

# Orthodox church 'a miracle' for NP



MARINA  
HEYBURN

By YVETTE BATTEN

MEMBERS of the Christian Orthodox Church no longer have to travel out of Taranaki to attend Sunday services.

This Sunday, their very own church, St Nicholas on Carrington St, will host its first meeting with about 100 excited members attending.

Spokeswoman Marina Heyburn said churchgoers previously had to

travel to Palmerston North, Wellington or Auckland to attend Sunday meetings.

"It's a miracle," she said.

"A dream come true, that we can have it on our doorstep and we don't have to travel so far."

New Plymouth was chosen as the site for St Nicholas by His Eminence Amfilochios, the Metropolitan of New Zealand and Exarch of Oceania.

"The Orthodox community cannot show their appreciation more to His

Eminence for giving us this gift to have a church here," Mrs Heyburn said.

She said Mt Taranaki had reminded Amfilochios of Mt Athos, in northern Greece.

"That particular area has a history of over a thousand years old and it's all monastery.

"Today, monks there continue to live the same way as they did a thousand years ago," Mrs Heyburn said.

The Christian Orthodox Church is

part of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, based at Istanbul, in Turkey.

The Orthodox Church service is formal, complete with chants and incense.

"It's very different from any other service, but we could say we're very similar to the Catholic Church and the High Church of England," she said.

Part of the service will be in Greek but most will be in English.

Anyone is welcome to attend the

Sunday service, which starts at 9am.

There will soon be a resident priest assigned to St Nicholas church.

Two monks and two nuns have moved to New Plymouth and will also be at the service.

The monks wear black robes, while the nuns wear a black habit and a black scarf.

Mrs Heyburn wants the public to be aware of who they are if they see the monks and nuns around New Plymouth.