**January 7, 2024 Baptism of Our Lord – Email/At Home Missal**

**ZOOM INFORMATION FOR SUNDAY JANUARY 7, 2024-EPIPHANY SUNDAY**

**The ZOOM link for today’s service, which opens at 9.30 am on January 7, 2024, can be found here:**

**Sunday Worship January 7, 2024 09:30 am ZOOM room opens; service begins at 10:00 am.**

**Join Zoom Meeting click here:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83858523329?pwd=UUpVdCtkTDB0MWhTVkhjSmxvWjFnUT09>**

**Meeting ID: 838 5852 3329 Passcode: 629887**

**You don’t have to have a computer or internet to connect to any of our church Zoom services; you can also just call in on one of these numbers (long distance charges may apply): (All Canadian numbers). You can also access the ZOOM from your telephone by using the “One tap mobile” option:**

**+12042727920,,83858523329#,,,,\*629887# Canada**

**+14388097799,,83858523329#,,,,\*629887# Canada**

**Dial by your location:**

**+1 778 907 2071 Canada**

**+1 780 666 0144 Canada**

**+1 204 272 7920 Canada  
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+1 647 558 0588 Canada**

**Meeting ID: 838 5852 3329 Passcode: 629887**

**Find your local number:** [**https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kz0pHIt5i**](https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kz0pHIt5i)

**……………………………………….**

**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 7, 2024 –JANUARY 14TH, 2024:**

**You will find the video for December 31st, 2023, the service of Lessons & Carols at the following YouTube link:** [**https://youtu.be/F-zyMmrTPXw**](https://youtu.be/F-zyMmrTPXw)

**……………………………………….**

**Coming Events** *(save these dates)* ***bold print - events being held here at St. Peter’s***

1. Jan. 17 Community Wellness Project Personal Care Clinic at Trillium United Church
2. **Feb. 14 Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 pm**

Apr. 5-7 Bishop’s spiritual Retreat for Lay Persons (Mount Carmel, Niagara Falls)

**……………………………………….**

**The Life of St. Peter’s for the week of January 7 – January 14, 2024**

##### Monday 6:00 pm TOPS - R.F.F. (Art Room)

##### 7:15 pm Church Council (Parlour)

##### Tuesday 7:00 pm Scouts - R.F.F. (Scout Room, Art Room, Fellowship Hall)

##### Wednesday

##### Thursday

##### Friday

##### Saturday 9:00 am Scouts (Fellowship Hall)

##### Sunday 10:00 pm Worship Service – A passage from Mark 2:1-22. (Jesus heals a paralytic and eats with tax collectors.)

1. **……………………………………….**
2. **Pastoral Visit:** Pastor Laura is available for visits by appointment by calling the church office, 519-653-4721. Whether you have a particular pastoral concern or would just like some one-to-one time to get to know Pastor Laura, she would love to meet with you.
3. **……………………………………….**
4. **Prayer List:**  Bill, Don, Tammy, Alice, Don, Lynn, Helen, Sharon, Donald, Shirley, Clara, Carol, Jeff, Aaron, MacKenzie, Rhett, Linda, Jan Ken, Lee, Maria, Deborah, Fred, Anne, Sherri, Panagiota.
5. **……………………………………….**
6. **Community Wellness Project** January 17, 2024 - Personal Care Clinic*Pay-as-you-can* Foot care, Haircuts (9 – Noon, by appointment only 519-653-6601 Ext. 4). Trillium United Church, 450 King St. East, Cambridge.
7. **……………………………………….**
8. **Weekly Bible Study**: Resumes again on Wednesday January 17th, 2023 at 10:30 am in the Art Room. Everyone is welcome!
9. **……………………………………….**

A special thank you to David Hall again today for filling in for Brad!

1. **……………………………………….**

This Lent and Easter, we will be using the book **“Praying the Catechism”** by Donald Johnson and Susan Johnson to guide us in a **season of intentional prayer as a community**. This resource invites the reader into a ninety-day journey of prayer and meditation through six sections of Luther’s Small Catechism: the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Baptism, Holy Communion, and Confession. We have embarked on a listening journey with Trinity Centres Foundation as we seek renewal and a sustainable future for our community. Renewal is first and foremost a spiritual journey. My hope is that spending intentional time in prayer as a community with a resource that is foundational for us as Lutherans – the Small Catechism – will help ground us in God, in our identity and values, and help us to pay attention to the Spirit’s movements in our lives and in our community.

