

Chapter 1 – The Lutheran Foundation

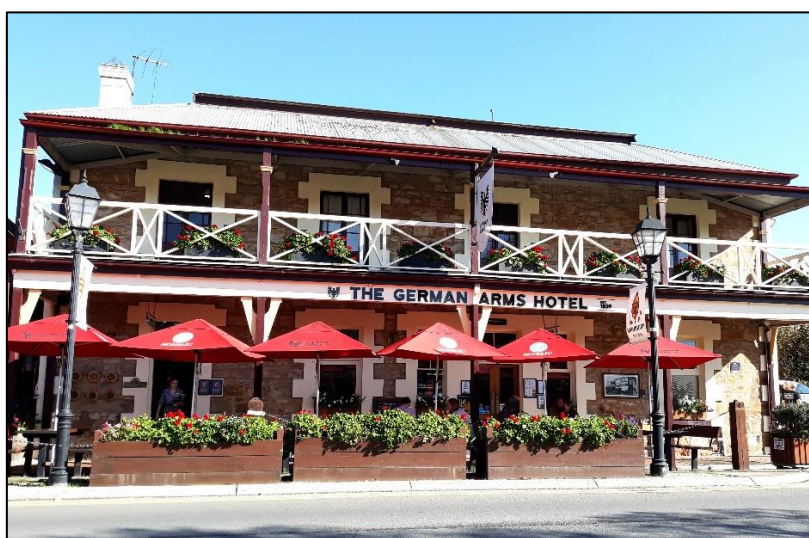
*We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed;
perplexed, but not in despair;
persecuted, but not abandoned;
struck down, but not destroyed.*

2 Corinthians 4:8-9

St Paul's Lutheran Homes in Hahndorf can easily be traced to the founding families and the two Lutheran churches in Hahndorf – St Paul's and St Michael's. Many of the original Board members who volunteered so readily to assist, first in the construction of the Independent Living Units (ILU), and then the Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF), are direct descendants of those founding families. Many of the residents, friends and volunteers are also descendants. For this reason alone, if for no other, there is great value in knowing and preserving the history of the Homes.

Although several ships carried Lutheran passengers to South Australia around the year 1838, Hahndorf is specifically named after Captain Hahn who not only transported the early settlers in his ship, the *Zebra*, but went far above and beyond his duties to help the new Lutherans to be supplied with urgent necessities, acquire land, and establish a livelihood. The name Hahndorf is a combination of Captain Hahn's name and the German word "dorf," which means village.

If you have ever walked the streets of Hahndorf, you will notice that in one way or another, most of the Hahndorf community still remembers and honours Captain Hahn's immense service, and pays tribute to the founding families who established this small town. Their memories are preserved via street names, the town layout, the preservation of German architecture, culture, food, music, plaques, and historical information in public places.



*The German Arms Hotel located at 69 the Main Street, Hahndorf SA 5245.
Photo taken by the author in 2023.*

A good example of this enduring heritage is the German Arms Hotel (see photo previous page), which serves as a haven for German food, music, and rich cultural experiences. Adorning the walls of this establishment are captivating displays of historical photographs accompanied by informative narratives. Originally established as a modest hostelry across the street at 84 Main Street in 1839, the German Arms Hotel became the first licensed hotel in Hahndorf. In the early 1860s, the present two-story stone and brick building was erected on its current site, marking the transition of the hotel business to its new premises.

In 1916 the hotel's name changed to Hahndorf Hotel and a year later, when Hahndorf was renamed Ambleside, it became the Ambleside Hotel. The business reverted to its original name in 1976, following renovations.

During the First and Second World Wars there was a high level of anti-German sentiment in Australia, which resulted in some Prussian families changing their names to Anglo-Saxon names. This also included some place names of German language origin that were changed to Anglo-Saxon names. As an example, Hahndorf was renamed to "Ambleside" in 1917. However, it reverted back to "Hahndorf" in 1935 as part of South Australia's centenary celebration, most probably because Captain Hahn always stressed that he was Danish. It was declared a State Heritage Area on 26 August 1988.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of St. Paul's Lutheran Homes in Hahndorf and appreciate how the Lutheran faith profoundly influenced the organization as a Christian institution, we must delve into the history of the pioneer families who laid the Lutheran foundation in Hahndorf, explore the origins of the Lutheran faith itself, and grasp the essence of being a Lutheran.

Martin Luther and the Reformation



The Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) understands itself to be a community of faith within the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church founded by Jesus Christ.

Along with all other Lutheran churches, the LCA traces its roots directly to a 16th century movement for renewal of the church known as the Reformation. Martin Luther was an Augustinian monk assigned to lecture in biblical theology at the University of Wittenberg in Germany. Even though he lived the life of a

conscientious monk, Luther felt that he was not able to please God. However, as he studied the Bible, he developed an understanding that its central message was about God's overwhelming love for people in Christ.

Key teachings of the Bible include that people are saved by God's grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, and not by their own efforts to please God. Martin Luther, realising this fundamental biblical fact, began protesting against Catholic Church practices, which he believed gave people the impression they must contribute to their salvation. Luther

taught that good works do not earn us salvation, rather, that faith active in love is fruitful in a good life and good works.

Luther's teachings, sermons and writings inspired others to join him in working for reform of the church. Beginning at Wittenberg, evangelical reform spread to many areas of Northern Europe, especially in Germany and the Nordic countries. In 1530, Lutheran leaders were summoned to give an account of their faith before the emperor at the Diet of Augsburg in Germany.

The confession of Christian faith they presented to the emperor is known as the "Augsburg Confession", and this has become the charter of Lutheran churches all around the world. As the movement for reform spread, other leaders came to the fore, and sadly divisions appeared among them. Those who followed Luther were nicknamed 'Lutherans'. Luther himself would have preferred them simply to be called 'Christians', but eventually the name was adopted. Today, around 74 million people call themselves 'Lutheran'.

The Early Lutheran Church

After the Reformation, the Lutheran church went through times of internal dissension and was beset by external perils of various kinds, culminating in the horror of the Thirty Years War fought in Central Europe (1618-1648). In these years, Lutheranism had to define and defend itself, and this is called the period of orthodoxy. Eventually, it was agreed that people should basically follow their leaders: if the Duke is Catholic, his people should be too; if the Prince is Lutheran, his people should follow him. Following this pattern, various regional churches developed in Germany, whereas in the Nordic sphere, entire nations followed their rulers in becoming Lutheran.

