

“But when it pleased God...”

Paul in his letter to Galatian Christians (1:15) lets us in on a secret of our Christian life. We think God will speak to us only in a certain way, in a certain place, under certain circumstances. In reality God might break in at any moment, in unexpected ways. How are we to know when and where? Paul was certainly not expecting an encounter with Jesus while he made his way to Damascus. Nor would he have expected it would become his calling in life to be instructed to take Jesus and his message to the Gentiles. Nor would the Christians in Damascus have expected their sworn enemy to become a convert and one of them. God is so unpredictable!

Normally when a minister talks like this the message is “to be open to change.” Though I’m new to you and Centre Congregational Church, that is not my message to you. Rather my advice is to draw near to God, become familiar with God, study the teachings of those who knew Jesus first hand, and, above all, pray regularly. Otherwise we are likely to miss the surprises of God. We must expect and look for those moments when God comes into our lives. Perhaps on a Sunday morning, perhaps not. Perhaps at work, around the dinner table or in the dark of night

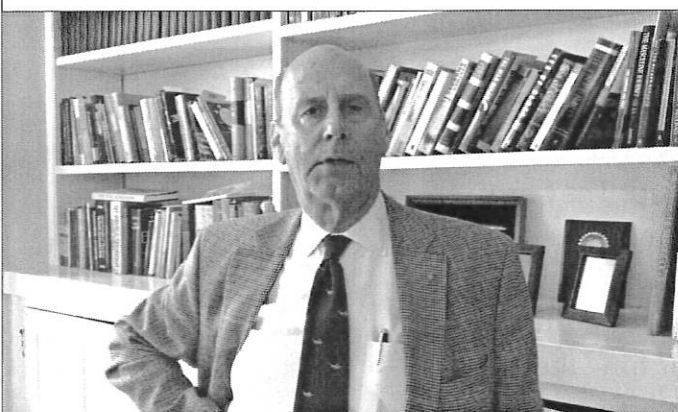


Photo credit: Matt Kadosh, NorthJersey.com

when we can’t sleep. If we strive to keep our relationship with God faithful and constant, we are more likely to find God’s surprising power breaking out all over the place.

This is a good message for Lent, that time of preparation for Christians and churches as we approach the great season of Easter. Lent is the time I’m arriving as the bridge pastor between Bert Marshall and whom-ever it is God will call to be your next minister. There will, no doubt, be surprises for all of us. That’s the way God works. I hope and pray my work among

you for the next few months will be to help you draw closer to God and our faith, that we both may discover what is the plan of God for each of us and for this church.

One of the opportunities I’ve planned is a brief course on Jesus’ *Sermon on the Mount*. We’ll read together these teachings of Jesus that Matthew collected and preserved in chapters 5-7 in his gospel. The class will last seven weeks, so this will take us past Lent into the Easter season. It will give me an opportunity to get to know some of you better and for you to get to know me. Look elsewhere in this newsletter for details about the class.

I look forward to my first Sunday with you on **March 4**. I will be in the office and Brattleboro each Tuesday and on call the rest of the week for emergencies. You may reach me through the church office or by calling 862-596-5780 at my home across the river. What surprises might it please God to give us and Centre Church?
-- J.D. Stinson

CENTRE BELLS

The Newsletter of
**Centre Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ
MARCH 2018**

From Acting Council Chair, MARGO NEALE

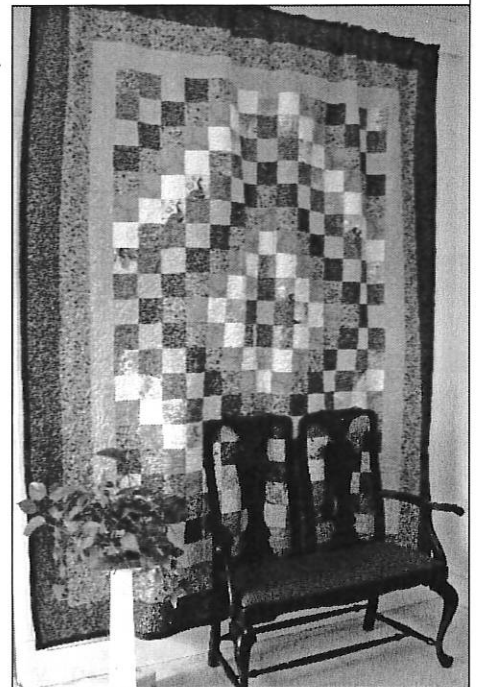
Greetings to all ,

After a rather complex and busy month at Centre Church, it is our pleasure to welcome the Reverend Dr. David Stinson, who will serve as our Bridge Minister from February 28 through June 14, 2018. Mr. Stinson, recently retired UCC minister and chaplain in the US Navy, is a resident of Swanzey, New Hampshire. He was our preacher on November 5, 2017. For 25 years he was the minister of the Glen Ridge Congregational Church in New Jersey. Prior to that he served congregations in Boothbay Harbor, ME, and Lawrence, MA. In 2010 he retired from the Navy at the rank of Rear Admiral. Also active in the broader United Church of Christ, he was Moderator of the Central Atlantic Conference in 2011. He and his wife Cynthia have four grown children.

