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*“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him”*

*John 1: 6~7*

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas – January 3, 2021**

Mars, PA 16046-0411

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Maizy Fisher, Director of Music Ministries

*We welcome you to St. John Lutheran Church. We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning. Should you have no permanent church-home in this community, why not consider making this one your own? Most elements of our service can be found in the bulletin. Those who are able, please rise when there is an \*, congregational responses are in **bold**. In order to participate fully in worship you are encouraged to softly sing behind your mask the hymns and liturgical music. Please place your offering and attendance cards in the baskets by the doors.*

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas– January 3, 2021**

*Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.*

### **PRELUDE:**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **GATHERING**

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

### **\*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,  
whose forgiveness is sure  
and whose steadfast love endures forever.  
**Amen.**

Together let us honestly and humbly confess  
that we have not lived as God desires.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Loving and forgiving God,  
**we confess that we are held captive by sin.**  
**In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray.**  
**We have not welcomed the stranger;**  
**we have not loved our neighbor;**  
**we have not been Christ to one another.**  
**Restore us, O God.**  
**Wake us up and turn us from our sin.**  
**Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

People of God, hear this glad news:  
 by God's endless grace  
 your sins are forgiven, and you are free—  
 free from all that holds you back  
 and free to live in the peaceable realm of God.  
 May you be strengthened in God's love,  
 † comforted by Christ's peace,  
 and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

**\*GATHERING HYMN— *That Boy-Child of Mary (vs. 1, 2 &4)***

*Refrain*

That boy-child of Mar - y was born in a sta - ble,

a man - ger his cra - dle in Beth - le - hem.

1 What shall we call him, child of the man - ger?  
 2 His name is Je - sus, God ev - er with us,  
 3 How can he save us, how can he help us,  
 4 Gift of the Fa - ther, to hu - man moth - er,

What name is giv - en in Beth - le - hem?  
 God giv - en for us in Beth - le - hem.  
 born here a - mong us in Beth - le - hem?  
 makes him our broth - er in Beth - le - hem.

*Refrain*

**\*GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
 and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
**And also with you.**

# \*KYRIE

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. A - men.



# \*GLORY TO GOD

Assisting minister



Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,



we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

## WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

### **\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

**Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

### **CHILDREN'S SERMON**

#### **FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:7-14**

A reading from Jeremiah.

*God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gifts of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.*

<sup>7</sup>Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,  
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;  
proclaim, give praise, and say,  
"Save, O LORD, your people,  
the remnant of Israel."

<sup>8</sup>See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,  
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,  
among them the blind and the lame,  
those with child and those in labor, together;  
a great company, they shall return here.

<sup>9</sup>With weeping they shall come,  
and with consolations I will lead them back,  
I will let them walk by brooks of water,  
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;  
for I have become a father to Israel,  
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

<sup>10</sup>Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,  
and declare it in the coastlands far away;  
say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him,  
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock."

<sup>11</sup>For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,  
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

<sup>12</sup>They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,  
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,  
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
and over the young of the flock and the herd;  
their life shall become like a watered garden,  
and they shall never languish again.  
<sup>13</sup>Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,  
and the young men and the old shall be merry.  
I will turn their mourning into joy,  
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.  
<sup>14</sup>I will give the priests their fill of fatness,  
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,  
says the LORD.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM 147** *Read responsively.*

<sup>12</sup>Worship the LORD, | O Jerusalem;  
praise your | God, O Zion,  
<sup>13</sup>**who has strengthened the bars | of your gates  
and has blessed your chil- | dren within you.**  
<sup>14</sup>God has established peace | on your borders  
and satisfies you with the | finest wheat.  
<sup>15</sup>**God sends out a command | to the earth,  
a word that runs | very swiftly. R**  
<sup>16</sup>God gives | snow like wool,  
scattering | frost like ashes.  
<sup>17</sup>**God scatters | hail like bread crumbs.  
Who can stand a- | gainst God's cold?**  
<sup>18</sup>The LORD sends forth the | word and melts them;  
the wind blows, and the | waters flow.  
<sup>19</sup>**God declares the | word to Jacob,  
statutes and judg- | ments to Israel.**  
<sup>20</sup>The LORD has not done so to any | other nation;  
they do not know God's judgments. | Hallelujah! **R**

## SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:3-14

A reading from Ephesians.

