



St John the Baptist  
Scottish Episcopal Church  
Perth

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Nov-Dec 2015



St. John the Baptist  
Scottish Episcopal Church  
Princes Street, Perth, PH2 8LJ  
Scottish Charity Number SC 011398

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In partnership with  
the Scottish Association of Retired  
Anglican Clergy



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Cover image: The altar at St John's decorated for Christmas 2014.  
Photo: Lis Burke

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## Letter from the Rector

Dear Friends,

Here I am writing to you as the seasons of Advent and Christmas approaches once again.

The dark nights have drawn in as we wait and prepare for the coming again of our Lord and Saviour.

I do hope that you will be able to join us as we say Compline with a reflection over the four Wednesdays in Advent. This will enable us to prepare once again for the celebration of Christmas.

This month we are welcoming the Revd. Nerys Brown into our church family, as our new Curate here at St. John's. What a wonderful celebration in the Cathedral for Nerys' Ordination to the diaconate. It was so good to see so many of you there supporting such an important occasion and the beginning of a new ministry. I personally feel honoured that Nerys has come to be with us and I look forward to sharing my ministry with her in the life of our church. We welcome her family too!

In recent times we have learned that we are to say goodbye to Lis our Lay Reader at the end of December. Lis after exploring with Bishop David the possibility of a new ministry moves on to the churches in Alyth, Blairgowrie and Coupar Angus to work with the Dean. I personally give thanks to Lis for all her support and encouragement shown to me over the past year. I know that you will agree that Lis has been a faithful servant and great support to this church over many years. We will all miss her, but give thanks for her continuing journey and I'm sure that she won't be a stranger to us.

In the midst of our church life here in Perth, we have our AGM once again this month. I must say I'm so grateful and so heartened for all that you do in St. John's to make it such a wonderful, loving and welcoming family. May this continue to be our pattern and prayer for all the times that lie ahead.

For me this year, a break during Advent will make it very different time. I will be away on a very special trip to India in December. I'm off with the Bishop and others to our companion diocese to celebrate along with them in their 200th anniversary as the diocese of Calcutta. I see this as a great opportunity and experience, one which I'm sure will bring a different meaning to my own personal story this Christmas.

We must not gloss over the hard times our world has been facing in the events that took place in Paris. I know that some of you in the congregation had family visiting there during the recent tragedy; in fact I know we have connections with families living there. Together we give thanks for their safety and pray for all of the people who have been involved in such a horrific event.

This time of the year reminds us as well to pray for and remember all refugees. Constantly we see and read in the media of folks fleeing from their land and homes. I find this particularly powerful as I think of Jesus our Saviour and his family becoming refugees and fleeing from their home. We must ask ourselves the question what would Jesus do today and we must never forget to pray for those who have very little.

I hope that in the darkness of our world you will see and experience a glimmer of the light of Christ. During this Advent period and over the celebrations of Christmas, may you know him in your hearts and in your homes. I look forward to celebrating with you once again the joy of this Christmas season.

With love and all good wishes,

Your friend and Rector,

**Graham**

## A prayer for Christmas

God,  
You chose to let your child be born  
in poverty and of doubtful  
parentage  
in an occupied country with  
unstable rulers.  
You chose to let him risk death  
in a dirty stable  
after a long journey by a  
pregnant teenager.  
You chose to let him grow up  
poor,  
and in danger,  
and misunderstood by those  
who loved him.  
While the rich are still full  
and it is the poor who are sent  
away empty,  
help us, lest we,  
in our ignorance or anger  
walk away from those who have  
no choice.  
Amen.

***From: Creation Sings Your Praise:  
A Christian Aid Worship Book,  
Canterbury Press, 2009***

## Our responsibility to meet families' needs

The Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of Scotland have warned that the UK Government's Welfare Reform and Work Bill will fail to get people into work and will instead increase poverty.

In a report published last week, the Churches highlight how the Bill threatens to undermine the founding principle of the welfare state, namely that the amount people receive in benefits should be sufficient to meet their basic needs. It argues that the Bill will break the link between what a family needs and the amount of support they can receive.