When northern Europeans began to be involved in colonial expansion, those from a Lutheran background took their faith with them and over a period of time established new Lutheran churches. German and Nordic Lutherans settled in the "new world" of the Americas, and later in countries such as South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.

A movement for renewal in the life of the church called pietism was the impetus for missions both within Europe and abroad. Lutheran missionaries took their evangelical faith to different parts of the world such as India, Asia, Africa, Madagascar, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea. Over time, these missions grew up to become young, independent, Lutheran churches with indigenous leaders.

The faith communities that grew out of the Lutheran movement are often called evangelical Lutheran churches. The word 'evangelical' shows that they are committed to preaching, teaching, and living out the gospel of Christ. The core beliefs of the evangelical Lutheran churches are:

- We believe in one God. We share the belief of all Christians that the one true God has made himself known as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- We believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus is Lord and Saviour. Jesus Christ is the eternal second person of the Trinity – God incarnate, through whom everything was made.

Fully divine and fully human. By his life, death, and resurrection, God's plan of salvation is accomplished for us. This is His grace.

- We believe God's forgiveness is a gift. Because of sin's power over us, we are unable to save ourselves. By the power of the cross, Jesus offers His forgiveness to everyone as a gift. We don't have to earn God's forgiveness or pay for it.
- We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are divinely inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God and the authority that decides what we believe and how we live. The Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit and lead us to experience the living Word of God, Jesus Christ our Lord. We believe that the good news about Jesus is the key to the whole Bible.

In July 1838 a group of devout Lutherans led by Pastor August Ludwig Christian Kavel left Prussia because of religious persecution and settled in the new colony of South Australia. A month before their arrival, other Lutheran missionaries arrived at the same place to begin work among the Indigenous Australian people. These two events mark the beginning of the Lutheran story in Australia.

The Persecution of the Lutherans



For centuries, a vast stretch of land now forming the northern portion of neighbouring nations Germany and Poland was known as the Kingdom of Prussia. On 27 September 1817, its very religious King Friedrich Wilhelm III, issued a cabinet order expressing his desire to unite the numerically small Reformed Church (to which he belonged) with the Lutheran Church of the majority of his subjects. A small, scattered, but determined group of Lutherans refused to obey, and became known as Old Lutherans.

In 1821 the King, wanting one Church government which was to be a Department of State, again attempted to force his "Order of Service" on all congregations.

The Old Lutherans, who were resistant to the new "Union Church" that the King desired, now had to worship secretly inside private homes, barns, or outdoors in deep forests. Bands of foot troops and light cavalry constantly combed the most restless areas of the Prussian countryside, and as focused searches moved on, local civilians, who were chosen at random, had to make their own homes available to quarter these forces. Wherever caught, worshipping Old Lutherans were surrounded and summarily dealt with. Records show that some persons, including women, were brutally beaten at whim on the spot before being released. Despite strenuous protests, the Prussian Government refused to relent and for some six years, daily existence continued to be unbearably hard for the Old Lutherans.

The Prussian King, realising he was not gaining control, decided to enforce his decrees even further to the extent of severely punishing those who opposed the rules regarding

the Union Church. In 1830 the Lutheran objectors, the 'Old Lutherans', were branded as 'separatists' by the King. In the following year, pastors who refused to use the new liturgy provided by the King were guilty of 'flagrant disobedience to the Crown'. As a result, they could be treated as criminals and could be subject to harsh punishment. Such pastors, when tracked down by law enforcements, were removed from office. Pastors and laypeople who continued to declare that they were Lutheran were imprisoned.

In 1834 a cabinet order was issued with the following rules which were put into effect with considerable rigour:

Persons conducting religious services in their homes for more people than their immediate family were to be subject to a fine;

The publication of religious tracts was to be restricted;

The administration of ministerial acts by suspended ministers or by laymen was to be prohibited and offenders were to be fined;

All Protestant parents were to send their children to public school; no child could secure a work permit unless he could produce, as evidence of having completed the common school, a certificate of confirmation from a minister of the Evangelical Church.

Fines were imposed on laymen for having their children baptised by Lutheran pastors – and in some cases the children had to be re-baptised by a Union Church pastor.

Pastors were imprisoned because they did not follow the rules. Some laymen lost all their worldly goods.

Eventually and most unwillingly, for they dearly loved their native land, the Old Lutherans set their thoughts on emigration. North America and Russia were considered at first. However, on an investigative visit to Hamburg in 1836, Pastor Kavel (who had already helped and encouraged the Old Lutherans over a period of years) heard from the city's helpful chief of police about the British colony of South Australia in the process of being founded, where all settlers would enjoy freedom of religious belief. Because South Australia guaranteed the one thing which the persecuted Old Lutherans so ardently desired, Pastor Kavel inspired his large congregation to emigrate there, despite knowing little else about the place himself.

It is interesting to note that Hahndorf's founding pioneers belonged to one of the most stubborn cores of resistance to the Union Church. These people were mostly of mixed German-Slavic ancestry, warm-hearted and tolerant, greatly devoted to their homes and family, and living a devout Christian faith. Their homeland was a clutch of small villages covering the junction of the three Prussian provinces of Brandenburg, Silesia and Posen, some 200 kilometres south-east of Berlin, at the point where the usually slow-moving Oder River swings sharply west to avoid steep granite cliffs on its way north to the Baltic Sea.



Pastor Kavel departed for London to persuade George Fife Angas (left), the astute but compassionate Baptist Christian businessman and Chairperson of the South Australia Company, which had charge of the arrangements for the new settlement, to induce the promoters to lend his flock the money to make the journey.

No doubt thrilled at the prospect of gaining immediate valuable skilled labour for their massive project, Angas and his backers agreed, and Pastor Kavel remained in England until the emigration, ministering to Germans living near the London docks and perfecting his command of English.

Image of George Fife Angas. Photo from the State Library of SA [B 1257].

Little did the faithful pastor imagine the amount of time which would pass until he was re-united with his congregation.

A number of families in Pastor Kavel's congregation split permanently over who would emigrate and who would remain. In a mix of overwhelming excitement and frustrations, those people departing quickly had to dispose of their real estate and most of their belongings, and procure passports from a most reluctant Prussian Government which placed daunting obstacles in their path. The ships which George Fife Angas and his company despatched to Hamburg to pick up their passengers on the arranged date in 1836 had to return empty to England because the Prussian authorities refused to grant the necessary passports. The South Australia Company lost a great deal of money as a result. Most of the would-be emigrants, now completely distraught, were forced both to live off precious meagre capital which dwindled quickly, and endure cruel taunts from their neighbours who were staying put.

