



GLAD TIDINGS



Vol. 45 Iss. 2

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, MD

March 2026

Lent at Prince of Peace

Come join us in person or [livestream on our Facebook page](#) as we begin [our Lenten journey each Wednesday in Lent](#).

March 11 & 25; 6:15 pm

A time of fellowship with wine, cheese, and finger foods.

March 4 & 18; 6:15 pm

Social Justice Ministry will lead discussions on Stepping Stones Shelter on March 4 and Lutheran Social Services on March 18. Additional information is on page 3.

March 4, 11, 18, & 25; 7:15 pm

Holden Evening Prayer



Lenten Sharing Bags

This year our Lenten Sharing Bag collection will benefit Stepping Stones Shelter which was the first shelter serving homeless families in Montgomery County. Currently there are 27 mothers and children in the shelter which provides not only food and shelter but also case management services to help families move from crisis to stability quickly. We will be collecting laundry pods, Lysol multi-surface cleaner and wipes, and Ziploc bags - all sizes.

Lenten Sharing Bag bags and lists of requested supplies are available in the narthex. All donations are due by Palm Sunday, March 29th. Contact Jane Sahmel or Jennifer Maloney if you have questions.

Stepping Stones Shelter has been nominated as one of the "Target Circle of Giving" Nominees. Set your store as Rockville or Gaithersburg and click on the link below to vote for Stepping Stones Shelter through March 31st! The process is very simple. Vote for Stepping Stones here - <https://www.target.com/circle/community-voting>



Daylight Saving Time



Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour when you go to bed **Saturday, March 8** for the start of Daylight Saving Time on Sunday, March 9.



Inclement Weather

During the winter months, if inclement weather requires us to cancel services or activities, a notice will appear on the [website homepage \(poplutheran.org\)](#).

Yard Sale & Vacation Bible School



Organizational meetings are being held soon. Yard Sale's is on **Thursday, March 5 at 7:00 pm via Zoom**. VBS's is TBD. All interested persons are welcome to one or both meetings. To find out more about it before you commit or you already know you want to be a part of it, please Contact [Lisa Canary](#) for more information, dates, times and, when needed, Zoom links. Thank you!





From Pastor Steve...

Pastor Steve Buechler
(pastor@poplutheran.org;
301-869-3666)

After one of the coldest winters in recent years - and overly persistent “snowcrete” - many of us are ready for Spring! And in March, meteorological spring begins! Hopefully, this month will bring with it warmer temperatures and no more snow or ice. But that doesn’t always happen.

On the other hand, the beginning of spring always brings the promise of a new season, even if the weather remains cold and damp. The beginning of spring always brings some signs of new life, even if you have to dig through the snow to see the crocus! And the beginning of spring is always a time to prepare garden beds and get ready for the planting season, even if in the early weeks this simply means starting seeds indoors or gathering supplies for the weeks ahead.

And in the church, the month of March is part of the season of Lent. And Lent is often called the springtime of the church year. This is partly because Lent always occurs at least partly in the spring. But it’s also because many of the things we do to prepare for Easter during Lent are similar to the things we do to prepare for the coming summer during the spring of any year.

Lent is really not supposed to be a time of “suffering and gloom” as many people think! Rather, as the “springtime of the church year”, Lent is a time to practice looking for signs of new life. As we read through the Gospel stories in this season, we’re reminded that much of what Jesus is remembered for doing happened at moments when people were at low points in their lives, and Jesus’ touch gave them hope and helped them to see a future. And so, Lent is a time to practice looking for signs of God’s new life in our lives, often especially at moments when things seem bad.

Lent as springtime also means preparing for the future. Many of the traditional Lenten disciplines are really intended to get us ready to live and serve in new ways in the future. For example, giving up bad habits in Lent is intended to help us live in new ways beyond Lent, not simply to take a break from them until Lent is over.

And Lent as springtime is also about nurturing new “seeds” in our lives that can grow and bear fruit as we move into the coming year. Often, the practices of deepening our prayer and worship life can help us to be more focused and more in tune with God’s call and voice in our lives so that we’re able to grow in new ways that we haven’t before.

