

**INTERIM MINISTER'S COLUMN**  
**Rev. Bert Marshall**

*You must give birth to your images.*

*They are the future waiting to be born.*

*Fear not the strangeness you feel.*

*The future must enter you  
long before it happens.*

*Just wait for the birth,*

*for the hour of new clarity. —Rainer Maria Rilke*

*The future must enter you long before it happens.*

Here is a phrase that speaks powerfully to transitional times in churches. Visually, it portrays the future being present in the here and now, as opposed to being "out there" somewhere waiting to be reached or arrived at – a mere object of our imaginations. The future is intimately bound up with our present, and is being formed by who we are and what we do – and, hopefully, by what God is calling us to be. The future must pass through the filters of human language, thought, and experience in order to be birthed into existence. In Christian practice, it must also pass through prayer and reflection. Human *being* is everywhere an agent of God's creative activity.

I look at Centre Congregational Church and I see a church still trying to find its way into a future that is yet unclear. I see a congregation that is still waiting to give birth to its images, still trying to discover what those images are, still searching for the hour of new clarity. The labor is long, the birthing is difficult, and the

**February Lectionary Texts:**

- 5 Isa 58:1-9a, (9b-12)•Ps 112:1-9 (10)•1 Cor 2:1-12, (13-16)•Matt 5:13-20  
12 Deuteronomy 30:15-20 or Sir 15:15-20•Psalm 119:1-8•1 Corinthians 3:1-9•Matt 5:21-37  
19 Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18•Psalm 119:33-40•1 Cor 3:10-11, 16-23•Matt 5:38-48  
26 Ex 24:12-18•Ps 2 or Ps 99•2 Pet 1:16-21•Matt 17:1-9

journey is definitely not for the faint of heart. The future can be a reluctant guest, an elusive image, or a disruptive intruder – but the past is no longer an attainable destination and the present is continually morphing into both past and future, like a river that is ever flowing and changing.



The challenge for churches in transition is to not fear the unsettling strangeness of this moment. The movement of change can be daunting and disorienting, but it is also inevitable, energizing, and laden with potential. Embracing change and living into new moments of possibility are the keys to growth and vitality.

Your future is not out there somewhere; it is here waiting to be born. Let it enter you. Welcome it. Learn to be midwives. The hour of new clarity will be birthed in due time, in God's time.

Grace & Peace,

Rev. Bert

**CENTRE BELLS**

The Newsletter of  
**Centre Congregational Church**  
**United Church of Christ**  
**February 2017**

**From Council Chair, MATT KENNEDY:**

Sometimes technology can be a great thing. As I sat down to write this, a Facebook memory from a year ago popped up with pictures of myself and others wearing our Bicentennial shirts. It's hard to believe that, at the time of my writing this, it's been a year since we kicked off our Bicentennial celebration, and that it's already been a little over 2 weeks since Christmas. Time sure can fly, whether it's two weeks or 200 years. About the time you're receiving this edition of Centre Bells, we are preparing for another important event in the life of the church, the Annual Financial Meeting following worship on **Sunday, February 5**. More than almost any other event in the life of the church, this meeting is crucial to determining the church's future. Centre has seen many changes in recent memory, with the staff, church leadership, and the membership in general.

During this time there has also been much discussion about what we should or shouldn't do with our financial resources, and this discussion hasn't been regulated to just at the Annual Financial Meeting. It is at the Financial Meeting, however, where the rubber meets the road, to borrow a phrase from my alter-ego passion: racing cars. So if you haven't already done so, please be sure to pick up a copy of the annual financial report either in person at the church office, or via email from Hilary (hilary@centrechurchvt.org). Set aside some time to look it over before the meeting, consider what is being proposed, and come prepared with any questions or suggestions you might have. As a congregational church, it is all our voices that guide us down the path and through the future. I hope to see you on February 5th.

**From Music Director, MARY MILKEY-MAY**

**MUSIC NOTES**

When Centre Bells went to press last month, we were still in the midst of preparing music for Advent and Christmas Eve. This year we happened to have several choir folks who planned on being away on Christmas Eve. Thanks to Rebecca Day, we ended up with some guests joining our choir for that service. Rebecca contacted some folks she knew (including her husband), some of whom were connected to Centre Church and some who were not. Even Hilary, our office administrator, joined the group! The result was fabulous. We had a full choir on Christmas Eve!! Thanks so much Becky, and thanks to those of you who sang with us! You saved the day!

We have a longer time span this year between Christmas and Easter as Easter comes mid April rather than in March. I like that! It gives the choir some more time to explore various anthems before we head into Lent. We will continue to offer a variety of styles for Sunday services hoping our music will feed your souls! If you have a favorite that you haven't heard in a while, please let me know.

