

December 2017: The Liturgical Services Calendar - Grande Prairie Pastoral District - www.gp.eeparchy.com & www.facebook.com/gpdormition/

Sunday: <i>Resurrection</i>	Monday: <i>Angels</i>	Tuesday: John the Baptist	Wednesday: Betrayal of Jesus Fast	Thursday: <i>Apostles & Nicholas</i>	Friday: Cross Fast	Saturday: Departed
Fasting Period: Nativity Fast Nov 15- Dec 24 <div></div> Fasting Days of Obligation: Wednesdays of the Nativity Fast, All Fridays & Nativity Eve <div></div> Days of Obligation: All Sundays, Christmas <div></div> Fr. Roman: (780) 513-1175 (<i>Home</i>) & (780) 933-4468 (<i>Cell</i>)				1	2 7:00 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE Altar Server Training	3 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: GREAT VESPERS and Confession
4 - 29th Sunday after Pentecost, <i>Octoechos Tone 4; The Great-Martyr Barbara (286-305); Our Venerable Father John of Damascus (749) [Nativity Fast]</i> 10 AM GRANDE PRAIRIE 4 PM MANNING	5 - Eve of St. Nicholas 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: GREAT VESPERS and Confession	6 Our Holy Father Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia [Nativity Fast] 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: Divine Liturgy	7	8 <i>Eve of the Conception</i> 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: GREAT VESPERS and Confession	9 - <i>The Conception of Saint Anna When She Conceived the Most Holy Mother of God</i> Introduction to Christ our Pashca: Live-Streaming Event: 6:30-8:30 Grande Prairie (Part 3)	10 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: GREAT VESPERS and Confession
11 - Sunday of the Holy Ancestors, Tone 5; [Nativity Fast] 10 AM GRANDE PRAIRIE 2:30 PM HINES CREEK - Unity Liturgy with Roman Catholic Church	12	13 - <i>Singing Practice</i> <i>7PM Grande Prairie - Caroling & Christmas Service *</i>	14 - <i>Bible Study Group:</i> 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE	15	16 - 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: Emmenuel Moleben and Confession 7:30 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE Youth Group Gathering	17 10 AM HIGH PRAIRIE: Divine Liturgy 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: GREAT VESPERS and Confession
18 - <i>Sunday before Christmas - Sunday of the Holy Fathers, Tone 6; [Nativity Fast]</i> 10 AM GRANDE PRAIRIE: Agape Meal after Divine Liturgy with St. Nicholas visit and celebration.	19	20 - <i>Singing Practice</i> <i>7PM Grande Prairie Caroling & Christmas Service *</i>	21	22	23 - 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: Royal Hours and Confession	24 - Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord (Strict Fast) (Confession Available 1Hour Before Each Service) COMPLINE and DIVINE LITURGY 4:00 PM HINES CREEK: 9 PM VIGIL SERVICE <small>(COMPLINE AND MATINS)</small> 10 PM DIVINE LITURGY
25 <i>The Nativity in the Flesh of Our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ (Christmas) - NO FASTING</i>	26	27	28* NO FASTING*	29	30 - * NO FASTING*	31 - 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: GREAT VESPERS & Thanksgiving Moleben and Confession and Thanksgiving Moleben

One of the ways we celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ on December 25 is to sing the Troparion of the Feast. The words of the hymn describe Jesus Christ as the light of the world, the Sun of Righteousness and the Orient from on high. The hymn also refers to the wise men from the East who followed a star to find this newborn King.

Depictions and descriptions of the wise men differ. They are sometimes called Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar, but have also been given other names. In Western art they are often shown riding camels, presumably to indicate that they come from the East, but in icons they ride horses, a way of showing that they wanted to get to the Savior as quickly as possible. Swift horses can certainly maintain a different pace from that of plodding camels, though the ride was arduous no matter what animals they rode.

While in many representations all three men look to be approximately the same age, icons show one as distinctly older than the other two, emphasizing that the urgent work of seeking salvation is for people of all ages, just as it is for people of every background and origin.

One word that is used by most traditions to identify the three travelers is "magi." This word brings to mind images of men who watched the stars closely and tried to derive wisdom from them, or who "worshipped the stars," as the Troparion states.