And so, my hope is that this month will feel like spring for all of you, both in the weather and in your spiritual lives!

Yours in Christ,

March Highlights

Every Sunday

10:00 am Worship live and streamed on our Facebook Page
11:00 am Sunday School (pp 5-6)

Every Monday

7:00 pm Grace Notes Rehearsal (pg 7)

Every Tuesday

10:00 am Quilters (pg 7)
12:30 pm Women’s Bible Study

Second Saturday Service - in order to provide an additional opportunity for worship apart from Sunday morning, we will hold a 5 pm Saturday service on the 2nd Saturday of each month. Our next service will be on Sat., March 14. This service will have the same sermon and readings as the Sunday service but will not be livestreamed.

COMING UP...

March

- 1 Confirmation Meets
- 4 Lenten Fellowship & Evening Prayer (pp1,3)
- 7-8 Youth Ski Trip (pg 5)
- 8 Daylight Saving Time Starts (pg 1)
- 10 Council Meeting
- 11 Lenten Fellowship & Evening Prayer (pg 1)
- 12 Women’s Book Group (pg 8)
- 14 Saturday Service (pg 2)
- 14-15 Seekers Elementary Retreat (pg 5)
- 17 St. Patrick’s Day
- 18 Lenten Fellowship & Evening Prayer (pp1,3)
- 19 Men’s Book Club (pg 8)
- 19 Women’s Fellowship (pg 7)
- 25 Lenten Fellowship & Evening Prayer (pg 1)
- 29 Palm Sunday

April

- 2 Maundy Thursday
- 3 Good Friday
- 4 Holy Saturday
- 5 Easter Sunday
- 6 Easter Monday
- 9 Women's Book Group (pg 8)
- 12 Confirmation Meets
- 14 Council Meeting
- 15 Tax Day

For a current calendar, see:

<https://poplutheran.org/church-calendars/>

COUNCIL CORNER

February 2026 Meeting

Updates from the PoP Church Council

Welcome to our newest Council members!

Doug Register
Jay Haran
Emma Yanevskyy
Luke Dillon (Youth)

Council elected the following new officers for 2026:

President: Sherry Kienzle
Vice President: Jamie Pflasterer
Secretary: Rotating

Finances

We had an exceptional January - many thanks to the Congregation for your increased giving!

Property

The deck and outdoor stairs (fire exit) on Besecker are scheduled for replacement (starting soon, weather permitting.) In addition, the carpet in the sanctuary was approved to be replaced as our next Feast Fund project.

Volunteers

All PoP members are encouraged to become part of a serving team! Assistance is needed with running the sound board at Sunday service, confirming our snow removal company completes the job after each snow, or simply joining one of the other various committees/teams in the Congregation. Many hands make light work - we would love for everyone to join a serving team where your talents can shine!

EDITOR'S NOTE: A list of these committees/teams can be found on pages 4-5.

Thank you for your support, and we welcome your input!

SPECIAL PRAYERS

. . . My need was met because someone came and communicated . . . in words I could not express. . . .

Pastor John B. McGarvey



PoP Members

Alice Baur, Elizabeth Langum Chung, Elizabeth Cockerham, Brittany (DeGeorge) Daniel, Sherry Fischer, Laura Hampe Garofalo, Helen Griffith, Carmen Hooks-Hill, Roy Johnson, Mike & Remi Langum, Anne Lomperis, Dick Moore, Heather Robinson, David & Martha Rogers, Sherry Schiebel, Nancy Swanson, Emma Yanevskyy

Sympathy

Family of Ralph McKenzie
(brother-in-law of Judy Bruening)

Ongoing

The people of Ukraine and all those who are suffering due to hatred, war, and acts of violence
For racial justice and equality
All those struggling with Covid-19 and their Caregivers
All those impacted by nature

The complete Prayer List is available in the Weekly Email sent on Thursdays.

An Easy way to support the PoP Prayer Ministry

Pray regularly for those on the PoP Prayer List! Download a copy of the Prayer List from the Thursday Weekly Email or pick up a printed copy from the bulletin board in the narthex. All of us praying makes a difference!

