

First Family

JULY 2025

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FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

230 E. SKYLINE PARKWAY

DULUTH, MN 55811

WWW.FUMCDULUTH.COM

On The Journey With You

I am continually proud of the way our congregation loves and cares about each other, and also actively reaches out into the community with help and loving care. We are not all the same in how we understand theology or politics, but we are united in our commitment to focusing on inclusion, respect and care for one another and for all.

In John 13:34-45 Jesus says, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples (followers), if you love one another.”

We are in a very divided society right now, where deep political polarization is striving to keep us from living Jesus’ commandment of active and unifying love. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks talks about a concept called “pathological dualism.” It arises, he says, whenever humanity becomes divided in thought into two groups: the unimpeachably good (“us”) and irredeemably bad (“them”).

This can easily lead into a situation where ideology makes a person or group dehumanize those they oppose. Once you’ve dehumanized “them” you no longer need to care about them. You can talk/act unkindly (even cruelly) about them, facts and compassion no longer matter, and if gone unchecked, this eventually leads to people behaving in ways they and others would never have anticipated behaving. I believe we recently saw this in the shootings/murders of the Minnesota legislators and some comments in the aftermath. I think we can all come up with other examples of pathological dualism.



In our church we focus on values, living out the ideals and ways of Jesus, and having that inform everything. We challenge each other to make sure our beliefs, words and actions are reflections of our faith over and above any political ideology. We know we can disagree with each other, even strongly, and still talk about it, respect each other, care deeply for each other and join hands in loving each other and doing great ministry in the world together. When our common focus is reflecting on what would Jesus do, say or think, that grounds and centers us.

Jesus calls us to care about each other, with a special focus on those who are marginalized and have the greatest needs. We really need to care about each other, and all the people outside our church doors, in our often divided, even violent, world.

Together let's remember, and live Jesus' powerful words: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples (followers), if you love one another."

On the journey with you, Pastor Jeanine Alexander

ANNUAL CONFERENCE SUMMARY

We had the Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church in St. Cloud last week. Participating from our church were: Rev. Jeanine Alexander, Rev. MaryAnne Korsch, Cindy Hedlund, Elizabeth Nelson. Kelby Werner, our former intern and church member, was commissioned as a provisional member of the UMC.

Written summary by our conference Director of Communications, Christa Meland:

- **Key Details and Theme:** About 500 of us from across Minnesota came together in St. Cloud to worship, learn, discern our shared future, and celebrate what God is doing through us. Drawing on 1 John 4, our theme was “Created to Love Boldly.” We were reminded that God loves us beyond measure and inspired to share God’s love in a hurting world.
- **Episcopal Address:** In her Episcopal Address, Bishop Lanette Plambeck urged us to lean into “the reckless, unrelenting grace of God” even when the world around us seems bent on despair.
- **Teaching Sessions:** We heard two teaching sessions from Rev. Dr. Tim Eberhart, a theologian and professor at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. He said climate disruption, political division, spiritual fatigue, and community breakdown are colliding and amplifying one another. He didn’t sugarcoat the realities of our time, but he did bring hope.
- **New Vision and Desired Outcome:** The Minnesota Conference adopted for itself the powerful new vision statement that The United Methodist Church unveiled in May: “The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections.” Our vision flows out from our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Our conference also named a hoped-for outcome for our shared ministry:
- **Celebration of Life in Ministry:** We honored and thanked 15 clergy entering retirement, and we celebrated one pastor ordained as a deacon, five ordained as elders, five commissioned as provisional pastors (a step on the way to ordination), one recognized as an elder in full connection from another denomination, and five authorized to serve as local pastors in the congregations and ministry areas in which they are appointed. Richard Huskey, who was also set to be ordained as an elder, unfortunately fell ill and was unable to attend the ordination, but Bishop Lanette is flying to Pennsylvania—where he lives—to ordain him as a matter of repentance and repair for the ways he was harmed by the church. In 1977, after Huskey disclosed that he was gay while in process to become an elder, the Minnesota Conference discontinued his orders. After the 2024 General Conference removed the denomination’s decades-long ban on gay clergy, Huskey requested to be ordained and was approved by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

