Anglicans and Lutherans sign historic covenant for Kangaroo Island

Anglicans and Lutherans on Kangaroo Island have formalised years of shared ministry with a Mutual Covenant, signed this week by the Archbishop of Adelaide, the Most Reverend Dr Bradly Billings, and the Bishop of the South Australiaâ??Northern Territory District of the Lutheran Church of Australia, Pastor Andrew Brook.

The covenant commits the Kangaroo Island Anglican Parish and the Kangaroo Island Lutheran Church to work together as a cooperating parish, extending eucharistic and pastoral hospitality to each otherâ??s members and worshipping together at St Albanâ??s Anglican Church, Kingscote.

A relationship years in the making

The agreement grows out of a longstanding partnership on the island. For some years, Anglicans and Lutherans have cooperated in worship, teaching, fellowship and pastoral care, and the two congregations decided it was time to put that cooperation into a formal document.

â??Over a number of years, the Lutheran and Anglican congregations on Kangaroo Island have been worshipping and working together,â?• Pastor Brook said. â??Up to this point theyâ??d been having services in each tradition week on week. I donâ??t know that anyone went to KI from either the Lutheran Church of Australia or the Diocese suggesting this should happen â?? I think it grew from KI themselves.â?•

The Archbishop of Adelaide, the Most Reverend Dr Bradly Billings, and the Bishop of the South Australiaâ??Northern Territory District of the Lutheran Church of Australia, Pastor Andrew Brook, sign the covenant on KI.

The Reverend Dr Mary Lewis, the Anglican Priest-in-Charge on Kangaroo Island, who was commissioned to the role in March 2025, said the covenant reflected years of close cooperation between the two churches.

â??For some years now the Anglicans and Lutherans on Kangaroo Island have been cooperating in worship, teaching, fellowship and pastoral care. We believe it is time for us to make a more formal agreement for working together as a cooperating parish,â?• Dr Lewis said.

â??We know that the Australian Lutherans and Anglicans have been building mutual arrangements nationally, as expressed in the document â??Common Groundâ??, and we believe that our coming together on Kangaroo Island can only bring glory to God, share the good news of Jesus and

consolidate the growth of Godâ??s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.â?•

Bishop Sophie Relf-Christopher with the Reverend Dr Mary Lewis. Bishop Sophie visited Kangaroo Island to see the cooperative ministry firsthand ahead of the signing.

Much of that groundwork has been laid by Dr Lewis and the local Lutheran pastor, Dean Zweck, who between them cover pastoral care for the islandâ??s Anglican, Lutheran and wider community. Pastor Zweck visits Kangaroo Island monthly and, in Dr Lewisâ??s words, is the islandâ??s go-to pastor when he is off the island.

Assistant Bishop Sophie Relf-Christopher visited Kangaroo Island last week to see the cooperative ministry firsthand ahead of the signing.

â??I could not be more thrilled for the faithful Christians of Kangaroo Island, who have demonstrated their practical resilience and faith once again through this covenant,â?• Bishop Sophioe said.

â??Congratulations to Reverend Mary Lewis and her Lutheran counterpart, Pastor Dean Zweck, who, with much encouragement from their people, have worked to put this in place over many months.

â??You can see from the photographs here of my recent visit how beautiful the island is, and how much God loves KI. What the images cannot convey is the warmth of the people and the fantastic ministry of

the Lutheran and Anglican Churches on the Island. Why not pop over and pay a visit to the island of rainbows?â?•

Building on national dialogue

The Kangaroo Island covenant draws on a broader cooperation between the two denominations. It cites Covenanting for Mutual Recognition and Reconciliation between the Anglican Church of Australia and the Lutheran Church of Australia â?? known as â??Common Groundâ?• â?? which affirms that the two churches â??stand in the continuity of apostolic faith and ministryâ?• and pledges them to â??work together to develop joint participation in mission and witnessâ?•.

St Albanâ??s, Kingscote, above, and St Columbaâ??s, Penneshaw, below

â??The thing that I really like about it is it begins with common ground, of which thereâ??s a lot,â?• Archbishop Billings said. â??And then it has that lovely paragraph about recognising each other as churches who stand in the continuity of apostolic faith and ministry.â?•

That national dialogue, conducted through the Australian Bishopsâ?? Protocols, has given local congregations like those on Kangaroo Island a framework for translating goodwill into practical arrangements.

What the covenant sets out

The Mutual Covenant runs to 10 clauses covering the practical realities of shared ministry. Anglican services at St Albanâ??s will be led according to Anglican liturgy under the oversight of the Archbishop of Adelaide, and Lutheran services according to Lutheran liturgy under the oversight of the equivalent Lutheran bishop, with offertory proceeds going to the denomination of the presiding minister.

One of Kangaroo Islandâ??s residents takes in the sunshine while the sunset below shows off how much God loves KI.

The Lutheran congregation will contribute an agreed annual payment towards the upkeep of St Albanâ??s and Lutheran members will take part in rostered cleaning and working bees, while the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide, as landowner, remains responsible for property insurance and maintenance oversight. Both congregations will carry public liability insurance, and each denomination remains responsible for safe ministry compliance for its own leaders.

The covenant also sets out a staged dispute resolution process, beginning with direct discussion between the Anglican priest and Lutheran pastor and escalating, if needed, to the Anglican Archbishop and the Lutheran District Bishop.

The agreement stands for three years from the date of signing, after which it is open to review and renewal.

â??My hope is continued presence, and that people living on the island, or visiting, have the ability to attend a service of worship in either tradition, Anglican or Lutheran,â?• Archbishop Billings said.

More information on the Kangaroo Island Anglican Parish is available at https://kangarooisland.org.au/listing/ki-anglican-church/

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