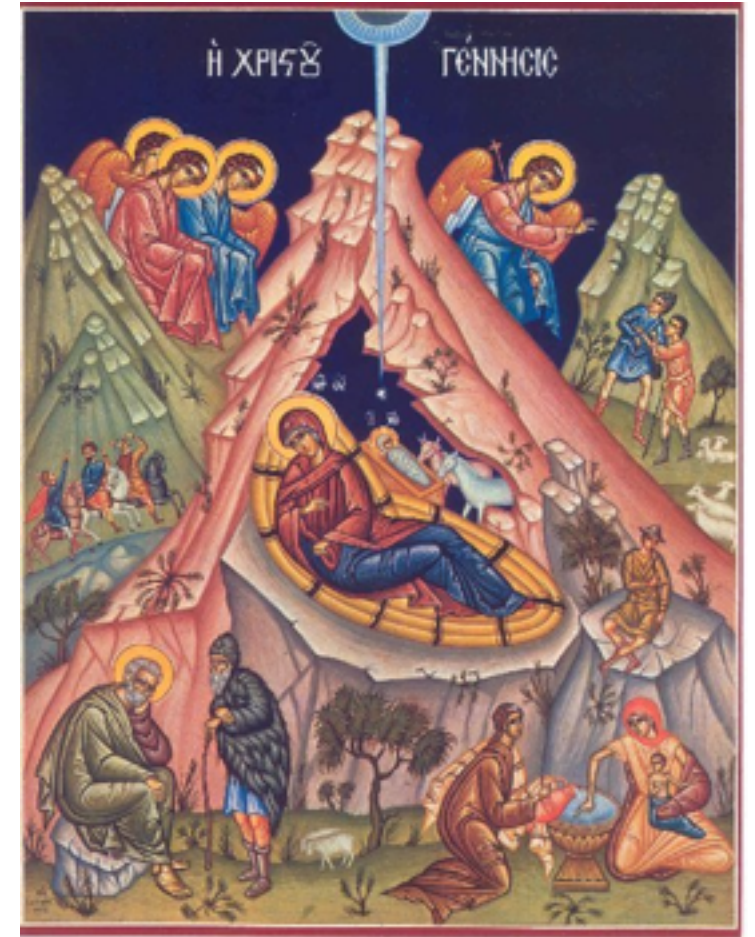
The wise men are not the only ones to whom this word is applied. In Acts 8: 9-24 we meet a "magus" (the singular of "magi") named Simon, who says of himself that he is "something great." He is popular and is listened to because he has amazed the people with magic. But Simon's response to the truly great things he sees the apostles doing is all wrong. He hopes to buy the power they have, so that "anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." Peter rebukes him and urges him to repent.

The magi who come to worship Jesus in the cave are quite different. They are ready to humble themselves before this Child. They are willing to be "taught by a star to adore" Him, as the Troparion puts it, not seeking to share His power but just to offer Him gifts. They are ready to accept what God is showing them by means of a star that is different from all the stars they have studied so attentively.

In his poem "Journey of the Magi" T.S. Eliot writes that the men returned to their kingdom homes but were "no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation, With an alien people clutching their gods." The magis' lives were changed, and perhaps they would never again be comfortable. God had shown them something entirely new in the stars, and the only possible response was the one we sing in the Troparion: "Glory to You, O Lord."

Troparion - Tone 4

Your Nativity, O Christ our God,* made the light of knowledge dawn on the world:* through it, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star* to worship You, the Sun of Righteousness,* and to know that You, the Dawn from on the high.* Glory to You, O Lord.



January 2017: The Liturgical Services Calendar - Grande Prairie Pastoral District - www.gp.eeparchy.com & www.facebook.com/gpdormition/

