

THE EPISTLE

St. John's Episcopal Church 405 N. Saginaw Rd. Midland, MI 48640 (989) 631-2260

> office@sjec-midland.org www.sjec-midland.org

OCTOBER 2025

We are a storytelling people. From our earliest days, we make sense of the world through stories, telling who we are, where we have been, and what we hope for. Stories hold our memories, our values, and our dreams. They give shape to joy and to sorrow. They help us make meaning of the events and experiences of our lives, and help us remember that those lives are connected to something larger than ourselves.



The stories we tell about ourselves matter. They shape how we understand who we are and what we are becoming. They influence the way we meet the world and the way we meet one another. When we tell a story centered on loss or fear, our world can grow narrow and our vision short. When we tell a story grounded in gratitude and hope, our hearts open, and new possibilities come into view. Over time, these stories form the patterns of our lives, guiding how we choose, how we love, and how we trust that grace is still at work within us.

The church, too, is a community formed and sustained by story. Week by week, we gather to hear the stories of our faith: of creation and covenant, of prophets and teachers, of life renewed and love made known. These stories are ancient, yet they speak with a living voice. They remind us that God's story did not end long ago. It continues in our own time and in our own lives.

Congregational life is storytelling in community. Through shared worship and work, through learning and laughter, we discover how our individual stories weave together into something larger than any one of us could tell alone. The life of the church is a living narrative of faith practiced in relationship, a story continually renewed as new voices join the chorus and as familiar voices deepen in wisdom and love.

Our shared story as a parish is written in many voices. It can be heard in the laughter that fills the parish hall, in the prayers spoken quietly in a pew, in the generosity that supports ministry near and far. It lives in the music of worship, in meals prepared for neighbors, and in hands joined for service and care. Each of these moments tells a part of the larger story of love that God is weaving through this community.

As we turn toward November, our stewardship theme, Tell Out My Soul, will invite us to listen for the story God is telling through St. John's. Inspired by Mary's song of praise, we'll reflect on how gratitude becomes generosity and how generosity becomes our shared witness. Together we'll explore the story of our mission



and our budget—the story of a church alive with worship, service, study, and care—and we'll give thanks for the grace that allows us to keep telling it with joy.

Stories have the power to shape us long after the words are spoken. They remind us who we are and whose we are. The story we tell together as a parish is one of faith and courage, of welcome and love, of grace that continues to find us and call us forward. Each time we gather, pray, and serve, we add new lines to that unfolding story. May we keep telling it with care and conviction, and may every word we live bear witness to the goodness of God.



September Worship Links

Below are direct links to last month's worship services. If viewing electronically, click on the date to view the video from that day.

13 th Sunday after Pentecost (Sept. 7) Holy Eucharist	15 th Sunday after Pentecost (Sept. 21) Holy Eucharist
14 th Sunday after Pentecost (Sept. 14) Holy Eucharist	16 th Sunday after Pentecost (Sept. 28) Holy Eucharist

You can find older services on this page:

https://www.youtube.com/@st.johnsepiscopalchurchmid8944/streams

WE APPRECIATE YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT!

St. John's depends on the generosity of our friends and members. Pledges and gifts to St. John's can either be made by check and sent via US Mail to 405 N. Saginaw Rd., Midland, MI 48640, or by visiting tinyurl.com/Give2SJEC. This link will take you to a screen where you will enter the amount of your donation,

and designate a specific purpose or fund. Enter your email address as well, and you'll receive an electronic receipt.

You can also access electronic giving from the upper right-hand corner of our webpage...





or by pointing your phone's camera at this QR code.

If you have any questions about your continued financial support of St John's, please call the church office and your call will be directed to the appropriate staff person. Thank you for your generosity!





the feast bite-sized

ORDINARY TIME | SEPTEMBER 10 - 24, 2025

holy ground for whole communities

Holy Ground for Whole Communities is a Lilly Endowment grant-funded program (2025-2028) supporting Episcopal congregations in discerning new ways to use their land and buildings as sacred assets for the common good. Through formation, action grants, and partnership, the program invites congregations to reimagine how they serve God, neighbor, and creation in a time of climate crisis and social transformation.

