

Service of Holy Communion

November 1, 2020 All Saints Sunday

WELCOME

PRELUDE

"Bell Processional in C" Lana Cartlidge Potts

(Permission granted to play by Lana Cartlidge Potts, copyright 2020)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, in whose image we are made,
who claims us and calls us beloved.

Amen.

Silence for reflection

Holy One, we confess that we are not awake for you. We are not faithful in using your gifts. We forget the least of our siblings. We do not see your beautiful image in one another. We are infected by sin that divides your beloved community. Open our hearts to your coming, open our eyes to see you in our neighbor, open our hands to serve your creation. Amen.

Beloved, we are God's children, and Jesus, our Beloved, opens the door to us.

Through † Jesus you are forgiven, by Jesus you are welcome, in Jesus you are called to rejoice! Let us live in the promises prepared for us from the foundation of the world.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG #427 *For All Your Saints, O Lord*

- 1 For all your saints, O Lord,
who strove in you to live,
who followed you, obeyed, adored,
our grateful hymn receive.
- 2 For all your saints, O Lord,
who strove in you to die,
who counted you their great reward,
accept our thankful cry.
- 3 They all in life and death,
with you, their Lord, in view,
learned from your Holy Spirit's breath
to suffer and to do.

- 4 For this, your name we bless
and humbly pray anew
that we like them in holiness
may live and die in you.
- 5 To God, the Father, Son,
and Spirit, ever blest,
the One in Three, the Three in One,
be endless praise addressed.

Text: Richard Mant, 1776-1848, alt.

GREETING

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

And also with you.

BLESSING OF THE HOME ALTAR/OFRENDAS

Today, on All Saints Sunday, our loved ones who have died join us in worship. The pictures of them we have gathered represent their presence with us. We remember them. We thank God for them. The memory of their lives, their faith, their struggles and triumphs encourage us to continue walking by faith.

If you have candles on your home altar/ofrenda, take a moment to light them now as we light the candles here. (*Light ofrenda candles*)

God of all the saints, with these words, we praise you for your glory and goodness:

By all your saints still striving, for all your saints at rest, your holy name, O Jesus, forevermore be blessed! For you arose victorious that they might wear the crown and share the light of glory reflected from your throne.

Give praise to God Almighty, and worship God the Son, and sing to God the Spirit, eternal Three in One, till all the ransomed number fall down before the throne, and honor, powe'r, and glory ascribe to God alone.

Amen

(ELW #420, text by Horatio Bolton Nelson)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, **you have knit your people together in one communion in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior**

and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE WORD

FIRST READING: *Revelation 7:9-17*

The book of Revelation is written to seven churches in western Asia Minor during a time of great oppression. Today's reading is a response to the question asked in 6:17: "Who is able to stand?" The writer gives the faithful the assurance of God's protection and a vision of victory.

⁹After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

"Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

¹¹And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²singing,

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom
and thanksgiving and honor and power and might
be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

¹³Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" ¹⁴I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁵For this reason they are before the throne of God,
and worship him day and night within his temple,
and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

¹⁶They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;
the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat;

¹⁷for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: *Psalms 34:1-10, 22*

¹I will bless the LORD at all times; the praise of God shall ever be in my mouth.

²**I will glory in the LORD; let the lowly hear and rejoice.**

³Proclaim with me the greatness of the LORD;
let us exalt God's name together.

⁴**I sought the LORD, who answered me
and delivered me from all my terrors.**

⁵Look upon the LORD and be radiant, and let not your faces be ashamed.

⁶**I called in my affliction, and the LORD heard me**

and saved me from all my troubles.

⁷The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear the LORD and delivers them.

⁸**Taste and see that the LORD is good;
happy are they who take refuge in God!**

⁹Fear the LORD, you saints of the LORD,
for those who fear the LORD lack nothing.

¹⁰**The lions are in want and suffer hunger,
but those who seek the LORD lack nothing that is good.**

²²O LORD, you redeem the life of your servants,
and those who put their trust in you will not be punished.