The Rt Rev Dr John Armes, Bishop of Edinburgh said "This report makes very clear that UK Government benefit cuts are not working. Far from encouraging adults back to work they threaten instead the health and well-being of families with children. This is a moral issue and it undermines the principle on which the Welfare State was founded, namely that people should have sufficient benefits to meet their basic needs. I would appeal to the UK government to pay attention to this report and to reconsider its policies in the light of the evidence that their cuts are causing the weakest and poorest in our nation undue suffering."

The report, 'Enough: Our responsibility to meet families' needs', was published as a partnership between a number of UK Churches. As well as the Church of Scotland and Scottish Episcopal Church, the report is backed by the Methodist Church, Quakers in Britain, the United Reformed Church and charity Church Action on Poverty.

Dr Paul Morrison, Public Issues Policy Adviser for the Methodist Church and author of the report said: "As Christians we believe all people are made in God's image. We do not believe that we should ever deliberately deprive a person, a family, a child of enough to survive, to thrive or to fulfil their God-given potential. We are asking that the welfare state holds to its founding principles, and seeks to provide enough so that every child can have the best chance in life."

People can find out how different groups will be affected by the Welfare Reform and Work Bill online here. The Churches are asking people to pray, to read and share the report and write to their MPs and MSPs. Additional resources for 'Enough: Our responsibility to meet families' needs' are available from <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/enough-resources/>

*From Inspires*



# Open Doors and Harvest Festival in Pictures



## Thanks from Fergus and Ruth

Fergus and Ruth would like to thank the congregation of St John's very much for the lovely celebration you put on for our Golden Wedding.

The orchid is beautiful and Fergus is enjoying DVDs bought with his token. The service was appropriate and affirming, and the balloons, cake and refreshment afterwards sent us home feeling extremely happy! It was a most memorable day.



### Welcome Nerys



*Nerys Brown, our new curate, at her ordination in St Ninian's on Sunday 15 November*

### Congratulations Bruce



*Bruce cuts the cake to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood*



## Positive Action - response to Refugee Crisis

Positive Action in Housing is a small Scottish charity which is responding to the refugee crisis in Europe by supporting volunteer work being done on the Greek island of Lesbos. It is currently appealing for 200 volunteers with medical or lifeguard skills over the age of 25, to travel to Lesbos for periods between now and March 2016. 54 people have been recruited so far.

Volunteers can sign up at <https://paih.typeform.com/to/qvDBN8>.  
The website also contains information about hosting refugees in the UK: <http://www.paih.org/host-a-refugee/>

## Reflections

As an oversensitive eternal sentimentalist, I look at this passage every year, and reflect. Could I share it with you once again:

I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round, as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys.

Charles Dickens

And as Tiny Tim said:

A merry Christmas to us all, my dears.

God bless us, every one!

*Raymond King*



# Church Diary

## Regular Services

First Sunday in the month	8:30 am	Holy Communion (Scottish Prayer Book)
	9:30 am	Matins
	10:30 am	Alive for Christ all-age Eucharist <i>(note no Matins or Alive for Christ in December or January)</i>
Third Sunday in the month:	8:30 am	Holy Communion (Scottish Prayer Book)
	10:30 am	Sung Eucharist with healing service
	6:00 pm	Evensong <i>(note no Evensong in December or January)</i>
Other Sundays:	8:30 am	Holy Communion (Scottish Prayer Book)
	10:30 am	Sung Eucharist
Weekday services:		
Wednesdays	8:00 am	Morning Prayer
Thursdays	11:00 am	Holy Communion (Scottish Prayer Book)

## Special Services

Sunday 6 December	10:30 am	Sung Eucharist (note no Matins or Alive for Christ)
Sunday 3 January	10:30 am	Sung Eucharist (note no Matins or Alive for Christ)

## Special Events

Sunday 29 November	AGM in the church after the service
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## Regular Events

Every Monday	12:00 pm	Giraffe Community Lunch in the Threshold
Every Tuesday	9:30 am	Buggy Club in the Threshold
Every Thursday	6:00 pm	Yoga class in the Threshold
	7:30 pm	Choir rehearsal



