

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					1	2
Fasting Days of Obligation: Wednesdays of the Nativity Fast, All Fridays & Nativity Eve						7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: GREAT VESPERS and Confession
Days of Obligation: All Sundays, Christmas						
Fr. Roman: (780) 513-1175 (<i>Home</i>) & (780) 933-4468 (<i>Cell</i>)						
3 - 26th Sunday after Pentecost; Octoechos Tone 1; The Holy Prophet Zephaniah (Sophonias) (7th century BC) 10 AM GRANDE PRAIRIE	4	5 - <i>Eve of St. Nicholas</i> 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: GREAT VESPERS and Confession	6- <i>Our Holy Father Nicholas the Wonderworker;</i> 7 PM GP: Divine Liturgy	7 - <i>Singing Practice</i> 7PM Grande Prairie - <i>Caroling & Christmas Service</i>	8 - CANCELLED: <i>Eve of the Conception</i> 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: GREAT VESPERS and Confession 8:00 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE Altar Server	9 - CANCELLED: <i>The Conception of Saint Anna</i> 10 AM GRANDE PRAIRIE: Divine Liturgy 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: GREAT VESPERS and Confession
10 - 27th Sunday after Pentecost; Octoechos Tone 2; The Holy Martyrs Menas, Hermogenes and Eugegraphus 10 AM GRANDE PRAIRIE 1:00 PM HINES CREEK - Unity Liturgy 4:00 PM MANNING	11	12 - <i>Bible Study Group:</i> 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE	13 - 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: Emmenuel Moleben and Confession	14	15 - 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: Emmenuel Moleben 7:30 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE Youth, Myrrh Bears & Altar Servers - Christmas Pageant Practice	16 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: GREAT VESPERS and Confession
17 - <i>Sunday of the Holy Ancestors; Octoechos Tone 3; The Holy Prophet Daniel, the Three Holy Youths Ananiah (Ananias), Azariah (Azarias) and Misael (Misael) (6th century BC)</i> 10 AM GRANDE PRAIRIE: Meatless Agape Meal after Divine Liturgy with St. Nicholas visit and celebration.	18	19 - <i>Bible Study Group:</i> 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE	20 - <i>Singing Practice</i> 7PM Grande Prairie <i>Caroling & Christmas Service *</i>	21 - <i>Parish Council Meeting: 7 PM</i> GRANDE PRAIRIE	22 - 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: Royal Hours and Confession	23 10 AM HIGH PRAIRIE: Divine Liturgy 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: GREAT VESPERS and Confession
24 <i>Sunday before the Nativity of Christ; Octoechos Tone 4; Eve of the Nativity of Christ</i> 10 AM GRANDE PRAIRIE 3:00 PM HINES CREEK: COMPLINE and DIVINE LITURGY 9 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: VIGIL SERVICE (COMPLINE AND MATINS) 10 PM DIVINE LITURGY	25 - The Nativity in the Flesh of Our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ (Christmas) - NO FASTING	26	27* NO FASTING*	28	29 * NO FASTING*	30 Cancelled: 7 PM GRANDE PRAIRIE: GREAT VESPERS
31 - Sunday after Nativity Tone 5; 10 AM GRANDE PRAIRIE	1 - The Circumcision of Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ; Our Father Among the Saints Basil the Great 10 AM GRANDE PRAIRIE			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. Please call to schedule a baptism or marriages.		

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.