SPOTLIGHT

Lenten Wednesday Short Programs

On March 4 at 6:15pm - Meet Mercedes Brant, Director of Community Engagement at [Stepping Stones Shelter](#) in Rockville and enjoy some refreshments as she discusses the history and mission of the shelter. Prince of Peace helps supply meals for families at the shelter, and they will be one of the recipients of this year's Lenten Sharing Bags collection. Stepping Stones works with families experiencing homelessness to help them move from crisis to stability quickly, in an atmosphere of dignity and respect.

On March 18 at 6:00pm - Pastor Christine will join us to talk about the current work of Lutheran Social Services and what's happening with immigrants in our area.

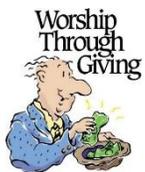
OTHER EVENTS

Haven Universe “Saturday Night Alive!”

Non-profit, Haven Universe has been partnering with Prince of Peace for several years and invites you to volunteer (or be a guest!) at HU “Saturday Night Alive.” These events are hosted for individuals with special needs and their families and friends, many of whom are adults that attend with their caregivers. “Saturday Night Alive” events will occur on the following dates **from 3:00-5:00pm** at Lakelands Park Middle School (1200 Main St, Gaithersburg): **Mar. 21, Apr. 18, May 16.** Positions for potential volunteers include front desk check-in, AV tech setup/takedown, craft table, merchandise sales, or just mingling with participants. This is a chance to see God’s work through our hands. (High school students can also earn SSL hours by volunteering.) Contact [Ric](#) or [Sherry](#) Kienzle for questions. We hope you can join us to be a witness of Christ to others!

STEWARDSHIP

Church Giving Envelopes



Envelopes for 2026 are available to all who would like them. They are located on the donation table in the Narthex. Please contact [Helen Griffith](#) if you have any questions.

Online Giving

It’s easy and will make your life easier. Just go to the church [webpage](#) (poplutheran.org) and click the green Donate Online button. Giving online can help all of us easily provide consistent support for the church. Signup today! Online giving is a win for the church and for the congregation. Please contact Chris Michel (michel_christian@yahoo.com) or Kwame Mensah (mensahkn@gmail.com) with any questions.

Electronic Giving

To donate right now or become an E-Giver, go to poplutheran.org or scan this QR code with your smart phone or tablet. Thanks for supporting the ministries of Prince of Peace!



Time and Talent

As we recognize all the blessings we have been given, we have the privilege of being a blessing to our church and others in our community!

We are grateful for our church members who have given their talents to duties during Sunday services, social justice efforts, administrative and building tasks, service projects, Sunday school.....the list goes on! We are encouraging ALL members of Prince of Peace to share that talent you have to contribute in some way to our church community. ***It takes every member to make a church!*** 🕊 Take a look below for various ways you can help.

Use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.
1 Peter 4:10

Prince of Peace is also grateful for the additional monetary contributions to replenish our General Operating fund. **Council is encouraging each household to increase their giving by \$20/mo to fund our operating budget.** We are prayerful that we will look back and see that members rallied together and the church ended the year with a surplus!

Give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
2 Corinthians 9:7

Thank you for your thoughtful commitment of ***time and talent*** this year!

We Need You!

Please consider contributing your talent - many hands make light work! Contact these coordinators with interest or for more information.

Facebook Greeter (backup) Martha Rogers
Sunday Service office@poplutheran.org
Be a presence/host online during Sunday morning service. Greet the online participant group and be on standby for any audio/visual streaming issues.

Snow Removal Coordinator

Coordinates with third-party vendor on removal of snow from church parking lot and walking areas (as needed/seasonal) (Questions? Contact Sherry Kienzle)

ADULT EDUCATION

Coffee and Conversation



Join us weekly after services for the Coffee and Conversation hour at 11am in the sanctuary. Throughout the year, we will include service

activities at the church, welcome speakers from outside organizations, and host group Bible study and conversation. To view schedule updates, or to sign up to lead a Bible study session this fall, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/PoPAdultEd2025>. We look forward to having you!

Descriptions of the current upcoming “lessons” follow.