Sunday: <i>Resurrection</i>	Monday: <i>Angels</i>	Tuesday: John the Baptist	Wednesday: Betrayal of Jesus Fast	Thursday: <i>Apostles & Nicholas</i>	Friday: Cross Fast	Saturday: Departed
Why we bless our homes: We, as Christians, are engaged in a struggle to reclaim fallen nature for the Kingdom of God. We often talk about this in terms of our own salvation, but the Church, addressing all of creation in a wholistic manner, also reaches out and reclaims a bit here and a bit there of creation in general. We do this in order that we might restore the usefulness of creation for working out our own salvation. Hence we bless anything that might help us in our salvation - and by blessing it we reclaim it for the Kingdom of God.						
1 - <i>Sunday before Theophany, Octoechos Tone 8; The Circumcision of Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ; Our Father Among the Saints Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia</i> 10 AM GRANDE PRAIRIE	2	3 - <i>Bible Study Group:</i> 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE	4	5 - Strict Day of Fasting 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: VIGIL SERVICE (COMPLINE AND MATINS)	6 - <i>Holy Theophany of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ</i> 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: DIVINE LITURGY; GREAT BLESSING OF WATER	7 <i>*OLD CALENDAR* Nativity in the Flesh of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ</i> 10 AM MANNING: CONFESSIONS, COMPLINE, DIVINE LITURGY & AGAPE CHRISTMAS MEAL 4 PM PEACE RIVER: DIVINE LITURGY
8 - <i>Sunday after Theophany, Octoechos 1; Our Venerable Father George the Chosebite (610-41); Our Venerable Mother Dominica (474-91); and Emilian the Confessor</i> 10 AM GRANDE PRAIRIE 2:30 PM HINES CREEK – <i>Blessing of Water</i>	9 GP Home Blessings: Jan 9 - Feb 15	10 - Singing Practice 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE	11	12 - Parish Council Meeting 5 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE	13 - Altar Server Training: 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE	14 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: <i>GREAT VESPERs and Confession</i>
15 – 35th Sunday after Pentecost, Octoechos Tone 2; Our Venerable Fathers Paul of Thebes (312-37) and John the Hut-Dweller (465-74) 10 AM GRANDE PRAIRIE 3:30PM HIGH PRAIRIE: <i>Divine Liturgy, Blessing of Water and Blessing of Homes</i>	16	17 - <i>Bible Study Group:</i> 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE	18	19	20 - <i>Introduction to Christ our Pashca: Live Streaming Event:</i> 6:30-8:30 <i>Grande Prairie (Part 4) & Youth Group Gathering</i>	21 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: <i>GREAT VESPERs and Confession</i>
22 – 36th Sunday after Pentecost, Octoechos, Tone 3; <i>The Holy Apostle Timothy; the Holy Venerable-Martyr Anastasius the Persian (628)</i> 10 AM GRANDE PRAIRIE	23	24	25	26	27	28 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: DIVINE LITURGY
29 - 37th Sunday after Pentecost; Sunday of Zacchaeus; Octoechos Tone 4; The Transfer of the Relics of the Great-Martyr Ignatius the God-bearer (of Antioch) 10 AM GRANDE PRAIRIE Agape Meal after Divine Liturgy. 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: GREAT VESPERs and Confession	30 - <i>The Three Holy and Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom</i> 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: Divine Liturgy	31	There are few things more vital to our lives than our homes. In our homes we pray, we work, we talk to others, we order our lives, we work out our marriages, etc. What more important place to reclaim for the Kingdom of God - or is it better to continue living in a place which is occupied by the enemy. For the most effective working out of our salvation, we must drive the enemy out of our homes, and keep him at bay by our prayers, our righteous life, and the annual sprinkling by Holy Water at Theophany. Fr. Roman: (780) 513-1175 (<i>Home</i>) or (780) 933-4468 (<i>Cell</i>) Please Note: Confession is scheduled after all vesper services and also by appointment before or after any liturgical service.			

Bring the Blessing of the Jordan Home

The blessing of homes constitutes an *invocative blessing*, meaning that by his prayer and by the sprinkling of Holy Water the priest *invokes* God's blessings and protection upon the home and those living in it. We bless homes for many reasons:

- * To reveal the home as what God had created it to be, a way to Heaven
- * To rid the home of every evil
- * To show that the family is a small Church unit in Christ
- * To consecrate the home and all activity in it to God
- * To fill the home and all who live in it with the fullness of God

Traditionally, the priest personally visits all his parishioners each year to pray with them in the place where they live, and to bless their surroundings with the newly sanctified water of Theophany. By sanctifying our homes we extend the grace of God to our individual dwellings.

Just as our souls, so also our homes become tainted by the sins of those living in them and consequently lose God's protective power. We cleanse our souls of sins at least once a year and the church is blessed with the newly blessed water every year, so should our homes be sanctified with Holy Water to invoke God's blessings and protection on it and its inhabitants. As we renew the insurance on our home every year, so we should renew our insurance of God's protection and His blessing which is of greater importance and more effective.

What should we do during a home blessing

As we welcome our priest during the holy season of Theophany to bless our home, let us be mindful that he is bringing to us the "blessing of the Jordan," and that unless God protects and blesses our home, we "labour in vain." ([Ps. 127:1](#))

Each family is considered a small church and the family table is the home altar. When the priest comes, have as many family members there as possible. If you do not have an icon corner, ensure that you set up a place for prayer either at the kitchen or dining table. On the table include an icon and a lit candle. You may also include anything that you may want to have blessed (i.e. icon, cross, personal item, etc.) Make sure that the lights are on in every room. The priest will begin the blessing at the icon corner or table. If you have children, they may lead the priest, while holding a candle, to each room in the house.

This is also a wonderful time for you and your priest to visit and to get to know each other better.

[From: *Our Faith - Nasha Vira* (Religion education newsletter of the Eparchy of Edmonton) January-February 2011]