To participate:

1. Buy a copy of the book. We will need to order copies through Augsburg Fortress so please sign up on the sheet in the narthex if you would like a copy. The cost will be ~$25/book.

2. Work through the daily devotional on your own, beginning February 19.

3. Sign up for the weekly in-person or virtual sessions with Pastor Laura (dates/times TBD)

1. **……………………………………….**

**Presiding Pastor: Rev. Laura Sauder**

**Organist & Director of Music: Bradley Moggach**

**Guest Organist: David Hall**

**Assisting Minister: Barb Burden**

**Reader: Bonnie Berg**

**Land Acknowledgement:**

A: With good and grateful hearts we acknowledge that the land upon which we live, work, play, and worship, is the same land upon which the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and the Attawandaron (or Neutral) peoples first lived, worked, played, and prayed to Creator. Calling the earth upon which they stood, Mother Earth, they cared for the earth as they would care for their mother. Let us take an example from our Indigenous forbears and neighbours, and show gratitude to our Mother Earth. May we be ever mindful of what she has provided for us, even to the next seven generations.

**Welcome remarks**

**Gathering Hymn: ELW # 299 ‘Cold December Flies Away’**

1 Cold December flies away

at the rose-red splendor.

April's crowning glory breaks

while the whole world wonders

at the holy unseen pow'r

of the tree which bears the flow'r.

On the blessed tree

blooms the reddest flow'r.

On the tree blooms the rose

here in love's own garden,

full and strong in glory.

2 In the hopeless time of sin

shadows deep had fallen.

All the world lay under death.

Eyes were closed in sleeping.

But, when all seemed lost in night,

came the sun whose golden light

brings unending joy,

brings the endless joy

of our hope, highest hope,

of our hope's bright dawning,

Son belov'd of heaven.

3 Now the bud has come to bloom,

and the world awakens.

In the lily's purest flow'r

dwells a wondrous fragrance.

And it spreads to all the earth

from the moment of its birth;

and its beauty lives.

In the flow'r it lives,

in the flow'r, and it spreads

in its heav'nly brightness

sweet perfume delightful.

*(Title: Cold December Flies Away; Text & Music: Catalonian carol; tr. Howard Hawhee, b. 1953;Text & Music© 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, admin. Augsburg Fortress; All rights reserved. Used by permission. Reprinted and Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-727610. All rights reserved.)*

**Greeting:**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always.

***C: And also with you.***

**Theme Time**

**Thanksgiving at the Font, ACS Form A (English)**

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity,

☩ one God,

the fountain of living water,

the rock who gave us birth,

our light and our salvation.

**Amen.**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God’s mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

*Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.*

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning you created us in your image and placed us in a well-watered garden. In the desert, you promised pools of water for the parched, and you gave us water from the rock. When we did not know the way, you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters. At the cross, you washed us from Jesus’ wounded side, and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life.

We praise you for your salvation through water, for the water in this font, and for all water everywhere.

For the Pacific, Arctic, and Atlantic Oceans; for the Great Lakes; for the Speed River and the Grand River.

Bathe us in your forgiveness, grace, and love. Satisfy all who thirst, and give us the life only you can give.

To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ, our living water, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

**Amen.\***

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**Gospel Acclamation: ACS Setting 12: *(page 33) (sung)***

Alleluia *(repeat)*

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***Reader:***

**The Holy Gospel according to Mark 1:1-20**

***C: Glory to you, O Lord.***

*May we be equipped by these words to walk in love for God, ourselves, our neighbours, all people, and all God’s creation.*

The beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, God’s Son, happened just as it was written about in the prophecy of Isaiah:

*Look, I am sending my messenger before you*.  
*He will prepare your way,*  
*a voice shouting in the wilderness:*  
        “*Prepare the way for the Lord;*  
        *make his paths straight*.”