Mr. Stinson invites you to participate in a study of the Sermon on the Mount on Tuesdays at noon, beginning on March 13. The course will last seven weeks. See the box on page 5 for details; more information about participation in this learning experience will follow early in March. Please see Mr. Stinson's message included in this newsletter.

We look forward to Mr. Stinson's steady and experienced guidance as we move into a new phase of our life together at Centre Church.

You may recall that I have hoped to use this column to express our gratitude to groups in the church that make exceptional contributions to our life together and to the community. This month I especially thank the members of the Quilting Group. They are Margit Brosnan, Stephanie Cary, Dawn Chattin, Anne Doesburg, Patty Reardon, Duo Xi, and Gisela Robeck. They meet once a week at Gisela's home where she serves them sumptuous desserts. Then they go to work on their quilts. Over time they have produced charming baby quilts, quilts for departing members of our congregation, celebrative quilts, and quilts for sale to bolster church coffers. At the Christmas Bazaar they raffle off large quilts for the benefit of the church. You may have seen these gorgeous quilts in the front hallway of the church just before the raffles. This group has turned quilting into a real ministry, an extension of the ministry of our church into the community. We are very grateful to them.



All best wishes to each of you. We have come through a difficult month. Be safe and well and aware that you are held in the heart of Centre Congregational Church.



“They captured in their ramble all the mysteries and magics of a March evening. Very still and mild it was, wrapped in a great, white, brooding silence -- a silence which was yet threaded through with many little silvery sounds which you could hear if you hearkened as much with your soul as your ears.” – *L. M. Montgomery*

From Music Director, MARY MILKEY-MAY

MUSIC NOTES

If you were in church on Sunday, February 11, you heard the new Children's Choir make its debut. Though this group is small, the kids are enthusiastic, talented, and fun. We have been rehearsing Sundays after church each week to prepare for singing IN church. The Children's Choir will also be singing on February 25, Rev. Bert's last Sunday, and they are already rehearsing for Easter! If there are any kids out there who would like to join us, we'd love to have you. If you are age 5 or older (or almost 5) we'd love you to be a part of the group. We will sing as often as we have something ready and it will be ready sooner with regular attendance. Let's see if we can make this work!

On February 25, the adult choir participated in the memorial service of Virginia Knuebel, a longtime choir member who was extremely dedicated to the music program at Centre. Alison Hale also played flute, as Virginia's other musical love was playing the flute. Thank you choir and thank you Alison for making music such a meaningful piece of Virginia's service. We will all miss her.

We hope you have been enjoying our Lenten music.....more to come!

BOARD of DEACONS



Deacon's Doings

The Deacons will be hanging the spring wreaths on March 4th. We are all eager for Spring! The Deacons with the help of Council have selected a

bridge minister to cover March to June 2018. Preparations are underway for Palm Sunday and Easter. A Special Farewell for our minister Rev. Bert Marshall was held on February 25, with a luncheon, entertainment and special toasts!

~Carlene McCarty, Chair, Deacons

BRATTLEBORO CENTRE for CHILDREN is in need of more substitute teachers. These are paid positions, usually an 8-hour shift, on short notice. (Early morning calls can happen!) If you, or someone you know, is reliable, willing or even curious, call **Nan Mann** at 802-254-0300.

"In March the soft rains continued, and each storm waited courteously until its predecessor sunk beneath the ground." — John Steinbeck, *East of Eden*

Search Committee

We continue to receive and read Ministerial Profiles. The faith and journey of these ministers continue to amaze and excite us. These are people who are at different stages on their life paths in UCC ministry. It is a joy to read and share our thoughts on these people of faith at our Search Committee meetings.

After each member shares the strengths and areas for growth that speaks to us, of a ministerial profile, we vote. This vote is to move forward to interview, keep on the maybe list, or we discontinue conversations with this minister.

