

# JOURNEY TO GREECE

17th September – 1st October 2017

THE GAP UNITING CHURCH

Escorted by  
the Rev Rod Fisher



Come along on an unforgettable journey in the footsteps of St. Paul, as we travel through some of the most significant historical and religious sites in Greece, from ancient empires, to the early church, and through to modern times. Whatever your particular interest, there will be lots to see and do, plenty of 'bucket list' items to tick, and enough time to rest in-between.

Rev. Rod Fisher is a Minister in the Uniting Church and lives with his wife and two sons in Brisbane. He is passionate about teaching and learning, having fun, and meeting new people. He is eager to share his insights gained during his recent tour of Greece in 2015. This journey will be enjoyed by both student and tourist alike, regardless of educational or religious background. Be prepared to learn, to laugh, and to join in the adventure!

## DAY 1: Sunday 17 September

### DEPART AUSTRALIA

Depart Australia this evening on our Etihad flight to Abu Dhabi.

## DAY 2: Monday 18 September

### ATHENS, THESSALONIKI

Upon arrival into Abu Dhabi, transfer to our connecting Etihad flight to Athens. On arrival, transfer to the domestic terminal for your flight to Thessaloniki. Upon arrival, we'll meet our guide and transfer to our hotel. Dinner & overnight in Thessaloniki.

## DAY 3: Tuesday 19 September

### PHILIPPI - KAVALA - THESSALONIKI

We will enjoy a day trip to Philippi and Kavala. We visit Philippi where Paul delivered his first sermon in Europe, sowing the seeds of Christianity. Here Paul baptized a "certain woman named Lydia" the first Christian convert in Europe. The Roman forum in Philippi, completely excavated, is from after Paul's time. Among the ruins, located on the rocky ledge above the town's main road is the prison of Paul and Silas. Still visible on the site are the remains of the two early Christian Basilicas and traces of via Egnatia. Continue into the modern port city of Kavala, ancient Neapolis, where Paul accompanied by Silas, Luke and Timothy, first set foot in Europe. Return to Thessaloniki. Dinner and overnight in Thessaloniki.

## DAY 4: Wednesday 20 September

### THESSALONIKI

Paul preached in Thessaloniki during the winters of 49-50 AD and wrote two epistles to the ancient Thessalonians. We start our brief tour of Thessaloniki viewing the White Tower, the Triumphal Arch of Galerius standing on the Egnatia Way. We then visit the Byzantine churches of Aghia Sophia, St. George (Rotonda) and St. Dimitrios & crypt. We also visit either the Byzantine or the Archaeological museum in Thessaloniki. This afternoon will be a free afternoon to do further exploring or take the opportunity to relax. Dinner & overnight is in Thessaloniki.

## DAY 5: Thursday 21 September

### PELLA - VERIA - VERGINA - KALAMBAKA

Today will start with a visit to Pella. During the reign of Archellaos, Pella became the capital of the Macedonian Kingdom (413-399 BC). The museum in Pella is well worth visiting. Continue to visit Veria and Vergina. Veria, located on the ruins of Ancient Beroea, is one of Apostle Paul's stops. Here we see the Byzantine mosaic in the monument commemorating his preaching. Vergina is the first capital of the Macedonian Kingdom. Here we visit the "Vergina findings", treasures of Ancient Macedonia and the tomb of King Philip II of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great. We continue our drive to Kalambaka. Dinner & overnight in Kalambaka.

## DAY 6: Friday 22 September

### KALAMBAKA - DELPHI

This morning we visit the Byzantine Meteora monasteries. Among striking scenery and perched on top of huge rocks, the ageless monasteries of Meteora seem to be suspended in mid-air. The monasteries contain beautiful Byzantine art and offer an insight to the mystic world of the monks still residing there. In the early afternoon, we continue our drive to Delphi. Dinner & overnight in Delphi.

## DAY 7: Saturday 23 September

### DELPHI, ATHENS

Delphi was known as the center or the navel of the earth. It reached its height in power in the 4th century as the sanctuary to the god Apollo. We explore the sanctuary by walking up the Sacred Way to see the Treasuries, the Theater and the Temple of Apollo. Visit the museum of Delphi and marvel at the splendid collection of artifacts from the excavation, including the bronze "Charioteer" one of the best preserved ancient works of metallurgy. Drive to Athens for dinner & overnight in Athens.

