



Christian Challenger

Vol. 67

October 7, 2020

No. 20

Babies Need Diapers!

Pantry Sunday — October 11th

For families who struggle financially, providing diapers for their young children is a huge challenge leading to a cycle of difficulty.

* Diapers cost up to \$100-150 per month, per baby.

* Many parents have to choose between buying food or diapers.

* Food Stamps cannot be used for diapers.

* Babies without disposable diapers are turned away from childcare.

* Parents without access to childcare can't go to work.

FCC's Outreach Partner, Interfaith Outreach, supplies each child with a large supply (80-100 depending on size) every 30 days through our Diaper Chest. Sizes 3 - 6 are preferred.

Help fill the shelves at Interfaith Outreach this **Sunday, October 11th**.

Bring packages of diapers, or monetary donations to serve these babies in need!

Shopping tip: Diapers vary widely in cost and quality. We have researched this extensively and our best buys are Target's Up and Up brand and Walmart's Parent's Choice brand.



Young Ages Preschool Kringles & Coffee Fall Fundraiser

October 13th – 27th
(Items will be delivered, fresh, the week before Thanksgiving)

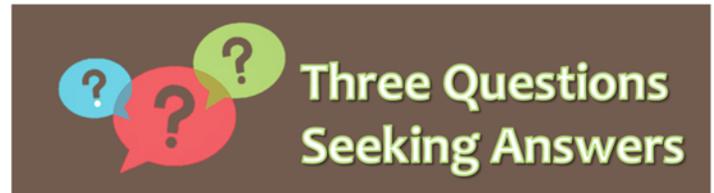
Kringles \$15.00 each

There are 12 flavors to choose from including: Apple, Almond, Wild Blueberry, Cinnamon Roll, Cherry, Cherry Cheese, Cream Cheese, Pecan, Pumpkin Caramel, Raspberry, Turtle and Wisconsin - a blend of cream cheese, cranberries and cherries.

Coffee \$13.00 for a 12 oz. bag

Freshly Roasted Specialty Coffees come whole, ground or K-Kups in a variety of blends and flavors. If you don't drink coffee, don't worry! We also have a variety of Artisan Loose Teas, Cocoa and Chai's to choose from.

Payment is due at the time the order is placed. All orders, including payment, are due by Tuesday, October 27th. Stop by or call the Church office to place your orders.



Join Dr. Bender for a three-week Sunday evening experience that will help you answer the questions:

1. Why Jesus?
2. Why the church?
3. Why this church?

Three Questions Seeking Answers is designed for guests, new members, those who don't know Jesus Christ well, and those who want to make Christ the center of their lives. Come join in the conversation on Sundays, October 18 & 25, and November 1, from 6:00-7:00 pm in Room 310 or on Zoom. Register at www.firstchristian2020.com.

Church Board Nominations

It is time to make your suggestions for nominations to the Church Board. The term of election is a three year term from January 2021 to December 2023. **Persons on the enclosed listing as Current Members of the Church Board MAY NOT be nominated for ANY position.** Those persons going off the Board in 2020 must be off the Board for at least one year before they may be nominated again for any position. For more information you may contact the church office or one of the following members of the nominating committee: Dr. Mark Bender, Mark Turnbow, Alan Freeman, Jim LaValley, Eddie Tucker, Debi Ballard, Susan Buckley, Ashley Burross, Stacey Strickland, Emily Thomas. Please return the enclosed nomination form to the church office by **Sunday, October 18th**.



Our organist would like to include your favorite hymn in the worship service on Sunday mornings. Please give us your name, hymn title, and then in 25 words or less, tell us why this hymn is special to you.

You can email your hymn information to susan@firstchristianwf.com, you can leave it in the pew on Sunday morning, or you can bring it to the church office.

Make Your Mark

Dr. Mark R. Bender
Senior Minister



Title

A few months ago, I had a conversation with a friend who had recently retired from ministry. One of the comments he made about his retirement is that he now had the time to “go deep.” He told me that when he was serving a church, there was only so much time to research a particular topic. The demands of ministry (sermons, pastoral care, leadership, etc.) left little time to follow all the “rabbit trails.” But now, he said, when he wanted to chase down a matter of theology or practice, he could read multiple books, do copious amounts of internet research, and give lots of thought to its implications.