Having a committee of 8, you can only imagine the challenges we face agreeing on times to interview candidates! After we agree with dates, then I contact the candidate and work on a time and place that work for all of us. Keep in mind that we are working to schedule time with people who already have fulltime jobs, families, and do not live in town next to us. :-)

As I write this, we have interviewed one candidate using Skype during a snow storm and have 2 more scheduled! another by Skype and the third coming to meet us, our church, and our community. A couple of members will share lunch, give a tour of the town, a tour of our church, and then a full committee interview.

Things are moving forward in our search. We are excited and exhausted at the same time. Please continue to pray for us, our families that we miss so much time with and the candidates.

BOARD FOR MISSION & SERVICE

Mission and Service continues to work with all ages. Faith in Action finished its final outpouring of help from the LemonAID stand and UCC grant in October to create the CWS Cleanup kits. These 15 kits were brought to the Meriden, Conn., UCC church in January. But \$14 remained from the donations, so with the suggestion from Groundworks, men's deodorant was purchased and donated. Rosie Gardner, Director of the Foodshelf at Groundworks, received this donation when she joined us on February 11th. She was at Centre Church to speak for Groundworks, our recipient of the Second Sunday Offering for February. Rosie made a point to say how much she enjoyed being at Centre Church and worshipping with us. In March we will sponsor One Great Hour of Sharing for our Second Sunday Offering.



Other news on the Second Sunday Offerings include the January donations from the congregation to Luz del Mundo Scholarship fund totaling \$233. Funds of \$267 from M&S 's budget was added to donate a total of \$500 at this time. This is an important time of year for this fund as school is just starting. We support 12-15 students, ranging from elementary school to college age. On **March 16th** we will celebrate this mission with a dinner in Memorial Hall. With a Central American theme, we'll serve chicken with pineapple, rice and beans, homemade tortillas, appetizers and flan with fruit for dessert. Harvey Nystrom is at the helm with help from the M&S committee AND a woman newly living in the area from Mexico. They each are taking the challenge of improving their second languages, Spanish and English, as they prepare the dinner!! The dinner will be at 6:00PM, with a suggested donation of \$15. We hope that you will all save this date on your calendars!

The Overflow Shelter continues to have full occupancy, so meals are important. Due to the icy weather last month, we had JUST enough food for everyone to have one portion. Pizza was added to the menu to be sure that everyone was fed, including any latecomers. The children of Centre Church decorated cookies that Marian Abell provided. Thank you again to ALL who contribute each month. If you haven't had the chance to yet, we have two more months to provide this very important local mission, **March 11th** and **April 8th**.

M&S is beginning to fill in people for the Peace Candle, a role that Dee and Bob Keller did soooo well! Thank you, again, to Dee and Bob for the years of dedication to this important part of our Sunday morning services. Please help us if you would like to light the Peace Candle or have an idea to share. We welcome ALL!!

~Respectfully submitted by **Priscilla Svec**

Benefit Dinner
for Luz del Mundo Scholarship Fund
Friday, March 16, at 6:00 p.m.
Memorial Hall

Come enjoy a Latin American-themed dinner and support the fund that assists with school expenses for the children of our sister parish in El Salvador, who are expected to pay for their own uniforms and school supplies. Many younger students at Cristo Redentor apply for tuition funding to attend the neighborhood Lutheran school because it is safer and closer to home than the public school. High school students receive help with general school supplies and uniforms.

Everyone is invited to the
MOMENT for PEACE
Friday, March 2
5:30-6:00PM
Centre Church Parlor
Everyone is welcome.

This month, Larrimore Crockett leads "Songs of Peace from Several Traditions." Larry will bring several songs about peace from various traditions and cultures, including Weston Priory in Vermont, the Taizé Community in France, and South Africa; we will all learn them and sing them together. Larry is a retired UCC minister, singer, and choir director who lives in Dummerston.

Lenten Bible Study Announced



You are invited to participate in a study of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) on Tuesdays at noon, beginning **March 13**. The course taught by Mr. Stinson will last seven weeks. This section of Jesus' teachings is one of his most famous, having motivated and influenced St. Francis, Leo Tolstoy, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, among others. John Stott, the Anglican priest, wrote that the Sermon is a brief statement of "a Christian value-system, ethical standard, religious devotion, attitude toward money, ambition, life-style and network of relationships—all of which are totally at variance with those of the non-Christian world."

At the time Matthew's gospel began to circulate, the church was living in the Roman world. The standards of Jesus and the church are still profoundly counter cultural in our own time and place. Come and delve deeply in to the challenge of living as a follower of Jesus. Participants should bring a Bible and a bag lunch to each class. A syllabus of reading assignments will be available on the table in the hallway outside the offices. For more information, please call the church office.

WOMEN'S SPIRIT . . .

The group continues sharing Victor Frankl's book *MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING*. The book has been a challenge to us to look at our own life's meaning as well as to be concerned about as how mistreatment of some is still going on.