> **Learn More:** greatlakesepiscopal.org/hgwc



worship leader training

continuing education

Worship is a powerful place - a place that transforms and empowers. This is the place where we may find ourselves awakened by God and stretched to reach new depths of faith, new ways of connecting what is going on in the world with how we might faithfully

If you are already licensed and are looking to expand your knowledge and capacities as well as keep your license current, sign up for our next online training on Saturday, September 27, 2025

Learn more here: https://bit.ly/wlt25

healing services

holy eucharist with a liturgy of offering wounds to God

The Standing Committee, in recognition of the hurts and wounds that many in our diocese are carrying related to church and bishops, invites you to four opportunities to participate in a healing service across the state, with two locations on Saturday, September 20, and two locations on Saturday, September 27.

View our calendar on greatlakesepiscopal.circle.so for all information and locations.



■ Scan to keep up to date on events and announcements at our online home for people, parishes, and ministries, greatlakesepiscopal.circle.so



CLICK HERE to read the most recent full issue of THE FEAST ONLINE

October 2025 The Epistle





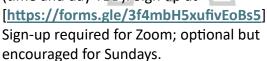
Exploring Episcopal Identity — Join us after the 10 AM worship service SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19, for this month's 2nd 3rd Sunday Sharing, where participants in the College for Congregational

Development (CCD) will offer reflections and insights from their two years in the program. We'll share what we've been learning about Episcopal identity how it shapes our worship, community, and mission—and invite you to join the conversation.

Living the Covenant **Exploring Episcopal Identity through Baptism**

What does it mean to live as an Episcopalian? This 8week series explores the Baptismal Covenant and how its promises shape our worship, community, and service in the world. Open to those preparing for baptism or confirmation, parish leaders and volunteers, and anyone curious about The Episcopal Church.

Sundays, through Nov. 16, 9:00-9:50 a.m. (make-up Nov. 23) and also via Zoom (time and day TBD). Sign up at [https://forms.gle/3f4mbH5xufivEoBs5].











A COLORFUL GHOST will be haunting Midland this year. She's looking for unwanted crayons and poptops to fill her haunted house. Once it's full, she will donate the

crayons to the Crayon Initiative and the poptops to Ronald McDonald Houses. Please bring your unwanted crayons and poptops to our TRUNK **OR TREAT** this Saturday to help fill her house. Come help color my costume!

BLESSING OF THE TRICK OR TREATERS

Sunday, October 26, during the 10 AM worship service, followed by fun activities after worship.





Radies Prayer Breakfast

Fundraiser for River Jordan, Inc. Sponsored by St. Martha's Guild November 1, 9-11 AM



Tickets—\$35 Individual, \$200 table of six—can be purchased on Sundays after the 10 am service, in the church office, or online via the QR code

Organ Project Update

Exciting progress is continuing to be made on our Organ Project! Delivery of the new instrument is now expected in mid- to late-November or possibly early December. While it's a little later than first planned, our anticipation only grows as we look forward to hearing it fill our sanctuary with music. As of Sept. 25, we've raised \$303,831.84 of our \$330,660 goal, which includes \$80,000 from Endowment—thank



you to all who have given so generously! We're still accepting donations through *The Mair Alsgaard Memorial Organ Fund*, and every contribution brings us closer to the finish line.

FUN FACTS ABOUT THE BUDGET

For 2025, we budgeted for revenue of \$1,116,426:
22% from the congregation
75% from the endowment
3% from facilities rent and
other sources





SAMS Pantry received a very generous donation of tuna, kidney beans, and ravioli from St. John's parishioners! Thank-you for your generosity! With the Fall season underway, our guests

would enjoy some cooler weather food items such as Progresso and Campbell's Chunky soups. Breakfast cereal, aluminum foil, plastic wrap, and

food storage bags are also always appreciated!











