

THE EPISTLE

APRIL 2026

Alleluia, Christ is risen! Now what?

The great celebration of Easter Day has come and gone, and while Easter is a full season, flowers wilt and eggs are put away and rhythms settle, and the world around us remains what it was: beautiful and beloved—and also heavy, uncertain, and at times deeply weary. The first followers of Jesus knew this space well. Resurrection did not immediately make sense to them; even as it unfolded, it was something they struggled to recognize and understand.

I think this is often true for us as well. We proclaim that Christ is risen, but what does that mean on an ordinary Tuesday? What does it mean when the news is difficult, when relationships are strained, when grief lingers, or when hope feels hard to come by? Easter meets us in our joy but it also meets us in the midst of painful moments and gently insists that death and despair do not have the final word.

I've reflected before on the poet Wendell Berry's invitation to "practice resurrection"—not to fully understand it, not to explain it, but to live it. Because resurrection is not only something that happened long ago, it is something we are invited into, again and again. Each time we choose love over fear, hope over cynicism, connection over isolation, we are practicing resurrection. Each time we work for peace, extend compassion, or tend to one another and to God's creation, we participate in the quiet, persistent work of new life.

This is true not only for us as individuals, but for us as a parish. This season of Easter, and the months of spring and summer ahead, offer us an opportunity to reflect on who we are and who we are becoming together. As we continue to learn how we function, where we are thriving, and where we might grow, we are invited into that same work of resurrection: letting go of what no longer gives life, nurturing what does, and remaining open to the Spirit's movement among us as we trust that God is always drawing us toward deeper connection, greater vitality, and more abundant life.

This does not mean that everything is suddenly easy or perfect or controllable. The risen Christ still bore the marks of the cross, and we, too, carry wounds both personal and collective. But resurrection promises that these wounds are not the end of the story. God is always at work bringing life out of what feels closed, lost, or beyond hope.

So this Easter season, we are invited not just to celebrate resurrection, but to practice it. To look for it in small moments of grace. To embody it in acts of love. To trust that even in a weary world, God is still bringing forth life—through us, among us, and sometimes in spite of us.

Alleluia, Christ is risen! And we are still becoming Easter people.

With Easter hope,
Alissa+





March Worship Service Links



2nd Sunday in Lent
March 1, 2026



3rd Sunday in Lent
March 8, 2026



4th Sunday in Lent
March 15, 2026



5th Sunday in Lent
March 22, 2026



Sun. of the Passion: Palm Sun.
March 29, 2026

Older services can be found here:
<https://tinyurl.com/sjeclivestream>

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

FIRST WEEK OF EASTER | APRIL 9, 2026

new commission on ministry process & manual available

The Commission on Ministry will be hosting a townhall on Wednesday, April 15 at 7 p.m. for anyone interested in learning more about the discernment and ordination process in the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes, and for anyone who would like to learn about the new process or ask questions about the new manual. If you are unable to attend the virtual event, there will be a recording on our Diocesan town hall meeting playlist on YouTube. View the manual at greatlakesepiscopal.org/com. Register for the townhall at: greatlakesepiscopal.org/townhall.



earth day retreat

This spring, we're gathering youth in 6th -12th grades from across the diocese for a weekend of service, reflection, and hands-on care for creation. We'd love your help getting the word out to the young people and families in your congregation!

April 24-26
Grand Rapids & Rockford
Staying at St. Andrews, Grand Rapids
\$30/person - Scholarships available

For more information and registration, go to:
greatlakesepiscopal.org/earthdayretreat

confirmation registration deadline

The next diocesan service of Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation will be on Saturday, May 9, at 4 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church in Alpena (2:30 p.m. rehearsal). **The deadline to register candidates for that service is April 24. Candidates may not register themselves; they must be registered by their congregation.**

All information about services of Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation are available on our website at greatlakesepiscopal.org/confirmation



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 version of THE FEAST ONLINE.](#)

APRIL

Sunday Sharing



Please join us for **Sunday Sharing** on **April 19 at 11:30 AM** in Williams Hall. We will be dedicating the *Cross Collection* donated by S. Preston and Dr. Betty B. Jones. Preston and Betty collected crosses during their many global travels; each cross has a story and is unique to its location. Dr. Betty B. Jones retired from Delta College in 2001 leaving a remarkable legacy of intercultural and international education. We look forward to learning about this remarkable legacy to our community and our church.