I agree with his notion that the demands of ministry make it difficult to fully investigate any one topic. But if you were to ask me what I’ve been thinking about and researching recently, I would tell you it is online church engagement. Having been thrust into this world by COVID-19, I am trying to learn everything I can about how to better utilize digital tools for ministry. That’s why I am reading blog posts from thought leaders, watching videos from ministry consultants, and participating in webinars (like the one I’ll be watching tomorrow night - the Online Church Engagement Summit).

I mentioned in a *Make Your Mark* column earlier this year that one of the thought leaders I’ve been reading and learning from is Carey Nieuwhof, a Canadian pastor, blogger, author, and podcaster. As a staff, we have read several of his articles together in Staff Meeting. To me, he is on the cutting edge of thinking about church on the digital frontier. In fact, he has even gone so far as to suggest that churches are first digital expressions with satellite physical spaces. In other words, the main campus - the main meeting space - for the church is online.

Now, I’m not sure that I completely agree with Nieuwhof on that point, but I do think he is right about the need to give intentional thought to online ministry. Even this last Sunday when we have had our highest in-person worship attendance since March (pre-COVID), the number of people joining us online was 2-3 times higher. Plus, many are enjoying the “on-demand” feature of digital worship. No longer do they miss church if they aren’t in the building at 8:40 am or 10:45 am on Sunday mornings. They can tune in on Facebook or YouTube later in the day or throughout the week. In fact, we still see people watching some of our services from April.

While I believe an online worship offering is here to stay and will be a part of our ministry going forward, what I know is that there is lots to learn about how to do this well. Further, what I believe we will have to figure out is how we introduce people to Jesus Christ in the days ahead, both through in-person and digital means.

Last week, Nieuwhof addressed this topic in a blog post. Judging by what growing churches are doing right now, he believes there are seven factors that will drive future church growth:

1. **Personal invitation** - A great social media presence is important, as are services unchurched people can access. But at the heart of it all, in almost every growing church is this: people inviting their friends...If your church members don’t invite their friends, don’t expect to grow.
2. **Refusing to settle for mediocre** - It’s one thing to invite your friends. It’s another to have a great experience to invite them into. Many churches settle for mediocrity. Don’t...If your worship service is something only insiders love, don’t be surprised when outsiders walk away.
3. **An open door online and a great in-house experience** - future churches will realize their online presence is their front door... Future churches will also realize, though, that

following Jesus is about more than consuming content while you run, drive, or cook dinner. Our digital age also leaves people hungering for greater community, greater experience, and greater transcendence. Which is why church that are growing are focusing more and more on creating experiences that engage more than just the head on a Sunday...but also engage the heart and relationship.

4. **Genuine community** - the paradox of our age is that we’ve never been more connected as a culture, and we’ve never felt more alone. Churches that grow in the future will prioritize community. Real community. The truth is the real mission of the church is relationship. It defines the vertical nature of our faith (love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength) and the horizontal essences of Christianity (love your neighbor as yourself).
5. **Deep engagement** - In the future church only engaged people will attend because only the engaged will remain. Engaged people are passionate people. They know what the mission is. They serve in it. And they live it out. They’re passionate enough about it to invite their friends.
6. **Clarity** - Growing churches are clear churches. They have clarity about the mission. Clarity about the vision. And they have clarity about the strategy. Clarity means this is how we’re going to reach our community. It also means, no, we’re not going to do X, Y, and Z. We’re about THIS instead.
7. **Risk and experimentation** - To accomplish a radically new future, you will have to do radically different things. The people you’re trying to reach don’t care what you did yesterday. Actually, they don’t really care what you’re doing today. Whether that’s pop-up church, micro campuses, new approaches to social, or even different ways to connect people, your church needs to rethink its current methods to accomplish its mission.