Scouting for Food at St Johns

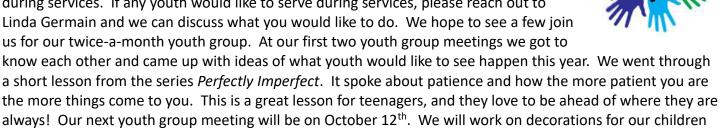
Williams Hall will be used as the food drop-off and sorting location for the **2025 Scouting for Food Drive** on



Saturday, November 8th, between 10am and 2pm. If you receive a yellow collection bag at your home before this date, please consider filling it with food donations for scouts to collect. If you do not receive a bag at your home, please consider dropping off a food donation at the church during the event. If you would like to help with the drop off, sorting, and boxing please feel free to join us in Williams Hall at any time during the event as we anticipate plenty of work to be done (*in 2024, over 4,700 items were collected*). Ultimately, once the food has been sorted and boxed, it will be delivered to *SAMS pantry* and the *Memorial Presbyterian Church HELP pantry*. Special thanks to the St John's Endowment Committee for a generous grant to cover the cost of the bags used in this year's collection.

September **Children and Youth**

EYE Youth group – We started back up September 7th. We have seen many youth during services. If any youth would like to serve during services, please reach out to Linda Germain and we can discuss what you would like to do. We hope to see a few join us for our twice-a-month youth group. At our first two youth group meetings we got to



Sunday School and Nursery – Our kids have started to return as our school year programming has been ramping up. Ms. Alicia has led several Sunday school lessons from Godly Play for all kids in attendance to get things going. We appreciate the flexibility of our children's group as our volunteers and staff have had emergencies and days off to start our year. Ms. Linda led a second lesson to our upper elementary children called Pray for All People. The main idea was that regardless of the person, you should pray for all and uplift them through prayer. Teaching children how to pray and what to pray for isn't always easy but can be interesting to navigate. We often teach the Five Finger Prayer approach, which is where each finger on one

hand is for a specific group to pray for. For example, we encourage a prayer for each finger based on these five categories; family and friends, teachers, leaders, sick and poor, and yourself.

and youth trunk. We will pick up our series on Identity at the end of October.

We had a change to our Godly Play room. Church staff were looking for a place to store the mobile altar to keep it safe and protected from our storage area. We replaced our makeshift altar that was in our Godly Playroom with the mobile Altar to give kids a sense of what a real altar may look like. Thank you, Mo. Alissa, for allowing this to happen.



Thank you, Jenni Stoll, for the playdough and miscellaneous other donations from the Learning Tree Cooperative Preschool's extra stuff. Jenni is one of our regular nursery care employees and now is the director of Learning Tree Cooperative Preschool as of this year. We look forward to a collaboration with the preschool this year. Let's see how much stuff we can trade!



One of our 4H kids, Abby Germain, donated some flowers for the Altar upstairs in September. She worked hard to grow and learn about flowers this summer for a 4H project and presentation at the Midland County Fair. She had an abundance of flowers growing and thought it would be nice to see her hard work in a beautiful setting.



On September 28, we kicked off **Neighboring Week** with *The Blessing of the Animals* on the south lawn of the church in honor of St. Francis. Attending were:

- † 42 humans
- † 22 dogs
- † 1 hedgehog

Additionally, a variety of dogs, cats and bunnies attended in absentia.



























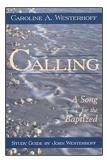




Library News

by Marnie Bash

On the Feature Shelves this month are books about sacraments and other "life-changing" events, including books on baptism and Eucharist, as well as books on death and grief, divorce, and other "life hurdles". The authors approach each of these topics with wisdom, gentleness, and deep feelings. Not necessarily "easy" reading, nevertheless, they are well worth reading.



Sacraments: One of my favorite books on baptism has always been Carline Westerhoff's *Calling: A Song for the Baptized*, an extended meditation on baptism. Anne Kitch's *Taking the Plunge* is a thoughtful discussion about having our children baptized. Also available is Roger

Hutchison's *The Gift of Baptism*, nominally a children's book but a lovely meditation for all ages.

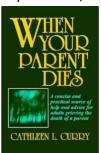
Books about the eucharist include Stookey's Eucharist, Christ's Feast with the Church, Fragomeni's Come to the Feast, and Miller's Praying the Eucharist. N.T. (Tom) Wright offers a short meditation in The

Meal Jesus Gave Us, and Milton Brasher-Cunningham's Keeping the Feast, is a wonderful book all about meals and using them as a basis for meditating on the meaning and spirituality of the mass – as well as including some wonderful recipes!





