

# SPiRiT @ FiRST

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FIRST  
CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH *of Essex Junction*

*Love. Serve. Grow.*

### July/August 2024: In this issue...

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## Your Pastor's Ponderings.....

By now all of you probably know that our talented and beloved Christian Education Director, Laurie Chipman, will be leaving us and retiring to New York State to be closer family. She loves her family but she has also grown to love the people and programs of FCCEJ. She has poured her energy and heart into making our Faith Formation Program for Children and Youth the best one in the state of Vermont. For years, she has been the point person and convener of all the Vermont Christian Educators in the state and the others look to Laurie for guidance and expertise. We have been incredibly blessed to have Laurie on staff for so long.

Due to Laurie's love of our church and her investment in our Faith Formation & Youth Ministry Programs, she has gifted us with a new way of leaving. Instead of making a clean break and having a sudden gap in our staff and programming, she has offered to transition more slowly so that a new person can come on board and learn the ropes before Laurie is completely gone. The old style abrupt departure usually leaves churches floundering for a bit as the new replacements figure out how the program works. Laurie wants our program to flourish and continue on in a healthy way even during a transition, so as new staff are hired, Laurie will slowly cut back her hours and stay on board to guide the new folks and share her expertise.

With Laurie working with our Human Resource Committee, we have decided to start advertising in August for the new 6th - 12th grade Youth Ministry Educator, hoping for a start date in January 2025. This person will join Elizabeth Miller, Children's Ministry Coordinator, in working with the young people in our faith community. Laurie plans to stay for six weeks of transition after their hire date and help them settle in.

Since we don't have an exact hire date, Laurie has agreed to be a little flexible as to how long she will stay, but she does plan to depart before Easter 2025. That gives HRC and Church Council a little wiggle room in the hiring process.

Once the new person is hired, then we plan one heck of a party to celebrate Laurie's fifteen years of incredible ministry here. We will plan a fun party with gifts and speeches and maybe even a little light roasting! We will laugh and cry as we remember all the good times and significant events in which Laurie has participated. More of the details will be forthcoming.

For now, enjoy Laurie and the many gifts she brings to the church. Tell her how much you have appreciated her leadership, and share a story of her that you remember. Together we will celebrate and grieve, laugh and embrace, and together we will know that we have been blessed.

Enjoy the summer and I'll see you in August.

Rev. Mark

### **FCCEJ Summer Preaching Schedule**

- ◆ July 7<sup>th</sup> ~ Jonah Moos Leading the Worship Service
- ◆ July 14<sup>th</sup> Josh Sharp Leading Worship
- ◆ July 21<sup>st</sup> Josh Sharp Leading Worship
- ◆ July 28<sup>th</sup> Rev. Joan O'Gorman [Williston & Respite House] Leading Worship
- ◆ August 4<sup>th</sup> Mary McHugh Leading Worship
- ◆ August 10<sup>th</sup> Rev. Mark back and New Member's Joining
- ◆ August 25<sup>th</sup> Rev. Paul Sangree Leading Worship [Vermont Conference Minister]
- ◆ September 1<sup>st</sup> LAST DAY OF SUMMER WORSHIP STARTING AT 9am
- ◆ September 8<sup>th</sup> Welcome Back Sunday with 2 Services at 8:30 and 10:15am

As I write this, the end of June has arrived and I am soon on vacation for a week away with family and to enjoy reconnecting with one of our grandsons again. Life is good! My spirit will be refreshed, and I'll return ready to put final touches on our Youth Summer Service Days. Our Youth Ministry Team has been working hard organizing these fun days of hands-on service for our youth. Junior & Senior High Youth can sign up for one day or all four days, or if they have a summer job and are not sure they can participate I ask that they please reach out to me, as I'm sure we can figure something out so that they can spend some time in service. Our days will begin here at church, anywhere from 8am to 8:30am, and we will return here at the end of our day. Parents can drop off their youth and then YM Team will transport the group to our off-site locations. Participating youth need to have a YM Family Registration form all filled out (one form per family), along with a Parent/Guardian Permission Slip/Signed Waiver for the VT Food Bank on gleaning days. Both have a deadline of a week beforehand.