*In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.*

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup>just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup>He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup>that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup>he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup>as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup>In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, <sup>12</sup>so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup>In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; <sup>14</sup>this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the  
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

## **A Dramatic Reading of the Creation Story in Genesis and the Prologue of John's Gospel**

Voice 1: In the beginning God (beat)

Voice 2: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
He was with God

Unison: In the beginning

Voice 1: (no pause) God created

**Unison: the heavens and the earth.**

Voice 2: Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Voice 1: Now the earth was formless and empty,

**Unison: darkness**

Voice 1: was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.  
And God said, "Let there be light," and there was

**Unison: light.**

Voice 2: In him was life, and that life was the light (beat)

Voice 1: light

Voice 2: of men.

Voice 1: God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the

**Unison: darkness.**

Voice 2: The light shines in the

**Unison: darkness,**

Voice 2: but the darkness (beat)

Voice 1: darkness

Voice 2: has not understood it.

Voice 1: God called the light "day," and the

**Unison: darkness**

Voice 1: he called "night." And there was evening,

Voice 2: and there was morning

**\*Unison: --the first day.** (pause)

Voice 1: So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning--the second day.

Voice 2: There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe.

Voice 1: And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

Voice 2: And there was evening, and there was morning--the third day.

Voice 1: And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. God made two great lights--the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.

Voice 2: He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

**Unison: And there was evening, and there was morning--the fourth day.**

Voice 1: And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth."

Voice 2: And there was evening, and there was morning--the fifth day.

Voice 1: And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

Voice 2: He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

Voice 1: Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Voice 2: Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Voice 1: God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

Unison: And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day. (beat)

**\*Unison: The Word**

Voice 2: became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Voice 1: In the beginning God (pause)

Voice 2: In the beginning was

**Unison: the Word,**

Voice 2: and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God

**Unison: In the beginning**

## SERMON

### **\*HYMN OF THE DAY– *Word of God, Come Down on Earth (Vs. 1&3)***



1 Word of God, come down on earth, liv - ing rain from  
2 Word c - ter - nal, throned on high, Word that brought to  
3 Word that speaks God's ten - der love, one with God be -



heav'n de-scend - ing; touch our hearts and bring to birth  
life cre - a - tion, Word that came from heav'n to die,  
yond all tell - ing, Word that sends us from a - bove



faith and hope and love un - end - ing. Word al - might - y,  
cru - ci - fied for our sal - va - tion, sav - ing Word, the  
God the Spir - it, with us dwell - ing, Word of truth, to



we re - vere you; Word made flesh, we long to hear you.  
world re - stor - ing, speak to us, your love out - pour - ing.  
all truth lead us; Word of life, with one bread feed us.

### **\*APOSTLE'S CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\***

**On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **\*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the earth. Protect your church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness, that we might live always to the praise of your glory.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You bring together heaven and earth. All creation testifies to your splendor. Hold the ecosystems of this earth in delicate balance, from coastlands to farmlands, forests to wetlands, deserts to rainforests. Show us new ways to live in harmony with the world around us.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You overflow with grace upon grace. Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority. Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities. Protect all those in harm's way and those risking danger for the sake of others.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You bring consolation to those who weep. Embrace those who feel far-off, excluded, or defeated. Accompany those living with chronic and invisible illness. Sustain the weak and weary. Refresh those who labor under the weight of pain or sickness, especially Geneva, Cherry, Brooke, Bob, Winnie, Sally, Chuck, Henry, Harry, Roy, Ruth, Pastor Storm, Bill, Karen, and Ellen. For those on our prayer list, and all whom we remember aloud or in our hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You come to us in the beauty of darkness and of light. Bring justice and reconciliation to communities divided by oppressions and misuse of power. Guide us to speak holy words of advocacy and truth. Help us to honor your image in one another.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You turn our mourning into joy. We give thanks for those who have died in faith. With all the saints, give us our inheritance in Christ. In the fullness of time, gather us all together in your mercy. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

## **\*PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

## MEAL

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

### **\*OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

God of mercy and grace,  
the eyes of all wait upon you,  
and you open your hand in blessing.  
Fill us with good things at your table,  
that we may come to the help of all in need,  
through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and Lord.