Come join us each Thursday afternoon at 4:30 in the library. You do not need to own the book.



CHURCH LIFE



◆ WORSHIP SCHEDULE ◆ HOLY WEEK & EASTER

March 25 - Palm / Passion Sunday

A liturgy of transition from palms to passion

Distribution of palms



March 29—Maundy Thursday

7:00 pm, Centre Church

A service of Tenebrae and Sacrament



March 30—Good Friday

12:00pm till 3:00pm

Guilford Community Church UCC

38 Church Drive, Guilford

Reflections on the Seven Last Words of Christ

By Members of the Brattleboro Area

Interfaith Clergy Association



April 1—Easter Sunday

Christ Is Risen! Alleluia!



Brown Bag Lunch Group

We're going to try again to meet on the first Wednesday noon of March (7th). We were snowed out in January and February. Bring your lunch and something hot will be provided to drink while we catch up on the activities of the church and each other.

Centre Bells

is published monthly by

Centre Congregational Church, UCC

News items and articles, address changes, or requests to be added or removed from the *Centre Bells* mailing list should be submitted to the administrative assistant at: 802-254-4730/
centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org





If you would like to give one or more flowers for Easter, please fill out a form for each plant ordered and return the form(s) to the church office with your check to:

Centre Congregational Church
 193 Main Street
 Brattleboro, VT 05301

DEADLINE: Sunday, March 18, 2018

EASTER FLOWER ORDER

NAME _____

PHONE _____

Circle one: IN HONOR/MEMORY/CELEBRATION OF
 IN THANKSGIVING FOR

_____ 8" pot tulips@	\$14.50 each
_____ Easter lily@	\$12.50 each
_____ 3-bulb hyacinth@	\$9.50 each

CHECK TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

EASTER FLOWER ORDER

NAME _____

PHONE _____

Circle one: IN HONOR/MEMORY/CELEBRATION OF
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CHECK TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Board for Member Care

Member Care is always hoping people would find some time to visit our homebound members. That list of members and friends of our church is always in Centre Bells. Also, some members are in need of a ride to and from church on Sunday. Please contact the church office if you are able to help. ~Carolyn Smith, Member Care

PEOPLE



A word of good cheer would be warmly received by members and friends of our church who are in nursing homes, assisted living centers, or are house-bound as of February 25.

DON WEBSTER
 50 Highlawn Road
 Brattleboro, VT 05301 257-1434

FRAN BURROWS
 66 Green Meadow
 Brattleboro, VT 05301 254-4934

JEANNE RUETER
 Thompson House, 80 Maple St.,
 Brattleboro, VT 05301 254-4977

NANCY CLARKE
 Holton Home, 158 Western Ave.,
 Brattleboro, VT 05301 254-5005

WANDA GODFREY
 Vernon Hall, 13 Greenway Dr.,
 Vernon, VT 05354 254-2444

PHYLLIS HICKOK
 1520 Little Blue Stem Ct.
 Ames, IA 50014 (515)337-1956

JANE REED
 461 Grafton Rd., #101
 Townshend, VT 05353 (802)221-4213

KAREN GETTY PETER
 Langdon Place, 136 Arch Street,
 Room 152
 Keene, NH 03431 (603)357-3902

ROGER KETCHAM
 c/o 8 Williams Court
 Weymouth, MA 02188

DOROTHY ATOMANUK
 665 Upper Dummerston Road
 Brattleboro, VT 05301 254-6929

ALICE STOCKWELL
 39 Country Hill
 Brattleboro, VT 05301 254-5504

Please let Hilary know if we've missed someone.



WELCOME, welcome,
 little stranger,
 Fear no harm, and fear no
 danger;
 We are glad to see you here,
 For you sing "Sweet
 Spring is near." L.M. Alcott