Legislation: Hundreds of voting members in attendance at Annual Conference approved the majority of legislation under consideration, including:

- a resolution calling on all congregations to commit to taking climate action by creating or strengthening a “green team” for action in four areas each year—worship, education, practice, and advocacy.
- a resolution encouraging all congregations to examine our church property deeds and personal and business property deeds, as well as the books in our municipalities and counties, for discriminatory language/laws and have them removed.
- a resolution that publicly opposes the U.S. presidential administration’s proposed plan for the U.S. to “take over” and “own” the Gaza Strip and calls for the Palestinian people to have a voice in their own destiny and a right to their land.
- a resolution affirming that withholding humanitarian aid to those in need is antithetical to the Gospel message and opposing the actions of the U.S. government to withhold aid from the people of Gaza.

Children & Youth

FUMC Summer Carnival - All Are Welcome!

Join us Monday, July 14th from 4:00-7:00pm at First United Methodist Church for a fun, family friendly carnival! Enjoy games, inflatables, face painting, animals, food, and more! Come connect with neighbors, explore our children's ministries, and enjoy a joyful evening overlooking Lake Superior. We'd love to see you there!



BAPTIZED IN JUNE

Aurora Jayne Kantonen



YOUTH MISSION & PLAY IN JULY

- Monday, July 21: 10am-5pm
- Serving a meal at the Union Gospel Mission followed by water activities.
- For those entering 7 to 12 grades.
- Sign up with Pastor Jeanine or the church office.

*Thank
you!*

A special thanks to Randy Bowen, Daryl Harper, Tom Brown, Dave Johnson, and Joel Smith for helping with the LED project.

Thanks to Marlene Bowen for bringing the food shelf donations to Chum.

Lastly, thanks to an Angel Donor for their contribution which enables the church to paint the downstairs class rooms, the Social Hall, the Fireside Room & the Church office

WORSHIP IN JULY 2025



July Sermon Series: Moments That Take Our Breath Away from PSALMS

During July we will continue to worship in person in our sanctuary every Sunday at 10am AND online on YouTube every Sunday morning at 10am. The service can also be watched anytime after 10am Sunday morning. The service on YouTube is a livestream of the service happening in the sanctuary. **Please make worship a summer soul destination this year!**

COMING THIS FALL: TABLE OF EIGHT



This September, new member Gary Solomonson will begin organizing and facilitating Table of Eight—a monthly support group for families and friends of loved ones living with dementia. Whether you're just beginning the journey, have walked it for years, or are navigating life after loss, this group offers a welcoming space to share stories, explore caregiving approaches, and support one another.

Gary brings 45 years of experience in senior living, having helped launch similar groups across the U.S. and U.K. During June and July, he'd love to meet informally with two or three people over coffee after Sunday services to explore interest in this new ministry. Please let Pastor Jeanine know if you would like to meet with him or talk with him directly.

An online version of the gathering will also be offered for our virtual members and friends. Plans are underway to host two gatherings each month—one in person and one online. Look for a flyer in the foyer for more details.

P.S. To spot Gary, he's usually the Norwegian in the bow tie and corduroy sport coat.

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Would you benefit from a grief support group? If there is enough interest, Parish Nurse Linda Wiig and Rev. MaryAnne Korsch are considering forming a monthly grief support group for Coppertop members and friends. Our initial plan is that the group could meet in person for about 90 minutes per session to discuss the grief process, strategies for living into a new reality, and helpful practices for healthy coping. The focus would be on mutual support, confidentiality, and honoring one another's experiences as we learn together. If this is something you'd be interested in, please connect with either Linda or MaryAnne before the end of July.

From Our Faith Community Nurse

Good Day to All,

Caring for our Community here in Minnesota and across the Nation will be more difficult if many provisions in the “Big Beautiful Bill” are passed into law.

I’m really upset about the Reconciliation Bill (BBB) now in the Senate. I had hopes that some of that bill would change for the better, but from what I have heard and read so far, that isn’t happening.