Two more years passed! At last, King Friedrich Wilhelm III and his government could wrangle no longer. The Prussian bureaucrats were becoming more and more a national and international laughingstock. Passports were issued and the emigrants given a mere two months to get out of Prussia. Somehow, Pastor Kavel and his flock persuaded George Fife Angas to lend them their passage money out of his own resources: a mighty gesture which immediately strained his finances severely. The last-minute flurry of preparations for departure must have tested already exhausted, stout hearts to the limit yet again.

Pastor Kavel's congregation were trailblazers. Soon other pastors were assisting their congregation to emigrate. Pastor Krause's flock bound in several groups for North America, and were able to leave during 1839. Pastor Fritzsche's followers departed for South Australia in 1841.

Friedrich Wilhelm III died in 1840 and his more understanding son, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, came to the throne. Persecution of Old Lutherans ceased, but the Prussians' burning interest to emigrate to South Australia and neighbouring colonies, for reasons other than religious, continued to swell for some forty years, before dropping away suddenly.

Journey to the End of the World



It was the year 1838 and the river port town of Altona still belonged to Denmark. In the harbour the 3-masted *Zebra* was being loaded. Provisions were to last 6 months for a journey to the end of the world: to Adelaide in South Australia. Thirty-four-year-old Captain Dirk Meinerts Hahn from Westerland had the command.

The *Zebra* was the third ship to carry Prussian Lutherans to South Australia. The first two, the *Prince George* and the *Bengalee*, arrived in November 1838. The *Zebra* arrived in late December 1838, while the *Catherina* reached Port Misery

Image of Captain Dirk Meinerts Hahn. Photo from the Lutheran Archives SA [P00953 01875].

(an early name for Port Adelaide) in January 1839. Most of these emigrants were the founders and settlers of Hahndorf. To think in 1770, almost 70 years earlier, James Cook sailed the Endeavour into Botany Bay.

The following are short extracts from Captain Hahn's journal, from the book: "Emigrants to Hahndorf – A Remarkable Voyage' 1838" by Martin Buchhorn, Frank Rainer Huck, and Lee Kersten. Permission to re-print here has been given by the Lutheran Church of Australia, who now own the copyright.



*On 22 June 1838 we sailed from the Elbe [River] to the city of Hamburg in our ship, the **Zebra**. While the ship was being unloaded, we were engaged in bidding for various cargoes, the most favourable of which seemed to be one for Arkhangelsk. I felt inclined to take this. By chance we also had the possibility of a cargo of emigrants to Adelaide in South Australia.*

Above is Captain Hahn's ship, the "Zebra". Photo from the State Library of SA [B17899].

This news hit me like a shower of cold rain. Remembering what difficulty and trouble I had experienced when I had to take a similar load only as far as New York, I immediately said: 'If the people are responsible for getting their own food and there is someone in charge of them, so that I don't have to have anything to do with them except get them to their destination, then I won't say no to the task'. But I still drew the attention of Mr Dede, the ship's owner, to the fact that a chronometer and a considerable number of charts and books would be necessary for this voyage.

Time was short, so we had to decide that same day whether we would accept the cargo or not.

I had never in my whole life heard the name of this place, Adelaide. It was impossible to agree to take the cargo without at least knowing whether we could in fact get there.

Schröder, the broker through whose agency this cargo was being chartered, immediately offered to accompany me on board the **Prince George**, the English ship that was also to go to Adelaide. I wanted to ask what sort of place it was and to look at the charts showing its position. The captain of the **Prince George** was very willing to tell me everything he knew about it, and he showed me his charts.

On 28 July 1838 the emigrants came on board, 199 souls in number. They had to emigrate from Prussia because of their faith, and were indeed very religious. There was an address as well as prayers and hymns every morning and evening. The sound of their beautiful singing could be heard across the harbour. Everyone who heard them testified to their rare gift for song. This led so many people of high and lower social standing to come on board every evening that the channels were often full and there was scarcely any room left on the deck. Anyone who had even a passing acquaintance with me asked to be allowed on board, so that on several occasions we were 28 people in the cabin. While we were still in the harbour, two children died and were buried in the Altona paupers' graveyard.

Now I will describe the condition of our passengers, whose situation indeed called for compassion. We had departed from the Elbe with 26 people sick. Sea-sickness laid low the rest as well, with the exception of two men of advanced years. Most recovered very slowly, for the older ones among them, having all their lives until now eaten nothing but the food of their native region, which consisted chiefly of potatoes and milk, could not adjust to the ship's food. The tropics were very hard for them to endure. The heat was terrible, especially inside the ship with so many people crowded together there. It was so hot that someone showed me a packet of pieces of sealing wax which had been wrapped up in paper in a chest and had melted together into one lump. There were sick people everywhere. The amount of sickness appeared to increase every day. Deaths occurred more and more frequently too, so that the eighth body had to be put overboard on 24 September. The doctor explained that the sickness raging among these folk was typhus or nerve fever.

But I could not sufficiently admire their steadfastness in remaining true to their faith after eight years of daily persecution, even when they couldn't meet together as a congregation, after their preachers had been driven away from them. If they were discovered, they were penalised with heavy fines. Yet all they had done was that one of them who felt inspired would stand up and address those present. This was also what happened on board, and they certainly did not deviate from Lutheran doctrine when they did so. These people had been falsely labelled religious bigots and mystics in Hamburg. They had gone on journeys of some miles into woods to receive Holy Communion from their pastors, who were fugitives wandering about from place to place. Yes, fathers often had to baptise their children themselves for lack of pastors.

In spite of all this, they were extremely good-natured. They showed me several copies of petitions to the King of Prussia for free exercise of their religion. These were composed in such terms that today one can scarcely believe that their requests were not granted. They were willing to give up their old churches and schools and build new ones for themselves.

They were also willing to hand over to the Calvinists the considerable capital that belonged to the congregation in addition to their church, along with the church buildings. They would even have agreed to be banished to a distant part of Prussia. But in spite of all this, all their requests and representations were in vain. Finally, they chose two deputies from their group who were to appear before the King to put these requests to him. But they were turned away because the King was not willing to grant them an audience.