# **Advent and Christmas 2015 Services and Events**

## **Pull-out Guide**

## Advent and Christmas Services and Events

Wednesdays in Advent	7:30pm	Waiting for the Light: Compline and Reflection at St John's (Wednesday 9 December at St Ninian's)
Sundays in Advent	2:00pm	PACT Christmas choir rehearsal at St Leonard's
Sunday 5 December	5:00pm	PACT torchlight procession starting at Thimble Row. Mulled wine and mince pies.
Sunday 29 November	2:30pm	PACT Rehearsal for Nativity tableau at St Leonard's
Wednesday 9 December	7:00pm	Giraffe Winter Concert in St John's Tickets £10 including refreshments
Sunday 13 December	2:30pm	PACT Rehearsal for Nativity tableau at St Leonard's
Monday 14 December	2:30pm	Fellowship Christmas music in the Threshold
Friday 18 December	7:00pm	PACT Carol service at St Leonard's
Sunday 20 December	10:30am	Sung Eucharist with Carols and Readings at St John's
Wednesday 23 December	6:30pm	Lessons and Carols at St Ninian's followed by mince pies
Thursday 24 December	5:00pm	Christingle service at St John's led by Nerys Brown
Thursday 24 December	11:00pm	Midnight Eucharist at St John's
Friday 25 December	10:30am	Christmas Family Eucharist at St John's

# PACT Carol service

**Friday 18th December, at 7:00 pm**

The annual PACT Carol service organised by Perth Action of Churches Together will be held this year on Friday 18th December at 7:00pm in St Leonard's in the Fields Church, Marshall Place.

Once again we hope to have a PACT choir, which is open to anyone who enjoys singing. This year, it is being led by Michael Ellacott, and rehearsals will be on Sunday afternoons from Sunday 22nd November to 13th December. For more information about the choir, please speak to your PACT reps.

This ecumenical Carol service is always a joyful experience as Christians from all denominations come together to celebrate the Incarnation. There will be plenty of carols, and a collection will be taken to support local charities. YOU are invited to come along.

**Marjorie Clarke**

As part of the Pact Christmas Service in St. Leonard's in the Fields Church on Friday 18th December at 7pm, I am calling children to come and take part.

We have verses written using the letters of the word N-A-T-I-V-I-T-Y and while these are being read out, the children will move forward to build up and create a tableau. The children will be more likely to be asked to be an animal or part of the crowd as we only need one Holy Family.

We will be singing *Away in a Manger* and *Little Donkey* and the words should really be learned before the first rehearsal.

Rehearsals for children accompanied by a parent/carer will be 2:30 - 4:30pm on Sundays 29th Nov and 13th Dec at St. Leonard's in the fields, entering by the side door on James Street, then around to the Hall where we will start our rehearsal.

**Liz McKerchar**



## Fellowship Christmas Music in the Threshold

Monday 14 December 2:30pm  
Carols and festive cheer!





Perth Action of Churches Together

## CAROL SERVICE

7.00pm Fri 18<sup>th</sup> December

St Leonard's in the Fields,  
Marshall Place, Perth  
(opposite the South Inch)