**Amen.**

### **\*GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### **\*PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh  
you have opened the eyes of faith  
to a new and radiant vision of your glory,  
that, beholding the God made visible,  
we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.  
And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## \*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,  
the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup  
we remember your Word dwelling among us,  
full of grace and truth.  
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.  
We look with hope for his coming.  
**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.  
Come among us.  
Bless this meal.  
May your Word take flesh in us.  
Awaken your people.  
Fill us with your light.  
Bring the gift of peace on earth.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours,  
Holy One of Israel,  
Word of God incarnate,  
Power of the Most High,  
one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**\*LORD'S PRAYER**

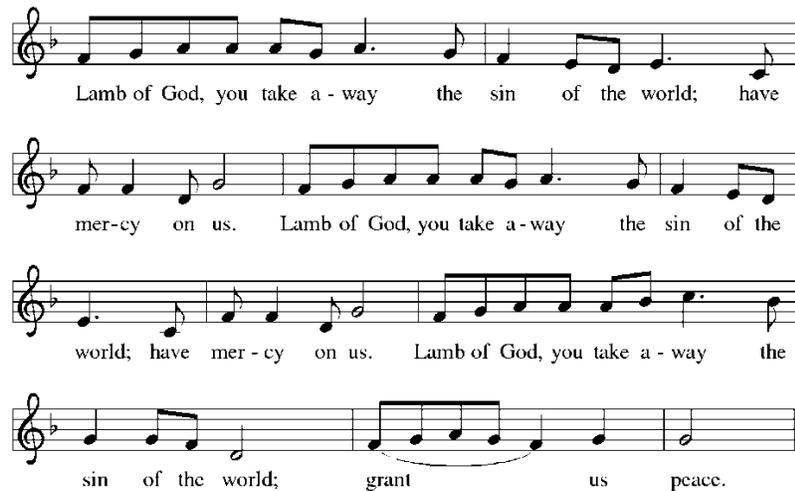
Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray,  
**Our Father, who art in heaven,**  
    **hallowed be thy name,**  
    **thy kingdom come,**  
    **thy will be done,**  
        **on earth as it is in heaven.**  
**Give us this day our daily bread;**  
**and forgive us our trespasses,**  
    **as we forgive those**  
        **who trespass against us;**  
**and lead us not into temptation,**  
    **but deliver us from evil.**  
**For thine is the kingdom,**  
    **and the power, and the glory,**  
    **forever and ever. Amen.**

## **\*INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Even as we watch and wait, Christ is here.  
Come, eat and drink.

*In response to Jesus' invitation, all are welcome to come forward and experience the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine of communion. Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life and salvation as the blessings of God's sacramental grace. Come forward by family to receive the elements, please keep your masks on and maintain at least six feet distance from those ahead of you. Gluten free wafers are available.*

## **COMMUNION SONG: *Lamb of God***



The image shows the musical notation for the Communion Song 'Lamb of God'. It consists of four staves of music in a single system, written in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff begins with 'Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have'. The second staff continues with 'mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the'. The third staff continues with 'world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the'. The fourth staff concludes with 'sin of the world; grant us peacc.'

## **COMMUNION**

The body of Christ, given for you.  
The blood of Christ, shed for you.  
**Amen.**

## **\*POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in grace.  
**Amen.**

## **\*POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Let us pray.  
Gracious and abundant God,  
you have done great things for us, and we rejoice.  
In this bread and cup you give us life forever.  
In your boundless mercy, strengthen us  
and open our hearts to the world's needs,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## SENDING

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

### \*BLESSING

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting,  
the long-expected Savior fill you with love,  
the unexpected Spirit guide your journey,  
✠ now and forever. **Amen.**

### \*SENDING SONG – *The Bells of Christmas (vs. 1 & 4)*



*Det ki - mer nu til ju - le - fest, det ki - mer*  
1 The bells of Christ - mas chime once more; the heav'n - ly  
2 This world, though wide and far out - spread, could scarce - ly  
3 Now let us go with qui - et mind, the swad - dled  
4 Oh, join with me, in glad - ness sing, to keep our



*for den høj - e gæst, som steg til la - ve*  
guest is at the door. He comes to earth - ly  
find for you a bed. Your cra - dle was a  
babe with shep - herds find, to gaze on him who  
Christ - mas with our king, un - til our song, from



*hyt - ter ned med nyt - års - ga - ver: fryd og fred.*  
dwell - ings still with new year gifts of peace, good will.  
man - ger stall, no pearl nor silk nor king - ly hall.  
glad - dens them, the love - liest flow'r of Jcs - se's stem.  
lov - ing souls, like rush - ing might - y wa - ter rolls!

### \*DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

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#### 8:00 AM

**Assisting Minister: Matt Claus**

**Communion Assistant:**

**Lector:**

**Usher:**

**Attendance Last Week:**

**Attendance This Week Last Year:**

#### 10:30 AM

**Assisting Minister: Valerie Cardinal**

**Communion Assistant:**

**Lector:**

**Usher:**

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