Then, two years ago, they did get permission to emigrate, and many then sold their belongings. However, before they could depart, this permission was withdrawn. The people then had to use up most of the money they had realised because they had no work; it was only two years later that permission to emigrate was finally granted. These events had plunged many of them into great poverty. Nevertheless, I often heard them intercede in their evening prayers for the King of Prussia, that God would not punish him for his treatment of them but that the King should come to understand how unjustly he had dealt with them, so that he would not die in his sins; if God only forgave him these sins, they would be reconciled to him in their hearts. I was dumbfounded by this idea, but I have already said that it is my intention only to describe the events in such fashion as I experienced them, and not to make judgments about them.

But even a stone would have felt pity at the sight of a whole deck full of poor people on their knees, all united in beseeching God's blessing and assistance in their undertaking. How often have I heard in their prayers the words: 'We have not been led to this action by desire to see a foreign part of the world, nor by the vain desire for riches, but it is belief in You alone, O God, and Your holy Word that had made it necessary for us to take this step. And so lead us to a place in Your creation, where we can live and preach Your holy Word in its truth and purity.'

At midday on 27 December, amid cries of joy from the passengers, we sighted 'Kangaroo Island'. We reached Investigator Strait in the evening. On the following day we sailed up St Vincent's Gulf. At midday we saw a couple of ships lying at anchor. Consoled by the knowledge that we were not after all the only ones who had come to that shore, we set course toward them and anchored in their vicinity. That was in Holdfast Bay, at two in the afternoon, on 28 December, after a voyage of 129 days.

*On the **Zebra** we were flying the first foreign flag on the shore of this new colony, which drew the pleased attention of many educated English colonists. And so a whole company of distinguished persons came on board on the day after our arrival. They gave us a friendly welcome and asked permission to go down between decks to see the passengers and our arrangements, which I was pleased to show them. Admittedly, 11 people had died during the voyage, six adults and five children, but the rest, 187 souls in number, were all alive and blooming with health. It happened to be a Sunday, so the people in their usual way were very neatly dressed. The steerage was spick-and-span. The most complete order reigned among them, and at one gesture from me there was not a sound as these gentlemen went through the steerage quarters. Those of them who were asked a question, gave a modest answer; in short, I saw that the colonists were extremely pleased with these people.*

When we came up on deck again, these gentlemen could not find words enough to express their satisfaction with the appearance of our passengers and with their cleanliness and tidiness.

After we had arrived in the harbour, many distinguished people came to the Port to see our emigrants. I had many requests every day for workmen, farmhands, labourers, servant girls - but since my passengers, as earlier mentioned, had emigrated for the sake of their faith, they did not wish to be separated. They wanted to form their own congregation if only they were granted a plot of land on which they could earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.



*Above is an image of **HMS Buffalo** anchored in Holdfast Bay, SA on 28 December 1836.*

Photo courtesy of:

*© 2007 Photographic Art Gallery **website:** www.Photographicartgallery.com.au
From the publication "Taking Possession, a Saga of the Great South Land" by
Elynor Frances Olijnyk, illustrated by maritime artist, John Sheard Grafton.*

This image perfectly illustrates what the scene might have looked like two years later when Captain Hahn anchored the **Zebra** at Holdfast Bay at 2pm on 28 December 1838.

The Promised Land

Even though the **Zebra** arrived on 28 December, it had to anchor and wait due to low tide. The passengers were finally able to disembark on 2 January 1839, when the ship entered Port Adelaide. At last, after 84 days of not sighting land, the harbour was more than welcoming. It is interesting to note that the Colony of South Australia was very young at that time; just two years earlier people celebrated the Proclamation of South Australia.

After a few weeks the Prussian migrants made their way from Port Adelaide, better known at that time as Port Misery, to their promised land. They carried most of their belongings on their own backs or in hastily made carts drawn by themselves. The hiring of bullocks was beyond the means of the majority of them. By May 1839 all had made the trip to Hahndorf successfully, where a town had been surveyed and land allotted to each family.

On arrival they looked in astonishment at the luxuriant vegetation. Now the real hard work began. Land had to be cleared, vegetables and crops sown, cattle broken in, and cows milked. At the same time, shelter had to be provided from the cold nights. These first houses were made of any material at hand. At the same time, they had to get used to the climatic conditions, so different from their native country, which they had left.

Their first winter in the Mount Lofty Ranges was far from what they had expected. Food was often lacking and many went without at times. Some even died of hunger. Eventually the new migrants managed to produce a surplus of farm products which were sold in Adelaide by their women.

They walked all the way through the Ranges to the Adelaide Town in the hope of selling their produce to pay off their husbands' or fathers' loans, or to buy more land. Years later some of these women would walk once a week to Coromandel Valley where secure factory work was available. The trail from Hahndorf to Adelaide which these women faithfully traced has been re-established for modern walkers as *The Pioneer Women's Trail*.

Within five years the migrants had established themselves, earning the respect of most of their neighbours. Population had increased to just over 250 and the town had a large number of cattle and 12 horses. Land under cultivation had also increased with 40 acres set to potatoes and vegetables, and 80 acres with wheat.

They had a mill worked by bullocks, a general store, an inn, a blacksmith, a pair of wood choppers, several carpenters, and a number of cobblers. In The South Australian newspaper dated 15 May 1844 it was reported that 'the men tan their own leather and the women card and spin wool and knit their own stockings'. In order that no opportunity may be neglected of improving their circumstances, those of the able-bodied among them who could be spared from home, found employment with the neighbouring farmers and settlers in the capacity of shepherds, labourers or servants.



*Photo of a garden at the rear of the Union Hotel at Hahndorf. Bill Paech is centre.
c. 1912. Photo from the State Library of SA [B16980].*



*Bringing a load to the old Mill at Hahndorf. On the cart from left to right are Heinrich Thiele, Gottlieb
Jaensch and Bill Jaensch, c. 1901. Photo from the State Library of SA [B16977].*

By the early 1850's many of the original families had moved away to improve their prospects. Some had moved to Klemzig, whereas others had settled at Lobethal or in the Barossa Valley. They looked for more and better farming land outside Hahndorf. In the town itself, the early primitive buildings were gradually replaced by stone structures of the traditional German fachwerk style. Many of the early settlers found their final place of rest in one of the Hahndorf cemeteries.