On Wednesday, July 17th, we will help with the VT Food Bank delivery here at FCCEJ—bright and early at 8am. We will then transition to baking goodies in our kitchen that we will later deliver to an organization after lunch. We are still finalizing where that will be for the afternoon, along with hoping to end our day helping out the Heavenly Thrift Shop.

After gathering here on Thursday, July 18 morning, we will travel to Burlington Interval where we will glean for the VT Food Bank, then have lunch and hope to help out at Spectrum or another location in the afternoon.

On Wednesday, July 24 we will arrive at church for an activity, then travel to go gleaning for the VT Food Bank, stop for lunch and return to church and make part of the meal for the Dismas House dinner that evening. We would like to coordinate with whoever signs up for the other meal items and would be willing to take the dinner to Dismas.

Thursday, July 25 begins by helping the volunteers get things ready for the Heavenly Food Pantry distribution day. We are working out the plans for the rest of the day but very well may end up at Mansfield Place playing board games with the residents.

Vacation Bible Camp, August 5-9, is the other main program that is keeping me busy these days. Many of you have stepped up to volunteer your time, thank you. We have campers who are registered, and we are hoping for more. The majority so far are staying for the full day. We do need a few more afternoon Senior High or College aged to work the afternoon of camp week. If you, your youth, or someone you know might be interested, please be in touch. I will be scheduling a couple of times for the JH youth and staff to gather in July so we can put a few pieces of the set together and have a small training session about camp week.

I pray you are finding ways to connect with our God through nature, people, volunteering, worshipping and setting some time aside to just be and listen for the breath of God to speak to you.

Peace to you & blessings for the road ahead,

Laurie Chipman, *Christian Education Director*

## **Vacation Bible Camp**

August 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Mornings 9am-12pm OR All-Day 9am-4pm (\$100/camper ~ scholarships available)

**Campers** ~ Toddlers with a Parent & PreK up through current 5th graders

**Register Online!** Take a moment and sign up today! Campers and all volunteers can register through this link: [fccej.org/v5/grow-in-faith/vacation-bible-camp/](https://fccej.org/v5/grow-in-faith/vacation-bible-camp/)

**Volunteers: Youth (6th – 12th) & Adults**

*Music ~ Science ~ Crafts ~ Games ~ Drama ~ Reflection & Snacks ~ Puppeteers*

Still room to volunteer if you are interested. Fill out volunteer paperwork and return to Laurie before August 1st.

Be a Camper Group Leader ~ Station Leaders or Helper ~ Set up the weekend before Camp ~ Work on a project before camp week.

Our current volunteers for the week are:

Jessica & Jonah Moos, Lauren Starkey, Riley Elliott, Judy Allen, Mary Anne Warren, Ginny Coe, Mary Ann Phelps, Judy Roy, Cathy Lapierre, Ann Marie Sullivan, Bill Bickford, Eric Lindholm, Jane Piper, Amanda Palmer, Bob Driver, and Doug Olufsen

Connect with Laurie if you are interested and would like to be involved somehow. We are always happy to chat and answer your questions. Volunteer for the full week, every morning, or just a morning or afternoon.



# **Faith Formation News**

**\*\*Watch for Family Ministry emails in your inbox\*\***

Sunday June 23, during Children's Message, Elizabeth, Children's Ministry Coordinator, presented The Beatitudes materials that will be provided in the Narthex throughout the summer months. On a weekly basis, children and their families will learn the blessings and hope The Beatitudes offer followers of Jesus. Also, please remember to check out the faith formation bulletin board as the hive gains bees along with other weekly information. Enjoy your summer!

Faithfully,

Elizabeth Miller, *Children's Ministry Coordinator*

## **Youth Ministry**

**It's time to build self-confidence. Unwind. Build Community with those around you.  
Come feel the love that God hands out to all so freely.**

### **Youth Picture Board**

We are always looking to add pictures to refresh this board. Send Laurie a picture or drop one off. The board is right outside the CE office. There will be some new ones soon of our youth in their school band uniforms. Stop by and take a look!

### **Youth Ministry Info Board**

Youth Registration forms (one form per family), SHY job applications for Nursery & VB Camp and Adult Volunteer Safe Conduct paperwork for all those volunteering with children and youth.