Carols, readings, prayers  
and a Christmas message

Featuring the 'Churches Together' choir

An offering will be taken in aid of charity

**ALL WELCOME**

## Let your light shine in Perth!

Torchlight Procession

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December

Meet at Thimble Row at 5:00pm

Finishing with mince pies and mulled wine  
outside St John's Kirk

Carol singing

Switch-on of the Perth Nativity Scene

Perth Action of Churches Together in partnership with Perth & Kinross Council

# Lectionary

<b>29 Nov</b>	<b>Advent 1</b> Jeremiah 33:14-16 Luke 21:25-36	<b>27 Dec</b>	<b>St John the Evangelist</b> 1 John 1-9 John 20:1-8
<b>06 Dec</b>	<b>Advent 2</b> Isaiah 30:19-21,23-26 Luke 3:1-6	<b>3 Jan</b>	<b>Naming of Jesus</b> Philippians 2:5-11 Luke 2:15-21
<b>13 Dec</b>	<b>Advent 3</b> Isaiah 12:2-end Luke 3:7-18	<b>10 Jan</b>	<b>Epiphany</b> Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12
<b>20 Dec</b>	<b>Advent 4</b>	<b>17 Jan</b>	<b>Epiphany 2</b> 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 John 2:1-11
<b>24 Dec</b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b> <i>Christingle</i> <i>Midnight Eucharist</i> Isaiah 9:2-7 John 1:1-14	<b>24 Jan</b>	<b>St Paul</b> Acts 26:9-23 Matthew 19:27-30
<b>25 Dec</b>	<b>Christmas Day</b> Isaiah 9:2-7 Luke 2:1-14	<b>31 Jan</b>	<b>Epiphany 4</b> 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 Luke 4:21-30

## Giraffe Winter Concert

Wednesday 9 December 7:00pm - 9:00pm in St John's

Featuring the band from Perthshire Brass  
and many other local performers including the Checkin & Giraffe Choir

£10 including light refreshments and mince pie

Tickets available from Giraffe South Street Cafe  
or phone 01738 449 227  
All proceeds to Giraffe

# Give a precious gift this Christmas



As Christmas approaches, we often find ourselves lost in the aisles of shops along with hundreds of other frantic shoppers who have lost sight of the real meaning of Christmas – even the true reason for giving someone a gift.

In Nigeria, many communities have been receiving gifts but haven't necessarily understood what the gift is, or why they need it – does this sound familiar? The gift they have received is a long-lasting insecticide-treated net, which when hung correctly, should protect people from mosquito bites, and potentially deadly malaria.

Malaria is a leading cause of death in Nigeria, with approximately 250,000 children dying every year. It is particularly dangerous for pregnant women to get malaria. What is shocking about this situation is that it is preventable but many people don't know how to protect themselves.

Christian Aid partners in Nigeria are working hard to teach communities how to protect themselves from malaria. Nurse Dorothy has received training in malaria prevention and management so that she can deal effectively with malaria cases and share her knowledge with her patients. On the day we spoke to her she had just helped to deliver Onuchukwu Okoye's baby boy, Israel. Onuchukwu had attended antenatal sessions with Dorothy so she knew how to avoid getting malaria.

Dorothy's expert care enabled Onuchukwu to protect herself and her baby during pregnancy. Without this help, this story could have had a very different ending.

**This Christmas, we are joining with Christian Aid by praying for the work in Nigeria and raising money to support people like Dorothy.**

**Please stop and remember that, this Christmas, your gifts have the potential to achieve so much. It costs just £3 to buy a long-lasting insecticide-treated net, and £33 to train a primary health worker like Dorothy in malaria prevention and treatment.**

**Will you join us in giving a precious life-saving gift this Christmas?**

You can make a donation by visiting [christianaid.org.uk/christmas](http://christianaid.org.uk/christmas)

or get in touch by calling 0207 523 2269.



Twice the impact! This Christmas, the UK Government will again match every pound raised\* – meaning we can transform the lives of even more people living in poverty.

\*Up to £5 million on donations received between 6 November 2015 and 5 February 2016.

UK registered charity no. 1105851 Company no. 5171525 Scot charity no. SC039150  
Christian Aid Ireland: NI charity no. NIC101631 Company no. NI059154 and ROI charity  
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## Choral Evensong

On Sunday 1st November, All Saints Day, a full Choral Evensong was held at St John's. Graham presided and gave a short Reflection, Ranald intoned the collects and Alison conducted the choir augmented by boys and girls from Glenalmond's Chamber Choir. In all there were twenty-two singers and Dr Tim Ridley, of Glenalmond, played the organ.

Evensong has changed the least of services over the centuries and it was fitting that the Introit was Tallis' *If ye love me*. The *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* were sung to Stanford in B flat - joyous music. The Responses and Lord's Prayer were in a delightful arrangement by Andrew Carter. The anthem was Wesley's *Blessed be the God and Father*, a splendid anthem that gave Rhiannon a wonderful solo, beautifully executed; the basses had some good lines to sing and the piece ended with a brisk fugue.