Although life was still hard, the migrants were now working for themselves and looking to the future with confidence. Today Hahndorf is no longer just a German settlement; it has grown into a multi-cultural community and one of South Australia's top tourist attractions. There is still evidence of the early days though, even in the main street.

There are several of the original buildings still standing including the Old Mill built in 1864, St Michael's Lutheran Church built in 1859, replacing the original pug building dating from 1840, and the Hahndorf Academy. The Academy was built in 1857 and was later used as a college, dentist room, hospital, betting shop and council chambers.

The Original Inhabitants of the Mt Lofty Ranges

To fully understand and appreciate the Lutheran story in Hahndorf, we must note that before the arrival of the first white settlers and later the missionaries, which were followed by the persecuted Lutherans, the Peramangk Aboriginal people and other Indigenous nations inhabited the Adelaide Hills.

The Peramangk traditional lands were primarily located in the Mount Lofty Ranges and also in the southern stretches of the Fleurieu Peninsula. The Peramangk people were often referred to as the 'Mount Barker tribe' by the local white settlers because their numbers were noted to be greater around the Mount Barker summit. However, Peramangk country extended from the Barossa Valley in the north, south to Myponga, east to Strathalbyn and west to Gulf St Vincent.

The site chosen by the Lutherans for the village of Hahndorf happened to be a favourite summer camping place for the Peramangk people. The Indigenous people called this place '*Bukartilla*' (in reference to the swimming hole). However, this site was unsuited for the Peramangk people to use year-round. During winter, chill winds often howled relentlessly through this open, park-like countryside. Such exposed territory was also regularly prone to sudden, uncontrolled floods from a series of watercourses which eventually joined in several places near what is now Hahndorf's main street, and then emptied out as a single volume of water into the Onkaparinga River several kilometres further west.

There are few records of conflict between the Peramangk people and the Lutherans. On the contrary, the Peramangk are recorded as being wise caretakers of the land and great hunters, showing the settlers how to catch possums and where to find edible roots and leaves. Captain Hahn recorded in his journal many of his observations regarding the Peramangk, including the occasions where they deliberately set large areas on fire with perfect control as part of their regular land management practices.

In 1844, there is recorded a battle between the Peramangk people of the ranges and the Moop-pol-tha-wong from the Murray and Encounter Bay regions. This occurred in the vicinity of Nixon's Mill at Hahndorf and involved some 2000 warriors. Intervention by the Mill owner and two other European men by attempting to reason with the Indigenous leaders failed. The episode was only ended when European mounted troopers with drawn swords arrived.

The following are short extracts from Captain Hahn's journal, from the book: "Emigrants to Hahndorf – A Remarkable Voyage' 1838" by Martin Buchhorn, Frank Rainer Huck, and Lee Kersten. Permission to re-print here given by the Lutheran Church of Australia, who now own the copyright.

Description of the Hahndorf site: *My first glance fell on beautifully formed trees, which nature had planted there as with the hands of a gardener – the beautiful long grass wet with dew coloured the ground a lovely green; from the several big trees standing majestically, wild birds flitted from branch to branch, cockatoos, parrots, and parakeets etc warbling their varied tones.*

Description of Indigenous people: *A few of them might have a kangaroo skin wrapped around them to cover their nakedness. Smallpox must often rage among them as most carry thick scars from it. I saw there a jacket which had been put together only from the skins of small opossums by an aboriginal woman. It was so beautifully sewn that few European women could do better. If you consider the tools with which the job was done, it deserves greater admiration. The thread had been made from kangaroo gut. A small bone sharpened to a point at one end served instead of a needle.*

These people seem very good-natured, at least those living in the region of the Onkaparinga River. The general opinion is that beyond the Murray they are less well-disposed. If they are not provoked, they don't harm any human being.

As time went on, many of the Indigenous people vanished from the Mount Lofty Ranges and many people today wonder what has happened to them. In the book *Peramangk: A Social History of the Aboriginal People of the Southern Mount Lofty Ranges* written by Paul Simpson, the author indicates that when the first British settlers arrived in 1836, the Peramangk were already suffering from the aftermath of disease and bad relations with visiting sealers and whalers. In early 1837 it was apparent to the Peramangk people that Europeans were here to stay. At first, they treated Europeans like their own people, but soon conflicts over food, land, women, and laws saw the Peramangk people being treated as strangers in their own lands.

Prior to official settlement of South Australia in 1836, the British government had passed laws stating that Aboriginal lands in South Australia officially belonged to no one and were thus open for sale and settlement.

Some reserves were allocated for Aboriginal people near Adelaide and also in parts of the Ranges. There were reserves near Paris Creek between Meadows and Strathalbyn, one at Macclesfield and another between Eden Valley and Angaston. However, the size of the

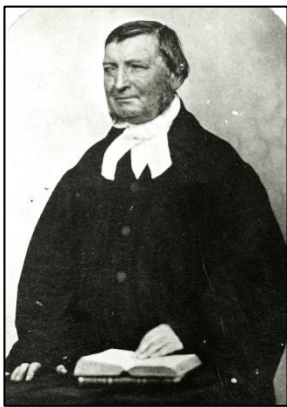
land was too small for survival by hunting and gathering. Expecting Aboriginal people to undertake European-style farming was, in retrospect, inappropriate. In most cases the reserves were taken back again by the government.

By the mid-1840's, Peramangk elders realised that their lives were never going back to the old ways. Many of them had died from European disease. With their land stolen and game animals gone, they were unable to practise their burning or hunting. Marriage and other ceremonies could not be performed. Peramangk people began to rely on European handouts for food, blankets, and clothing. They had to often beg as they were now treated as thieves, beggars, trespassers, and slaves in the land that was once their own.

Government policy set up ration depots, schools were run by missionaries and church missions became refuges to which Peramangk survivors fled. Peramangk people worked as servants, scrub cutters, shepherds, shearers, and labourers. When their family systems broke down, they moved to where their cousins in other groups lived and to where government handouts and protection were available. The ration depot at Moorundie (near Blanchetown) and missions at Matco (Mannum), Adelaide, Point McLeay, Poonindie, Point Pearce and Wellington held mixed groups as diverse as Meru, Ngadjuri, Kurna, Peramangk, Ngarrindjeri, Tatiara and Nauo survivors. By the end of the century many Aboriginal people had lost their identities, language, culture, and land.

In recent decades, there have been moves to identify Peramangk descendants through genealogy and through outreach to those who identify as Peramangk. As of late Adelaide Hills schools, churches and local councils hold frequent 'Welcome to Country' ceremonies hosted by Peramangk elders and artists.

