kalgoorlie up to September, 1903. After this date Kalgoorlie was served by other pastors who came to work in WA, and services continued to be held in this city up to the year 1913.

In a report to the Board for Home Mission in WA, published in 1921, we read the following statement:

“The congregation at Kalgoorlie, about the year 1914, disbanded, and in June, 1915, one of the trustees sold the property for seventy pounds. After deducting the expenses incurred, Mr Mengler, the trustee, by request of the district, forwarded the balance, sixty pounds and fifteen schillings, which was then paid into the Home Mission Fund of WA.”

1956-1963 – A New Beginning (Pastor AC Lienert)

It is obvious, that after 42 years, one would not expect to find any of those people connected with the Lutheran congregation at Kalgoorlie before and up to 1914, to be in Kalgoorlie to build up a congregation in 1956. It was the influx of Lutheran migrants to Australia from different countries of Europe from approximately 1950 on, that caused the Lutheran Church again to begin holding services in that city in 1956.

A member of the Home Mission Board of SA had travelled by train across the Nullarbor in 1955, and found that Lutheran migrants from Europe were settling in Kalgoorlie. After his return to SA he gave his report to the board on the situation at Kalgoorlie. As a result of this the board asked Pastor A.C. Lienert, the pastor stationed at Northam, to make regular visits to Kalgoorlie, and arrange for services to be held there Pastor Lienert continues:

“My first visit to Kalgoorlie was on the 16th November 1955, by train, which I boarded at 7:30pm, Wednesday, and which arrived at Kalgoorlie at 7:00am, Thursday. After spending four days looking up families, and arranging for use of a hall for services, I left Kalgoorlie by the train leaving at 8:00pm Sunday, arriving at Northam 7:15am next morning. After this I visited Kalgoorlie once in two months for the next seven and a half years. On one occasion I travelled from Northam by car, when besides Kalgoorlie, I visited, Norseman, and Gibson (Esperance), to hold services in those places. All the other trips to Kalgoorlie, Norseman and Esperance, were done by train. The reason for using the train was by no means because of comfort, but because the car travelling at that distance, 312 miles from Northam to Kalgoorlie, would have involved the Home Mission Board in too great an expense.

The first service in 1956 was held on the 3rd January in St. Andrew’s Hall, Cassidy Street – property of the Presbyterian Church, but no longer used by them. The Presbyterian Church had by this time a fine new church, with a good amenities hall on Maritana Street. The hall which they so kindly offered us to use is now demolished.

From March, 1958, when I began to hold services at Norseman, and later on also at Gibson (Esperance) from April, 1959, I had to extend my stay in the Goldfields district several days longer.

For the first year I hired a small car from a garage for visiting Kalgoorlie. Later on this was not available. On frequent occasions I visited the homes by push-bike. At other times, I walked.

My trips from Northam to Kalgoorlie ended in September, 1963 when I moved to Morawa, to take up work in that parish.”

Historical Note

It is recorded in 2 different reports in the Kirchenbote (E.L.C.A.) that efforts were made in 1905 to get Pastor Noack’s father to come to Kalgoorlie as a graduate from the USA. It took 55 years before one of his family would come, but 26 years later his service is still being given!

Pastors who have served Kalgoorlie 1901 – 1913

It may be of some interest to mention briefly the names of the pastors who served the Kalgoorlie field from the time of Pastor Fischer in 1901 up to the time of discontinuance of service in 1913, and the years in which they served.

E. J. Fischer – Arrived in WA April 19th 1901

He conducted his first service at Kalgoorlie on May 12, 1901. He held services in Perth, Kalgoorlie, and at towns on the Great Southern railway line from Narrogin to Albany from May, 1901 to September, 1903, with residence in Perth. At a conference in Perth on May 27, 1905, the parish of Perth extended to him a call to be pastor of their parish. Up to this time his status was that of the “Travelling Missionary” for WA. Pastor Fischer left Perth at the end of 1910, being called to a parish in Victoria.

H. D. Mensing – Began work in Kalgoorlie in September, 1903

He lived at 10 Hare street, Kalgoorlie, and traveled to Great Southern areas from there, serving Wagin and Katanning once a month. He left the Goldfields in 1904, and took up parish work in Victoria.

J. E. Hansen – left SA in January, 1905

He had no home in WA which is evident from records of his travels from the Goldfields to Great Southern areas during his six months in WA. “Ein Heim war mir gänzlich unbekannt”, he reported.

On May 27th, 1905, he was invited to be chairman at a conference in Perth to call Pastor Fischer as Perth parish pastor. Until this time Pastor Fischer was termed “Reiseprediger” (Travelling missionary). He held a confirmation service in Kalgoorlie, in the English language on June 24th, 1905, which was also his farewell service. He left Fremantle on the ship “Oruba”, on July 5th, 1905.

H. H. Wolters – 1905 to 1910

Arrived at Perth on August 13th, 1905 and was installed at Katanning on August 26th, 1905, by Pastor Fischer. He resided in Albany for 1906 and 1907, and from 1908 to 1910 lived in Katanning. He served Kalgoorlie from this field.