The good news for First Christian Church, Wichita Falls, is that we are already moving down the path in many of these areas. We’ve been giving thought to how we offer a compelling online and in-house experience. We’re working hard to develop genuine community in worship, groups, and service opportunities. And we intentionally spent time and money (through our Vision Team process) in working to gain clarity about what God has called us to do.

But, rather than focus on the things the church can (and will) do, let me encourage you to look back at factor #1 above - personal invitation. Who have you invited to join you at church, either in-person or online? If you aren’t comfortable coming to the building, have you considered hosting a watch party at your house? Are you looking at things highlighted in this *Challenger* with the lens of who you know that might join you at one of these events (like at the *Three Questions Seeking Answers*)?

So here’s what I want you to do. Scan through the other pages of the Challenger. Think about what you are going to participate in. Then pray about who you should invite to join with you. Allow God to bring names to your mind and heart. And once you’ve done that, then ask, “How am I sharing my faith through intentional investment in others?” This may just be the time to make that investment!

Mark



FCC MINISTRY NEWS AND CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS



Join us on the East Parking lot Sunday mornings at 8:40 am for a Drive-In Communion service! This short service features hymns, prayers, a message, and communion. Come start your Sunday with this Onsite Worship Experience.



We are excited to announce that we will be hosting both of our Trunk-or-Treat events this year!

Off-Site Trunk-or-Treat will be on Tuesday, October 20, from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the Wichita Falls Housing Authority offices (115 E Wichita St.). We will line their parking lot with cars and pass out candy to the residents of the area.

On-Site Trunk-or-Treat will be Sunday, October 25, from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. We are thrilled to announce that we will be partnering with First Presbyterian to host our first Drive-Thru Trunk-or-Treat! Both church parking lots will be lined with cars ready to hand out candy and treats to all who drive through!

If you would like to volunteer to bring a trunk and pass out candy at either event, please email [Claire](mailto:claire@firstchristianwf.com) (claire@firstchristianwf.com) and let her know which event you will be at. We are also taking candy donations.

Coats For Kids



Diana Costello, Judy Muir, Debbi Schmidt getting ready to draw the gourmet dinner winner!

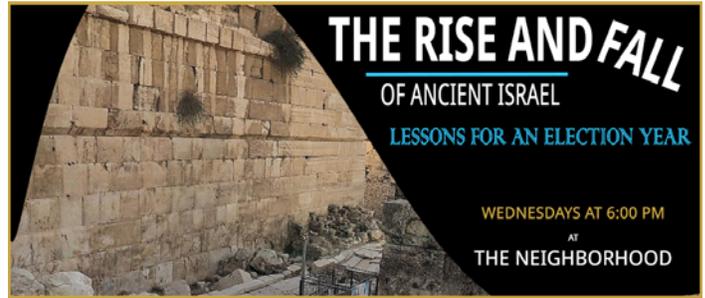
Thank you for your donations to the Coats for Kids fundraiser. Our goal was \$5,000 and \$8,060 was raised! Thank you again for your generosity!

The drawing for the "home cooked gourmet dinner delivered to someone's home" was held on September 21st. The winner was Gary & Linda Cook. Congratulations!

We will be sorting coats on Sunday, November 1st, at 2:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Then sorting and delivery of coats to the schools will be the week of November 16th to 20th from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Furniture Needed for MSU Student

We have an MSU student, Kristen, that works in the MSU food pantry in need of some furniture. She is looking for a couch and a dinette table and chairs. All she has is her bed for the new apartment. If anyone has things that they would like to find a new home for, please call Sally Hastings, 940-224-4416! Cindy Cummings will pick them up in her truck and deliver them to Kristen. Thank you!



The **Challenger** is biweekly, with the next publication on Oct. 21! FCC Ministry News is sent by email every Monday.

From the Mailbox . . .

My Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Words cannot begin to convey my astonishment, or the profound gratitude I feel, at being granted the high honor of the title of Minister Emeritus. I am truly humbled, and profoundly grateful, for your kindness. The love I feel for this congregation, and the thankfulness I will always have for the unceasing kindness you have shown my family and me for the last two decades, cannot be adequately expressed in words (even by someone as notoriously verbose as me). Thank you, Pastor Mark; thank you, faithful Elders; thank you, dearly beloved congregation.

We have a wonderful ministerial team, along with a great staff and superb lay leaders. I am profoundly grateful (from my privileged position in the pew), to receive the Word, the sacraments, the enlightenment and the pastoral care from such faithful and devoted servants. Most of all, I will always be grateful to Almighty God, who blessed me so greatly by leading me to this community, and to this deeply gracious, ever-faithful, always beloved Church.

In Christ's Name,
Dave

Member News:

♥ **Hospitalized:** no one. Released and back home is Melody Jennings.

♥ Our sympathies are extended to Dana Allison and Family on learning of the death of her mother, Jay Keck, on August 4th.

♥ Our condolences are extended to former member, Steve Neeld, and to Larry Carr & Families on learning of the death of Steve's wife and Larry's second cousin, Elaine Neeld, on September 29th. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, October 17th, at 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall.

♥ Congratulations to Ashley & Brandon Warton on the birth of their son, Alek Michael Warton, on September 27th. Alek weighed 7 lbs 4 oz and was 19 1/2" long. Proud grandparents are Stacey & David Strickland.

FOR THE RECORD . . .

CGRM: (Tues., Sept. 29)	29
Neighborhood (Wed., Sept. 30)	25
Sunday School (Sun. Oct. 4)	53
Worship (Oct. 4): 8:40am Drive In Worship Service	30
10:45am Worship Service	255
Total Worship	310
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week	\$18,362.35
Sunday Receipts for 10/4/20	\$9,017.00
Through Oct. 5: Income \$664,659.43	Expenses \$704,758.05

This Sunday:

"A Fine Child"
Exodus 2:1-10
Dr. Mark R. Bender

SUGGESTIONS TO NOMINATING COMMITTEE

I/We suggest to the Nominating Committee that the following persons be considered for submission to the Congregation for election to the Church Board for a three year term ending 12/31/2023. **(THOSE PERSONS-- EXCEPT FOR THE YOUTH--LISTED ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS FORM MAY NOT BE NOMINATED FOR ANY POSITION):**

TRUSTEE - One is to be elected. Please suggest only 1. _____

ELDERS - Six are to be elected. You may suggest any number up to 6.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

DIACONATE - Sixteen are to be elected. You may suggest any number up to 16.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

YOUTH DIACONATE - Six **HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH** are to be elected for a **one year** term. You may suggest up to 6.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

LIFE-TERM ELDER – There is no numerical requirement in filling this position of honor for distinguished service as an Elder.

_____	_____
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LIFE-TERM DIACONATE – There is no numerical requirement in filling this position of honor for distinguished service as a Diaconate member.

_____	_____
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For more information you may contact the church office or one of the following members of the nominating committee: Dr. Mark Bender, Mark Turnbow, Alan Freeman, Jim LaValley, Eddie Tucker, Debi Ballard, Susan Buckley, Ashley Burross, Stacey Strickland, Emily Thomas, a Past President. **PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE CHURCH OFFICE BY SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18!**

CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH BOARD & THEIR TERMS

Term Ending 12/31/2020

Trustee

Kerry Roach

Elders

Rick Appling
David Collins
Woody Gossom
Howard Morris
Ricky Scales
Emily Wilson

Diaconate

Debi Ballard
Kim Ballard
Larry Ballard
Ashley Burross
Kyle Burross
Buddy Edgemon
Alan Freeman
Lynette Gill
Linda Gipson
Kris Gossom
Scot Hafley
Ann Kable
Hollie Murphey
Nancy Smith
Curtis Sullivan
Liz Thomas

Youth Diaconate (Term Ending 12/31/20):

Abby Bender
Davidson Cook
Hannah Earley
Isabell Murphey
Emily Thomas

Life Term Elders:

Melba Anastopoulos
John Bridgman
Diana Costello
David Gately
Patt Giddings
Kenn Hill