Happy February!

"Life has taught us that love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking outward together in the same direction." ~*Saint-Exupery*



**Deacon's Doings**

The Deacons are recommending a change in the procedures to ordering flowers each week for the Sanctuary. We have been brainstorming new ideas and ways to save money! More to come in the next month.

***Chili Dinner Sunday, Feb. 26, directly following church***

There will be a sign-up sheet on the Bulletin Board. We are looking for folks to make Chili, Cornbread, Salads, drinks and desserts. This is a February tradition so we hope you will all join us.

***Cleaning of the Chandeliers Saturday, Feb. 4, 10:00***

If you can help wash globes, let me know please. Right now we have the Kennedys, McCartys, Browns, Mary Bristol, and I think Mike Ball. We could use a few more helpers.

Lots of interest in having *monthly Pot Luck Dinners*. Let us hear from you if you as a congregation are interested. The first one could be in March if there is enough interest.

Deacon of the month for February is Carlene McCarty.

Stay warm, everyone!

Carlene McCarty, Chair of the Deacons ([vtbooklady@gmail.com](mailto:vtbooklady@gmail.com))

## SEARCH COMMITTEE

After taking a little break over the holidays...we got into full swing in January. We put together a demographics survey that went out in our bulletins to those attending church during a few Sundays in January. We have also made it part of this February Centre Bells (see below). Thank you to all who have taken a few minutes to complete and return this survey.

During our most recent free time we entered all the written responses to our first survey into one very large file. Our thanks to all of you who took so much time and energy to complete that survey. We so appreciate your dedication to the search process. Those of you on a Committee had the opportunity to complete a survey focusing on your committee.

Wow! The Search Committee has created 4 surveys and many of you have completed 4 surveys! Thank you. We will use your survey responses to express our church families past, current and future ... completing our Centre Church Survey to our ends of a Ministerial Call.

~Anne Fecto

### Demographic Profile of Centre Congregational Church Congregation

Please take a moment to respond to the following confidential questions. The responses will be used to create our church's Profile. In an effort to reach all or as many members as possible, could you please sign the form at the bottom, unless you are uncomfortable doing so? This is part of the profile which will describe our church to potential pastors. Please return or mail your completed profile to the church office (193 Main St., Brattleboro, VT 05301) or a committee member.

List the total number of members in each age group that are in your household including yourself:

\_\_\_\_\_ 0-5 years \_\_\_\_\_ 19-34 years \_\_\_\_\_ 50-64 years \_\_\_\_\_ 75 years or older  
\_\_\_\_\_ 6-18 years \_\_\_\_\_ 35-49 years \_\_\_\_\_ 65-74 years

Education of all adults in your household including yourself:

\_\_\_\_\_ Did not complete high school \_\_\_\_\_ College graduate  
\_\_\_\_\_ High school graduate \_\_\_\_\_ Some postgraduate studies  
\_\_\_\_\_ Some college/vocational \_\_\_\_\_ Postgraduate degree

Family units: Please check one:

\_\_\_\_\_ Couple with children at home \_\_\_\_\_ Single  
\_\_\_\_\_ Couple without children at home: \_\_\_\_\_ Single parent with children  
\_\_\_\_\_ No Children \_\_\_\_\_ Grown Children

What is the occupation of each adult in your household:

\_\_\_\_\_ Business \_\_\_\_\_ Farmer/agriculture \_\_\_\_\_ Professional \_\_\_\_\_ Tradesperson  
\_\_\_\_\_ Clerical \_\_\_\_\_ Laborer/Manufacturing \_\_\_\_\_ Student \_\_\_\_\_ Other

What is your current employment information of each adult in your household:

\_\_\_\_\_ Employed \_\_\_\_\_ Not currently employed \_\_\_\_\_ Retired

How long have you attended Centre Congregational Church:

\_\_\_\_\_ Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_ New

What is your involvement level. Please check all that apply to you/your household:

\_\_\_\_\_ Attend Sunday Service \_\_\_\_\_ On a Committee \_\_\_\_\_ Attend CE (Adult/Child)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Attend Social Gathering \_\_\_\_\_ Assist in Church Activities

## BOARD FOR MISSION & SERVICE

### SECOND SUNDAY OFFERING

Yes, you read that right!

Long-time members may remember when our Special Offering of the Month was called the Second Sunday Offering, and Mission & Service has decided to return to that format for our Special Offerings. The month-long offering was a well-intentioned idea, but it has had a few drawbacks: It somehow diluted the offering, making it less "special;" it has been shortchanging the General Fund, which used to receive the other weeks' offerings; and it sometimes makes it harder to give by requiring writing on envelopes and checks every time.