The Feud of the Century



In the early days after arrival to South Australia, Pastor Kavel ministered in various parts of the state including Klemzig, Glen Osmond, Hahndorf, and the Barossa Valley. Since the Hahndorf settlement was not easy for Pastor Kavel to visit regularly, the arrival of another Lutheran Pastor by the name of Fritzsche was very welcome. It was soon arranged that Pastor Fritzsche should serve the southern settlement of Lutherans whilst Pastor Kavel served the northern.

Image of Pastor August Ludwig Christian Kavel. Photo from the Lutheran Archives SA [P01724 03286].

All was well for some years. Pastor Gotthard Daniel Fritzsche was a theologian of some standing in his own right, with works respected in Lutheran circles far beyond Australia; Pastor Kavel tended towards chiliastic doctrines then fashionable in Lutheran thought. From their beginnings, the Prussian settlements had minor feuds on questions of orthodoxy; at the Bethany Synod in 1846 however, Pastor Kavel and Pastor Fritzsche quarrelled irreconcilably over doctrinal issues and severed organisational ties.

The split between Pastor Kavel and Pastor Fritzsche resulted in two separate synods, which, after gathering in Lutheran bodies elsewhere in Australia, later became the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia.

The Church, placed in the 'vacuum of a new land' with no final authority, reacted in a way which today is hard for us to understand. The Church dealt with this major issue by enforcing discipline in a most rigid manner and withholding Holy Communion from erring members. Excommunication was used as a final resort.

Chiliasm crept into the Hahndorf Lutheran church and was seen as the beginning of the discord, which quickly turned into a serious problem.

Chiliasm refers to a belief or doctrine that suggests a future golden age or utopian society. It is often associated with the concept of a thousand-year reign of peace and prosperity, sometimes referred to as "Millennialism."

Author's note: *There were other contributing factors which caused the split, for a deeper understanding please read Appendix B: History of the Lutheran Church of Australia.*

In 1847 the Synod met again, this time in Hahndorf. At this Synod a new rule was introduced: marriage to anti-chiliasts was forbidden! This too, caused unrest.

Following the rift, Pastor Fritzsche and Pastor Kavel went their separate ways causing each member of the congregation heartache because now there was a need to choose whom they will follow. Huge decisions had to be made which in turn caused rifts between friends as well as family members. August Thomas, one of Hahndorf's pioneer settlers became so troubled that he hung himself in his stable.

This division had travelled far and wide, and affected other Lutheran churches. Efforts were made many times to bring unity. Individual agreements were made by the Evangelical Lutheran Church Australia and the United Evangelical Church Australia. This was prior to Synod in October 1966 where the constituting of the Lutheran church Australia took place. This then brought St Michael's Lutheran church Hahndorf and St Paul's Lutheran Church as well as other Lutheran congregations under the one church, Lutheran Church Australia.

From this point forth the rift between the St Michael's Lutheran Church Hahndorf and St Paul's Lutheran Church Hahndorf was considered healed. It only took 120 years!

St. Michael's – Oldest Lutheran Congregation In Australia

The early Hahndorf Lutheran congregation was officially established on Sunday 3 March 1839. The congregation initially worshipped under an enormous hollow gum tree by the creek, or in wet weather, jammed into a stockman's hut nearby. This hut, belonging to a cattle station nearby, became the church, school, and manse. Pastor Kavel used it as his home during his visits every six weeks from his base at Klemzig.

In 1840, the pioneers built their first church which was dedicated by Pastor Kavel. It was simply known as the "Hahndorf Lutheran Church". The church was erected on the spot of

the present Saint Michael's church building and stood inside the walls of the current church.

It was constructed by Johann Georg Boehm in the 'fachwerk' style with clay infill. The building had a wooden framework, probably redgum, with gaps filled in with wooden pegs wrapped with a clay and straw mixture. This was smoothed off and whitewashed every year as a protection against the weather. The roof was of wooden shingles. It doubled as a schoolroom and meeting hall to accommodate a hundred people. In the beginning both Kavel and Fritzsche ministered from there.

However, when the congregation officially split in 1846 due to doctrinal differences, Pastor Fritzsche and his followers retained the original church property while the followers of Pastor Kavel built a small brick church at the southern end of Hahndorf (Windsor Avenue) which became the home of St Paul's United Evangelical Lutheran Congregation.

By 1857 Pastor Fritzsche's congregation had grown considerably due to continued influx of new Lutheran to Hahndorf. The old mud-walled church had become so dilapidated that it was decided to build a new one. It was to be erected of hardstone with brick corners around the existing church which would be demolished when the new structure neared completion.

The newly built Lutheran church was named after St. Michael, as the foundation stone was laid on St. Michael's Day, 29 September 1858. The new church was dedicated on 3 July 1859.

There were few physical changes at the church until 1908, when the vestry was rebuilt. In 1931, a porch was added.



St Michael's Lutheran Church c. 1900. Photo from the State Library of SA [B18230].

To celebrate the centenary of the arrival of the **Prince George**, two farmers, Benno and Oscar Nitschke built the belltower in time for the dedication on 20 November 1938. While the interior of the church was being renovated, electricity replaced gas lighting.

A brand new bell was purchased from America. The old one had been cast from weapons used during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 that led to the formation of the German nation after many centuries of loose alliances between Germanic states. One of several ordered by Germany's first Prime Minister, Otto von Bismarck, to be presented to Lutheran churches in Europe, this bell had somehow found its way to Hahndorf.

In 1946 it was given to the new Lutheran school built opposite the church by St. Michael's congregation. It proved irresistible to successive generations of mischievous boys at the school who loved to annoy the villagers by attaching a billygoat to the bell's rope at midnight.

St Michael's Cemetery

In the early days members of the congregation who died were buried in the church cemetery in the church grounds. This arrangement continued until 1885 when the cemetery was permanently closed due to an outbreak of typhoid fever. A new cemetery was opened just out of the town. In the 1950's the congregation levelled most of the area which forms the present car park and placed the names of those known to be buried in the church cemetery on bronze plaques which were fixed to the new memorial arch in 1959. A few graves in relatively good condition were preserved, the earliest date on a tombstone being 1839.



Tombstone still preserved at St Michael's Church cemetery. Photo taken by the author in 2023.



Photo of St Michael's Lutheran Church taken by the author in 2022.