St. John's **Welcoming Committee** will hold its first meeting of the year on **Thursday, April 23, at 7 PM** in the church library. We host events to invite the community in, such as Game Nights and Trunk or Treat, and go out into the community for events such as Pride Fest and Pride Night at the Loons. If you're looking for a way to get involved, we'd love to have you!



Community



April **Game Nights** are Friday, April 10 and 24, in Williams Hall. Play our games or bring your favorites! Bring your friends or join in with us! All ages welcome!

Are you interested in helping plan our next **SJEC Ladies Prayer Breakfast**? The first meeting will be on April 29 at 6pm in the McNab Room. The breakfast is planned for the first Saturday in November.



Loaves & Fishes RETURNS! St. John's Popular Fellowship Dinner Groups

For more information, see the sheets on the bulletin board outside Williams Hall. **April 26 is the final day to sign up!** Contact Bob Stoney with questions: 989-835-2494. *Bon appétit!*

SAMS Pantry

April requests for SAMS Pantry include taco shells, taco seasoning, flour tortillas, enchilada sauce, cake frosting, jello mix, and basic spices such as garlic powder, garlic salt, diced onion, cinnamon, chili powder, Italian seasoning, and BBQ sauce.

Come, See, Be

Over the past several months I have felt God stirring something in my heart for people in our community who are often overlooked: neighbors who are unhoused, hurting, lonely, or simply in need of connection. I find myself wondering what it might look like for St. John's to share more intentionally in God's love for these neighbors.

I am hoping to gather a small group of 5-8 people who feel drawn to this kind of ministry to pray, listen, and discern together what God might be calling us to do. This group would help explore possibilities, learn about needs in our community, and shape what this ministry might become at St. John's.

If you feel a pull toward building relationships with people who are often forgotten, and would be interested in helping shape something new, I would love to hear from you. Please contact Chris Schuster or St. John's office.

March Children and Youth



Gods Best Kids & Upper Elementary Kids during March enjoyed *Godly Play* stories, a St Patrick lesson, *Storymakers* lessons, and a Palm Sunday lesson.

Ms. Alicia kept the Gods Best Kids engaged with *Godly Play* stories. She covered the Faces of Easter, St Patrick, and other Easter stories. All very interactive and engaging. The



kids helped with the stories and props used to tell these stories. While *Godly Play* stories aren't typically verbal interactions more storytelling by the adult lead, they have key moving pieces to help with.



Our St Patrick's day of observation, March 15th, lesson was very creative this year. Ms. Alicia dressed as St. Patrick and walked through the *St. Patrick, Godly Play* story. As this lesson progressed, we had two children dress up as St

Patrick. For Communion on March 15th, Abby Germain dressed as St. Patrick and led Lilly Stoll to the front of the church with the days offering. This gave all present at church a fun addition to church service as well as our Sunday School kids a little added fun for the day.



Ms. Linda worked with the older kids on a couple of different activities and studies. For Palm Sunday we read a Bible story entitled *Palm Sunday* and a poem by Mary Oliver *The Poet Thinks About the Donkey*. August Anderson took charge of the reading and did a wonderful

job on Palm Sunday! Often kids will do the reading or skits if they wish because it allows them to be more involved and participate. Both led to a brief discussion about Palm Sunday and why Donkeys are important.



Conversations can be very interesting with our lessons! During Lent we also began a *Storymakers* book entitled *Lent* that we will complete in April. So far, we discussed treasures, baptism, mountain tops, and water into wine. We will complete our *Lent* lessons with light and cast out...could be interesting studies in April!

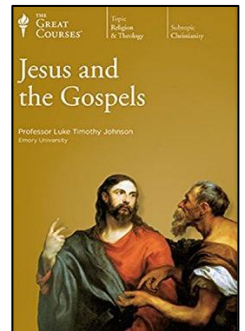
Looking ahead to April, we had some Easter fun and will be finishing up *Lent* and *Restart* during Sunday School.



