



/ JUNE-JULY 2023

# MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN



Rev. Dr.  
Roger Paavola  
District President

I read an article some time ago in which the author surveyed a group of graduating college students to get the “Top Ten Reasons for Being a Father.” The results are stunning. Fathers teach you:

10. Things about tanks.
9. How to go to the bathroom without someone having to go with you.
8. How to be a friend with someone even if they forgot to invite you to their party.
7. How you can drop by to see someone without bringing a little gift.
6. How you can be at a party comfortably even if someone else is wearing the same outfit.
5. How to get by with one billfold, one pair of shoes, one color in all seasons.
4. How there's always a game going on somewhere (or it's afternoon somewhere in the world).
3. How buddies never trap you by saying, “Notice anything different about me today?”
2. How if something doesn't work, you can smack it with a hammer and toss it across the room.
1. How you can do your nails with a pocket knife.

Fathers are different, kind of like those strange things kept in an old box in the garage, just sitting there until you need them. Jesus used parables and real-life experiences to teach us about fathers. Think

about it: We can probably picture ourselves in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. We might see ourselves as the prodigal son because we've grown up and moved away, making our own mistakes along the way. Or we might look at ourselves as the ones who stay at home, taking care of business. Some of us are like the father. We've tried to do the best that we know how.

The father of the prodigal son gave his younger son everything he asked for, handing over his share of an inheritance. Some dads like to do that — give whatever their kids ask for. He wanted his son to be happy and learn how to live with what he had, even if it meant making some mistakes. Dads will love children even if they cause the family pain and suffering. Fathers suffer for and with their children because — at least as far as the world is concerned — they're supposed to be tougher.

Jesus uses images of fathers to let us know what God is like to us. If your father was distant and unaffectionate, you may have the same feeling about God. If your father was loving, giving and merciful, God's picture in your mind will be somewhat similar.

Unfortunately, some really fear their father's punishment and rejection. (“Just wait until your father gets home!”). Some dads were the ultimate punishing machine! Maybe it's grades or friends or choices we made, it just didn't do enough to satisfy some dads. All too often, we superimpose our personal view of earthly fathers on our picture of God. We take purely human traits of our dads and place them over the picture

See MESSAGE, Page 2

## MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

of God. Good or bad, we likely think of God in the same way. Unfortunately, some dads are just absent!

Fortunately, anything bad is mistakenly not equated with God on this earth. It isn't true. In the story of the prodigal son, the prodigal comes running back to his father. The father sees him coming down the road, long before the prodigal had finished making up the story he was going to lay on his father, who wanted nothing to do with any cock-and-bull story. He was ready to forgive.

Most of us fathers can't measure up to what the father of the prodigal did in the story. Most fathers let their children grow up to make mistakes and are prepared to give them the old "I told you so!" story. Some fathers don't care about what happens to the child. Some earthly fathers have become all too human and can't be enough like God, our heavenly Father. Some earthly fathers are more likely to choose favorites: "Why can't

you be more like your sister/brother/or the neighbor's kids?"

It's not much of a stretch to think that God wants us to be more like the father in the parable than the examples of the world — not too over-protective, but able to accept the wayward child back into the family without punishment. In my heart, I wanted to be more like the father in the parable, but I know fathering in a sin-filled world isn't ever going to be perfect.

Are we expecting something special for Father's Day? Maybe a tie, golf balls or something else that expresses the children's love and personality? How about a multi-functional remote control that operates everything from the microwave to the TV and DVD player? How about breakfast in bed, some new tool or a *Sports Illustrated* subscription?

What do dads really want? They want children who are safe, free from suffering in any way. They want their cars

to run, their houses to be secure, the heating and cooling working, and to help children with their needs to make the right decisions.

That's what our heavenly Father wants for us. He has the wisdom to let us learn in any way we choose, and to love us and welcome us back when we've fallen in the mud doing things our way.

Earthly fathers who want to follow the example of our heavenly Father would love perfectly and know that mostly they are not the example. Our earthly fathers expect a phone call just to hear from you. The heavenly Father wants the same ... reverse the charges and place it on His Son.

So when our heavenly Father sent Jesus to find us when we were lost, and return us to the right relationship with Him, wouldn't that be the perfect way to live?