March

- 1 Adult Bible Study, Sherry Kienzle
- 8 Adult Bible Study, Sherry Kienzle
- 15 TBD
- 22 Adult Bible Study, Sherry Kienzle
- 29 Palm Sunday, Jamie Pflasterer

April

- 5 Easter Sunday, Jamie Pflasterer
- 12 **Montgomery County's Dementia-Friendly Initiative - Join us on Sunday**
Please join us as we welcome a speaker from the county's [Dementia-Friendly Initiative](#). The initiative heightens awareness of dementia and equips the community to respond warmly and effectively when serving people living with dementia and their families. The talk will include -

- Learning about Alzheimer's and other types of dementia.
- Recognizing the signs of dementia.
- Tips for communicating and interacting with a person who has dementia.
- Tips for creating a dementia-friendly physical space.

Dementia Friendly America
Issue Brief

Dementia Friendly Communities
Dementia is a complex issue that must be addressed at a community level. A dementia-friendly community is one that is safe and supportive for people living with dementia and their families, and that provides the resources and services needed to help them live well.

Dementia Friendly America
Dementia Friendly America (DFA) is a national, voluntary, non-profit organization that works to advance dementia-friendly communities across the United States.

DFA Supports Community Efforts
DFA provides a variety of resources and support to help communities become dementia-friendly. These include:

- **Dementia-Friendly Communities Toolkit**: A comprehensive guide to help communities assess their current status and identify areas for improvement.
- **Dementia-Friendly Communities Grants**: Financial support for community-based projects that promote dementia-friendly practices.
- **Dementia-Friendly Communities Training**: Workshops and webinars for community leaders and staff.
- **Dementia-Friendly Communities Certification**: A process for recognizing and certifying dementia-friendly communities.

Who is Involved?
Anyone can get involved in making their community more dementia-friendly. This includes:

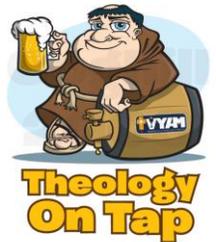
- **Businesses and Employers**: Supporting employees with dementia by providing accommodations and training.
- **Local Government**: Implementing policies and programs that support people living with dementia.
- **Healthcare Providers**: Improving care for people with dementia and their families.
- **Community Organizations**: Providing support and resources for people with dementia and their families.
- **Individuals**: Being dementia-friendly in their own neighborhoods and businesses.

Get Involved
Dementia Friendly America
1000 North Washington St. Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20002
www.dementiafriendly.org

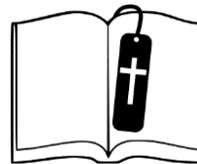
- 19 **Special Montgomery County Police Department Presentation on Frauds and Scams**
Please join us in welcoming Michael Conrad from MCPD to the Adult Coffee and Conversation hour for a special presentation on frauds and scams - how to protect yourself and loved ones. The presentation will cover some of the most common frauds and scams, discuss how to recognize them and prevention measures you can take, and then provide resources to use for recovery if you've been caught in a scam. There will be brochures and tip sheets available from MCPD as well. Hope to see you there!
- 26 Adult Bible Study, Sherry Kienzle
- May**
- 3 Adult Bible Study, Sherry Kienzle
- 10 TBD
- 17 Adult Bible Study, Sherry Kienzle

Theology on Tap

Join us for our next Theology on Tap session to talk about issues of faith. Pastor Steve leads one of these events each month. Check Weekly Email and the online worship notice for the next date and join us!



PoP Women's Bible Study



The Women's Bible Study meets every Tuesday from 12:30-2pm. We are currently studying 1 Corinthians. Two resources (not required) that might be helpful are *1 Corinthians (N. T. Wright for Everyone Bible Study Guides)* and *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians (The New Testament for Everyone)*. They are both available through Amazon and Bookshop.org. Additional availability can be found through audible, Libby, and other sources at the library. If you have questions or need to join by Zoom, please contact [Pastor Wendy Deeben](#).

MUSIC

Grace Notes

Is this the year to dust off your trumpet, trombone, saxophone, drums, guitar or other musical instrument and start playing again?