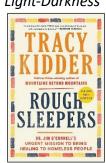
Moving from the sacraments to other life experiences, two excellent books about dying are Ira



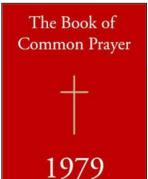
Byock's Dying Well: Peace and Possibilities at the End of Life, and Atul Gawande's Being Mortal. And books on grief include Brownlow's Jesus Wept, Katheen Curry's When Your Parent Dies, and James Mayfield's Discovering Grace in Grief.

David Finnegan-Hosey's *Christ on the Psych Ward* is the story of his battle with serious depression, and Andy McQuitty's *Notes from the Valley* describe his journey through a serious battle with cancer and how his spirituality supported him. There are also a couple of books about the effects of divorce. Richard Schmidt's *Comfort Ye-Finding Light in Times of Darkness*, Joyce Rupp's *Little Pieces of Light-Darkness*

and Personal Growth, and David James' From Loss to Hope, all look at healing in the "hard times". A less personal but absolutely fascinating book is Tracy Kidder's Rough Sleepers, the story of a doctor's lifelong journey helping the street people in the Boston area.



Although not "light reading before bed" these books are well worth the time spent in reading them and may give us support in those difficult times that come into every life. They will be available on the feature shelves now through most of November; shortly before Thanksgiving I will be putting out the books for Advent, devotionals and books about the Advent/Christmas season. Enjoy a good book this month!



BCP Spotlight

by Ellen Mc Vey

64. Before Worship (BCP, p.833)

O Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it the spirit of grace and of supplication: Deliver us, when we draw near to thee, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship thee in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This prayer was first added to the BCP in 1928. It comes from a collection of prayers, *Ancient Collects*, by William Bright, published in 1875. Much of our BCP comes from scripture and that is true of this prayer which joins scriptures from the Old and New Testaments - Zechariah 12:10, "And I will pour out a spirit of compassion and supplication on the house of David...." and John 4:23, "But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him."

But what I really like about this prayer is the plea that "coldness of heart and wanderings of mind" be replaced with "steadfast thoughts and kindled affections". Busted. And it's interesting that the BCP identifies this as a prayer "before worship" though really, it can apply in many life situations. I must not be the only one who occasionally finds their mind wandering to "what's for lunch", "who do I need to talk to after service", etc.! Or, maybe I sometimes come to church while continuing to harbor unkind thoughts over some perceived slight or unfairness.

One thing I like about the BCP is the breadth of prayers offered - even a prayer to help with distractions during worship. If you also find this happening to you occasionally, it may be helpful to use this prayer to ask for help to refocus your mind and heart...that we may worship God in spirit and in truth.

Women Journeying Together

We are working on *Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts, and Outlaws*, a study from Adam Hamilton. Partway through the book, we've already had some fascinating and vigorous discussions about the Gospel of Luke and the specific theme of "lifting up the lowly".

Our schedule for this month:

Oct 2 – Parables from the Underside

Oct 9 – On the Journey to Jerusalem

Oct 16 – The Final Week

Oct 23 - Crucified with the Outlaws

Come and join us some Thursday.

Women Journeying Together meets each Thursday afternoon during the school year from 1:00 to about 2:30. We gather in the Activity Room, at the bottom of the stairs across from the church office. We study, share, pray for and with each other, laugh frequently, and occasionally have lunch together. Women of all ages are welcome to join us, for a special study or "forever". If you have questions, please contact me, Marnie Bash, at mpbash@ameritech.net

Church History in Three Minutes (or Less)

by Eric Carlson

The "Great Bible" of 1539 (see last month's article) is historically significant as the first authorized Bible in English, and it established a crucial (if awkward) precedent: the Bible received authority from the monarch. The translation itself wasn't that well-received, though, and was largely ignored after Henry's death in 1547.

During her short reign (1553-1558), Henry's elder daughter Mary briefly restored papal authority, causing hundreds of clergy and scholars to flee to Protestant territories, especially Geneva. Once there, some produced a new English



translation: the Geneva Bible (GB). The GB had many new features, including the convenient chapter and verse divisions that we now take for granted, and being printed in a size convenient for individuals (as opposed to church reading stands). The GB accepted that the Bible contained what it called "hard places" which were not clear on their own. Its explanations, in the form of prefaces and marginal notes, were controversial, though. Matthew Parker, the first Archbishop of Canterbury under Queen Elizabeth I, banned its publication within England and promoted a note-free (and poorly received) substitute, called the Bishops' Bible. But his successor Archbishop Grindal reversed the ban and the GB rapidly became the preferred translation. Its position appeared secure when Elizabeth died in 1603.