I’d just like to reiterate a couple of the items that will impact our community health.

Firstly, the cuts proposed to Medicaid are profound. St. Louis County has about 200,000 population. Medicaid covers about 1 in 4 residents—60% are families with children, and 42% are seniors and people with disabilities. Medicaid, not Medicare, is the main payer of long-term care in Minnesota. Medicaid covers 20% of all mental health treatment in our state as well as, payment for more than half of all substance use disorder treatment. (Source from MN DHS.)

The proposed cuts to Medicaid will threaten rural hospitals-- closing up to 40%. Extended care facilities will be under threat of closure also. Who will take care of the residents who have no family or anyone to care for them? Seniors will also have to recertify twice a year rather than just once per year. If those seniors cannot continue to reside in the facility, they may have increased health problems requiring hospitalization, and that care cost will be passed to the county, which will be passed on to the county residents in the form of more taxes.

The Affordable Care Act is also on the chopping block to the tune of 300 billion dollars as well as the SNAP program.

Food insecurity has greatly increased here and nationwide. Currently, there are 47 million people who fit in this category. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Program) is to be cut by 30% which also includes the WIC program (Women Infant & Children). The WIC program covers low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum mothers, and children up to the age of five. Children and infants make up 77% of the dollars available to the WIC program. States will be required to pay five percent of the local operating budget. States pay nothing now. These costs to the states may require higher taxes or cuts to the food people receive.

Healthcare for many low-income families, care for children with disabilities, prenatal and postpartum care, food support for children and infants, access to healthcare in rural communities, preventive and primary care, dental care, long-term care – all of these services need to be maintained. If you agree, please gain more information about the issues. Then write or call your legislators and tell them you oppose the cuts to Medicaid, SNAP and WIC. A good source of information is a Duluth Indivisible group—you can join at <https://duluthindivisible.org/>.

Can we be changemakers? As Christians that care about people, what can we do individually and as a group? Resist the above changes, persist in communicating our displeasure, and continue to act for what is right and what you are passionate about.

Peace. Linda

FIRST FAMILY

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EARTHKEEPER

What's in Your Brain? Maybe a Plastic Spoon

By Naomi Yaeger

Plastic Free July 2025 is a global initiative encouraging individuals and communities to reduce single-use plastic waste throughout the month. The campaign runs from July 1 to July 31 and aims to raise awareness about plastic pollution and promote sustainable practices.

Could you go the whole month without using single-use plastic? The key words here are “single-use plastic.” I’ve done this challenge in past years—but still packed my lunch in plastic containers. The Plastic Free Foundation, based in Australia, is committed to ending global plastic waste. Rebecca Prince-Ruiz OAM, the founder of Plastic Free July, launched the movement in 2011. Concerned about how much plastic was going into landfills, she encouraged 40 of her friends to avoid single-use plastic for a month.

The campaign quickly grew—from 40 people to 400, then 4,000—and eventually inspired the creation of the Plastic Free Foundation as a registered charity in 2017.

Visit <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/> to take the pledge. You can commit to things like refusing single-use cups, plastic food wrap, or plastic drink bottles. Speaking of bottles—just the other night I was at Sir Ben’s listening to Terry and others play at a

music jam. I decided to treat myself to a pop. The waitress asked if I wanted it in a bottle. I said yes, but when it arrived, it was a plastic bottle. I expressed my dismay, and she explained my options. I ended up switching to a root beer that came in a glass bottle instead.

Plastic is not just a waste problem—it’s a health issue too. A 2025 study published in Nature Medicine found that, on average, the human brain now contains micro- and nanoplastics equal in mass to a plastic spoon.

“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much.”

