



The Messenger

October 2024 Edition

A Monthly Newsletter from St. John Lutheran Church and School

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St. John Lutheran Church and School

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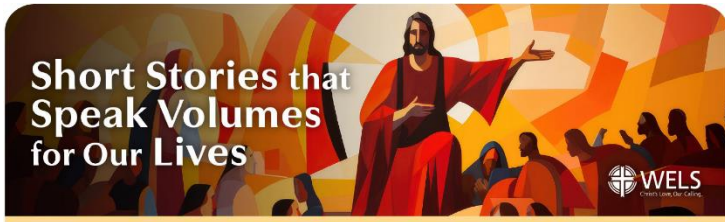


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Gather. Grow. Go. To the Glory of God!



Devotional Corner: Search for What Was Lost

Jesus told this parable, "Suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Luke 15:8-10

My wife works with a lady who buys her lottery tickets every now and then. One day, a rumor spread that our local grocery store sold a \$100,000 ticket. We both thought, "Are we winners?" How would we spend it? Then I said, "Honey, where's the ticket?" After a brief panic and a 20-minute search of the house, we found it. The ticket was a loser.

When we lose something that we hold to be valuable, we search for it frantically. That's what Jesus described in this short story about a woman searching for a coin that she lost. Without Jesus, you and I are like that lost coin. Our lustful thoughts, hurting words, and loveless deeds—everything we think, say, or do that fails to be perfect—are sins that separate us from God. How frightening to be lost in sin!

Thankfully, though, there is good news! Jesus came "to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10). God sent Jesus to find us and reconnect us to God. Jesus did that by loving us so much that he paid for all our sins by his death on the cross. That's how much Jesus loves us!

Jesus searches for us and finds us. The angels in heaven rejoice! Jesus comes to us through his Word and takes away our fear by comforting us with the forgiveness of sins. He assures us that he has made us dearly loved children of God. Through Jesus, heaven is our inheritance.

God loves us so much that he stopped at nothing to find us and save us from eternal separation from him in hell. Through Jesus, we have the gift of eternal life, which is a whole lot more valuable than winning the lottery. How fortunate we are! We will never be lost again when we cling in faith to Jesus, our Savior.

Come and share with us the love of Jesus. Like heaven's angels, we can rejoice over all that Jesus did to find us and give us life with God.



Worship With Us!

Worship Services: Sundays at 9:00 am

Bible Class and Sundry School: Sundays at 10:15 am

Christian Parenting Today

Christian Parenting Today: Being Sensitive to Parents with a Child Who Has Special Needs

Exerts from a Forward in Christ article by Megan Redfield, Brenda Wagenknecht, and Megan Neisius

I'm leading a Bible study on grief as I write this. A few days ago, I was preparing a lesson that included a portion of Lamentations chapter 2: "My eyes fail from weeping, I am in torment within; my heart is poured out on the ground. . . . What can I say for you? With what can I compare you, Daughter Jerusalem? To what can I liken you, that I may comfort you, Virgin Daughter Zion? Your wound is as deep as the sea. Who can heal you?" (vv. 11-13).

The condition of these women and children has affected [the author] deeply. He struggles to find the right words. I'm so thankful the Holy Spirit led these inspired words to be included in Scripture. If here, in this setting, a man going through suffering had difficulty finding the right words . . . well, then, maybe I can give myself a break for all the times I can't find them either.

In the earliest years of our marriage, my husband and I kept our struggles with infertility to ourselves. We just were not ready to share that grief with others. You can imagine the sting of the well-meaning comments and questions made innocently by people unaware of our struggle. Once we decided to pursue adoption, we began to share more openly. In some ways, it was a relief. The chorus of "You'd look good with a baby in your arms" came to an end. In its place we received encouragement and support that were meaningful to our situation.

But still, I was surprised at how some relationships began to shift. There's an awkwardness, a distance that can occur, when we walk through something that our loved ones can't understand. It happens because there's this big gaping hole where we can't relate and we don't know how to communicate. We love so much, and we don't want to cause pain with our words. We don't know what to say. So we pull away a little.