But her cousin and heir, the Scottish King James Stewart, soon embarked on a mission to destroy its influence. James was very anti-Catholic, but he also felt his authority threatened by the Geneva-influenced Presbyterians who dominated the Scottish church. He preferred the English model of bishops hand-picked by the king. He found the GB marginalia "savoring too much of dangerous and traitorous conceits." For example, some notes supported disobeying tyrannical rulers, contradicting the Diving Right of Kings doctrine that James held dear. In 1604, James authorized work on a rival translation. The Bible was divided into six parts, each assigned to a separate team of translators. The result in 1611 was called the Authorized Version—ironically, it was never officially authorized—alias the King James Bible. (The entire process is brilliantly described in a book Marnie Bash recently featured in her article: Alister McGrath's In the Beginning.) It was the standard English translation until the English Revised Version of the 1880s. Since the KJB is so influential for the Anglican tradition and English language, I will devote a future article to it.



Monday, November 3, 8:00 AM

Join us at the Big Boy Restaurant, 1513 S.
Saginaw Rd., for our monthly **Men's Breakfast**.
Once in the restaurant, walk through the big room to the smaller room located at the southeast end of the restaurant to find our table.

JOIN US for food and fellowship!!

October 2025 The Epistle

> Each month the *Prayer Corner* includes the church's prayer list as well as the anniversaries and birthdays for the month. The prayer list is updated weekly and included in the Sunday morning worship service bulletins, along with the Daily Prayers for the Wider Church. The most recent version can be found at any time by clicking the "Announcements" link on the SJEC web page:

> > https://www.sjec-midland.org/

Please keep the following people in your prayers...



Cathy Chang & Juan Lopez, Susan & Bob, Char Bakeman, Betty Kirkley, Ronnie, Henry Youngquist, Chris, Yvonne, Charlene Adams, Lynn Miller, the Peterson family, Pam, Brad & Rebecca, the family of Tom Monto, Ed

Patterson, Laani, and Don Marcou.

Give thanks with those celebrating Oct. Birthdays...

1 – Ryan Moeggenberg Roni Rogers

2 - Dick White

8 – Wendy Thompson

11 – Joyce Anderson Linda Leckrone

16 – Dave Kempsell

19 – Leyna Gruhzit

24 - Alice Stoll

26 - Sara Philo

Avonlea Anderson

27 – Gabby Robinson

28 - Lizzie Albright

29 – Mark McCartney

30 - Kate Robinson

Contact the church office 989-631-2260 / office@sjec-midland.org

- To add someone to the prayer list
- Request receipt of the weekly Worship++ email
- Request receipt of the monthly Epistle
- To update your membership directory info

Give thanks with those celebrating Oct. Anniversaries..

4 – Adam & Sara Philo

15 – Jim Stefanski & Jason Wright

23 – Jerry & Margo Nielsen

31 – Kristina Mason & Kate Robinson



Members of the congregation who have received Pastoral Care training are available all year for friendly visits. Members who are in the hospital, nursing homes, or homebound may request a visit from our team to receive communion, a comforting prayer shawl or a pocket cross.

Team members include:

The Rev. Alissa Anderson and parishioners

Chris Esquivel Chris Schuster Jan Marcou Fred Schuster

Pat Roush

Call the parish office (989-631-2260) with a pastoral care request. In the case of a pastoral emergency outside office hours, please contact The Rev. Alissa Anderson at 616-540-9102 (cell).



October 2025 The Epistle



ACT UGANDA – Your congregation has been instrumental in helping ACT Uganda. We now have a big goal that we would like to bring to your attention. We believe in the transformative power of education SO MUCH that we want to fund 225 scholarships in 2025! That is 70 more than we currently fund. It is a BIG ask, we know, but going to school is the most direct path out of poverty for a young person.