SECOND READING: 1 John 3:1-3

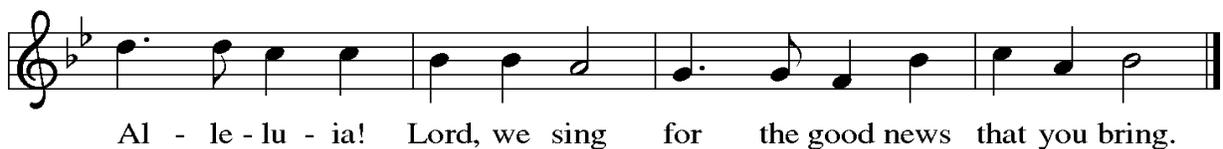
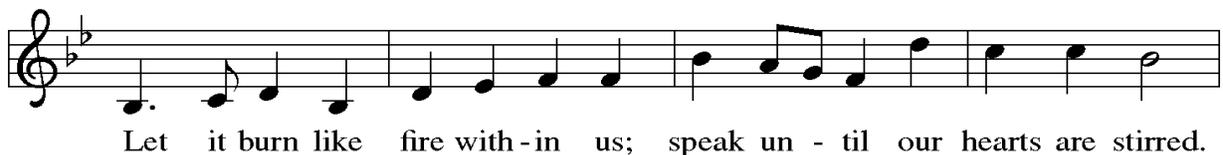
A saint is one who has been set apart by God for God's purposes. God, out of divine love, set us apart to be the children of God. Our holy hope is that we shall see God as God really is.

¹See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. ³And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL READING: Matthew 5:1-12

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the fifth chapter
Glory to you, O Lord.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus provides a unique description of those who are blessed with God's favor. His teaching is surprising and shocking to those who seek wealth, fame, and control over others.

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

One of my seminary professors used to say it puzzled him why people who don't care to attend worship in this life, are interested in going to heaven. "It's just more of the same," he said, "gathering with the faithful and praising God continually." I was reminded of that by this morning's first scripture reading from Revelation, chapter 7.

It is a beautiful scene of communal worship. There's a grand throne raised high off the ground so everyone can see it. Jesus, the Lamb, is seated on the throne, surrounded by a sea of people. There are people of every color and ethnicity, every nationality and culture. The size and diversity of this crowd is incredible. As far as the eye can see, are people, and they are happy. They are rejoicing.

Over here, some are dancing; over there is a group playing conga drums; toward the back is a full orchestra; in the middle a gospel choir; and near the throne is – of course – a pipe organ. Although everyone is dressed in white robes, you can see a hint of what they used to wear in earthly life: some wore suits and dresses; others serapes or dashikis or Native American regalia, or traditional outfits from Russia, Germany, Japan, Nigeria, and Alaska. They are all one, now, in their white robes, and still all unique at the same time. The crowd makes a rippling effect, as people move and sing, bow before the throne, and then up again clapping their hands and greeting one another with joy. It's worship – whole body and soul worship – in the kingdom of God. What could be better?

If you look closely, you'll see people who had little chance to be happy in this life, people who had bloated stomachs from starvation, people who were tormented by the voices in their minds, people who had suffered such violence they were always afraid,

people who'd been told they were nothing and had come to believe it. The exuberance, the glory, and the lavish welcome is a new experience for them.

I picture Katy Bush – an elderly member of a church I served in Houston; she never smiled. When I knew her she lived in a very nice assisted living center. Her daughters visited and called often. There was nothing she needed that she didn't have, and yet all she could do was complain. She complained about her children, about the place where she lived, about the aids who spent all day helping her, even about the volunteers from church who came to see her regularly. I was annoyed by her complaints when I visited her, but I was also sad for her. How had she come to be like that – so quick to think she was being slighted or ignored, so ungrateful to those who cared for her, so determined to seeing the worst in every situation and to think she was the most put-upon person ever?

When she died, I thought... there she is in the midst of the greatest celebration – all those people around the throne of God, rejoicing. I wondered if Katy would know how to rejoice. I imagined her staring blankly at the palm branch in her hand and at the people around her singing with full hearts, as a warmth and good feeling spread through her body. Slowly it dawned on her that she was happy. She waved that palm branch a little, jumped up and down a few times, and began to smile a genuine smile. Now, finally, she knew she was included; she knew she was loved.

Sometimes, Jesus said such unlikely things. “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” he said. “Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are those who are persecuted for striving to be righteous. Blessed are you when people say ugly, hurtful things about you because you love Jesus and seek to walk in his ways. *Blessed* are you. Yours is the kingdom of God.”

