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South Australia’s Mount Gambier receives its first Sunday Matins and Divine Liturgy



Mount Gambier is the largest regional city in South Australia, with a population of around 27,000 people. It is strategically located almost exactly half-way between Melbourne and Adelaide and is the site of the famous Blue Lake as well as many natural limestone features such as caves and sinkholes. It is a major hub for the local timber, transport, and fishing industries.

Mount Gambier has long had a significant Greek community, once having up to 200 families. However, like many regional centres the community has dwindled, as young families move to the major cities for improved employment and educational opportunities. There are currently around 60 families in and around Mount Gambier.

One of the major challenges facing the community has been its lack of regular worship to bring the community together. With no resident priest, they are reliant

on priests coming from Adelaide to serve the liturgy and the holy mysteries, which (because of the distance) has only happened a few times per year. Further, with no church of their own, they have to borrow the local Anglican church for worship, which means that they had to worship on Saturday instead of Sunday.

His Grace Bishop Silouan of Sinope had his first visit to Mount Gambier in his role as bishop on the first weekend after Pascha 2021. In a meeting with the committee of the local Greek Orthodox Community, these issues were raised, and he proposed a trial to increase the frequency of worship from a few times per year to at least once per month. Further, so as to emphasise the importance of Sunday worship, it was also resolved to use the Community's own hall facility to host worship on a Sunday.

Consequently, Mount Gambier's first Sunday Orthros + Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Sunday 27th of June – the Feast of All Saints. Celebrated again by His Grace and in the familiarity of their own hall, the service really gave the community a sense of belonging and ownership. His Grace also appropriated the opportunity provided by the rich hospitality of the faithful of Mt. Gambier for a Bible study on the Saturday evening before the Divine Liturgy. Around 30 locals were present at each of these events.

We pray that this is the beginning of something special for the Orthodox community of Mt Gambier, and that they finally get the church that they want, need, and deserve.

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