Life Term Diaconate:

Sara Anderson
Rosie Bearden
Peggy Fitts
Carolyn Ford

Term Ending 12/31/2021

Trustee

Glenn Tole II

Elders

Gary Ballard
Linda C. Carr
Linda Cook
Kathleen Lauck
Sherry Tucker
Andy Wilson

Diaconate

Teresa Archambo
Brandi Brannon
Shirley Craft
Philip Dudenhoefter
Fred Gentry
Ronnie James
Melody Jennings
Jim LaValley
Karen LaValley
Margaret Phillips
James Poole
Fred Ridenour
Jane Ridenour
David Strickland
Stacey Strickland

Ted Lauck
Virgil Lee
Sandrea Marvel
Dorothy Montgomery
Judy Muir

Lou James
Sam Maynor
Lou Murdock
Sue Nunn

Term Ending 12/31/2022

Trustee

Nick Gipson

Elders

Cindy Hernandez
Jerry Johnson
Richard Phillips
Kerry Roach
Sandra Ross
Cheryl Smiley

Diaconate

Jodi Bender
Twila Boydston
Bob Carlton
Mary Carlton
Dave Clark
Leann Elder
Robert Hastings
JJ Johnson
Vicki Kunkle
Stacey Lingbeek
Sheila Reynolds
Mistie Seguine
Tyler Thomas
Ashley Warton
Karen Watson

Roma Prassel
Frank Tate
Pat Thacker
Linda Tole
Marilyn Vaughn

Jean Puckett
Ann Watkins
Vivian Zug

OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, October 11, 2020 PANTRY SUNDAY
8:40 Drive In Worship Service (East Parking Lot)
9:30 Sunday School
9:45 Journey Through Scripture (Parlor)
10:45 Worship (Sanctuary or Watch the Livestream on YouTube or Facebook.com/FCCWF)

12:00-2:00 Pastor's Class (Rm 402)
2:00 Pickleball (Gym)
5:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403/Gym)
6:00 Young Disciples (Grades K-5) (Rm 402)
Monday, October 12, 2020 COLUMBUS DAY
Children Come First & Young Ages Preschool Closed
7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, October 13, 2020
7:30-6:00 Children Come First (Tu-F)
9:00-12:00 Young Ages Preschool (Tu-F)
9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 310)
10:00-11:00 YAS Music (Rm 220) (Tu/Wed)
6:00 Membership Ministry Meeting (Parlor)
6:00 Property Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)
6:00 Outreach Ministry Meeting (Fellowship Hall)
6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups (Rm 304-308)

7:00 Worship Ministry Meeting (Sanctuary)
Wednesday, October 14, 2020
7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Fellowship Hall)
8:55-10:30 CCF Chapel (Chapel)
9:00-9:30 CCF Music (Rm 220)
10:15 Sheri Sutton's Fall Bible Study (Fellowship Hall/Zoom)
5:30 Brown Bag Fellowship (Fellowship Hall)
5:45-8:00 CCF Training (Rm 210)
6:00 Neighborhood Worship (Fellowship Hall)
6:00 First Kidz (PreK-5th Grade) (Rm 402)
6:15 Chancel Choir (North Portico)
7:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403/Gym)

Thursday, October 15, 2020
9:00-9:30 CCF Music (Rm 220)
10:00 CCF Field Trip to the Pumpkin Patch (UUMC)
6:00 College Bible Study (Rapid Fire)
7:00 Bible Story Time with Claire (Facebook/YouTube)

Friday, October 16, 2020
8:55-10:30 CCF Music (Rm 220)

Sunday, October 18, 2020
8:40 Drive In Worship Service (East Parking Lot)
9:30 Sunday School
9:45 Journey Through Scripture (Parlor)
10:45 Worship (Sanctuary or Watch the Livestream on YouTube or Facebook.com/FCCWF)