### **Youth Calendar:**

*Youth Summer Service Days:* July 17 & 18 and July 24 & 25 (Wednesdays & Thursdays)

You can sign up for full or half days ~ all four or just one ~ whichever works with your schedule. You must have a Youth Registration Form on file before participating in YSSDs.

Youth Ministry Team will finalize the service opportunities. So far, our current list looks like this:

Help our Food Pantry and possibly our Thrift Shop, glean for VT Food Bank, make goodies for Spectrum and Respite House, visit our seniors and play board games at Mansfield Place, and make part/all of a Dismas House meal.

### **SH Youth Job Opportunities**

#### *VB Camp*

August 5-9~ work M-F afternoons 11:45am-4:30pm of camp week. \$200 for week.

Application is online on our VB Camp page or here in the office hallway. Schedule an interview with Laurie ASAP! Looking for 3 more staff! You can also volunteer in the mornings 8:30-12noon.

#### *Nursery Staff (Senior High Youth & College Students)*

Work as a team, two by two, in the Nursery during our 9am summer services (June 2 to September 1). Nursery workers are paid \$20 per worship service. Arrive at 8:45am and stay through 10:15am. Staff receive a text reminder on Thursdays from Laurie that goes out to the full group (including a second adult). Staff sign up for dates on our online Google Excel sheet. (Nursery Adult Supports sign up on this same calendar.) Reach out to Laurie for an application and an interview.

I slept and dreamt  
that life was joy.

I awoke and saw that  
life was service.

I acted and behold,  
service was joy.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

# Missions Committee

## Montana Service Trip



By the time you are reading this newsletter, the Montana Team will have been to the Blackfeet Reservation where we worked with members of the tribe on service projects and were involved in some amazing cultural events. The day of our arrival we visited a local craft/maker's market where there was a local drum group performing. We also had the opportunity to visit a ranch and go horseback riding as well as hike in Glacier National Park. We are eager to share our experiences with you and are planning a formal presentation to the congregation in the fall.

If you see any team members over the summer - Ashley, Lisa & Matt Clark; Bill Coddington; Dave, Christine, Sam & Mae Dewey; Sharon Dettenrieder; Cathy Lapierre; Mark Mendes; Gretchen & Izzy Owens; Heather, Terry, Addie & Tristan Stein – be sure to ask them about their experiences. We are grateful for this opportunity to serve and are most appreciative of the support from the FCCEJ community.

With Gratitude,

Sharon D. Dettenrieder for the Montana Service Team

## Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop News!

Happy Summer! Thrift Shop customers have been delighted with our Spring/Summer inventory and we continue to see an increase in customer traffic and sales. Due to our increasing sales, in June we were able to donate \$19,500 to the community. \$1,500 was given to each of the following organizations: Building Bright Futures, Champlain Community Services, EJRP Scholarship Fund, Janet S. Munt Family Room, Jenna's Promise, Let's Grow Kids, National Alliance of Mental Health VT, Project Hoepfner, HomeShare Vermont, Vermont Children's Trust Foundation, Stern Center for Language and Learning, Vermont Community Fund and Hunger Free Vermont.

We also spruced up the porch at the shop with the installation of new carpet. The Thrift Shop is also working with the Food Pantry to support the Milk Project. We appreciate our generous community members who make donations, so we may continue to meet our mission of serving others, both with sale items and financial donations to local organizations.

We constantly explore ways to reuse and recycle items donated that we cannot sell, with a goal of keeping the clothing waste in our community and we reach out to folks who reuse and recycle. We continue to take the unsold denim (jeans) to Outerknown, a recycling/reuse business in St. Albans. We appreciate the support our community at large provides and always welcome donations of gently used items in good resalable quality. Please spread the "good word" of the shop's mission with your friends and if you are interested in volunteering, contact Elaine Raymond, 879-7350 or Sandy Tallman, 879-0665.

We are open for shopping and receiving donations on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 10-1, and Wednesday evenings from 4-7pm. Being open on the first Sunday of the month will resume in the fall.