Have you always wanted to sing or play with “the Band”? Grace Notes is looking for musicians and singers. We rehearse on Monday nights from 7:00 to 8:30 pm and are working toward the goal of playing once a month during our worship service.



Time commitment is rehearsal 3-4 times a month and playing at one Sunday service a month. Contact [Jon Conary](#) for more information.

SOCIAL MINISTRIES

Gaithersburg HELP



A big thanks for all of the Souper Bowl soups and stews. All of the cans added up to almost 350 pounds!

Since last year ended on a good financial note, HELP will be increasing the amount of food to pack for each family. Your ongoing donations of canned goods and other non-perishables, plus financial donations from POP and individuals, made that happen. It is way more fun to add more food than to be analyzing what to delete.

In case you're wondering, so far there have happily been no instances of ICE showing up at the Pantry, and client numbers keep growing.

It is now clear that the big immediate need for IT support will require several individuals to cover the various skills needed. If you have a bit of time and a desire to help out, please contact Hope Walker, or look at the Gaithersburg HELP website for more detailed information and an application form. Filling out the form will get you a call from the Volunteer Coordinator who can explain the needs in detail. Contact information is below.



For questions or to volunteer, please contact your POP Delegate, Hope Walker, (hope.walker@GaithersburgHELP.org)

If you would like a tour of the Pantry on Muddy Branch Road, that can easily be arranged. The website is GaithersburgHelp.org for lots of great information

Quilters



Would you like to change the world for someone? Can you tie a knot or tear/cut a piece of cloth? Then join the Quilter's group, **Tuesday mornings from 10:00 am till noon** at the church or work from home. We also can use donations of cloth (cotton preferred). **We are changing the world one quilt at a time!**

Contact [Lisa Conary](#) for more information.

Fabric Donations Needed



Do you have some fabric in your home that you are not going to use? The PoP Quilters are in need of fabric and sheets for quilts. We use sheets for the backing and other pieces of cloth for squares. Cotton is best but blends work as well. Please leave any fabric donations in the church office or music room.

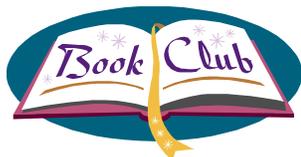
If you have questions, please contact [Lisa Conary](#).

FELLOWSHIP

Ladies of Prince of Peace, please mark your calendars for March 19th for a wonderful evening of fellowship, food, and a very special guest speaker. Judith Clark, founder of Women Who Care Ministries, will join us to share her story and offer insight into the mission and work of her ministry. This is a local organization serving our community. Please visit their website or speak with Meredith if you would like more information before the event. Feel free to bring a guest. Part of our goal, along with enjoying time together, is to help inform our community about this remarkable ministry. You will be given the opportunity to contribute to the Ministry. **This will be a potluck gathering in the Fellowship Hall at 6:30pm.** Please follow the [link](#) to RSVP and indicate the dish you plan to bring.

Men's Book Club

Our next meeting will be on **Thursday, March 19th, 7 pm** at Dick Moore's house. It is time to re-read *1984* by George Orwell.



Women's Book Group

The Women's Book Group will be gathering again on Thursday evening, **March 12, 7:30 pm** to discuss *Trust* by Hernan Diaz. The Group will either meet at the home of Kathy Mellott or at PoP in the Fellowship Hall and will be announced in the Book Group email.

Future Book Selections and Hosts

April 9 *James*

By P. Everett
host Susan Victor

May 8 *The Glassmaker*

By T. Chevalier
host Alice Benson

June 11 *The Choice*

By E.E. Egar
host Nancy Wolejsza

July 9 *The Hazelbourne Ladies Motorcycle and Flying Club*

By H. Simonson
host Judy Bruening

GIVING IN 2025

GAITHERSBURG HELP

Between 1/1/25 and 12/31/25, POP donated \$9,000 (our annual support and proceeds of the Interfaith 5K) and 2,578 pounds of food to Gaithersburg Help. To learn about volunteer opportunities, go to <https://www.gaithersburghelp.org/>.