John the Baptist was in the wilderness calling for people to be baptized to show that they were changing their hearts and lives and wanted God to forgive their sins. Everyone in Judea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to the Jordan River and were being baptized by John as they confessed their sins. John wore clothes made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. He announced, “One stronger than I am is coming after me. I’m not even worthy to bend over and loosen the strap of his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

About that time, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. While he was coming up out of the water, Jesus saw heaven splitting open and the Spirit, like a dove, coming down on him. And there was a voice from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness.”

At once the Spirit forced Jesus out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among the wild animals, and the angels took care of him.

After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee announcing God’s good news, saying, “Now is the time! Here comes God’s kingdom! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!”

As Jesus passed alongside the Galilee Sea, he saw two brothers, Simon and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” he said, “and I’ll show you how to fish for people.” Right away, they left their nets and followed him. After going a little farther, he saw James and John, Zebedee’s sons, in their boat repairing the fishing nets. At that very moment he called them. They followed him, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired workers. *(CEB)*

The Gospel of the Lord. ***C: Praise to you, O Christ.***

**Engaging with the Story**

**Sermon for Baptism of Our Lord**

**Mark 1:1-20**

In today’s service we make the leap from the Old Testament (or Hebrew Scriptures) to the New Testament (also sometimes called the Greek Scriptures). As we continue to follow the story of God’s unfolding relationship with humans, we do so now through the life and witness and ministry of Jesus – God’s Word made flesh. Today through Easter Sunday, we will journey with Jesus and his story, as recorded in the Gospel of Mark.

Mark is the shortest of the four gospels and although it’s short it still packs a lot in. In these first 20 verses we already have:

- a short introduction,

- John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus,

- Jesus’ Baptism,

- Jesus’ testing in the wilderness,

- John the Baptist’s arrest, and

- Jesus beginning his ministry by announcing the arrival of God’s reign and calling his disciples.

It’s a lot – and I can’t preach on all of it – or if I did you’d probably eventually fall asleep or get up and leave! So as we talk about the beginning of Jesus’ ministry today, it feels especially important to pay attention to the first words Jesus speaks, following his baptism and testing in the wilderness. He tells us, “Now is the time! Here comes God’s kingdom! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!”

Jesus, in his first public proclamation, calls us to change our hearts and lives. But what exactly does this mean? What does it look like?

At the 2019 national convention in Regina, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton who is the bishop of our sister church in the US – the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – preached at the closing worship service and talked about something she calls: “Billy Joel theology.”

I know many of you will be familiar with the musician Billy Joel. Piano Man? One of his other big hits back in the 70s was a song called “I love you just the way you are.”

What Bishop Eaton said was this: God does NOT like us just the way we are. That’s why God sent Jesus. God likes us the way God will make us to be.

When I preach, one of my most repeated messages is the promise that God loves us, not because of anything we do, but simply because God loves us. And I still think this is true. But Bishop Eaton’s anti-Billy Joel theology adds an important layer to this message.

Yes, God loves us. That’s why God sent Jesus. But God also sent Jesus because we needed some help.

In these opening paragraphs of Mark’s Gospel we hear that same message from Jesus’ own lips. God does not love us just the way we are. Jesus tells us: “Now is the time! Here comes God’s kingdom! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!”

Keep these words in mind over the coming months as we make our way through Mark’s Gospel because they are the theme statement of Mark’s whole gospel.

“Now is the time! Here comes God’s kingdom! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!”

The word translated as change comes from the Greek word *metanoia* which means “a transformative change of heart.” It means to turn around. It’s a calling to reorient ourselves to a new way of thinking and being in the world. The churchy word we often use for this is *repentance.*

Jesus calls us to repent; to change the way we think and act. Which is where most of us get into trouble, right from the start. By nature humans don’t really like change – at least most of us don’t. Just as a pastor who tries to get their parishioners to sit in a different spot on Sunday morning.

We don’t always like change, and yet Jesus is telling us this is exactly what he’s come for. To change hearts and minds. To change the way we think and act. To invite us to be a part of God’s kingdom – this new way of living and being in the world that’s grounded in love and compassion and justice and peace.

Jesus’ call to change is a timely message at the beginning of a New Year. This time when we’re naturally already thinking a bit about perhaps living a bit differently in the coming year. But not to worry, I’m not adding another goal or item to you “to-do” list for this year.

The change that Jesus calls for is NOT just another item to add to our New Year’s resolutions and that’s because this change is a process that begins with God. It’s something that God does for us.