## DAY 8: Sunday 24 September

### ATHENS

We will enjoy a full day of sightseeing in Athens. We will visit the Acropolis to see the Propylae, the Erectheum and the Parthenon. We shall also ascend Mars Hill, view the Agora (ancient market place where Paul spoke to the ancient Athenians). We will also see the House of Parliament, the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Presidential Palace, Hadrian's Arch and the Panathenaic Stadium. We also visit the New Acropolis museum. Dinner & overnight in Athens.

## DAY 9: Monday 25 September

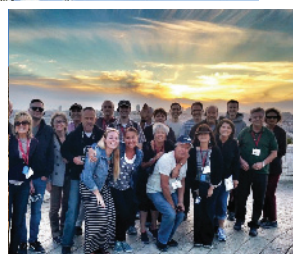
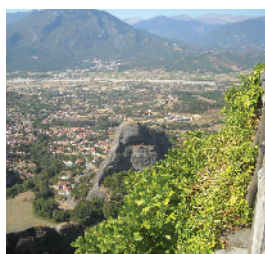
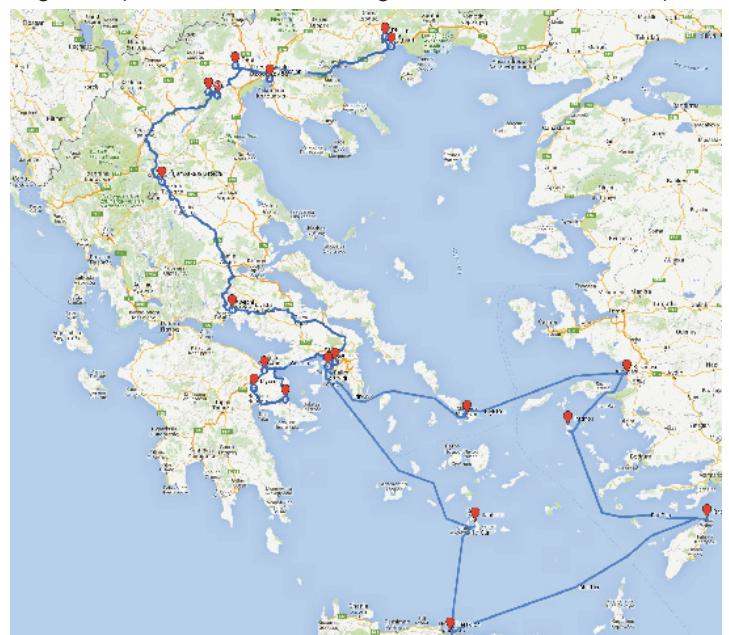
### CRUISE (MYKONOS)

This morning we will transfer to the Port of Piraeus and board our cruise. This afternoon will have a free afternoon to enjoy in Mykonos. Dinner & overnight on the ship.

## DAY 10: Tuesday 26 September

### CRUISE (KUSADASI & PATMOS)

Enjoy a shore excursion to Ephesus and the House of Virgin Mary in Kusadasi Before his crucifixion, Jesus entrusted the safety of the Virgin Mary to St. John the Evangelist. St. John moved Mary to



Ephesus for safety. Virgin Mary lived here until the 101st year of her life. In 1957 the Vatican recognized the "House of the Virgin Mary" as the place where the Virgin spent the last years of her life and since then it is an important pilgrimage site for both Christians and Muslims.

Next stop the city of Ancient Ephesus, the Ionian colony, which is one of the largest open-air archaeological museums in the world. Together with your tour guide, you will pass the Magnesian Gate. Traces of the Hellenistic, Roman and Early Christian period are scattered everywhere: the Agora, the Odeon, the Library of Celsus, the marble-paved main Street of the Kouretes, the Thermal Baths of Scholastica, Trajan's Fountain, the Public Latrines, the Houses of the Patricians, the Prytaneum, Hadrian's Temple, the Great Theatre. The excursion is completed at the Covered Bazaar of Kusadasi with some free time for shopping and... bargaining! During the excursion you will have the opportunity to do some shopping such as carpets, jewelry, leather and other souvenirs. In the afternoon we visit the Monastery of St John and the Cave of Apocalypse in Patmos. The picturesque alleyways wind upwards, towards the Monastery of St. John the Evangelist, founded in 1088 by St. Christodoulos. The visit will open the doors for you of the Monastery's yard, the place where the monks take their meals and the old bakery. Of exquisite beauty is the tour of the Byzantine Church of St. John, which is adorned with a wood-carved icon screen, important frescoes from several periods, with both mosaic and other icons. Next stop, the small museum which hosts religious treasures of inestimable value, like manuscripts, medieval textiles, sacerdotal vestments and others.