This summer marks 12 years since we traded the awkwardness and loneliness of infertility for the awkwardness and loneliness of parenting a child with special needs. I've learned a lot in those years. Not much offends me anymore. I've healed a lot of the early grief I carried, clearing space to see good intentions and to take words and actions in the kindest possible way.

But writing this article challenges me to take a step beyond how I process the words that people say. I thought about all the well-intentioned words that have secretly stung. I thought about the other side of it—all the times I thought I was helping and later learned that I was hurting. I thought about times I so badly wanted to help someone, to be able to comfort with just the right words, but couldn't figure out how so I said nothing.

I realized I do not want to take this opportunity to correct and refine those who are already trying, who are doing the best they can to "encourage one another and build each other up" (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Instead, I want to take this opportunity to encourage those who, like the poet in Lamentations, feel at a loss for words. Whose "eyes fail from weeping" and whose hearts are "in torment within," but who feel stuck.

To you, I say it's okay not to know what to say. It's okay not to know how to fix it. It's okay that you can't make it better. Sometimes, the most perfect thing to do is to show that you're willing to sit down in the muck with people, put an arm around them, and say, "I see that you're hurting. I'm sorry it's so hard right now. I'm praying for you."

I think this reaches far beyond parents of children with special needs or women struggling with infertility and applies to so many hurting hearts. I don't need to be fixed—I need to be seen. I don't need to be shown a solution—I need to be shown my Savior. I don't need to be pulled out of the muck—I just need to know you're willing to sit in it with me.

As I worked on that Bible study lesson, my daughter's school aide messaged me that they were having a hard day. I popped over to her message and started brainstorming and trying to fix it. It took a minute, but I realized what I was doing and deleted everything I had written. I wrote instead, "I'm sorry to hear you guys are having such a rough day. It's so hard when all you're trying to do is help her and she's pushing you away." Send. The aide told me later that those words were exactly what she needed to hear. She felt seen and understood, and that empowered her to keep pressing on. I also may have promised her a margarita after school gets out. Margaritas—and chocolate chip cookies—never hurt, either. -Megan Redfield

Article continues on page 4

Parenting article continues...

“[Jesus’] disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him’ ” (John 9:2,3).

Parenting a child with extra needs is usually not planned. Parents may encounter extra needs with an unexpected diagnosis, an accident, or an illness. Extra needs vary from physical disabilities like cerebral palsy to developmental disabilities like autism or learning disabilities like dyslexia or mental disabilities like anxiety. Each unique situation may involve grief and joy, love and heartache, all mixed together. As Jesus described the glory of God being displayed in the blind man’s life, we glimpse God’s perspective, as his plans may include displaying his works through his miraculous creation, his never-ending grace, his complete control, and his ultimate goal for his children—living for him now and in eternity!

As we support our fellow Christians impacted by special needs, we can remember a few basic principles.

Ask the parents about the child in humble and sincere terms. How are they, the parents, doing? Strive to appreciate the situation sincerely. Rather than pity, ask how you can support them. Praying, delivering meals, watching the child while the parent runs errands, assisting during Sunday school, offering a listening ear. . . . Don’t forget to ask the individual with extra needs too! Speak with him or her in a way that shows you care.

Listen to their answers without judgment. Empathetically try to imagine yourself in their situation but avoid assumptions. Be ready for their worries, hopes, and dreams. The parents might be grieving as they see delays in reaching developmental milestones. They might surprise you as they celebrate what appears from the outside like a minor accomplishment.

Include family members in event planning. Incorporate supportive measures that will help the child participate to the greatest extent. Remember them in your prayers, asking God to be with them in every daily challenge. Recognize that the individual with extra needs has gifts that God will use to bless others.

Adjust the environment to improve accessibility. Modify your expectations and time frames. Extra needs often require extra time. Evaluate your mindset, thinking of the person first before the disability.

Think out of the box to allow yourself to be open to accommodations. Try to understand things like different developmental timelines and the impact of disabilities on daily life. Be sensitive when sharing all

your child’s milestones, as families may be celebrating very different ones. Think about how you can connect with the individual with special needs.