EYE Youth Group continues to work on the *Storymakers, Identity* book series. We will move forward with our last two chapters in April to complete the *Identity* book series. Looking forward to what discussions will bring this month

Women Journeying Together

Following a joyful Easter luncheon, we will take a dive into a relatively unexplored area when we look at the “what and why” of apocryphal materials from both the Old and New Testament times. We’ll start by looking at *The Apocrypha* of the Old Testament, found in some of our Bibles between the Old and New Testaments. Then we’ll discuss the “canon” of the Bible and how it was set. Last, we’ll look at some different kinds of New Testament apocryphal materials, mostly from the 2nd century AD. Our leader in the New Testament apocryphal materials will be Professor Luke Timothy Johnson in the DVD series, *Jesus and the Gospels*. While this material is not considered “inspired” and is not used in our worship or church teaching, it is interesting to see what early Christians were reading and hearing. We will be doing this study Thursday afternoons between April 16 and May14; come and join us in the Activity Room at 1:00!



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

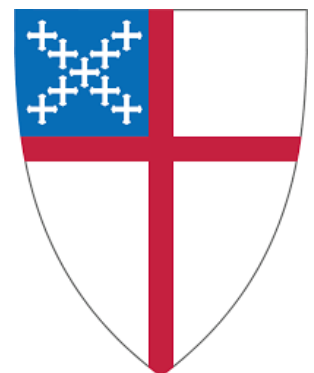
Library News

by Marnie Bash

And now for something different:

The comedian Robin William’s once listed these top 10 reasons to be an Episcopalian:

10. No snake handling.
9. You can believe in dinosaurs.
8. Male and female God created them; male and female we ordain them.
7. You don’t have to check your brains at the door.
6. Pew aerobics.
5. Church year is color-coded.
4. Free wine on Sunday.
3. All of the pageantry – none of the guilt.
2. You don’t have to know how to swim to get baptized.



And the Number One reason to be an Episcopalian:

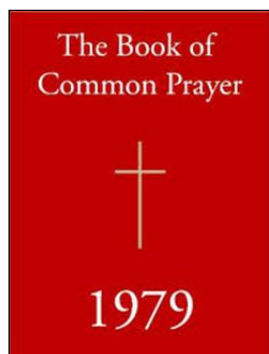
1. No matter what you believe, there's bound to be at least one other Episcopalian who agrees with you.

Fun, right? The books on the Feature Shelves this month are ones I label "inspirational", sometimes fun – *Stories, Tales, and a Few Small Lies of a Country Parson*, by Robert Horine, or *Whistling in the Dark, a Doubter's Dictionary* by Frederick Buchner; sometimes hopeful and supportive – *God Works the Night Shift* by Ron Mehl or *God's Annoying Love for Imperfect People* by Mike Yaconelli. Other books in this category include *Fresh Bread*, poetry of Joyce Rupp, and *Meditations on the Psalms* by Barbara Crafton. And finally, *A Year with CS Lewis*, one page of reflective reading from Lewis' work for each day.

Check out the books on the Feature Shelves this month and spend a few minutes each day during this joyful Easter season to enrich your faith.

BCP Spotlight

by Ellen Mc Vey



The Body Language of Worship - Part 5: **Genuflection, the Gospel procession**

Genuflection

Genuflection is a gesture of reverence in worship. The word genuflect comes from the Latin word meaning "to bend the knee." This involves touching a knee briefly to the floor (or thereabouts!) while holding the upper body upright, then returning to a standing position. This is not required by the BCP at any time, and it is not commonly used in most Episcopal churches unless the parish has a strong Anglo-catholic piety.¹ However, it's very appropriate to genuflect as a sign of reverence if it aids in your worship. It is most often seen when people enter or leave a pew as a sign of respect before the altar and the presence of reserved sacrament in the tabernacle (located under the cross in the front). Genuflection can also be done in place of bowing.

The Gospel Procession

"Additional Directions" for Holy Eucharist (BCP p. 406) allow for the Gospel to be read from the lectern, pulpit, or from the midst of the congregation. It is desirable that it "be read from a book...of appropriate size and dignity." The Second Council of Nicaea in 787 decreed that icons, crosses, and gospel books may be venerated as sacred images, just as the incarnate Christ is the image of the invisible God.²

Reading the Gospel from the midst of the congregation has been the more common practice at SJEC. This physical act demonstrates the word of God being brought to the people. Seeing the Gospel in the middle of the church reminds us that Jesus comes to us where we are. When this is done, it is common for worshippers to turn to face the Gospel book. This focuses our attention to this most important reading, shows a reverence to the Gospel, and demonstrates that we always face the Gospel and do not turn our backs to it. The procession also resembles the Jewish tradition of bearing the Torah scroll into the midst of the congregation.