Walking down the stairs, the religious energy that you will experience is soul touching. Behind the chapel of St. Anne lies the entrance to the Grotto of the Apocalypse. You will see the cross engraved by St. John the Evangelist, according to tradition, the triple fissure in the wall of the cave, from where St. John heard God dictating to him the Apocalypse. And also, the spot where he lay down to sleep. Dinner & overnight on the ship

#### DAY 11: Wednesday 27 September

##### CRUISE (RHODES)

Today we will travel to Rhodes where optional shore excursions will be available. Dinner & overnight on the ship

#### DAY 12: Thursday 28 September

##### CRUISE (CRETE & SANTORINI)

This morning we will be in Heraklion (Crete) with optional shore excursions available and in the afternoon in Santorini with optional shore excursions available. Dinner & overnight on the ship

#### DAY 13: Friday 29 September

##### ARGOLIS (CORINTH, MYCENEA & EPIDAUROS) - ATHENS

After disembarkation we head to Peloponessos for a morning tour to Ancient Corinth. Here under the shadow of the towering Acropolis, St. Paul preached and lived for two years. The vigorous and mostly Gentile Church he founded here in 50 AD caused him much grief and prompted him to write at least four letters to them. Visit the ruins of the ancient city where Paul worked with Aquila and Priscilla. See the remains of first century shops, the agora where Paul's trial by Gallio took place, the Fountain of Peirene, Temple of Apollo and the Bema. We then continue to Mycenae and visit the Lion's gate, the Cyclopean walls, the Royal Tombs etc... In the afternoon we visit the theatre of Epidaurus famous for its astonishing acoustics. Dinner & overnight in Athens.

#### DAY 14: Saturday 30 September

##### ATHENS - DEPARTURE

This morning we enjoy breakfast and check out before a visit to the Archaeological Museum or Cape Sounion. Transfer to the airport in time for our Etihad departure flight back to Australia.

#### DAY 15: Sunday 1 October

##### ARRIVE AUSTRALIA

Arrive back to Australia today with wonderful memories of your trip!

### TOTAL PACKAGE PRICE:

**AUD \$6390** per person (twin sharing)

Single supplement: **AUD \$950**

Outside Cabin Supplement: **AUD \$275**

Outside Cabin Single Supplement: **AUD \$100**

\* Price is based on minimum of 20 full paying participants. Conditions apply. Subject to change.

#### HOTELS TO BE USED (or similar)

**Thessaloniki**

Hotel Imperial Palace (3 nights)

**Kalambaka**

Hotel Divani (1 night)

**Itea / Delphi**

Hotel Nafsika Palace (1 night)

**Athens**

Hotel Titania (3 nights in renovated rooms)

**4 Night Cruise**

XA Cabins - 4 nights in inside Cabin

(Outside Cabin Supplement available)

#### PRICE INCLUDES:

- Return economy class airfares from Brisbane - Abu Dhabi - Athens - Abu Dhabi - Brisbane with Emirates
- Domestic flight from Athens - Thessaloniki
- 8 nights' hotel accommodation in Greece including daily buffet breakfasts & dinners throughout
- 4 Night Cruise in inside cabins on a full board basis
- Any 3 shore excursions at any of the ports of call during the cruise.
- Unlimited non-alcoholic drink package during the cruise.
- Comprehensive sightseeing tours as outlined in the itinerary with the services of local professional English speaking guide for the mainland (outside of the cruise)
- Airport meet and assistance and transfers and transportation throughout in a luxury air-conditioned coach
- Entrance fees to all sights and museums as mentioned in the itinerary
- Port taxes, tips on the cruise and fees
- Tips, portage & gratuities throughout

#### PRICE EXCLUDES:

- Beverages with meals outside of cruise
- Lunches and drinks outside of cruise
- Entrance/sightseeing/meals other than those in the itinerary

- Other optional shore excursions during the cruise besides those listed above
- Single supplement
- Travel insurance
- Visas (if applicable)
- Incidental expenses of a personal nature such as phone calls, laundry, room service etc.
- Any services not listed in 'Price Includes' above

#### WHAT TO DO NEXT:

1. Register your interest and obtain a booking form from Rev Rod or the team at Olive Tree Travel
2. To secure your place, a deposit of \$350 per person is required by 6th February 2017 (unless sold out prior)
3. Full payment will be required by 12th July 2017



WHO TO CONTACT:



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Minister of the Word

The Gap Uniting Church

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