## Chili Grab-n-Go Fundraiser

The Missions Committee is holding a Chili Grab-n-Go Dinner on Friday September 20th. The committee will be asking church members to make meat or vegetarian chili and corn bread. Watch for sign-ups in early September. The dinner will benefit the Age Well Meals on Wheels program. The following is information on this program:

*Meals on Wheels ensures that older Vermonters can remain in their own homes and avoid far more costly healthcare alternatives, such as unnecessary trips to the emergency room, hospitalizations, and nursing home placements. For many aging Vermonters, trusted Age Well volunteers or staff members who show up every day with a meal and a warm smile is the only person they see or speak with all day. This special delivery is the reason to get up in the morning, something to look forward to, and a reminder to take good care of themselves. Adequate nutrition is a necessity for health, functionality, and the ability to remain independent. Healthy eating can increase energy levels, mental acuity, resistance to illness and disease, immune system strength, recuperation speed, and the ability to manage chronic health problems. Our meal programs ensure that aging Vermonters have access to adequate nutrition even when family support, mobility, and resources are lacking. From a recent Participant Survey, 88% report they eat healthier food because of Meals on Wheels.*

Contact Linda Bogardus at [lbogardus@myfairpoint.net](mailto:lbogardus@myfairpoint.net) for more information or to sign up.

# Stewardship

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q. Do I have to use the printed and numbered pledge envelopes?  
A. *No. If you are paying your pledge by check, nothing else is needed, and the check can be deposited loose in the collection plate. If you are paying with cash, please use a plain envelope with your name on it.*
- Q. Do I need to pay my pledge weekly?  
A. *No. Your pledge can be paid on whatever schedule best fits your financial situation. It can be weekly, monthly, quarterly, or any other way you choose. This includes automatic payments from your bank.*
- Q. Can I make one annual pledge payment?  
A. *Yes. An annual pledge can be paid in one lump sum at any time during the year.*
- Q. If I'm gone for two months, should I put the missed pledge payments into separate envelopes when I return?  
A. *No. It is not necessary to put the payments for the missed weeks into eight individual envelopes. One envelope with the total amount pledged for the missed weeks is sufficient.*
- Q. Can I write one check and split the amount between pledge and special offerings?  
A. *Yes. Writing one check is fine as long as it is indicated in the memo line or on an attached note how the total amount should be split.*
- Q. Do you need my member number to credit my account with my payments?  
A. *No. Member accounts can be accessed in the church database by either member number or name.*
- Q. I have money from a fund raising event. What should I do with it?  
A. *The money should be counted by two people. The amount should be written on a paper and the paper signed by the counters. The money and the signed paper are then placed in an envelope or a bank bag (there are bank bags over the safe which is in the closet across from the administrative offices). Be sure to indicate which fund raising event and deposit in the safe ASAP after the event.*
- Q. Can I donate appreciated stocks?  
A. *Yes. It's easy, and a simplified way for tax deduction. Additional information on making a stock donation is on the FCCEJ website (Giving / Ways to Donate / Make a Gift of Stock).*

Ann Gray, Financial Secretary

## **Deacons**

Happy Summer to you all! It's time for picnics, family gatherings, hiking, swimming, and all those wonderful things folks do during summer. And, of course, VACATIONS!

As Rev. Mark and his family are on their long awaited vacation, we will have our yearly experience of the "vacated" pulpit being filled by a variety of guest speakers. Jonah Moos will start us off in July, followed by Josh Sharp for the next two Sundays. Welcome home, Josh! Joan O'Gorman from Respite House will speak on July 28. Mary McHugh will lead the first Sunday in August and then we welcome Rev. Mark as he returns to us refreshed and relaxed!

The Deacons pray that the summer will be refreshing and relaxing for us all. Play hard, visit often, love each other, and STAY SAFE this summer!

May your summer be filled with blessings!