12:00-2:00 Pastor's Class (Rm 402)
2:00 Pickleball (Gym)
3:45 Chancel Ringers (Stratten Hall)
5:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403/Gym)
6:00 Three Questions to Answer (Rm 310/Zoom)
6:00 Young Disciples (Grades K-5) (Rm 402)

Monday, October 19, 2020
7:30-6:00 Children Come First (M-F)
8:55-10:30 CCF Music (Rm 220)
9:00-9:30 CCF Chapel (Chapel)
9:00-12:00 Young Ages Preschool (M-F)
1:30 CWF Group 1 (Rm 310)
7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, October 20, 2020
9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 310)
10:00-11:00 YAS Music (Rm 220) (Tu/Wed)
6:00 Offsite Trunk or Treat (115 E Wichita St)
6:00 Education Ministry Meeting (Rm 405)
6:00 Stewardship Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)
6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups (Rm 304-308)

7:00 Evangelism Ministry Meeting (Rm 222)
Wednesday, October 21, 2020
7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Fellowship Hall)
8:55-10:30 CCF Chapel (Chapel)
9:00-9:30 CCF Music (Rm 220)
10:15 Sheri Sutton Bible Study (Rm 310/Zoom)
12:00 YAS Staff Meeting (Rm 405)

5:30 Brown Bag Fellowship (Fellowship Hall)
6:00 Neighborhood Worship (Fellowship Hall)
6:00 First Kidz (PreK-5th Grade) (Rm 402)
7:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403/Gym)
Thursday, October 22, 2020
9:00-9:30 CCF Music (Rm 220)
6:00 College Bible Study (Rapid Fire)
7:00 Bible Story Time with Claire (Facebook/YouTube)

Friday, October 23, 2020
8:55-10:30 CCF Music (Rm 220)

SERVING SUNDAY ELDERS

10/11: Howard Morris, Linda C. Carr; Linda Cook, Presiding
10/18: Woody Goosom, Jerry Johnson; Kathleen Lauck, Presiding

OCTOBER DIACONATE SERVERS

Twila Boydston, Captain
Debi & Larry Ballard, Alan Freeman, Kris Gossom, Hollie Murphey, Liz Thomas, Shirley Craft, Ronnie James, Jim & Karen LaValley, James Poole, JJ Johnson, Sheila Reynolds, Tyler Thomas, Isabell Murphey, Emily Thomas.

THE CHURCH STAFF...

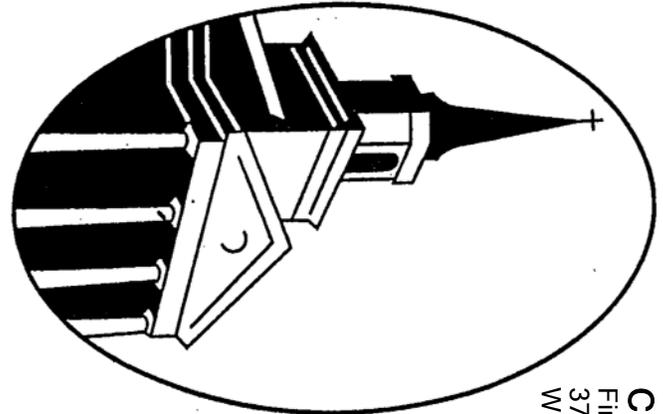
Church Number 940-692-2282 FAX Number 940-696-3085
Web Page: www.firstchristianwf.com Church e-mail: susan@firstchristianwf.com
Dr. Mark Bender, Senior Minister 692-2282
Rev. Josh deSteiguer, Minister of Youth Ministries 692-2282
Claire Baer, Director of Children's Ministries 692-2282
Jeanette Showalter, Director of Music Ministries 763-8515
Cheryl Appling, Business Administrator 691-7265
Heather Dickerson, Director of Children Come First 687-2231
Alisa Gardner, Director of Young Ages School 692-3640
Rev. Margaret Scales, Common Ground Recovery Ministries 337-1712
Susan Marrs, Executive Secretary Tina Williams, Financial Secretary
Karen Watson, Receptionist Debbie Watson, Organist
Tim Williamson, Director of Digital Media

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