In 2008 the Congregation approved plans for redevelopment. The opening of the new St Michael's Lutheran church complex in Hahndorf was led by Pastor Robert Voigt, the President of the S.A. – N.T. District, on 18 January 2009.







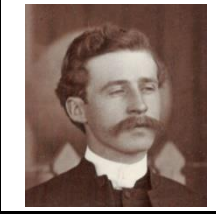


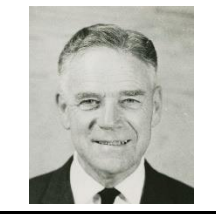
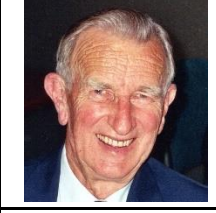



*Pastors: Tim Ebbs, Stephen Schultz and Robert Voigt opening the new complex on 18 January 2009
Photo courtesy of St Michael's Lutheran Church Hahndorf.*



What the new complex looks like on 16 Jan 2009. Photo courtesy of St Michael's Lutheran Church Hahndorf.

Today, St Michael's Lutheran church bell still calls the faithful to worship, to weddings, and to funerals. When a parishioner dies, it tolls at noon for each year of the person's life on earth. Townspeople stop to count the bell strikes and wonder who has left them. In the churchyard, tombstones are left standing amongst the cypress trees in the car park, and many pause to consider the people whose toil established the village.

Before the Country Fire Service installed a siren, Hahndorf's church bells warned of approaching floods and bushfires that regularly threatened the village. The oldest Lutheran congregation in Australia, St Michael's remains an active church community with a thriving school and much to celebrate.

Pastors who served at St Michael's Lutheran Church: 1838 – 2023			
			
August Kavel 1938 – 1846	Gotthard Fritzsche 1841 – 1855	Carl Stempel 1855 – 1901	Alfred Brauer 1901 – 1922
			
Johannes Homann 1922 – 1926	Frederick Blaess 1927 – 1943	Theo Backen 1943 – 1962	Elmore Zweck 1962 – 1971
			
Gordon Mibus 1971 – 1994	Treva Gerschwitz 1995 – 2002	Stephen Schultz 2002 – 2017	Fin Klein 2018 – current

St Michael's Lutheran Church Hahndorf

Address: 3 Balhannah Rd, Hahndorf, SA 245
Phone: (08) 8388 1225
Email: church.office@stmichaels.com.au
Website: <https://stmichaels.com.au>

St Paul's Lutheran Church

After Pastor Kavel's and Pastor Fritzsche's disagreement severed the Hahndorf Lutheran congregation in 1846, the thirty families remaining faithful to Pastor Kavel began worshipping in the hut diagonally opposite the church on Balhannah Road.

Although Pastor Kavel had left Klemzig that year to live at Langmeil in the Barossa Valley, he regularly made the long journey on horseback to visit his Hahndorf congregation.

By 1855, 23 families had left the village to be closer to him in the Barossa, where they founded Nain and Gruenberg, now part of Moculta. The six or seven families who remained faithful to Pastor Kavel but chose to remain in Hahndorf, assumed the name St. Paul's and set about to build their church.



*Original St Paul's Lutheran Church built 1858. Reclaimed and renovated to be used as a church hall in the 1950s. Builder Wilhelm Adolf Altmann on **left**, others to the **right** include: Ben Kramm, Eddie Rothe, and Edwin Braendler. Photo from the Lutheran Archives SA [P115 47 22910].*

For a deeper look at Pastor Kavel, go to Appendix A – Pastor Kavel in the News 1839. Here you will find an address he gave to the Prussian immigrants shortly after their arrival to South Australia and an interesting account on how Rev. John Blacket obtained the very first portrait of Pastor Kavel.



*The original St Paul's Lutheran Church as it looked in 1858.
Photo from the State Library of SA [B18228].*

The original church was built of red brick, on a stone foundation; the roof was of shingles and the ceiling pug. The building measured about 35 feet long and 26 feet wide. The windows were casement type opening outwards. The main double doors on the west facing end were sheltered by a small brick porch which had small seats on either side.

There was a small door on the eastern end behind the altar. The pulpit was built over the altar. A harmonium was installed. There is no evidence of a vestry being built. It is likely that a small area near the altar of the church, probably on the left, was curtained off to form a vestry. The western wall of the church building was topped by an open belfry which contained a small bell.

The foundation stone for the new church was laid on the 16 March 1858. The church was referred to as the 'Old-Evangelical-Lutheran Apostolic Church at Hahndorf'. The term Apostolic no doubt refers to Pastor Kavel's Apostolic Church Constitution.

Pastor Kavel dedicated the church building, located on Windsor Avenue, in July of 1858.

Over the next few years Hahndorf experienced a flurry of church building. St John's church was built in the mid-1850s by Pastor A Keppler. This small brick church was dedicated on Christmas Day, 1857. It was demolished before 1900, having stood behind the manse of the current St Paul's Lutheran Church. In 1865, the St Paul's and St John's congregations merged and used the St Paul's church. The cemeteries of both congregations were used until 1883.

In 1874, St Paul's congregation merged with St Michael's congregation. This union lasted for a little over a year. St Paul's Lutheran church reformed its congregation in 1875.

By the late 1880's the original St Paul's Lutheran church had become dilapidated. It was decided to build a new church rather than renovate the old. The foundation stone was laid on 18 January 1890 and the dedication took place on 14 September 1890.



The current St Paul's Lutheran church in Hahndorf. Photo taken by the author in 2022.

The present St Paul's Lutheran Church, with its distinctive 20-metre belltower (imported from Germany), was built in 1890 to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the first Lutheran church in Australia. Due to its prominent position on the Main Street of Hahndorf and traditional 19th century architecture, it has become a landmark for local residents and tourists alike.

After the new church was built the old church, located at 5A Windsor Avenue, was used by the congregation and community as a social gathering place for weddings, dances, meetings, fund raising activities, Sunday school, and so on. However, due to constant financial constraints on the church very little was done in way of renovating it and the old church was looking more like a relic.



*The old St Paul's Lutheran church in 2018, just before the renovations.
Photo courtesy of Andy and Jan Liebelt.*

In the 1990's functions at the old church ceased and it became the Louise Flierl Mission Museum. Opened to the public in March 1998, the museum honoured the memory of those who completed missionary work in Papua New Guinea and Southeast Asia. The collection has significant relational value to the Lutheran Church of Australia, in that it exists as a result of the work of Australian Lutheran missionaries in PNG and Southeast Asia from 1886 and throughout the following century.