Today we celebrate and give thanks for Jesus’ baptism – the beginning of his ministry and his work calling and gathering, teaching and healing, bringing wholeness and peace and life to all with hearts open to receive it.

At Jesus’ baptism, he is named and claimed as God’s beloved Son. As we remember Jesus’ baptism, we remember that in our own baptism we too have been named and claimed as God’s beloved children. That at our baptism, we already received God’s gifts of grace and unconditional love. Gifts that free us from the power of sin and death.

Martin Luther taught that remembering our baptism can help us live into Jesus’ call to change. In his small catechism he writes: “baptism signifies that the old person in us with all sins and evil desires is to be drowned and die through ***daily*** sorrow for sin and through repentance, and on the other hand that ***daily*** a new person is to come forth and rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.”

Baptism is God’s work, not ours.

In baptism, God names and claims us as beloved children.

In baptism God ushers us into a new way of living.

The gift of baptism is the promise that God has already begun the transformative work in our lives. We do our best each day to live into that gift, knowing all the while that this gift doesn’t hinge on anything we do or do not do.

As we begin this journey into Mark’s gospel over the coming weeks, as we journey in the adventure of Jesus, we are invited again to be transformed by Jesus’ love for us and for this world. For God’s love to take root and bear good fruit in our lives.

For now is the time. God’s reign has come near. In this good news, we can trust. AMEN

**Hymn of the Day: ELW # 453 ‘Baptized and Set Free’**

1 We are people created,

chosen by God.

Then we're washed, ever gently,

in mercy and love.

Sin has power no more.

Jesus opened the door

to a fountain bringing healing,

and wholeness and more.

2 We are fed and we're nourished,

filled and refreshed.

Then our hunger returns and

again we are blessed.

For whatever the need,

God is greater indeed:

endless ocean, always deeper

than all of our need.

3 We are nourished by water,

all living things,

and by life that the Spirit

abundantly brings.

As we journey toward home,

may your presence be known:

precious river, ever-flowing,

now carry us home.

4 Now with praise and thanksgiving,

we join the song.

All are welcome! We gather

to sing loud and strong.

Not enslaved, but set free!

From now on, all will be

one in Jesus, one in water,

baptized and set free!

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**Prayers of Intercession:**

A: As we celebrate Christ embodied in human form, we pray for God’s blessing on the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

Inspire wisdom and a spirit of proclamation in your church, God of forgiveness. Uplift leaders to share the truth of your word in community. Encourage us to live into the promises of baptism, working for justice and peace in all the world. God of grace, **C: receive our prayer.**

Renew your creation, God of thunder and mighty waters. Restore the rivers in which your children are baptized. May fields flourish and grow. Summon the stewards and caretakers of the land to cherish your good works. God of grace, **C: receive our prayer.**

Give strength to your leaders, God who is present in every country and community. Raise up leaders committed to equity and healing. Grant them discernment and compassion as they lead in love. May your peace flow in every nation. God of grace, **C: receive our prayer.**

Protect and cherish the most vulnerable among us, God of strength. Accompany those separated from family or hurting from broken relationships. Shelter our unhoused neighbors and any experiencing poverty. Protect those incarcerated in prisons and detention centers. Care for the sick and suffering (especially we pray for Linda, Sherri, Panagiota, each beloved child on our prayer list, and those we name before you now…). God of grace, **C: receive our prayer.**

Encourage this congregation, God who calls and sends disciples. Guide us in accompanying, learning from, and serving our neighbors on the margins, following the example of Jesus. God of grace, **C: receive our prayer.**

We pray for our siblings in Christ. For the people of Preston and Wanner Mennonite Churches, and their pastors Danielle Raimbault and KyongJung Kim; for the people of St Matthew’s Lutheran Church, Kitchener and their pastors Sebastian and Carey Meadows-Helmer, and Scott Knarr. God of grace, **C:** **receive our prayer.**

We pray for our Ministry of Facilities and Risk Management. Guide them, and us, in our faithful stewardship and care of this building. God of grace, **C:** **receive our prayer.**

Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

**Share the peace of Christ:**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C: And also with you.\***

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**Offering**

**Offering Hymn: ELW # 692 ‘We Are an Offering’**

**Chorus 1**

We lift our voices

We lift our hands

We lift our lives up to You

We are an offering

Lord use our voices

Lord use our hands

Lord use our lives they are Yours

We are an offering

**Bridge**

All that we have

All that we are

All that we hope to be

We give to You

We give to You

**Chorus 2**

We lift our voices

We lift our hands

We lift our lives up to You

We are an offering

We are an offering

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**Offering Prayer:**

Blessed are you, Holy One,

for all good things come from you.