Many Ugandan children—especially girls—miss out on a basic education simply because their families can't afford tuition or school supplies. Our HONOR scholarships enable students to receive a quality education from primary school to high school graduation so that they can become thriving adults. It takes just \$300 to send a child to school for one year. To learn more and to help education become a reality for a deserving and determined student, visit our website: actuganda.org/education. Thank you!

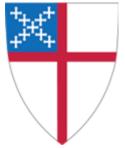
How to Connect with Mother Alissa Schedule a time via Calendly

CLICK HERE



Drop in Coffee Shop Office Hours Thurs., 9-11 AM. This month you'll find her at Grove Tea Lounge (2405 Abbott Rd.)





HEAD OF THE CHURCH – JESUS CHRIST MINISTERS - ALL OUR MEMBERS

To get in touch with any Clergy, Staff Member or Member of the Vestry, call or email the parish office:

(989) 631-2260

office@sjec-midland.org

OUR VESTRY - OUR ELECTED LEADERS

Clergy

Staff

Juli	
Dr. Amon Eady	Director of Music
Travis Fader	Organist
Linda Germain	Children & Youth Director
Colleen O'Dell	Bookkeeper
Ellen Woodard	Administrative Assistant
Nick Lowthian	Sexton
Vickie Densmore	lanitor

Class of 2026

Deb Blackhurst Angela Garcia, Co-Warden Gail Hoffman

Class of 2027

Eric Heglin, Clerk Susan Rye Fred Schuster, Co-Warden Class of 2028

John Adams Doug Germain Ann Wright

WEEKLY OPPORTUNITIES AT ST. JOHN'S

Sunday		Wednesday (Parish Office open 9am-3pm)		
8:00am	Holy EucharistSanctuary	10:30am	Women's Bible StudyLibrary	
8:30am	Chancel Choir RehearsalChoir Room	12:00pm	Holy Eucharist Chapel (use office entrance)	
9:00am	Fellowship HourWilliams Hall	1:00pm	AAMcNab Room	
10:00am	Holy Eucharist Sanctuary & YouTube	5:30pm	Tai ChiWilliams Hall	
11:00am	Fellowship HourWilliams Hall	5:30pm	Christian MeditationWilliams Hall	
11:30am	Handbell Choir RehearsalBell Zone	Thursday (Parish Office open 9am-3pm)		
4:00pm	Youth Group (every other)Activity Rm	9:00am	Alissa's Drop-in Coffee Office Hrs Grove	
5:00pm	NAMcNab Room	10:00am	Love Knots (2 nd /4 th)Williams Hall	
7:00pm	Bible in the Basement (1 st /3 rd).Activity Rm	1:00pm	Women Journeying Together Activity Rm	
Monday	<code>[(Parish Office open 9am-3pm)</code>	Friday (Parish Office open 9am-noon)		
12:00pm	AAMcNab Room	12:00pm	AAMcNab Room	
6:00pm	Popup Bible StudyLibrary	5:45pm	Peer Support MeetingMcNab Room	
Tuesday	(Parish Office open 9am-3pm)	7:00pm	Community Game Night (2 nd) Wms Hall	
10:00am	Samaritan Fund ClientsLibrary	<u>Saturday</u>		
10:00am	St. Martha's Guild (2 nd) Activity Room	12:00pm	AAMcNab Room	
1:00pm	KnitpickersWilliams Hall	7:00pm	NAMcNab Room	
		•		

The 10:00 am worship service is livestreamed on YouTube. At the time of the service, go to: https://www.youtube.com/@st.johnsepiscopalchurchmid8944/streams. A live service will have a prominent "LIVE" badge on the video thumbnail or title indicating the video is currently being streamed live. Previous services can also be viewed here at any time.



We joyfully gather to pray, worship, learn and serve as we seek to follow Jesus, and invite all to join us on a sacred journey of hope and transformation.

The next edition of **The Epistle** will be published in early November. The final deadline for submissions is Monday, November 3. Please consider submitting stories of your group's activities, or news of coming events and activities.

If you are not currently receiving an email notice to tell you that **The Epistle** has been published on our website, and you would like to receive one, please email office@sjec-midland.org.

If you prefer a printed copy of The Epistle, they are available in the church office, the narthex and each entrance into the church building.





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Rector - The Rev. Alissa G. Anderson





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