Love one another. God will display his glory as you reflect his love.
-Brenda Wagenknecht

“God will never give you more than you can handle.” These well-meaning words occasioned by 1 Corinthians 10:13 are often shared with parents of children with disabilities. They are spoken by empathetic friends and echoed by compassionate acquaintances. The delivery may be different, but the foundation of the message is always the same: God gives his toughest battles to his strongest soldiers.

I agree with the sentiment insofar as I believe that God is faithful. I have full trust in him. I have confidence in the life God has chosen for me. But I would be lying if I said there were not days when I felt pushed to my limit, because, simply put, being a “medical mom” is really, really hard. And there are days when I wonder why exactly God chose me to handle this particular challenge. Why did I have to be the one to bear this burden? Why couldn’t my neighbor or my coworker?

That sounds harsh, and I don’t mean for it to be. I love my child deeply, but being a medical mom is not something I would wish for anybody. It’s not that I want you to bear this instead of me—it’s that I want to know why it has to be mine in the first place. And I know that’s something you cannot help me with. That is a question only God can answer. But I don’t want to be told “God will never give me more than I can handle.”

What I would like is a reminder that God doesn’t need me to be strong or valiant. He doesn’t need me to act tough or pretend to be brave. He doesn’t need me to exude warriorlike confidence. God doesn’t need me to have it handled. Because he does.

He has it handled—even as I’m frustrated or anxious, worn down or broken. Share that with me. Share the Scriptures that invite me to come to God when I’m feeling weary and burdened—the ones that focus on God’s strength rather than mine. Offer words like ones found in 2 Corinthians 12:9, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

Take the focus off me and place it all on him. God doesn’t need me to have it handled. Because he does. Share the words that let me give this battle to God—that allow me to put down the shield and drop the sword. Give me the ones that will send me running into his everlasting arms. Because I promise you, more often than not, those are the ones I need the most.

-Megan Neisius

found at forwardinchrist.net/parents-special-needs/

Upcoming Events

Fall Fest- Saturday, October 5

St. John will once again have a table at Wrightstown's annual Fall Fest! Stop by the parking lot at The Hair Canvas to grab some brisket sandwiches and hot dogs for lunch while checking out the rest of the vendors and entertainment. The car show will start at 10:00 am, with a Color Blaze Run, street market, kids activities, and live music beginning at 11:00. Speak with Leah Cisler for information about donating or volunteering for St. John's food stand.



Trunk or Treat- Sat, October 19

St. John's PTO invites you to our free family fun!!! Join us in the St. John parking lot for our annual Trunk or Treat event on October 19th from 1pm-3pm. Children can dress in their costumes and go car to car, stocking up on goodies. This is a rain (activities will move to the gym) or shine event! To register your car for the event please email PTO@stjohnwrightstown.com.



Mr. Raddatz' 10 Year Anniversary Celebration- Thurs, October 17

Come celebrate Mr. Raddatz' 10 years of service to St. John! Join us at Lucky's Pub and Grill on Thursday, October 17, from 5:00 to 8:00. The adult social will include pizzas and a cash bar. Plan to share a word of thanks or a funny memory! If you would like to contribute a card or donation for a gift, a box is available in the kitchen and worship space hallway.

Mark Your Calendars!

- October 2- Breakfast and Bible Study
- October 3- 2nd-3rd Grade Field Trip to FVL Meadows
- October 4- No School (Teacher Inservice)
- October 5- Fall Fest
- October 6- FVL Football Pancake Feed
- October 6- Band and Choir Sacred Concert
- October 8- Monthly Fellowship Luncheon
- October 10- K-8th Grade Field Trip to The Farm
- October 11- Hot Lunch
- October 14- Church Council Meeting
- October 15- Pastoral Call Meeting
- October 16- Breakfast and Bible Study
- October 16- K-3rd Grade Field Trip to FVL's Alice
- October 17- Mr. Raddatz' Anniversary Celebration
- October 18-20 FVL presents *Alice in Wonderland*
- October 19- Trunk or Treat
- October 20- Quarterly Voter's Meeting
- October 24-25- No School- WI Teacher's Conference
- October 27- Federation Reformation Service
- October 28- PTO Meeting
- October 29- End of First Quarter

Church Highlights

Upcoming Voters' Meetings

St. John has two voters' meetings on the calendar for October. The first will be a pastoral call meeting on Tuesday, October 15th at 6:30 pm to extend a new call in our search for a full-time pastor. The second is a quarterly meeting on Sunday, October 20th following the morning's service. Voting members, please make every effort to attend these important dates. take on one or more mornings each week.