In bread and cup you open heaven to us.

Meet us at this table,

that we receive what we seek

and follow your Son, Jesus,

in whose name we pray. **Amen.\***

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You are invited to prepare your table with bread and wine, or crackers and juice, whatever is available to you, so that you may participate in the meal.

**Meal: Click here for the communion liturgy from worship on YouTube:**

[**https://youtu.be/ViXmTzRsfU4**](https://youtu.be/ViXmTzRsfU4)

**Great Thanksgiving: ACS Setting 12: ‘Dialogue…’ (page 36) (spoken)**

The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **C: We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **C: It is right to give our thanks and praise**

**ELW Setting 12: ‘Preface…’ *(Epiphany)***

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,

that we should at all times and in all places

give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,

through our Savior Jesus Christ.

By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations;

in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son;

and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,

with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**ELW Setting 12: ‘Holy, Holy, Holy…’ *(page 36 )***

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**God of pow’r and God of might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

**Hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**\*

**Thanksgiving at the Table:**

On the night before he showed us the full extent of his love,

our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,

and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**The Lord’s Prayer:**

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those

who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen.

**Invitation to Communion:**

This is Christ’s table. All are welcome here to receive God’s abundant gifts of love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness.

I invite those at home, and those in the building communing by fellowship cup, to take your bread or cracker as we say together, “The body of Christ, given for us.”

And, as we take our cup we say, “The blood of Christ, shed for us.”

**Communion Music: ELW # 767 ‘Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me’**

1 Lord, take my hand and lead me

upon life's way;

direct, protect, and feed me

from day to day.

Without your grace and favor

I go astray;

so take my hand, O Savior,

and lead the way.

2 Lord, when the tempest rages,

I need not fear;

for you, the Rock of Ages,

are always near.

Close by your side abiding,

I fear no foe,

for when your hand is guiding,

in peace I go.

3 Lord, when the shadows lengthen

and night has come,

I know that you will strengthen

my steps toward home,

then nothing can impede me,

O blessed Friend!

So, take my hand and lead me

unto the end.

*(Title: Lord, Take My hand and Lead Me; Text: Julie von Hausmann, 1825-1901; tr. Lutheran Book of Worship; Text © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, admin. Augsburg Fortress.; All rights reserved. Used by permission. Music: Friedrich Silcher, 1789 – 1860; Public Domain. Reprinted and Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-727610. All rights reserved.)*

P: May the body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ strengthen you, and keep you, in his grace.

***C: Amen.***

**Prayer after Communion:**

A: Giver of every gift,

Christ’s body is our food, and we are Christ’s body.

Raise us to life by your power

for the benefit of all and to your glory,

now and forever. Amen.\*

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**Blessing:**

God who names you,

Christ who claims you,

and the Holy Spirit who dwells in you,

☩ bless you and remain with you always. **Amen.\***

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**Sending Hymn: ELW # 673 ‘God, Whose Almighty Word’**

1 God, whose almighty word

chaos and darkness heard

and took their flight:

hear us, we humbly pray,

and where the gospel day

sheds not its glorious ray,

let there be light.

2 Christ, who once came to bring,

on your redeeming wing,

healing and sight;

health to the troubled mind,

sight where illusions blind;

oh, now to humankind

let there be light.

3 Spirit of truth and love,

life-giving, holy dove,

speed forth your flight;

move on the water's face

bearing the lamp of grace,

and in earth's darkest place

let there be light.

4 Holy and blessed three,

glorious Trinity,

Wisdom, Love, Might:

boundless as ocean's tide,

rolling in fullest pride,

through the earth, far and wide,

let there be light.

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**Dismissal:**

**P: We are disciples**

**Alive in the adventure of Jesus**

**A: Let us go forth in joy and peace, to love and serve God and our neighbours.**

***C: Thanks be to God.\****

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