So here's how it works:



On the Second Sunday of the month, all loose and non-pledge offerings will go to the Second Sunday Offering recipient. Check or cash, it doesn't matter, special envelopes optional. We're going to try to make it more Special. Brochures (and yes, sometimes special envelopes) will be available. When possible, speakers will be arranged to tell us about their organizations.

On the other Sundays, if you missed or forgot the Second Sunday and still wish to give, you are welcome to; just make sure it is clearly designated on your check memo line or in an envelope of cash. Otherwise, all loose and non-pledge offerings on those weeks will go into the General Fund for Centre Church.

If you have any questions, feel free to talk with any member of Mission & Service.

### SECOND SUNDAY OFFERINGS for 2017

Thanks to everyone who gave feedback to Mission & Service at our Survey Cafe in November!

From your advice and comments, we are returning to the Second Sunday format, and going to ONE monthly recipient most months (which will mean more money to that one recipient).

If you like to plan well ahead, here's the schedule for 2017, including recipient categories:

**January** - Luz del Mundo Scholarship Fund (Youth, Poverty, International)  
**February** - Groundworks Collaborative (Hunger, Poverty, Local)  
**March** - One Great Hour of Sharing (Hunger, Poverty, International)  
**April** - Boys and Girls Club of Brattleboro (Youth, Local)  
**May** - Brattleboro Summer Lunch Program (Youth, Hunger, Local)  
**June** - Carry Me Home (Poverty, International)  
**July** - Partners in Service for DCF Foster needs (Youth, Local)  
**August** - Brattleboro Senior Meals (Age, Hunger, Poverty, Local)  
**September** - Brattleboro Centre For Children (Youth, Poverty, Local)  
**October** - Neighbors in Need (Hunger, Poverty, National)  
**November** - Loaves & Fishes (Hunger, Local)  
**December** - The Samaritan Fund (Poverty, Local) and  
 The Christmas Fund (Poverty, National)

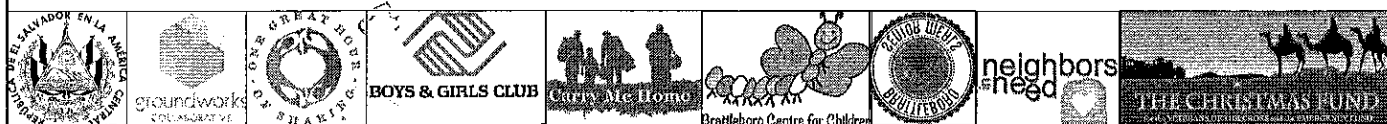
***El Salvador Dinner Fiesta***  
**Friday, February 3**  
 6:00 p.m. in Memorial Hall



Please join Mission and Service for a celebration of and fundraiser for our Sister Parish, Cristo Redentor, and the Luz del Mundo Scholarship Fund. Food, music, slide shows of past trips, and more!

Mission & Service will of course also continue to do special fundraisers, such as the Feb. 3 El Salvador Dinner (Please come!), SERRV Sales, Blanket Sales, Heifer International, Star Island scholarships when a year comes in which we have youth of an age to attend, Christmas presents for DCF and/or BCC kids, and we're looking into re-summing the Crop Walk (Hunger Walk) some of you may remember from the past.

If you want to know more or want to help with anything, you're welcome to talk to any M&S member.





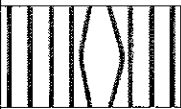
# CHURCH LIFE

Everyone is invited to the  
**MOMENT for PEACE**  
Friday, February 3 • 5:30-6:00PM  
Centre Church Parlor



This month **Parker Huber** will lead our meditation: "Inspiration from Thoreau: A Contemplation." In celebration of the 200th anniversary of Henry David Thoreau's birth in Concord, Massachusetts, Parker will share some of his favorite passages from "Walden." Come, let Thoreau's words flow through you. Perchance, as Thoreau wished to reawaken us. Parker is author of "The Wildest Country: Exploring Thoreau's Maine."

**FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE** meeting, Monday, February 6, 3:30 p.m., in the church library.



### Corrections Box:

Here are two corrections to the new directory listings:

Dennis Newman's email: [dnfinesse@outlook.com](mailto:dnfinesse@outlook.com)  
Stephanie Cary's address: 54 Linden St. Apt 1

Please let Hilary know if there is a mistake or update to your listing: (802)254-4730 or [hilary@centrechurchvt.org](mailto:hilary@centrechurchvt.org).