So now, who's your Daddy? Abba Father. Thank you, Father.



## 'It is finished' » Shared by the Board of Evangelism of First Lutheran Church, Little Rock

They say a picture is worth 1,000 words. Thus, we believe this photo offers the complete statement of Jesus' crucifixion and His resurrection's blessing of faith and eternal life, as shown by the beautiful live flowers on His vacated Easter cross. "It is Finished."

The transformational cross has an interesting history, too. When the Lutheran Laymen's League's international convention was held in Little Rock in 1989, its theme, "Built on the Rock" was illustrated by a display featuring a large wood cross standing atop a pile of stones brought singly to the convention by each of the 700-800 attendees, who labeled their rock with their name and contact information.

The concept was developed by Joline Kaucher, whose husband, David, and his brother, Ted, built the large wooden cross she envisioned — the same cross which is currently featured in First Lutheran's Lent and Holy Week worship services as our "rugged cross" and later (transformed by the promise

of the resurrection to eternal life), in our Easter Sunday "flowered resurrection cross."

In an intriguing sidebar, we learned that at the end of the 1989 LLL convention, guests were invited to pick up a labeled stone — from the cross's pile — to connect them to a contact buddy with whom to share "post-convention conversations and prayers."

In the hotel elevator on their way home, the Kauchers were joined on another floor by a stranger still wearing a nametag that rang a bell. The unknown lady was peering at Joline's nametag as well.

"Joline, I believe I have your rock," she said, and Joline replied, "And I have yours. No way!"

From the 700-800 unique rocks of all sizes, shapes and aspects, these two strangers chose each other's, which Joline still calls "God's Divine Coincidence"!

The Lord works in mysterious ways, but it seems that this connection was meant to be.



The Resurrection's blessing of faith and eternal life is expressed beautifully by the artful juxtaposition of a hand-built wooden cross blanketed with living flowers against the crucifixion art above the altar at First, Little Rock.

## Welcome!

2023 Call Day and vicarage/deaconess intern assignment services were held at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), Ind., and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL), in late April.



From CTSFW, Jeremy McDonald was called as pastor of Zion, Ulm, Ark., and Our Savior, Brinkley, Ark.; and Charles Vincent Shemwell was called as pastor of Bethlehem, Johnson City, Tenn. From left, Dana and Jeremy McDonald; Pat and Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola; and Amanda (holding Lucia) and Vincent Shemwell (holding Freyja).



From CSL, Jacob Childers was called as associate pastor and his wife, Christina Shaffer, was assigned as deaconess intern at Grace, Knoxville.



**T**o support the efforts of students pursuing a career in church work, the Mid-South District is pleased to once again offer opportunities for financial aid. Members in good standing of a Mid-South District congregation and enrolled in an LCMS seminary or university to prepare for full-time service to the church are eligible.

You must first inform the district office that you are or will be a student at

an LCMS school. All related forms, including the application, are available at [mid-southlcms.org](http://mid-southlcms.org). Go to "Resources" and select "Student Financial Aid" from the drop-down menu.

Applications may be emailed to Julie Tyler at [jtyler@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:jtyler@mid-southlcms.com) or submitted by postal mail to Mid-South District LCMS/Attn: Julie Tyler; 1675 Wynne Road; Cordova, TN 38016.

**The application deadline is June 15.**

### CONFERENCE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

## 'Making Learners for Life'

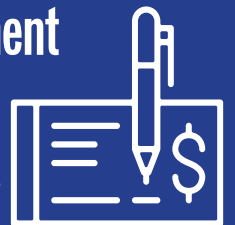
The Mid-South District is excited to offer this year's Early Childhood Conference July 17-18 at Faith Lutheran Church, Collierville, Tenn.

The theme for this year's conference is "Making Learners for Life," inspired by Matthew 28:19-20. Keynote presentations will be from staff of Arkansas State University and the University of Memphis.

For more information and to register, visit [mid-southlcms.org/2023-ecc-conference](http://mid-southlcms.org/2023-ecc-conference).

## Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of  
March 31, 2023  
(12 months)



Anticipated amount (25% of budget)	\$391,068
Actual receipts	\$354,249
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$36,819)

### Use of mission commitment receipts

Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$100,025
Allocated to Tanzania	\$6,250
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70% of receipts)	\$247,974
Total receipts	\$354,249

### Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of March 31, 2023	\$354,249
Actual receipts as of March 31, 2022	\$351,236
Over (under) prior year receipts	\$3,013





# Disaster response grows in time of need

A chain of storms rapidly intensified and dropped dozens of tornadoes during the afternoon and evening of March 31. The Mid-South District communities of Little Rock and Wynne, Ark., and the town of Covington and McNairy County in west Tennessee were hit especially hard. Several LCMS congregation members in these communities were among the many whose homes were destroyed or severely damaged.

A Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) from Batesville arrived in Little Rock in April to help with recovery. Teams from Oklahoma and Texas also helped in Little Rock.

Jan Simko, Mid-South District Disaster Response coordinator, reported that about 3,000 homes were damaged or destroyed with many families displaced, mostly in North Little Rock, Amboy, Sherwood and Jacksonville, Ark.

LERT assistance was gratefully received. A Jacksonville native left this heartfelt note: "I wanted to thank you and your congregation for your acts of kindness and compassion for my family. My words can't accurately describe my gratitude, but I cannot thank you enough. GOD bless all of you!"

"We knocked on many doors with no response," Simko recalls. "I left business cards at homes with minor damage thinking that homeowners may return."

"There was already some rebuilding going on, mostly roofs, within the first two weeks, but this will be a long-term rebuild — probably one to three years."



From left, helping with disaster response efforts in Arkansas were, from left, Rev. Matt Albright, Christ, Little Rock; Joel Junkans, congregation president, Grace, North Little Rock; Kathy O'Day, Lutheran Church Charities director of Disaster Response; Jan Simko, Mid-South District Disaster Response coordinator; Kathy Mathews, Mercy in Action Disaster Resources; Rev. Kent Schaaf, Grace, Little Rock; Rev. David Vandercook, Trinity, North Little Rock, and Shepherd of Peace, Maumelle, Ark., and Rev. Kevin Conger, Hope, Jacksonville, Ark.

Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, hosted LERT training on March 4 and March 25, and some who attended also underwent basic and advanced chainsaw training in late April. Newly formed LERT teams at Trinity, North Little Rock, and Hope, Jacksonville, received training on April 10 and 11.

The need for response teams will almost certainly continue, and volunteers are rising to the challenge. Continuing prayers are requested for the safety of our district LERT teams as they pursue their ministry to those stricken by natural disasters.



If your congregation is interested in **LERT training**, contact Jan Simko at 931-200-1777

# Congratulations!

We share with you the Mid-South District pastors who will celebrate ordination anniversaries in 2023. We rejoice and give thanks to God for the gifts these men provide to His church.