This service was much appreciated by the congregation of fifty. The Warden of Glenalmond has given her permission for another such service next year.

Many thanks to Joyce and Christine for providing supper for the troops in the Threshold.

*David Willington*



## Fellowship

After the summer break the Fellowship's first meeting of the new programme took place in September when Jean Parrot's combination of creative talent and enthusiasm once again succeeded in getting the least artistic amongst us to create very presentable cards. Normally I would be ashamed to send anyone a card I had made myself but Jean had us all producing cards we were proud of and would be happy to send to our friends and relations. This was followed by a change of scene for our October meeting when we enjoyed a chance to chat over a beautifully prepared afternoon tea at the Sub Rosa patisserie in St John's Place.

The next meeting is on Monday 9th November at 2:30 pm in the Threshold when we will be hearing about SECMA. All are welcome and we do our best to provide transport for those who would struggle to come if transport wasn't available.

*Jean Hendry*





## Vestry Away Day

The Vestry away day was held on Saturday 14th November 2015 at St Paul's, Kinross, and led by the Revd Thomas Brauer, the Diocesan Missioner.

The day started with the Liturgy, conducted by Graham. Then Thomas took over. The theme was 'St John's Mission Journey'. We were invited to examine our history and started with the building of the English Chapel in 1800. Reference was also made to John Knox's Sermon in 1559 and eighteenth century controversies. Thomas produced a long roll of brown paper and wrote down all the points we made. Where there were controversies he placed a stone. We proceeded through the nineteenth, twentieth and the first few years of the twenty-first centuries, noting significant episodes. Because St John's has such a rich history, this took considerable time. Consideration of this last year (marked on another roll of paper with post-it notes) took us up to lunchtime.

After a brief break, we were each asked, drawing on our history, to specify three points which we felt were the strengths of St John's.

These were then subsumed under three headings: Love of others, Liturgy and Preaching, Music and History and Atmosphere. Next, the question was posed: 'What would we do if fifty Syrian refugees turned up at noon on a Sunday?' Whereas we could do only a little by way of food and comfort, we could act as enablers and put them in touch with the proper agencies. In this way we were invited to think about outreach, seeing God in others and carrying worship outside the church.

Together we composed a collect:

O God, Creator and Maker of all, help and guide us to be not afraid in fulfilling your mission for us. We pray this in and through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

We finished with a short Eucharist, passing the bread and wine to each other.

This was a very thought-provoking exercise with useful discussion, making us examine our role as a church. Many thanks to Thomas for conducting it and to Graham for organising it.

*David Willington*

## Donations for Refugees

Over the next few months we will be welcoming 5 families of Syrian refugees. These families include children.

Perth & Kinross Council is leading a group of organisations to prepare for their arrival and help them settle in Perth & Kinross. Accommodation will be provided as well as all the basic essentials they will need.

There are some items that the Council are not able to provide, but we are aware of a number of generous offers of donations for which we are very grateful. We would like to be able to provide the families with these other things that they need.

This needs to be well organised so that each family receives the best support possible. We want to avoid:

- Providing the first families with lots of support and then not being able to support the later families in the same way.
- Collecting more than we actually need and risking the waste of donations.

The list of items that we need is below.

### Household Items

**If you would like to provide any of the items marked below with an asterisk\*** please email Nicholas Morris (Coordinator of the PKAVS Minority Communities Hub (MEAD)) at [nicholas.morris@meadproject.org.uk](mailto:nicholas.morris@meadproject.org.uk). Please include your name and contact details and details of the item/s you would like to donate. We will reply to you to confirm whether or not this item is still needed and to give you details of where the item should be delivered.