### WOMEN'S SPIRIT

This group is still meeting each Thursday at 4:30 in the church library and is open to anyone who would like to come. At present, the group is reading together and discussing J.D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy*. It is not necessary to have a copy of the book as it is read in each meeting.



### ♥ ♥ ♥ BROWN BAG GROUP ♥ ♥ ♥

After a January hiatus, the Brown Bag Group will again meet at the church at noon on **Wednesday, February 1**. This will come up very quickly on your calendar, so mark the first with a big star and bring your brown bag lunch to share in conversation and fun. Everyone is welcome.

### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION @ CENTRE CHURCH

Faith in Action during the worship service for ages 5+; nursery care provided during the service for ages 0-5. Every Sunday except Communion Sunday, the 1st Sunday of the month.

### ADULT EDUCATION OFFERINGS

**BOOK STUDY:** Join a self-led book study group currently reading *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi*, by Amy-Jill Levine. Copies are available at Everyone's Books for about \$15.00. Everyone is welcome in the church library!

**Sunday mornings, 9:00-10:00AM**

**SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS:** Led by the Rev. Sandy Daly, a group of adults gather in Chesterfield, NH, at Hallelujah Farm to discuss how and where God is moving in our lives and what we are being called to be and do. Directions to Hallelujah Farm are in the church office.

**Fourth Monday of each Month, 7:00-8:30PM**



There is no remedy for love, but to love more. *Henry David Thoreau*

**COOKIE TINS!** If anyone has cookie tins left over from the holidays that they would like to donate, the Christmas Craft Fair can use them. You can give them to Mary Bristol or Carlene McCarty.



### ORDER *This Jewel on Main Street*

The history of Centre Congregational Church, published for our bicentennial year, is still available for purchase from the office or during coffee hour following Sunday services.

For those who do not intend to be in the area and wish to buy a copy of this remarkable book, you may purchase it by sending a check for \$20.00 made out to Centre Church. This covers the \$15.00 book and shipping. Please send your orders to:

**Marion Daley**  
PO Box 445  
Putney VT 05346

Dot Vander Meulen will be happy to autograph the book before it is packed and mailed to you.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Harvey Nystrom** is the second person who joined Centre Church this past November. When I caught up with him on the phone over the Christmas holiday I got a little of his story.

Harvey was born and raised in Connecticut. He headed west for his first degree at Cornell University and then traveled farther west for graduate work. He earned a Masters degree at the University of Chicago. While still living in the Chicago area he and his partner, David Shallenberger, adopted then 10-month-old Carlos from Guatemala. The family moved to So. Vermont when David took a position with S.I.T. Harvey taught in the science field in several high schools in the area, including Keene, Bellows Falls and Brattleboro.

In 2010 the family moved to Brazil. Harvey taught at the American International School in Brasilia. They moved back to Brattleboro after a year. David was again working and traveling for S.I.T. Harvey decided that he would be the "stay-at-home Dad" as David's job took him away from home many weeks of the year. Their son graduated from BUHS and looks forward to enrolling in an auto mechanics program this coming June.

Harvey's church background is Episcopalian and Congregational. He is a practitioner of Buddhism. He is a valuable member of our Mission and Service Board. One of his many interests is cooking and he volunteers at our Loaves and Fishes on Tuesday. Other days he cooks at the Senior Center. Besides cooking, he is an avid reader, likes classical music – especially opera. He likes international travel. In one of our earlier conversations he told me he had been to Japan 4 times! That was of special interest to me as our son and family live there.

We are so pleased that Harvey has joined our congregation and we hope that this little bit will give you some information about him when you strike up a conversation at coffee hour or some other time.

Marion Daley  
Member Care Chairperson

I never knew how to worship until I knew how to love."  
-Henry Ward Beecher

## 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 housebound as of January 25th.

### 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)292-9196

### ROBERT & JANE REED

461 Grafton Rd., #201  
Townshend, VT 05353 (802)221-4213

### KAREN PETER

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

*Please let Hilary know if we've missed someone.*

It's time to sign up! VILLAGE HARMONY summer camp programs are now posted online.

Our 2017 world music summer camps for teens, adults and mixed-age ensembles take place in New England and beyond.


Go to [northernharmony.pair.com](http://northernharmony.pair.com) for the individual links to read about our different programs for the coming summer; to view and download a camp brochure PDF; and to apply online. We send acceptance emails out beginning January 15th, following which new applicants are accepted on a rolling basis as long as the camps have space.

We award generous financial aid for all US teen camps, and offer youth discounts for high school & college students for each of our international camps.

No auditions are required. If the idea of rehearsing seven hours a day and galumphing about the countryside performing makes your heart thump, then we want you.