¹[Genuflection, or Genuflexion – The Episcopal Church](#)

²[Gospel Book – The Episcopal Church](#)

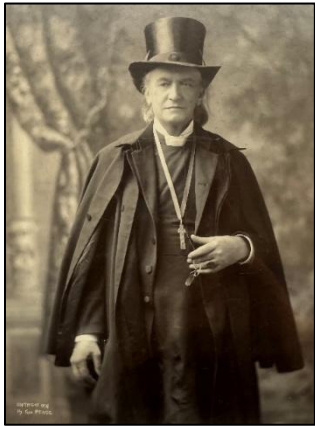
Church History in Three Minutes (or Less)

by Eric Carlson

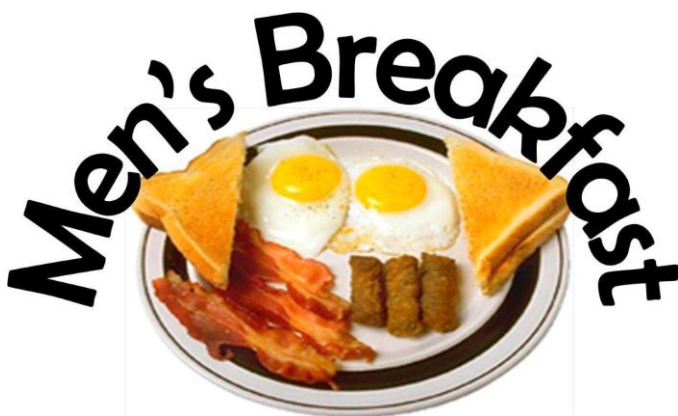
If you followed news of ICE's 2025 operations in Minnesota, you might have noticed protests centered on the Whipple Federal Building, which houses an ICE field office and detention center. It's named for Henry Benjamin Whipple (1822-1901), the first Episcopal Bishop of Minnesota. Whipple was from New York, but soon after his ordination in 1850 he moved to Chicago, where he became known for his effective ministry with poor working class and marginalized people.



When the diocese of Minnesota was created in 1859, the convention delegates couldn't agree on any of the bishop candidates. Whipple was then nominated by Chicagoans who had moved to Minnesota. When elected, he was the youngest bishop in the Episcopal Church, receiving an annual salary of \$1,200 for serving roughly 500 Minnesota Episcopalians. Although they wanted Whipple to focus solely on them, he had been brought up by his mother to sympathize with the oppressed, and in Minnesota that meant the Dakota and Ojibwe. While Whipple felt they should give up their culture and assimilate, he did not share the common white settler view that they were "savages." He fiercely criticized corruption in the Office of Indian Affairs, travelling to Washington to discuss reforms with President Lincoln. The Dakota War (1862) was his defining time. While recognizing that the Dakota were mistreated by settlers, he was horrified by the massacres carried out by some Dakota. He provided care for settler refugees and wounded soldiers, but Whipple repudiated the sentiments of most white Minnesotans, who wanted the Dakota exterminated. When 303 Dakota were sentenced to death for their roles in the war, Whipple persuaded Lincoln that the trials were so unjust that Lincoln granted 265 reprieves. Although 38 were executed—the largest mass execution in American history—Whipple's efforts to save the others made him a hero to the Dakota (he still is revered) and hated by whites.



Whipple remained bishop for 40 more years. He's buried in the Cathedral of Our Merciful Saviour in Faribault, which he built—the first Episcopal church built to be a cathedral. The Dakota reservation Episcopal church in Morton is St. Cornelia's, named in honor of his wife. Senator Walter Mondale had the federal building named in Whipple's honor in 1969. In 2019, the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota began demanding that his name be removed, arguing that documented human rights abuses in the detention center were an affront to what Whipple stood for.



Monday, May 4, 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!!



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, Char Bakeman, Ronnie, Henry Youngquist, Chris, Yvonne (Denée Koonce’s mom), Charlene Adams, Phillip, Julie, Dennis, Mike, Ron & Pat, Betty, Bronda (Wendy Thompson’s mom), Steve Jacqmain, Rod, Don Marcou, Vicki Leigeb, and Nikolas Wellstead.

Give thanks with those celebrating April Birthdays...