MARCH 2018

*Holy Communion
celebrated

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 10 ⁰⁰ BWC Rehearsal 11 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Choir Rehearsal	2 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 5 ³⁰ Moment for Peace 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	3 12:00 Private Event (Parlor)
4 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship* 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	5 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl	6 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 5 ³⁰ Search Committee 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	7 12 ⁰⁰ Brown Bag Lunch 12 ⁰⁰ ACA	8 10 ⁰⁰ BWC Rehearsal 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Choir Rehearsal	9 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ WWAC	10
11 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 12 ⁰⁰ Meetings Day 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	12 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl 7 ³⁰ AA District 8	13 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 12 ⁰⁰ Sermon on the Mount Class 5 ³⁰ Search Committee 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	14 12 ⁰⁰ ACA	15 10 ⁰⁰ BWC Rehearsal 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Choir Rehearsal	16 11 ⁰⁰ Funeral service 12 ³⁰ Centre Bells deadline 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 6 ⁰⁰ M&S Dinner 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	17
18 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	19 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl	20 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 12 ⁰⁰ Sermon on the Mount Class 5 ³⁰ Search Committee 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	21 12 ⁰⁰ ACA 12 ³⁰ BALL 3 ³⁰ Fundraising Comm	22 10 ⁰⁰ BWC Rehearsal 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Choir Rehearsal	23 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	24 TBD WWAC
25 Palm Sunday 9 ⁰⁰ Book Study 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/FIA 10 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ AA Meeting	26 1 ⁰⁰ Prayer Shawl 7 ⁰⁰ Spiritual Conversations	27 9 ⁰⁰ Meetings (L) 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 12 ⁰⁰ Sermon on the Mount Class 5 ³⁰ Search Committee 6 ⁰⁰ Church Council 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	28 Centre Bells mailed 12 ⁰⁰ ACA	29 Maundy Thursday 10 ⁰⁰ BWC Rehearsal 1 ³⁰ Quilting Ministry 4 ³⁰ Women's Spirit 7 ⁰⁰ Maundy Thursday service	30 Good Friday 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 12 ⁰⁰ Community Good Friday Service at Guilford Church 7 ³⁰ AA Meeting	31 Holy Saturday

BIRTHDAYS

2 Priscilla Svec
3 Patricia Brown
Milton Eaton
5 Emma Rueter
6 Emmett Healey
7 Dianne Bassett
Sylvia Eaton
13 Jon Potter

18 Haley Marcil
20 Kathryn Fecto
21 Mike Ball
22 Matthew Kennedy
26 Addison Minott
27 Marilyn Young
Aidan Kindopp
Henry Grobe

March Lectionary Texts:

4 Ex 20:1-17•Ps 19•1 Cor 1:18-25•John 2:13-22
11 Num 21:4-9•Ps 107:1-3, 17-22•Eph 2:1-10•
John 3:14-21
18 Jer 31:31-34•Ps 51:1-12 or Ps 119:9-16•
Heb 5:5-10•John 12:20-33
25 Mark 11:1-11 or John 12:12-16•Ps 118:1-2,
19-29 (Liturgy of the Palms)•Isa 50:4-9a•
Ps 31:9-16•Phil 2:5-11•Mark 14:1-15:47 or
Mark 15:1-39, (40-47) (Liturgy of the Passion)
29 Ex 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14•Ps 116:1-2, 12-19•
1 Cor 11:23-26•John 13:1-17, 31b-35
30 Isa 52:13-53:12•Ps 22• Heb 10:16-25 or
Heb 4:14-16; 5, 7-9•John 18:1-19:42
31 Job 14:1-14•Lam 3:1-9, 19-24 •Ps 31:1-4,
15-16• 1 Pet 4:1-8•Matthew 27:57-66 or
John 19:38-42

ANNIVERSARIES

12 Deborah & Robert Cope 31 Mary & Verne Bristol



CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
193 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301

Office Hours: variable

Church Office: (802) 254-4730 / centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org

Website: www.centrechurchvt.org

Facebook: [Centre Congregational Church-Brattleboro, VT](https://www.facebook.com/Centre-Congregational-Church-Brattleboro-VT)

CHURCH STAFF AND LEADERSHIP

Bridge Pastor

Rev. David Stinson: revdavid@centrechurchvt.org

Music Director

Mary Milkey-May: music@centrechurchvt.org

Administrative Assistant

Hilary Farquhar: hilary@centrechurchvt.org

Sextons

Gary and Paul Smith

Financial Secretary

Christine Yost: finance@centrechurchvt.org

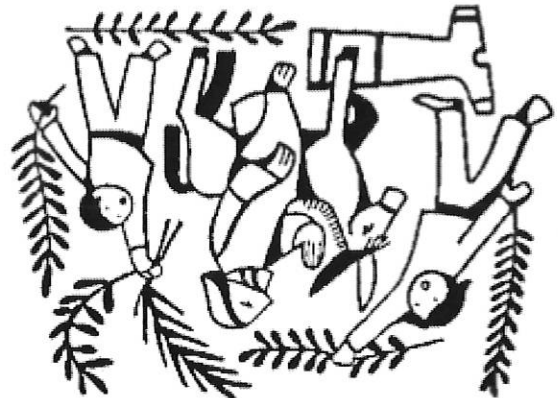
Acting Council Chair

Margo Neale

Treasurer / Clerk

Holly Kennedy / Constance Bresnahan

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MARCH

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