UNITED HELP UKRAINE

Social Justice Ministry on behalf of POP sent an end-of-year gift to United Help Ukraine (UHU) to help further its efforts in Ukraine. UHU's work includes:

- Providing life-saving medical training at UHU's TacMed centers to defenders, first responders and civilians;

- Supporting over 260 hospitals in Ukraine with vital medical supplies and equipment;
- Expanding SMUHA Family Resilience Project hubs to provide psychological aid and other resources to thousands of children and parents affected by the trauma of war;
- Installing water filtration systems in areas affected by the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam.

Visit <https://unitedhelpukraine.org/> to learn more.

RECENT EVENTS

We are Red Cross ready!

Thank you to the Red Cross for coming out to share very timely tips with the adult Coffee and Conversation group as well as the middle and high school Sunday School classes, on Sunday 2/22 about emergency preparedness. More tips and the Red Cross app can be found at

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html>



Shrove Tuesday pancake club

The Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner on Tuesday, February 17 was a roaring success, featuring great fellowship, full bellies. Dollars raised to support PoP youth attending the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis will be reported in a future GT issue.

Special thanks to everyone who attended or donated, the fellowship committee, and the many youth volunteers and adult helpers! Donations to support the youth ministry at PoP continue to be accepted - please include "youth fundraising" in the memo line.



Successful Souper Bowl!

Our Souper Bowl was a close competition, with the Patriots receiving a vote of 103 cans to the Seahawks 102! PreK-K and Elementary Learners worked hard to sort, count, and package the donations for Gaithersburg Help. Your soup, stew, chili, and other nutritious foods are always welcome. PoP collects for Gaithersburg Help all year.



POP OFFICE

Office Hours

Our office is now being staffed by Martha Rogers on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, from 9:30 am - 1:30 pm. However, it is always possible to:

- Call or email the office (or the Pastor directly) - we will be monitoring email and voicemail daily, so it's always possible to contact us;
- Drop off food for Gaithersburg HELP at the church - the bins continue to be located outside each door under the covered walkways.
- Send offering checks to the church (although [we're encouraging online donations](#) if you can do that.)

Serving in Worship Schedule

The Serving in Worship schedule for March and April has been posted on our [website](#) and the bulletin board in the narthex. Please review it and make arrangements for any conflicts. Thanks!

Recycling Toner/Ink Cartridges



Please continue saving used ink & toner cartridges for PoP. We still recycle them for store credit on office supplies. You can leave them in the box in the Narthex or in the labeled bin on the "Give & Take" table outside the back door.



Sunday Service Extras

Prince of Peace is in full bloom with fresh flower arrangements on Sundays!!

Please help us by ordering an arrangement. The cost will be \$40.00. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. If you have any questions, please contact Pamela Cook at 301-806-8016 (call or text).



Snack after Sunday Service is back! If you are interested in helping, there is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. Thank you for all your help! If you have any questions, you can contact Pamela Cook at 301-806-8016 (call or text).



ELCA DISASTER RESPONSE

Lutheran Disaster Response brings God's hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. With wildfires, hurricanes, flooding, and earthquakes, there are many immediate needs here and around the world. Most

current for many of us is the continuation of the Covid-19 pandemic, Afghan and Ukrainian refugees, and the war in Ukraine. Visit the [ELCA Disaster Response webpage](#) (<https://elca.org/disaster>) to donate or learn more about how you can help.

THINK ABOUT IT

Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth.

Hosea 6:3

I was listening to my five-year-old son, Mathew, as he worked on his Speak-and-Spell computer. He was concentrating intensely, typing words for the computer to say back to him.

Mathew punched in the word *God*. To his surprise, the computer said, "Word not found."

He tried again with the same reply. With great disgust, he stared at the computer and told it in no uncertain terms, "Jesus is not going to like this!"

--Mary Farwell

My three-year-old grandson found a quarter in the driveway as the family left for church. When they returned home, he pulled it out of his pocket and handed it to his mother. "You can have this money, Mommy. I was going to give it to Jesus, but he wasn't there."

--Joyce Parson

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 Photography TBD

Articles for the April issue of *Glad Tidings* are due **March 15**. Please email articles to Martha Rogers at GladTidingsEditor@gmail.com. Photos and/or graphics are welcome!

Glad Tidings is online at www.poplutheran.org

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