***We strongly suggest that if you are purchasing a new item that you do not do so until we have confirmed that it is still needed.***

Items	Required	Items	Required
Tumble drier*	1	TV*	5
Computer*	5	Vacuum cleaner*	5
DVD*	5	Pushchair*	3
Radio*	5	Baby Cot*	1

5 October 2015

## Personal Items

We currently know the details of 3 of the families who will be arriving. These include the following:

Adults	Children
Father	12 year old boy
Mother	5 year old boy
	3 year old girl
	New born baby expected in November

Mother	15 year old boy
	13 year old boy
	5 year old girl

Mother	6 year old boy
Grandmother	4 year old girl (twin)
	4 year old girl (twin)

Below is a list of items that we think they will also need. If you would like to donate any of these items please contact Nicholas Morris ([Nicholas.morris@meadproject.org.uk](mailto:Nicholas.morris@meadproject.org.uk) - 01738 567076) to make sure that they are still needed.

To make sure that the donations are given to the appropriate person we would ask you to label donations, clearly marked for whom it is suitable. e.g. a bag clearly marked "6 year old boy" with items suitable for this child separated from items suitable for other people.

Please keep donations limited to those items on the list. If you wish to provide something else please contact Nicholas Morris ([Nicholas.morris@meadproject.org.uk](mailto:Nicholas.morris@meadproject.org.uk) - 01738 567076) to check that the item is something we can use:

- Toys, games, books, etc. age appropriate for children
- Warm clothing for a Scottish winter. Clean, in good condition second hand clothes will be very acceptable. It would be especially appreciated if there were some new clothes too.
- Outdoor shoes
- Slippers
- Baby clothes (we don't yet know the gender of the baby)
- Nappies

## Financial Donations

We are looking at how we can organise donations of money to refugee families. Please contact Nicholas Morris for updated information.

Thank you.

5 October 2015

## Please wear a poppy

*This poem was read as part of the service on Remembrance Sunday and is reproduced here at the request of several members of the congregation.*

“Please wear a poppy,” the lady said  
And held one forth, but I shook my head.  
Then I stopped and watched as she offered them there,  
And her face was old and lined with care;  
But beneath the scars the years had made  
There remained a smile that refused to fade.

A boy came whistling down the street,  
Bouncing along on care-free feet.  
His smile was full of joy and fun,  
“Lady,” said he, “may I have one?”  
When she’s pinned it on he turned to say,  
“Why do we wear a poppy today?”

The lady smiled in her wistful way  
And answered, “This is Remembrance Day,  
And the poppy there is the symbol for  
The gallant men who died in war.  
And because they did, you and I are free -  
That’s why we wear a poppy, you see.

“I had a boy about your size,  
With golden hair and big blue eyes.  
He loved to play and jump and shout,  
Free as a bird he would race about.  
As the years went by he learned and grew  
and became a man - as you will, too.

“He was fine and strong, with a boyish smile,  
But he’d seemed with us such a little while  
When war broke out and he went away.  
I still remember his face that day  
When he smiled at me and said, Goodbye,  
I’ll be back soon, Mom, so please don’t cry.

“But the war went on and he had to stay,  
 And all I could do was wait and pray.  
 His letters told of the awful fight,  
 (I can see it still in my dreams at night),  
 With the tanks and guns and cruel barbed wire,  
 And the mines and bullets, the bombs and fire.

“Till at last, at last, the war was won -  
 And that’s why we wear a poppy son.”  
 The small boy turned as if to go,  
 Then said, “Thanks, lady, I’m glad to know.  
 That sure did sound like an awful fight,  
 But your son - did he come back all right?”

A tear rolled down each faded cheek;  
 She shook her head, but didn’t speak.  
 I slunk away in a sort of shame,  
 And if you were me you’d have done the same;  
 For our thanks, in giving, is oft delayed,  
 Though our freedom was bought - and thousands paid!

And so when we see a poppy worn,  
 Let us reflect on the burden borne,  
 By those who gave their very all  
 When asked to answer their country’s call  
 That we at home in peace might live.  
 Then wear a poppy! Remember - and give!

*Don Crawford*





# **WAITING FOR THE LIGHT**



## **COMPLINE AND REFLECTIONS FOR ADVENT**

**7.30pm**

**St John's Episcopal Church, Princes Street**  
with the congregations of St John's Church and  
St Ninian's Cathedral

**December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>**

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