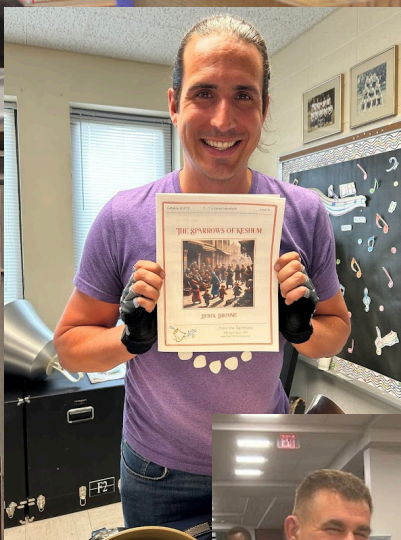
— Luke 16:10a (NIV)

Naomi Yaeger is a commissioned Earthkeeper with the United Methodist Church. Contact her at (218) 591-5277 or sun_dog_press@yahoo.com



Ways to give to support your church: give online at fumcduluth.com or use the QR code, or text **COPPERTOP** to **73256** or mail to FUMC
230 E. Skyline Parkway,
Duluth, MN 55811.





MUSIC NOTES



Summer Concerts – Mark Your Calendars!

Strikepoint Homecoming Concert, Sunday, August 10, 7:00 p.m.

Once again, Strikepoint will be touring this summer, returning home with a concert in our sanctuary on Sunday, August 10 at 7:00 p.m. Under Derek Bromme's direction, they will embark on a 10-day concert tour taking them as far west as Mount Rushmore in South Dakota. Their concerts are always filled with exceptional music and lots of fun. You don't want to miss their homecoming concert here! Admission is free but an \$18 donation is suggested.

Echoes of the Lake Concert, August 19, 7:00 p.m.

Come and listen to the Arrowhead Chorale's treble ensemble, Echoes of the Lake, in concert in our Social Hall on Tuesday, August 19 at 7PM. The Arrowhead Chorale is an auditioned choir based in the Twin Ports that has provided exceptional musical performances for four decades. Our own Mary Whitlock is a member of the Arrowhead Chorale and also sings in this treble ensemble. And, our Children's Music Director, Beth Brophy, will also be playing several instruments during the concert. Come enjoy beautiful music and some delicious treats.



Children's Music

Our music and children's ministries staff came up with a new, experimental program for our children in 2nd -6th grade. Rather than offering two music groups, Ringtones and JAM, as well as our Tweens group, we will now offer one combined group called Joyful Noise. The group will meet on Wednesdays from 5:15-6:15 p.m. with time spent in a variety of musical activities (ringing, singing and drumming) and a weekly spiritual lesson or activity. Beth Brophy, our Children's Music Director, and Christine Winkler Johnson will co-lead this new program. JAM Junior, the music group for our youngest members (1st grade and under), will still meet on Wednesdays from 5:00-5:30 p.m. and continues to be led by Beth Brophy. We are excited about this new plan and hope it engages our children in the wonderful gift of music! Parents: Look for more detailed information from Beth and Christine later in the summer.

Velda Bell, Director of Music Ministries
and Larry Ehresman, Congregational Ministries Coordinator

NEXTREX® PLASTIC BAG AND FILM RECYCLING

The bags-to-benches project spearheaded by the sustainability team now has a complete seat. FUMC and the Duluth Lions Club joined forces in 2021, collecting plastic bags and film, which were transformed into the beautiful Trex bench pictured above. Our congregation has collected approximately 18.3 pounds per month for a total of 888.5 pounds. This amount has increased over the last year. Members of the Lions Club take this plastic to Cub Foods, and they ship it to NexTrex, a decking and railing company. When an organization collects at least 1,000 pounds during a 12 month period, a Trex bench is donated to that group.

All this is possible because church member Daryl Harper regularly picks up the plastic, sorts and weighs it, then drops it off at Cub Foods. Please thank Daryl for his behind-the-scenes work. Also thanks to Randy and Marlene Bowen who installed the bench outside the east parking lot entrance. Now you can sit and enjoy the flowers, the view, and the comfort of belonging to a caring community.

Jean Walsh, Sustainability Team



Not all plastic is acceptable. It must be clean and “stretchy”. Please save Daryl the trouble of sorting out noisy chip bags.



Pictured above: Randy and Marlene Bowen taking a rest after installing the bench.



Pictured left: Larry Ehresman points out the recycling location in the kitchen.