Fridays Helper Wanted

We are currently looking one or more volunteers to serve as a greeter/receptionist on Friday mornings. The person (or rotation of people) who take on this spot would serve to provide a friendly face for people coming and going in the morning, complete some simple tasks, and answer as many basic inquiries as they can, allowing Dierdra to focus on other administrative duties.

Ideally, the volunteer would be available from 7:30 am until 12:00 noon to cover when school families first arrive and when families return for their half-day students. Please contact Dierdra Stary at the office if you would like more information or would be willing to help us on Friday mornings.



Choir News and Needs

St. John's Choir is looking to expand the worship opportunities throughout the year! They are searching for new members and instrumentalists. If you have ever considered using your musical talents to enhance worship, now is a great time to join. You are welcome to join for a short time or for worship throughout the year. Particular needs include a soprano or alto soloist for Ash Wednesday and a congas percussionist for the Epiphany service.

The choir is also looking for volunteer babysitting services during their practice times to allow young parents to participate. These hours could count towards school families' required 10 hours of volunteer time for the school year.

Anyone interested in serving in the choir, providing instrumental music in church, or offering babysitting services can call Ginny or Jeremy Uecker.
Ginny: 920-949-1168 Jeremy: 920-949-1167.

Church Birthdays

Happy birthday to our church members celebrating in October!

- Oct 1 Bryce Herlache
- Oct 2 Lisa Pohlman
- Oct 4 Austin Lazor
- Oct 4 Dominic Myers
- Oct 5 Dale Abrahamson
- Oct 6 Bernice Klister
- Oct 6 Jason Uitenbroek
- Oct 8 Porter Micke
- Oct 8 David Rosenbaum
- Oct 10 Gavin Hein
- Oct 10 Carl Uitenbroek
- Oct 13 Jacob Bruecker
- Oct 13 Collyns Nielson



- Oct 14 Owen Ratkowski
- Oct 14 Arlen Wicks
- Oct 15 Cecelia Raddatz
- Oct 18 Eric Olp
- Oct 19 Kevin Vande Hey
- Oct 22 Robert Maass
- Oct 23 Michael Penneberg
- Oct 23 Lynn Ratkowski
- Oct 24 Caleb Ritter
- Oct 26 Shelly Meulemans
- Oct 28 Hannah Kraus
- Oct 29 Leah Cisler
- Oct 31 Amy Leonhard

School Highlights

Culver's Coupons for Sale

We will be offering Culver's coupons at our front desk as a fundraiser from October 1st- 22nd! A sheet of sweet deals will be \$10. Come and grab some for your family and friends, then watch for more information about a Donate While You Dine night where a percentage of sales can be donated to our school.



School Pictures

We recently had our school picture day, with lots of smiling students on display! You should have received a form with ordering information from your child's teacher. All ordering is done online. Picture retake day is tentatively scheduled November 4th for those who need another shot or for those who were unable to attend the first date.



Yearbooks Offered

St. John's PTO is taking the lead on offering school yearbooks for the first time! They will be working with the picture studio to compile a book filled with class composites as well as candid shots. If you would like to contribute your own pictures from school events like field trips, Trunk or Treat, singing dates, Easter Egg Scramble, or more, please forward them to your child's classroom teacher or the Courtney Schisel with the PTO at pto@stjohnwrightstown.com.



Parent/Teacher Conference Signups Procedure Change

Based on feedback from parents with multiple students who have struggled to schedule parent/teacher conferences in an efficient manner, we are changing our conference sign-up procedure slightly. We will still send out an online sign-up prior to conference dates, but will send it out to families with multiple children prior to sending it out to families with a single student enrolled at St. John and will make families aware of the sign-up's expected release dates. We will also offer two afternoons, November 13th and 14th, from 3:00-6:00 pm rather than just one afternoon/evening session. As always, those who are unable to make our scheduled times are encouraged to schedule an alternative time to meet with the teacher(s). The fall conference sign-up will be sent out to families with multiple children enrolled on October 29th and to families with a single child enrolled on November 1st.