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 – Emma Massey | 15 – Jim Watt |
| 3 – Bill Kent, IV | 17 – Hannah Harris |
| Marcy Kirksey | Caroline Koonce |
| 7 – Mike Strong | Betty Schartow |
| 8 – Faye Ebach | 18 – Wesley Koonce |
| 10 – Grace Ward | 21 – Angi Matthews |
| 11 – Jacques Randolet | 23 – John Black |
| 12 – Barb Tazelaar | 24 – Jenny Kent |
| 13 – Andy Anderson | 26 – Geoff Newhouse |
| Michelle Spencer | Marie Stoll |
| 14 – Beth Chateaufneuf | 30 – Jim Bakeman |
| 15 – Sue Rye | |

989-631-2260 / office@siec-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 April Anniversaries...

- 4 – Tom & Lisa Miller
- 24 – Doug & Eileen Germain
- William & Marcy Kirksey



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 Very Rev. Alissa Anderson and parishioners |
| Chris Esquivel Chris Schuster |
| Jan Marcou Fred Schuster |
| Pat Roush Michelle Spencer |
| Dave Schafer |





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 Very Rev. Alissa Anderson** at 616-540-9102 (cell).

SOLO


Piano

RECITAL

Featuring works of Schubert

Pianist George Fee will present a solo piano recital consisting of works by **Franz Schubert** on **Sunday, April 26, at 2:30 pm**. The free, 65-minute concert will be held in the Sanctuary at St. John's Episcopal Church, Midland.



The Sound of Dreams

Sunday, May 3, 2026 at 2 PM


St. John's Episcopal Church
405 N. Saginaw Rd. Midland, MI

Free Admission - Donations Welcome
Dessert Reception to Follow Concert

How to Connect with Mother Alissa


Schedule a time via Calendly

[CLICK HERE](#)



Drop in Coffee Shop Office Hours
Thurs., 9-11 AM.

During the month of April, you'll find her at Live Oak Eastside (2405 Abbott Rd.)




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

Clergy

The Very Rev. Alissa G. Anderson*Rector*

Staff

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

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

Class of 2027

Eric Heglin, *Clerk*
 Susan Rye
 Fred Schuster, *Co-Warden*

Class of 2029

Nykkooa Lurie
 Mike Spender

Class of 2028

John Adams
 Doug Germain
 Ann Wright, *Co-Warden*

WEEKLY OPPORTUNITIES AT ST. JOHN'S

Sunday

8:00am Holy EucharistSanctuary
 8:30am Chancel Choir RehearsalChoir Room
 9:00am Fellowship Hour Williams Hall
 10:00am Holy Eucharist Sanctuary & YouTube
 11:00am Fellowship Hour Williams Hall
 11:30am Handbell Choir Rehearsal..... Bell Zone
 4:00pm Youth Group (every other)Activity Rm
 5:00pm NA..... McNab Room
 6:30pm Bible in the Basement (1st/3rd)..Activity Rm

Monday (Parish Office open 9am-3pm)

12:00pm AA..... McNab Room
 6:00pm Popup Bible Study..... Library

Tuesday (Parish Office open 9am-3pm)

10:00am Samaritan Fund Clients Library
 10:00am St. Martha's Guild (2nd) Activity Room
 1:00pm Knitpickers..... Williams Hall

Wednesday (Parish Office open 9am-3pm)

10:30am Women's Bible Study.....Library
 12:00pm Holy Eucharist.. Chapel (use office entrance)
 1:00pm AA..... McNab Room
 5:30pm Tai Chi Williams Hall

Thursday (Parish Office open 9am-3pm)

9:00am Alissa's Drop-in Coffee Office Hrs. Live Oak
 10:00am Love Knots (2nd/4th) Williams Hall
 1:00pm Women Journeying Together .. Activity Rm

Friday (Parish Office open 9am-noon)

12:00pm AA..... McNab Room
 6:00pm Community Game Night (2nd & 4th) .. Wms Hall

Saturday

12:00pm AA..... McNab Room
 7:00pm NA..... McNab 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 May. The final deadline for submissions is Monday, May 4. 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.



St. John's Episcopal Church
 405 N. Saginaw Road Midland, MI 48640
 (989) 631-2260 office@sjec-midland.org
www.sjec-midland.org

Rector – The Very Rev. Alissa G. Anderson



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