

05/04/2021

## **The Greek Orthodox Church of Greater Salt Lake and The Hellenic Cultural Association Commemorate the Bicentennial of the Greek Revolution of 1821**



The Greek Orthodox Church of Greater Salt Lake and Utah's Hellenic Cultural Association observed the 200th anniversary of Greece's independence from the Ottoman Turks with a month-long series of significant religious and civic events:



Meeting with Senator Mike Lee (R) of Utah

In late February 2021, Senator Mike Lee (R) of Utah requested a meeting with the Clergy, members of the Parish Council, Nico Priskos – Board Member of the American Hellenic Institute, and several parishioners in order to be informed about our Omogeneia's concerns regarding Greek – Turkish relations. Chief among the topics discussed were the recent conversion of Hagia Sophia, the continued closure of the Halki Theological School as well as the ongoing interference by the Turkish authorities vis-à-vis the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Senator Lee assured those gathered that he would work closely with other Philhellene Senators to address the many issues brought to his attention so that the 200th Anniversary of Greece's fight for independence would bear fruit in today's global geopolitical struggles.





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Divine Liturgy and Doxology on March 25th

The V. Rev. Archimandrite George Nikas, Cathedral Dean, assisted by the Rev. Presbyter Patrick O'Rourke, celebrated the Divine Liturgy on the morning of March 25th in honor of the Feast of the Annunciation and Greek Independence Day. A celebratory Doxology was held at the end in special commemoration of the 200th Anniversary of Greece's fight for freedom, concluding with Fr. George leading the congregation in an emotional singing of the Greek National Anthem. Young Adults from the Dionysios Greek Dance Troupe were dressed as evzones and amalies to mark this significant occasion.



Visit by Utah Governor Spencer Cox to Holy Trinity G.O. Cathedral

Culminating the Bicentennial Celebrations was the highly anticipated visit to our GOCGSL Community by the Honorable Governor of the State of Utah, Spencer Cox, on the afternoon of March 25th. Governor Cox was warmly received by the Clergy, George Karahalios, President of the Parish Council, Jeannine Timothy, President of the Hellenic Cultural Association, Mike Korologos, HCA Board Member, and several Parish Organization and Ministry Leaders. Governor Cox read and presented a Declaration which pronounced March 25, 2021 as "Greek Independence Recognition Day in Utah." Governor Cox was then presented with a large Greek flag, which recently was flown atop the flagpole at the iconic Acropolis in Athens, Greece. This unique gesture – most likely the only such Greek Flag of its kind donated by Greece in the United States – is a gift to the State of Utah from Her Excellency, the President of the Hellenic Republic, Katerina Sakellaropoulou. It was accompanied by a letter from the public relations director for the president, Maya Solomou, who wrote: "President Sakellaropoulou would like to compliment the Greek Orthodox Community of Greater Salt Lake and the Hellenic Cultural Association of Utah on their project to observe the bicentennial anniversary of the independence of Greece, which constitutes an event of major significance." Also accompanying the flag was a letter issued by the Commander of Greece's Presidential Guard certifying the banner was raised on the pole at the Acropolis.





Proclamation by Salt Lake City Mayor Erin Mendenhall

Salt Lake City Mayor Erin Mendenhall issued a Proclamation proclaiming March 25, 2021 as "Greek Independence Day in Salt Lake City."



## St. Sophia Hellenic Orthodox School/Greek School March 25th Programs

Children from the Parish's St. Sophia Hellenic Orthodox School and our Community's Afternoon Greek School presented virtual March 25th Greek Independence Day Programs respectively. In addition, children from the St. Sophia School assisted in displaying 200 Greek flags on the grounds of both of our Churches. Holladay Mayor Rob Dahle was also in attendance for a special Greek Flag raising ceremony at our Prophet Elias G.O. Church along with Dr. Elaine Bapis, Co-Founder of the St. Sophia School.

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