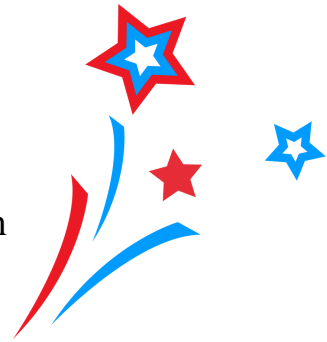
Pictured right: Linda Wiig by the plastic collection bin in the Narthex.



JULY BIRTHDAYS

Leah Abbott
Sannah Arvidson-Hicks
Mark Ball
Heather Boyson
Atley Collins
Beth Edin-Peppersack
Marcus Giuliani
Mary Grant
Bud Hanson
Parker Hinnenkamp
David Hoffman
Griffin Jeannette

Karen Jeannette
Nakiah Lanthier
Sandy Lanthier
Josephine Peterson
Dale Schroeder
Jason Serck
Leah Shadle
Gail Toftey
Julie Venhuizen
Jean Walsh



*If your birthday isn't listed, please contact
the church office so we can update our database*

FUMC Roadside Cleanup

The Roadside Cleanup went well. The weather was great, and the team was amazing. We were done EARLY!!!

Special thanks to Lauren, Stacy, Will & Millie Carolan, Millie's friend Annie,; Jamie (Alexander) Glitsos; Jill (Alexander) & Jon Anderson; Ellen, Josh, Martin & Owen Hill; and Tom Brown.

Please mark your calendars for the next Roadside Cleanup which will be Saturday, October 11th from 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM.

Church Office Summer Hours

Monday - Thursday 9-3
Friday 9-12

Some days the office may close early, please call ahead

Building Security

Please check in with the church office when entering the building during the week

From The Welcome Desk

Greg Leiviska, Director of Welcome

In times of political uncertainty and polarization, the idea of being a “welcoming congregation” takes on deeper meaning. It's no longer just about smiling at the door or printing “All Are Welcome” on a bulletin. It’s about creating a sacred, courageous space where people of all backgrounds, identities, and beliefs can show up fully—as they are—and be met with love, not judgment. “Welcoming” has become a buzzword in faith spaces, but its true essence requires action, commitment, and discomfort. In a climate where anti-immigrant rhetoric, anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, racial injustice, and religious intolerance are on the rise, being welcoming means standing up for those who are targeted. It means risk. It means solidarity.

Being welcoming today is in itself an act of resistance.

To be a welcoming congregation, we must go beyond acceptance to celebration. This includes:

- **Affirming LGBTQ+ people** not just in word, but by advocating for their safety, rights, and leadership.
- **Embracing racial and cultural diversity** by confronting systemic racism within and outside our walls.
- **Creating trauma-informed spiritual space** for those who’ve been hurt by religion.

A truly welcoming space doesn’t ask people to check their identity or pain at the door. It creates room for the whole human experience. We start by listening. Listening to voices that have long been silenced. Learning from communities most impacted by oppression. This might mean reshaping programs, shifting power, or reimagining worship itself. It will be uncomfortable. That’s good. Growth often is.



May we be brave enough to live the welcome we proclaim.
May our doors be open, our hearts broken, our arms wide.
And may our congregations become not just safe places,
but transformative ones.



Conversation with Church Friends: A group is meeting over Zoom every second and fourth Tuesday at 10am to catch up with each other and talk about what comes up that day. If you’re interested in joining the group, contact Pamela Brown at pamela.brown@reliabilitysolutions.us

The Coffee Hour after worship on Sundays is a perfect way to connect with the people of our church and is viewed as a ministry. Currently, we have a 4-week rotation, working in teams of 2. Would you consider volunteering for this important mission? Training is provided. You may contact with either Linda Wiig (linda.wiig@hotmail.com) or Pamela Brown (pr.brown1906@gmail.com) should you like to find out more.

Scams and Phishing in 2025

Alex Flinner, Technical Coordinator

While the summer is still heating up, this year has already produced many changes digitally, including widely accessible AI tools, drastic reductions in funding for consumer protection organizations, and the continuing improvement of shady groups to trick, scam, or swindle us out of our hard earned funds and time. All of which can make it difficult to know if what we have in our hand (or on our screen) is a legitimate thing. When you don't know for sure, verify.