## 55 YEARS

**Rev. Kenneth Haydon** (*emeritus*)  
Eureka Springs, Ark.

**Rev. Arthur Kaufmann** (*emeritus*)  
Bristol, Tenn.

**Rev. Stephen Stov** (*emeritus*)  
Rockwood, Tenn.

**Rev. David Tews** (*emeritus*)  
Horseshoe Bend, Ark.

## 50 YEARS

**Rev. Barry Hildebrandt**  
Cross of Christ, Chattanooga, Tenn.

**Rev. Paul Kritsch**  
Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Sharps Chapel, Tenn.

## 45 YEARS

**Rev. Dan Elkins** (*emeritus*)  
Olive Branch, Miss.

**Rev. Johnny Graham**  
Zion, Ulm, Ark.; Our Savior, Brinkley, Ark.

**Rev. Gene Henke** (*emeritus*)  
Nolensville, Tenn.

**Rev. Robert Herring** (*emeritus*)  
Holiday Island, Ark.

**Rev. Larry Rockemann** (*emeritus*)  
Knoxville, Tenn.

## 40 YEARS

**Rev. Andrew Toopes**  
Holy Trinity, Bowling Green, Ky.

**Rev. Thom Lakso** (*emeritus*)  
Knoxville, Tenn.

**Rev. Charles Neugebauer**  
Christ the King, Memphis, Tenn.

**Rev. Robert Pfaff** (*emeritus*)  
Wartburg, Tenn.

**Rev. Robert Seaton**  
First, Cleveland, Tenn.

**Rev. Larry Seiferth** (*emeritus*)  
Peoria, Ariz.

**Rev. Terry Tieman**  
Grace Celebration, Cordova, Tenn.

**Rev. Brian Truog**  
Christ Our Savior, Loudon, Tenn.

## 35 YEARS

**Rev. Russell Belisle**  
Cross of Calvary, Memphis, Tenn.

**Rev. Mark Krause**  
Salem Lutheran Ministries, Springdale, Ark.

**Rev. Randy Loux**  
Chaplain, Clarksville, Tenn.

**Rev. Steven Teske** (*candidate*)  
Little Rock, Ark.

**Rev. William Wagner**  
Trinity, Columbia, Tenn.

## 25 YEARS

**Rev. Douglas DeWitt**  
Faith, Thompson's Station, Tenn.

**Rev. Robert Harbin**  
Faith, Collierville, Tenn.

**Rev. Mark Wenzelburger** (*emeritus*)  
Garfield, Ark.

**Rev. Philip Young**  
Redeemer, Nashville, Tenn.

## 20 YEARS

**Rev. Paul Hass**  
Bella Vista, Bella Vista, Ark.

## 15 YEARS

**Rev. Andrew Abraham**  
Shepherd of the Hills, Crossville, Tenn.

**Rev. Robert (Danny) Anderson**  
Grace, Knoxville, Tenn.

**Rev. Shawn Found**  
LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces,  
Little Rock, Ark.

**Rev. Edward Maanum**  
First, Knoxville, Tenn.

**Rev. Brandon Martin**  
Salem Lutheran Ministries,  
Springdale, Ark.

**Rev. Theodore McMinn**  
Shepherd of the Hills, McMinnville, Tenn.

**Rev. Kevin McReynolds**  
Redeemer, Mountain Home, Ark.

**Rev. Aaron Neugebauer**  
Redeemer, Paragould, Ark.  
St. John's, Lape, Ark.

**Rev. Gregory Prauner** (*candidate*)  
Battle Creek, Neb.

**Rev. Mark Rhoads**  
Christ Our Savior, Loudon, Tenn.

**Rev. Gordon Smith**  
Our Savior, Morristown, Tenn.  
Christ of the Cumberland, Harrogate, Tenn.

**Rev. Jason Zirbel**  
Grace, Greenwood, Ark.

## 10 YEARS

**Rev. David Graves**  
St. Paul, Wartburg, Tenn.

**Rev. Joseph Jacks**  
St. Philip, Chattanooga, Tenn.

**Rev. William Ringer**  
St. John's, Russellville, Ark.

**Rev. Clayton Sellers**  
Faith, Collierville, Tenn.

**Rev. Alan Thoe**  
Grace, Murfreesboro, Tenn.

## 5 YEARS

**Rev. James Belles**  
Grace Celebration, Cordova, Tenn.

**Rev. Timothy Hunze**  
Emmanuel, Hermitage, Tenn.

**Rev. Jeremy McDonald**  
Fort Wayne, Ind.

**Rev. George Smith**  
Faith, Oak Ridge, Tenn.

**Rev. Gerald Stobaugh**  
Holy Spirit, Oak Ridge, Tenn.

**Well done, good and faithful servants**



## INSTALLATIONS

**Rev. Thomas Boeck** was installed as pastor of **Peace Lutheran Church, Conway**, on March 19. He had previously served at Marco Lutheran Church, Marco Island, Fla. Pictured are, from left, Revs. John Mathis, Christ, Little Rock; Rev. Korey Janneke, St. Matthew, Conway; Dr. Leroy Leach, emeritus; Dr. Roger Paavola, district president; David Vandercook, Trinity, North Little Rock; Shepherd of Peace, Maumelle; Thomas Boeck; Don Hefta, emeritus; Kevin Conger, Hope, Jacksonville; and Bob Benke, Faith, Hot Springs Village.