School Birthdays

Happy Birthday to our October celebrants!

Amara B.	Oct. 5	CeCe R.	Oct. 15
Porter M.	Oct. 8	Ryder E.	Oct. 18
Mila G.	Oct. 9	Raelynn W.	Oct. 20
Gavin H.	Oct. 10	Adeline H.	Oct. 26
Walle C.	Oct. 11	Hannah K.	Oct. 28
Brock G.	Oct. 11	Braxton E.	Oct. 30
Madelynn V.	Oct. 14		



FVL Highlights

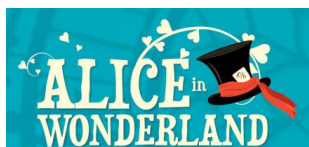
Joint Reformation Service- Sunday, October 27th

FVL will once again play host to the area's joint Reformation service. This year's service will be held on Sunday, October 27th at 4:00 pm. Make your way to the FVL auditorium to join with worshippers from all over the Fox Valley.



FVL Choirs and Bands Fall Sacred Concert- Sunday, October 6th

FVL bands and choirs will be presenting their annual fall Sacred Concert this Sunday, October 6th at 2:00 pm. Come to the FVL auditorium for this free event or stream it online at FVL's YouTube channel, where you can see many exciting events and updates.



FVL Presents Alice in Wonderland- Fri, October 18-Sun, October 20

FVL is proud to present Alice in Wonderland as their fall theater performance. The Brainerd Duffield play follows a series of fourteen episodes from Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass. Tickets are available online or at the door for \$7. Shows will be held Friday, October 18 and Saturday, October 19 at 6:30 pm, and Sunday, October 20th at 2:00 pm.



Daddy-Daughter Dance- Saturday, November 2

Girls ages 3-13 and their fathers are invited to enjoy an afternoon of dancing and other activities on Saturday, November 2, from 1:30-4:30 pm. The annual event is once again sponsored by FVL's Cheer and Stunt team. The cost is \$15 per person, with a maximum of \$50 per family. Register online or pay at the door.

8th Grade Welcome Night- Monday, October 21st



Eighth graders and their parents are invited to FVL's 8th Grade Welcome Night on Monday, October 21st from 5:00-7:45 pm. While students enjoy games and social activities, parents can attend 20-minute info sessions on important topics such as registration, tours, financial aid, course availability, and extra curriculars. All interested families should register online at fvlhs.org/8GWN.



FVL Football Pancake Feed- Sunday, October 6th

FVL Football's big fundraiser, the Pancake Feed, will be held on Sunday, October 6th from 9:00 am-12:30 noon. Join us after your service for all-you-can-eat pancakes and sausages served by our football teams, Copper Rock coffee, a great selection of auction items with online bidding, door prizes every 20 minutes, and presentations by players and coaches! Register online at fvlhs.ejoinme.org/2024PancakeReg

Ceramics Workshop- Saturdays October 19th and November 9th

FVL's Art Club is hosting a fall Ceramics Workshop! There are 24 spots available for students in 2nd-4th grades. The \$35 fee includes both workshop dates. Participants will learn how to make a clay turtle on October 19th from 9:00-11:00 am. Then students will return after their turtles have been kiln-fired on November 9th from 9:00-10:00 am to decorate their turtles. Online registration is required at fvlhs.org/future-foxes/youth-sports-camps.

Cheer and Stunt Clinic- Sunday, November 3rd

Registration is open for girls in 5th -8th grades to learn the proper techniques and different styles of stunts and pyramids. The clinic will be held Sunday, November 3rd, from 2:00 to 5:00 pm. Participants should wear athletic shoes and clothes and bring a water bottle. The cost is \$25 per person, payable with online registration at fvlhs.org/future-foxes/youth-sports-camps.