Personally, I have gotten many scam communications, including text messages about unpaid parking tickets, emails warning about "Unknown access to my Microsoft Office 365 account", dozens of robo calls with no one on the other end, mailings warning of unpaid bills for internet service, and more.

If you have experienced any of the above or numerous other scams, there are a few things that can clue you into them being scams or phishing messages. Some good warning signs from my examples above:

- Parking tickets/Toll tickets are physically distributed and if not placed on the car, they get mailed to the vehicle's registered owner, never delivered through text message.
- Mis-spelled email Subject lines or emails coming from random email addresses (ex. random6752@XYZ.com) are a good indicator, especially if they are for a service or subscription you don't have.
- Screen unknown callers by letting it go to voicemail or use your cell phone's virtual assistant to screen the call for you. If it is a scam call, most cell phones have a report option to warn your carrier of a questionable number.
- If you get random, or unexpected bills (even small ones), do not call the number on the suspect invoice, use the contact information from a known legitimate invoice or publication to contact the company to confirm what you received.

Scammers and Phishers are equal opportunity offenders who will try to take advantage of your good, responsible nature, and/or lack of technical knowledge to extract as much as they can. As a final example, we regularly get a scam bill at church from AT&T for less than \$10 and it is printed on very convincing letterhead and stuffed in a convincing envelope. Only by calling the bonafide AT&T number, were we able to confirm we owed no such amount, while confirming we had no active account.

If you do end up getting scammed, possibly taken advantage of, or are curious about what more to be aware of, here are some good sites with more information:

www.usa.gov/scams-and-fraud

www.bbb.org/scamtracker



CHURCH SERVICE

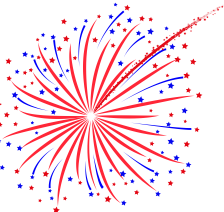

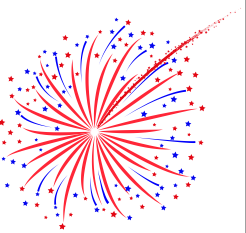
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 BENCH
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 FLOWERS
 FOYER
 GOSPEL
 LISTEN
 ORGAN
 PEACE
 PEW
 PIANO
 PRAYER
 SERMON
 SING
 SOLACE
 STATUES
 WORSHIP

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

G	E	C	A	E	P	Y	E	C	A	L	O	S	K	O
C	A	N	D	L	E	S	N	W	O	R	S	H	I	P
L	Z	N	A	G	R	O	F	I	N	O	M	R	E	S
N	R	I	O	H	C	L	D	E	T	Q	R	P	P	C
H	B	A	L	C	O	N	Y	O	B	E	R	H	O	P
T	C	Z	L	W	Z	P	K	E	O	A	L	M	C	E
I	F	Y	E	E	N	R	L	S	Y	R	M	L	E	W
A	I	R	B	C	P	L	E	E	T	U	S	C	U	D
F	S	I	R	E	U	S	R	Y	N	A	E	D	C	B
L	I	S	T	E	N	U	O	I	O	L	T	Q	Y	J
O	N	A	I	P	P	C	T	G	B	F	B	U	P	Z
A	L	T	A	R	M	Y	H	I	S	I	N	G	E	S
S	K	O	O	B	Y	E	B	E	L	I	E	F	U	S

The words appear UP, DOWN, BACKWARDS, and DIAGONALLY.
Find and circle each word.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
JULY		1	2	3	4 HAPPY JULY 4th	5
6 Worship 10am	7	8	9	10	11 Men's Group 8am	12
13 Worship 10am Sustainability 11:15am	14	15 Council Meeting 6:30pm	16	17 Ruby's Pantry 4:30pm	18 Men's Group 8am	19
20 Worship 10am	21	22	23	24	25 Men's Group 8am	26 Ryan & Ariana Wedding
27 Worship 10am	28	29	30	31 Trustee Meeting 4:45pm 		

First United Methodist Church

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