**Rev. Matt Albright** was installed as senior pastor of **Christ Lutheran Church and School, Little Rock**, on April 2. Pictured are, from left, Revs. Dr. Ross Johnson, LCMS Disaster Response director; John Mathis, Christ associate pastor; Dr. Roger Paavola, district president; David Witte, Grace, Little Rock, and Arkansas National Guard chaplain; Matt Albright; Thomas Boeck, Peace, Conway; Kevin Conger, Hope, Jacksonville; and Don Hefta, emeritus.



**Shelli Haynes** was installed as director of Christian education at **Praise Lutheran Church, Maryville, Tenn.**, on March 12. Shelli gained 27 years of experience as a DCE in congregations throughout the Pacific Southwest District (southern California) before moving to Maryville in June 2021 with her husband, Travis, and family.

## Purchase tickets for Henkel Conference

Thanks to a great response last year, the Henkel Conference is returning in 2023. The event will be held Aug. 7-8 at Ascension, Madison (just north of Nashville).



The Henkel Conference is devoted to sound theology and cultural engagement by hosting distinguished Lutheran theologians and experts on Christian subject matter.

The speaker lineup includes, Carl Trueman, Jack Kilcrease, Rev. Adam Koontz, Rev. Dr. Peter Scaer, David Fowler, Matthew Eppinette, Aaron Kheriaty and Rev. Dr. Jordan Cooper.

For more information, including the schedule, hotel arrangements and purchasing tickets, visit [ascensionmadison.com/henkel](https://ascensionmadison.com/henkel).

Shelli, pictured with Rev. Derek Roberts, Praise pastor, will serve as a Christian education "generalist," helping people of all ages learn more about the love of God through Christ, working to support and equip volunteers in outreach efforts as well to nurture church-member integration and community partnerships.

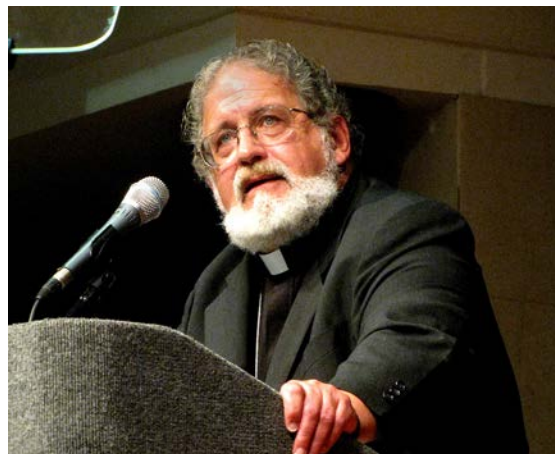
She will also provide resources for parents and grandparents to honor God through their vocational lives, and foster intergeneration within the congregation through fellowship activities and church and community events.

## IN MEMORIAM

Rev. Dr. Kenneth R. Klaus, speaker emeritus of "The Lutheran Hour" radio program, died March 23 at his home in Texas. He served as "Lutheran Hour" speaker from 2002 until his retirement at the end of 2010.

Following his retirement as full-time speaker, he continued recording one sermon a month for "The Lutheran Hour" before returning as interim speaker in 2017 and 2018. Using stories, parables and common-sense messages, Pastor Klaus was known by listeners for one thing: preaching Christ crucified and risen.

Visit [thelc.ms/lhm-ken-klaus](http://thelc.ms/lhm-ken-klaus) for more on the life and ministry of Pastor Klaus. Please also take a moment to lift the family and friends of Pastor Klaus in prayer and give thanks for the blessing of his ministry.



## Apply for a district **GROW** Grant!

The Mid-South District encourages innovative and creative new ministry initiatives by its congregations and schools with help from the GROW Grants program. What is a GROW grant? It is a financial contribution from the Mid-South District to support an innovative ministry program or initiative to reach new hearts with the Gospel.

Examples of such programs/initiatives include new ethnic ministries, outreach to college students, a community food pantry or clothing closet, a ministry for the homeless or any ongoing program that provides opportunities for Gospel-sharing with the community at large. A GROW grant is a one-time financial outlay of up to \$15,000 for a ministry or program that will be on-going and self-sustaining after its initial launch.

Complete information about the GROW Grants program and a grant application are available at [mid-southlcms.org/grow-grants](http://mid-southlcms.org/grow-grants).