Mary McHugh

### **\*\*\*Remember to Vote, Tuesday, August 13th\*\*\***

#### **Food for Thought, Bring a Non-Perishable Food Item for the Heavenly Food Pantry with You...**

The Heavenly Food Pantry has the opportunity to hold a food drive directly outside the polls at the Champlain Valley Expo. The pantry is in particular need of peanut butter, cereal and baked beans. Please consider bringing a non-perishable food item along with you to the polls. At this time, we will only be holding the food drive at the polling station in the City of Essex Junction. Specific details are as follows:

**When:** Tuesday, August 13th and Tuesday, November 5th — 7am to 7pm

**Where:** Champlain Valley Exposition in the Blue-Ribbon Pavilion

## Camp Scholarships Await You!

Children, Youth,  
Adults & Families

Connect with Laurie or Rev. Mark if you are planning to attend one of our UCC summer camps - Horton Center (NH), Silver Lake Conference Center (CT) or Pilgrim Lodge (ME). Scholarships can also go toward sending your child for full day VB Camp in August.

Attending a week of camp is a powerful way to connect with God, get to know others, and enrich your own faith. It's like VB Camp x 10! Meet new people, enjoy camp activities/outings, and have a life changing experience that you'll never forget. You'll want to go back every summer! UCC camps have some really cool staff and great views of God's creation.

## FCCEJ Family Camping Weekend

Friday, 8/ 9 - Sunday, 8/11 ~ Button Bay State Park  
13 sites booked - 10 available.

If you would like to contribute to the cost, you can mark your check "FCCJ Outdoor Ministries".

**Our weekend looks like this:** Arrive Friday afternoon/evening (time that works for you) and set up your site. Join the group for an evening campfire in our common area around our large red canopy. We'll move a couple of close by picnic tables so we can have a couple of meals together (lunch & supper of BYO to the table and a dish or item to share if you wish). Saturday will be a day of fun and activities, on your own and/or with others. Last year some took a bike ride, others were in the pool. We played corn hole, cards and got a little crafty. Glow sticks were a favorite of many. It's a very relaxed weekend with no set schedule. There will be great koinonia (fellowship) with others here from your FCCEJ family.



## JULY & AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

ACEBO, Trista  
ANTONE, Carolyn  
BABINGER, Fred  
BARTLETT, Asher  
BARTLETT, Megan  
BENWAY, Marie  
BERO, Peter  
BLACKMAN, Judy  
BLAKE, Nora  
BOTTAMINI, Diane  
BOURN, Isabelle  
BROOKS, Carolyn  
CARPENTER, Kelsey  
CHARLEBOIS, Danielle  
CHATES, Harriet  
CHEEK, Gene  
CHIPMAN, Brian  
CHIPMAN, Laurie  
CLARK, Matt  
CODDINGTON, Bill  
CONTI, Sue  
CUNNINGHAM-FIRKEY, Emily  
DAIGLE, Carol  
ELLIOTT, Riley  
EVANS, Rob  
FERRARA, Jonathan

FRANK, Courtney  
FRIVOLL, JanRoald  
FRIVOLL, Lois  
GARVEY, Joshua  
GIANNUZZI, Bruce  
GIBSON-KING, Melisa  
GILES, Janne  
GIROUX, Patricia  
HATHAWAY, Sheila  
HERLEY, Christina  
HOFFMAN, Alessandra  
HOLDEN, Mark  
HOUGHTON, Martha  
ISHAM, Barbara  
ISHAM, Ira  
JACKSON, Brad  
JOHNSON, Marie  
JOHNSON, Rachel  
JONES, Grace  
KELLY, Calvin  
KING, Henry  
KING, Justin  
KNAPP, Jackie  
LAFLAM, Tamsin  
LIVAK, Terri  
MARTHALER, Laura

MARTHALER, Lily  
MAYVILLE, Leah  
MCCULLEN, Judy  
MCCULLEN, Shannon  
MEILLEUR, Kevin  
MENDES, Mark  
MENDES, Shay  
MITTL, Jan  
MOOS, Ezra  
MOREAU, Judy  
NOEL, Matthew  
NOWELL, Tessa  
NYHAGEN, Sylvia  
OSBORNE, Howard  
PETHERBRIDGE, Dan  
PHELPS, Mary Ann  
RAYMOND, Francis  
RITTER, Dale  
RODDY, Cecilia  
SINKEWICZ, Christine  
SINKEWICZ, Robert  
SMITH, Barb  
STARKEY, Lauren  
THOMAS, Devon  
TOOF, Carolyn  
WEISCHEDEL, Betsy

### PLEASE NOTE:

In consideration of the privacy and safety of our faith family, we will no longer be publishing the actual birthdates each month, just notating who to celebrate. If you want an actual birthdate, please contact the church office. Thank you for understanding.