# FEBRUARY 2017

\*Holy Communion celebrated

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 12 <sup>00</sup> Brown Bag Lunch	2 1 <sup>30</sup> Quilting Ministry 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit 7 <sup>00</sup> Choir Rehearsal	3 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 5 <sup>30</sup> Moment for Peace 6 <sup>00</sup> M&S Dinner 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting	4 10 <sup>00</sup> Chandelier cleaning (Sanctuary)
5 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Study 10 <sup>00</sup> Worship* 10 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting 11 <sup>30</sup> Financial Meeting 6 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting	6 3 <sup>30</sup> Fundraising Committee 4 <sup>30</sup> Prayer Shawl	7 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting	8	9 1 <sup>30</sup> Quilting Ministry 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit 7 <sup>00</sup> Choir Rehearsal	11 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 12 <sup>30</sup> Centre Bells deadline 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting	11
12 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Study 10 <sup>00</sup> Worship/FIA 10 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting 6 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting	13 4 <sup>30</sup> Prayer Shawl 7 <sup>30</sup> AA District 8	14 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 5 <sup>30</sup> Search Committee 6 <sup>00</sup> Meeting Night 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting	15 12 <sup>00</sup> BAI!	16 1 <sup>30</sup> Quilting Ministry 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit 7 <sup>00</sup> Choir Rehearsal	17 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting	18
19 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Study 10 <sup>00</sup> Worship/FIA 10 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting 6 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting	20 4 <sup>30</sup> Prayer Shawl	21 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 6 <sup>30</sup> Church Council 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting	22 Centre Bells mailed	23 1 <sup>30</sup> Quilting Ministry 4 <sup>30</sup> Women's Spirit 7 <sup>00</sup> Choir Rehearsal	24 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting 7 <sup>30</sup> BMC Concert	25
26 9 <sup>00</sup> Book Study 10 <sup>00</sup> Worship/FIA 10 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting 6 <sup>00</sup> AA Meeting	27 4 <sup>30</sup> Prayer Shawl 7 <sup>00</sup> Spiritual Conversations	28 11 <sup>30</sup> Loaves & Fishes 5 <sup>30</sup> Search Committee 7 <sup>30</sup> AA Meeting				

## BIRTHDAYS

9 Ron Pollard  
17 Nan Mann  
20 Dart Everett  
Emily Randrup  
22 Stephen Brown  
26 Rennie Washburn  
27 Mary Ann Donovan



## NOTICE OF ANNUAL FINANCIAL MEETING

Pursuant to our By-Laws, this is to notify you that the annual financial meeting of Centre Congregational Church will be held on **February 5, 2017, at 11:15 AM.** The purpose of this meeting is to receive financial reports, approve the annual budget, and conduct such other business as may appropriately come before the meeting.

**All members are encouraged to attend.**



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

**Office Hours:** M - F: 8:30am—12:30pm

**Church Office:** (802) 254-4730 / [centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org](mailto:centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org)

**Website:** [www.centrechurchvt.org](http://www.centrechurchvt.org)

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

**CHURCH STAFF AND LEADERSHIP**

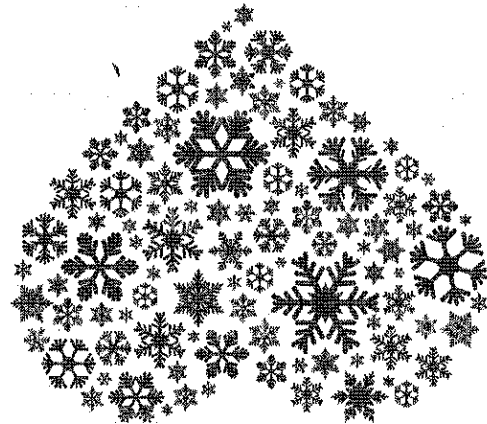
Interim Minister  
Financial Secretary  
Music Director  
Substitute Music Director  
Sexton  
Administrative Assistant

Rev. Bert Marshall: [revbert@centrechurchvt.org](mailto:revbert@centrechurchvt.org)  
Christine Yost: [finance@centrechurchvt.org](mailto:finance@centrechurchvt.org)  
Mary Milkey-May: [music@centrechurchvt.org](mailto:music@centrechurchvt.org)  
Ernest May  
Gary and Paul Smith  
Hilary Farquhar: [hilary@centrechurchvt.org](mailto:hilary@centrechurchvt.org)

Council Chair  
Treasurer / Clerk

Matt Kennedy  
Holly Kennedy / Constance Bresnahan

**2 0 1 7**



**FEBRUARY**

BRATTLEBORO, VT 05301

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