Please take a moment to learn about this important resource for ministry — and consider how your congregation or school may benefit. If you have questions about program, please contact Rev. William Zwick, Mid-South District mission executive, at [wzwick@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:wzwick@mid-southlcms.com).

### LWML Fall Retreats

## 'For Such a Time as This'

The LWML Mid-South District invites all women to attend the fall retreat of your choice:

Arkansas	Middle Tennessee	East Tennessee
Sept. 15-17	Sept. 22-24	Oct. 6-8
Mount Eagle Retreat Center	Camp Garner Creek	Eagle Rock Retreat Center

Attendees will go through "For Such a Time as This," an LWML Bible study written by Miriam Maassel Neumann. The study will look at the stories of Esther and Joseph, as well as our own. We will learn how God led people to accomplish His will for a special purpose, and consider how God picks certain times and circumstances when we can spread His word.

Please join us for a spirit-filled weekend and invite a friend! For more information and to register, go to [midsouthlwml.org/district-retreats](http://midsouthlwml.org/district-retreats). Be sure to click on the location you plan to attend. **Registration deadlines** are Sept. 1 (Arkansas), Sept. 8 (Middle Tennessee) and Sept. 22 (East Tennessee).

### SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH US!

Digital files, sent via e-mail, are preferred. Send email submissions to [LW@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:LW@mid-southlcms.com) or send by postal mail to: Judy Otto; 150 N. Maury St.; Holly Springs, MS 38635

Send us your stories and photos for our September 2023 issue by July 15.



### Have your donations matched, and help feed more children!

For many of the children in Haiti served by Trinity HOPE, their school lunch is the only meal they receive in a 24-hour period. Without this meal the children would struggle with malnourishment. Though the ministry continues to grow, there are still over 20,000 children on the waiting list hoping for this meal.

Right now, we have an opportunity like never before — the Bread of Life Campaign (see ad below).

The idea of the campaign centers on one truth — Jesus is the Bread of Life and He provides for our every need. With your help and a strong reliance on Christ to make this happen, we believe we can feed another 20,000 children through this campaign.

A very generous donor has agreed to match all new, recurring donations indefinitely. This means any new, recurring donation established today will be matched for as long as the donation continues. At a cost of about a quarter a meal, every dollar you donate on a recurring basis will provide eight meals. Also, a second donor has agreed to match the donation for one year. If you establish a new recurring donation today, every dollar will become \$3 for the 2022–23 school year and provide 12 meals.

To establish a new, recurring donation today, visit [trinityhope.org/match](http://trinityhope.org/match). You can also mail your donation to P.O. Box 2910, Lebanon, TN 37088.

### CTSFW offering summer classes

“Bringing the seminary to you,” Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., is offering two classes in the Mid-South District this summer. The continuing education series — designed for pastors, church workers and laypeople — offers in-depth study on contemporary topics.

Check out the whole summer schedule, learn more and register at [ctsfw.org/ctsfw-events](http://ctsfw.org/ctsfw-events).

**June 19-21**  
**Ascension, Madison, Tenn.**

**Justification by Faith and the Resurrection: Luke, Acts, and Romans**

This course will examine how the doctrine of justification relates to the resurrection of our Lord. It will look at how Paul builds upon Luke’s presentation of Christ as the New Adam, and how the doctrines of incarnation, resur-



**Rev. Dr. Peter Scaer**



**Rev. Dr. Scott Stiegemeier**

rection and justification are inseparable.

The course will be taught by Rev. Dr. Peter Scaer, CTSFW professor and chairman of Exegetical Theology.

**July 19-21**  
**Grace, Little Rock**  
**What It Means to Be Human**

Theological anthropology is a central concern for the church today. The world has a defective understanding of what a human being is, and the evidence is everywhere. This course will examine philosophical, cultural, and theological beliefs

and assumptions that underlie and address many problems that pertain to human dignity and ethics.

The course will be led by Rev. Dr. Scott Stiegemeier, associate professor of theology at Concordia University Irvine, Calif.



Make a Donation at:  
[www.TrinityHOPE.org/match](http://www.TrinityHOPE.org/match)



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