J. A. Moody – end of 1910 to 1918

Installed at Katanning as pastor of that parish on the Sunday before Christmas 1910. Pastor Moody served Katanning to the end of 1918. In a report printed in the Lutheran Church paper of that time, we read:

“Since the end of 1910, Pastor Moody, with the approval of his congregations, served the gold mining districts (Kalgoorlie). Besides the demanding programme of the Katanning parish, Pastor Moody is asked to attend to Kalgoorlie. He is not a travelling missionary, but the duly called pastor of Katanning parish. That is his appointed charge. This, his parish however, allows its pastor, on account of necessity, for helping out, to make monthly trips to the Kalgoorlie district.”

P. F. Rudolph – 1913 to 1914

He began work in WA in April of 1913. He visited Kalgoorlie and held services there in 1913, and worked in Perth in 1914.

1954 to 1985, in brief

1956 to 1972	Kalgoorlie was served from Northam	
	1956 – 1963	A. C. Lienert
	1963 – 1972	O. E. Klein
1973 – Opening 1985	Kalgoorlie served from Esperance	
	1973 – 1977	D. J. Schulze
	1978 – 1981	D. W. Buck
	1982 – 1985	Andy. Kowald

Since Pastor Lienert's time

Pastor Klein served Kalgoorlie every 3 weeks as did Pastor Schulze in his first year. After that, visits by all pastors were generally on a monthly basis, with the visit usually lasting a few days.

Up until 1982, the usual place of worship was the CWA Hall on Forrest St, with any special services (Installations, Confirmations) being held in the Anglican Church in Maritana Street. Since 1982, though, all worship services have been held at the aforementioned Anglican building (with thanks to their congregation).

Itinerant Pastor – H. J. Noack

The following is a précis of a letter dealing with his Kalgoorlie history.

“I have been going on the Line for 26 years. The first trip was in mid January when each day for a fortnight or so was blazing hot; there has been no such heat wave since! I felt like never again going on the Line. But the Lutherans (and other) migrants on the Line, for whom I had been sent out had been badly neglected ... so I promised to come again.

Next time was in May, indeed very different. On this trip the first baptism I conducted, of interest to the Kalgoorlie folk, was of Robert Hoppmann in Hughes. While further on in Coonana (some camps east of Kalgoorlie), the migrants asked me to stay longer, especially as their children needed to be taught. Since brother Alf Leinert cared for Kalgoorlie at this time from Northam, I decided to get my Welfare Car detached there on the forward trip and be there an extra day or so before being picked up for the return trip. So it was that I did not see Kalgoorlie for about 5 years.

When I came to Kalgoorlie again, I would walk from Parkeston (though, I often hitched a ride with one of the railway employees). I often spent time at the hospital seeing patients from the Line, then seeing anyone else I had time for.

Over the years, many from the Line shifted into Kalgoorlie, proving to be a great help to me. In the early days I would hire a taxi to visit people, but later I was often given lifts by members. Nevertheless from the time I borrowed a bike from Mrs. Werjutina I preferred to continue my ‘bike-tours’ each time I came.”

Retyped from history found in the church photo album from 1985

1985 - Present

Pastor Andy Kowald continued to visit once a month and the rest of the services were conducted by lay readers.

When Pastor Kowald left Esperance, Pastor Martin Freund moved into the manse in Esperance as an interim pastor during the call process. After 3 months he moved to Kalgoorlie-Boulder to become based here and travelling to Esperance once a month. This is the only time that St Paul's has had a pastor that visited Esperance rather than the other way around.

When Pastor Michael Mayer was installed in Esperance, Pastor Martin was installed as Assistant Pastor of the Parish to live and work in Boulder. Pastor Freund was battling with Parkinson's disease and yet he managed to conduct services, teach Scripture in Schools and spend much of his time visiting people hospital and other places. He was also an active member of the Ministers Fraternal.

In late 1994 Glenn and Karen Crouch started attending the church and as Glenn had previous preaching experience he was able to help Pastor Martin by becoming a lay preacher. Pastor Martin retired in early 1995 but remained a member of the church for while before moving to SA. At that time Tony Webb, Lyall Offe and Tom Larrison were lay readers.

After Pastor Martin left Pastor Michael Mayer started travelling up once a month to conduct services and take communion. Pastor Ron Buchold started in 2001 and continued this visiting schedule.

After Pastor Ron Buchold left the parish in 2002, St Paul's congregation requested permission from the WA District for Glenn Crouch to be allowed to conduct communion. During the time that Pastor Rodney Beh was interim pastor he was given permission to induct him into this role. On the same day the "new" altar was also blessed. The altar had been given to the church from the Northam church which had been sold.

Pastor Brian began in the parish in 2003 and visited St Paul's every 4 weeks for church services. Many fun times were spent around the BBQ or casserole tea getting to know everyone.

Since the Opening of the Church 1985 to Present

1992 – 1991	Pastor Andy Kowald lived in Esperance and visited Kalgoorlie
1991 – 1992	Pastor Martin Freund lived in Esperance and traveled up to Kalgoorlie on a regular basis
1992 – 1995	Pastor Martin Freund lived and served in Kalgoorlie
1992	Pastor Michael Mayer started in Esperance
1995 – present	Kalgoorlie served from Esperance
1995 – 2000	Pastor Michael Mayer
2001 – early 2002	Pastor Ron Buchold
Mid 2002	Interim Pastor Rodney Beh
2003 – 2007	Pastor Brian Keller