In early 2018, St Paul's Lutheran Church gave notice to the Louise Flierl Mission Museum. The museum found new premises better suited to house its valuable collection. The museum, now known as *Wantok Place*, is based at 175A Archer Street North Adelaide.

St Paul's Lutheran Homes' Annual Report 2017-2018, under the sub-heading 'The Museum Acquisition' states the following: *"The property at 5A Windsor Avenue Hahndorf - the Flierl Museum - has been gifted to St Paul's Lutheran Homes by St Paul's Lutheran Church. On 18 June 2018 we took ownership of the property. The ownership of this property has enabled the Homes to have the boundaries realigned such that there is no encumbrance on the Homes' property. Since the building is in a poor state of repair and is of little 'core business' value to the Homes, we are in the process of finalising the sale of the property. Proceeds of the sale will be used for future capital projects."*

In October of 2018 the old church and a portion of the original land was sold for \$360,000 to private buyers Andy and Jan Liebelt. The new owners then renovated the building incorporating the advice from Douglas Alexander, a Heritage Advisor recommended by the Mount Barker Council. After a number of years renovating, Andy and Jan converted the old church into an Airbnb named '*Under the Oaks*' which accommodated its first guests in 2021.

When the old church was sold, a number of people in the Hahndorf community became upset. Few facts regarding the circumstances of the sale were actually known by the majority of the people within the community but everybody had an opinion. However, in

hindsight, the sale of the old church appears to be the best thing that could have happened. As far back as 2010 St Paul's Lutheran church was in discussions with St Paul's Lutheran Homes as to what to do with the old church because of its poor condition. Over the years there had been discussions to renovate the building. Evaluations were carried out and estimates came back in the \$600,000 range. Neither party had the financial means to do the historical building justice.




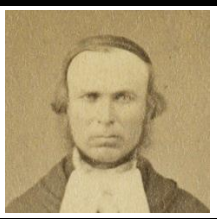


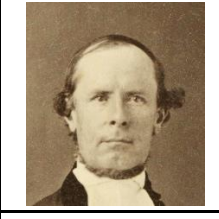
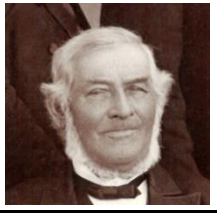


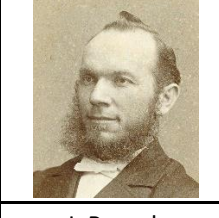
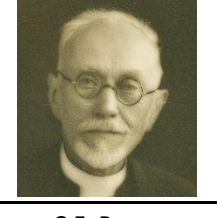

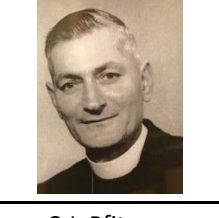
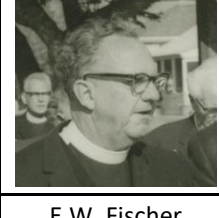
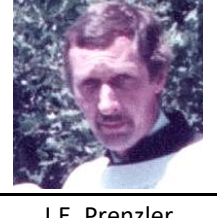

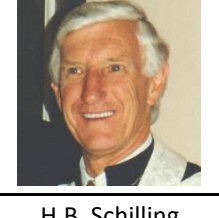
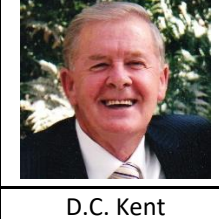
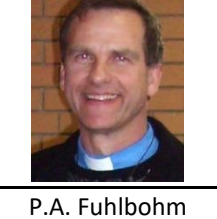
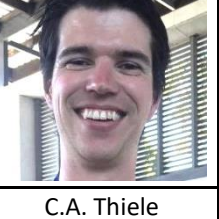
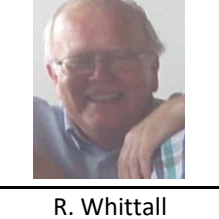
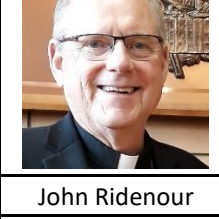
The original St Paul's Lutheran church converted into an Airbnb, named 'Under the Oaks'. Photo taken by the author in 2023.

Now, thanks to the efforts of Mr and Mrs Liebelt, the old church is once again fully restored and functional, according to heritage regulations. Andy and Jan are committed to maintaining the historical building for as long as they own it. If ever in the future there was a need for this building to be converted back into the original St Paul's Lutheran Church, it wouldn't take much to do.

Andy is the son of Martin Liebelt, who was one of the founding Board of Directors for St Paul's Lutheran Homes Hahndorf. Andy's family are direct descendants of Johann Christoph Liebelt and Anna Elisabeth Steinborn who arrived on the 'Zebra' to SA in 1838.

Andy's wife Jan (nee Craig) is directly related to the founding families Jaensch and Paech who were also passengers on the 'Zebra' in 1838.

Through ancestral lineage both Andy and Jan have a long-standing connection with Hahndorf and the old church and in their own way have saved it from ruin.

Pastors who served at St Paul's Lutheran Church: 1838 – 2023			
			
A.L.C. Kavel 1838 – 1860	J.C. Auricht 1859	G Staudenmeyer 1860 – 1864	G. Keppler 1861 – 1864
			
G.L.A. Fiedler 1865 – 1874	C.F.A. Stempel 1874 – 1875	Visiting Pastors 1875 – 1881	L. Kuss 1881 – 1884
			
J. Reusch 1884 – 1885	C.F. Braun 1885 – 1937	W.E. Petering 1938 – 1949	C.J. Pfitzner 1950 – 1958
			
E.W. Fischer 1958 – 1975	J.E. Prenzler 1975 – 1985	K.D. Kuchel 1985 – 1991	H.B. Schilling 1992 – 1997
			
D.C. Kent 1998 – 2005	P.A. Fuhlbohm 2006 – 2010	C.A. Thiele 2010	R. Whittall 2011
	<p>St Paul's Lutheran Church Hahndorf Address: 10 Mt Barker Rd, Hahndorf, SA 5245 Phone: (08) 8388 7240 Email: secretary@stpaulshahndorf.org Website: https://stpaulshahndorf.org/</p>		
John Ridenour 2013 – 2023			