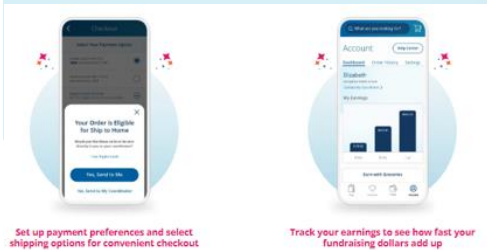
Save on Tuition with Raise Right (Scrip)!

Raise Right sells gift cards with a rebate percentage donated to organizations. Rebates can be between 2.5-20%, depending on the retailer. 35% of the rebate given to St. John can be applied to your family's tuition, which we apply quarterly! There are three ways to save:

1. Purchase in person at St. John. See Dierdra Stary or Rebecca Wicks for assistance.
2. Visit RaiseRight.com to browse the full selection and purchase online. Use code 5B5ECFD616833 for rebates to be applied to St. John and allow us to apply funds to your tuition.
3. Download the Raise Right Fundraising app. Use code 5B5ECFD616833 for rebates to be applied to St. John.

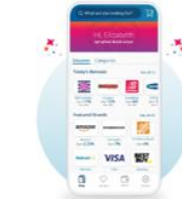
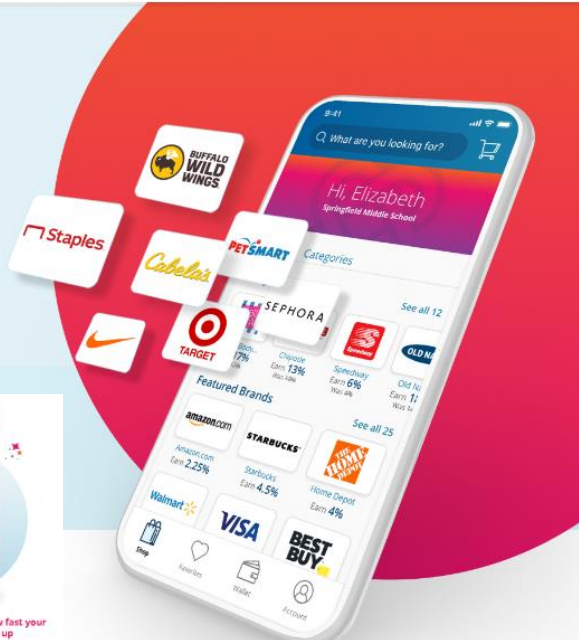
Earn anytime, anywhere with the RaiseRight app

Access all your gift cards and shop online—right from your device. Whether you're waiting to check out at the grocery store, dining out for dinner, or online shopping at home, our mobile app meets you where you are for easy earnings.



Set up payment preferences and select shipping options for convenient checkout

Track your earnings to see how fast your fundraising dollars add up



Discover new earning opportunities—daily bonuses, seasonal offers, or giveaways



Search by category or browse brands on bonus to find just what you're looking for



Add brands you love to My Favorites for faster shopping



View and use eGift cards (even offline), add money to reloadable cards, and track balances—all in one Wallet

Contact Us

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Pastor John Raasch	414-721-6013	pastorraasch@bethelmenasha.org
Tim Raddatz, principal and 4th-5th grade teacher	920-636-5007	tim.raddatz@stjohnwrightstown.com
Dillon Solomon, dean of students and 6th-8th grade teacher	248-525-3700	dillon.solomon@stjohnwrightstown.com
Rebecca Wicks, 2nd-3rd grade teacher	920-809-8648	rebecca.wicks@stjohnwrightstown.com
McKenzeY Crowley, kindergarten and 1st grade teacher	605-390-6827	mckenzeY.crowley@stjohnwrightstown.com
Jamie Buss, early childhood director and EC 3 teacher	920-538-0470	jamie.buss@stjohnwrightstown.com
Leah Gamboa, EC 2 teacher	920-309-5037	leah.gamboa@stjohnwrightstown.com
Madie Otto, EC 1 teacher	920-629-1220	madie.otto@stjohnwrightstown.com
Claudia Puente, student services coordinator	920-716-8523	claudia.puente@stjohnwrightstown.com

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