## **Summertime Program Updates**

**Sermon Talkback** WILL continue to meet through the summer  
The group meets every Tuesday morning from 8:30 – 10am in Marvin Lounge

**Wednesday Nights Searchers** will NOT meet in the summer  
First meeting will be on September 11, 2024—7pm in Marvin Lounge

**Grief Support** will NOT meet in July and August  
Next gathering will be Thursday, September 12 at 10am in Marvin Lounge

**Friday Bridge** will NOT meet in July or August  
First meeting will be on September 6th from 1:30 – 4pm in Marvin Lounge

**Friday Morning Coffee Clatter** WILL continue to meet at Martone's  
Friday mornings from 8-9am

### **Yoga @ First**

Come practice a compassionate, inquisitive sequence to integrate the mind, body, and soul. In each session, we will focus, breathe, build heat, strengthen, and relax. Join us Tuesday evenings, from 5-6:15. **During the summer months, we will be gathering in the Gym.** Wear comfortable, non restrictive clothing. Bring a mat or borrow one. Donations (to FCCEJ) welcome, but not required.

### **Craft Fest Annual Lawn Sale**

Mark your calendars for **Saturday August 17th** for the annual church lawn sale. The sale will be from 9am to 1pm rain or shine. All shopping will begin at 9am and not before. We'll be accepting kitchen items, books, children's toys, holiday items, puzzles, baskets, bath items, paintings, frames, jewelry, and furniture. Linens and clothes may be donated to the Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop.

Items can be dropped off the morning of the sale, starting at 7am at the church. Please note if you bring any furniture and it doesn't sell, you will be responsible for picking it up. The committee doesn't have the resources to bring to other thrift stores.

The lawn sale will include a bake sale sponsored by the Missions Committee. All proceeds from the bake sale will go to JUMP. Founded in 1988, the Joint Urban Ministry Project (JUMP) addresses the growing epidemic of poverty. To date, support for JUMP has grown to include broad interfaith assistance from 27 faith communities in the local area, key funding from hundreds of individuals, and vital sponsorship and dollars from both businesses and foundations. Unwavering, JUMP operates a key downtown Drop-In Center in donated space at the First Congregational Church of Burlington, where staff and volunteers provide compassionate care, practical assistance and informed referrals to thousands of Vermont children and adults. Eligible families and individuals receive voucher assistance for transportation, food, laundry, utilities, household goods, and healthcare every three months.

If you are unable to drop items off on August 17th, please reach out to Sue Conti at [sueconti@comcast.net](mailto:sueconti@comcast.net). For further information, please feel free to contact Linda Bogardus at [lbogardus@myfairpoint.net](mailto:lbogardus@myfairpoint.net).

### **Lunchtime Book Group**

The Lunchtime Book Group will continue meeting in July and August. We meet on the third Monday of each month at 11:30 in the Marvin Lounge. On July 15, we will discuss *This Other Eden* by Paul Harding. It's historical fiction about the last days of a small interracial community on an island off the coast of Maine. Hated by the mainlanders, they are evicted by the government.

On August 18, we will discuss *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt. In this book, Tova, a cleaning lady in an aquarium, develops a relationship with Marcellus, an octopus who lives in the aquarium. The book explores themes of the grieving process, loneliness in old age and how inter species relationships between humans and intelligent, empathetic animals can be transformative.

If you want to read ahead, September's book will be *The Women* by one of our favorite authors, Kristin Hannah. We'll meet on. September 16.

Bring a bag lunch and join us for camaraderie, and some lively conversation.

**First Congregational Church of Essex Junction**  
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Email: [welcome@fccej.org](mailto:welcome@fccej.org)

## **ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED**

### **Sunday Morning All-Family Worship June through Labor Day**

**9:00** - In-person and streamed via [youtube.com/c/fccej](https://youtube.com/c/fccej)

Music: Bethany Blake leads our musical offerings  
Finally @ First Praise Band is on summer hiatus

*\*Communion is served on the 1st Sunday of each month  
All are welcome at Christ's table\**

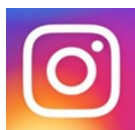
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