“The poor in spirit” – people whose hope is nearly gone. Every day they get up and do the same thing over and over again. They want to believe life will get better, that they'll find work or they'll be treated fairly, but it doesn't happen and they are close to giving up. The poor in spirit – Jesus calls them blessed.

“Those who mourn” – mourning is strange and difficult business. When someone you love dies, you feel lost, confused. Some days are so awful you don't know how you'll survive; other days you're simply numb. There is so much to mourn in life: the loss of strength and vitality as you grow older; the loss of hopes and dreams when a marriage ends; the loss of purpose and direction when, during a pandemic, the future is unclear month after month after month; the loss of civility and trust among people of the nation. Blessed are those who mourn? It doesn't feel 'blessed.'

“Blessed are you when people insult you, tell lies about you, hold you up for public ridicule because you try to love Jesus in your daily life.” I hate being insulted; I hate people telling lies about me. Both things make me extremely angry, quick to want to set the record straight, and lash out at those who've wronged me. “Blessed are you when that happens,” Jesus says. “You're in good company, because that's how the prophets of old were treated. Blessed are you when people disparage you.” Maybe... but I don't like it. It hurts to be abused and mocked.

What's happening up on that mountain? What is Jesus saying? What is he doing? All these people clustered around him – the Lamb of God – listening to his teaching, longing for his healing touch and his life-giving love: fishermen and washer-women, tax collectors and prostitutes; some educated folks and some illiterate beggars; some healthy folks and some who are sick, disabled, dying. They hunger for what Jesus can give. They long to be drawn into his orbit, be heard and seen and acknowledged as worthy, as belonging, as precious to the Most High. And Jesus, seeing them, knowing their need, creates for them the kingdom of God on earth, just as it is in heaven.

Is your hope nearly gone, are you at your rope's end? Blessed are you. God sees you. God claims you as beloved. You are not forgotten. You are not passed-by.

Is your heart breaking at the state of the world today? Are you endlessly mourning what used to be: the church as it was; a time when we could travel, have family gatherings, and go out to eat; the way your body used to respond when you were younger? Is there a terrible emptiness where someone used to be – your Mom or your spouse or your child or your Dad or your friend? // Jesus reaches out and touches you, saying “Blessed. Blessed are you. Not rejected. Not foolish. Not unimportant. Blessed.”

Jesus brings the kingdom of God to us, today, in the midst of our sorrow, our pain, and our weariness. A contentious election is underway and voting ends Tuesday; COVID cases are increasing again around the world; we can't plan for Thanksgiving or Christmas or the New Year because we don't know what life will be like then. All of it takes a toll on us. But here is Jesus, with us now, blessing us, assuring us we matter, and reminding us that God reigns, that God's kingdom – and only God's kingdom – lasts forever.

“Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” the elder asked. I said, “Sir, you know.” He replied, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They are before God's throne, worshiping God day and night; they hunger and thirst no more; the Lamb guards them from scorching heat, and shepherds them to the water of life. God wipes away every tear from their eyes.”

This is your home, the kingdom of God – the home of all the saints. Live in this hope. This is the world that endures: all of us singing, dancing, and rejoicing around God's throne; people of every era and every place gathered as one family; enough for all, community with all, love and joy for all, at the eternal throne of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

HYMN OF THE DAY #422 *For All the Saints* verses 1-4

1 For all the saints who from their labors rest,
 who thee by faith before the world confessed,
 thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest.
 Alleluia! Alleluia!

- 2 Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might;
thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight;
thou, in the darkness drear, their one true light.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
- 3 Oh, blest communion, fellowship divine,
we feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
yet all are one in thee, for all are thine.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
- 4 And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,
steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
and hearts are brave again and arms are strong.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Text: William W. How, 1823-1897

APOSTLES' CREED

With the whole Church let us confess our faith.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and buried;
He descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.**

Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The names of Shepherd King members who have died in the last year will be read in the prayers this morning. A bell will be tolled for each person. At the end of the list, you will be invited to say aloud other names of those who have died. There will be a pause so you can speak, and then the bell will be tolled once more.

Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God's power on the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Lord of all the saints, we praise you for evangelists and martyrs whose sacrifices witness to your gospel across time and space. Inspire us by their courage to carry our faith to new people and places around us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of every place, the universe proclaims your greatness from generation to generation. Bless the work of naturalists, conservationists, and park rangers who train our attention to the wonders of the world you have made. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of every nation, guide this country—red states and blue states, rural voters and urban voters, young and old—as we share in another national election. Kindle hearts eager to understand our common needs and seek our common good. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of every blessing, your Son's blessing came to those living with poverty, grief, hunger, thirst, and persecution. Shape our vision of the saints to match his own. Awaken in us your call to serve all who suffer. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of every time, countless are the multitudes you have called by name and gathered to yourself. Comfort us as we grieve those who have died in the past year: Wilma Anderson, Doris Simpson, Barbara Resnick, Bobbie McCown, Fred Kupfernagel, Melba Sanchez, Caryle Steves, Ed Waltersdorf, Jim Jensen, Jeanne Weisbaker, Helen Vettters, Aurelia Krueger *and those we name before you now*. In faith, may we join with them in ceaseless praise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of healing and new life, listen to the prayers of your gathered people...

Bless with healing these our friends and neighbors: Barbara, Jennifer, Janice, Lynnae,

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

THE DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
 praise him, all creatures here below;
 praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
 praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around your table, and shared your abundant blessings. Number us among them that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance, and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant.

Amen.

(Please have the bread and wine/juice ready for Holy Communion)

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

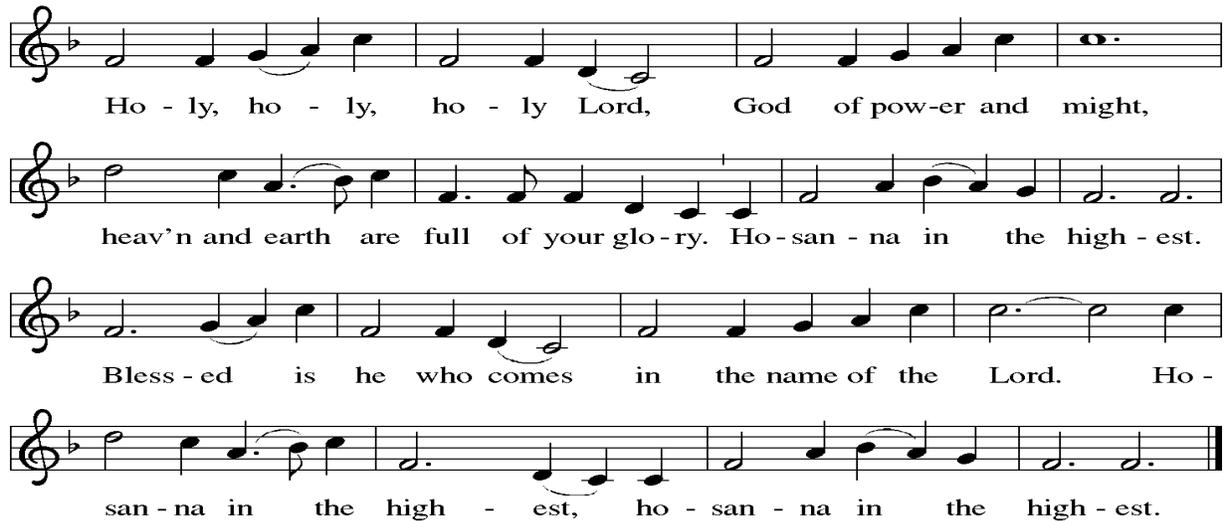
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE FOR SUNDAYS

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;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.
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:

"Holy, Holy, Holy"



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.
 Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
 san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come... through all generations you have heard the cries of your people, bringing them from hardship and death into life. You gave Abraham and Sarah a child in their old age; you brought Israel out of slavery into the freedom of the Promised Land; you sent judges, kings, and prophets to rule your people and return them to you when they had strayed. And when the time had come, you sent your Son Jesus to be our brother, our teacher, and our Savior. We remember, that...

In the night in which he was betrayed, 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 in remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,

**but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

There is a place for you at the banquet. Come and feast at Jesus' table.

Take the bread and eat, this is the body of Christ, given for you. (*please consume the bread*)

Take the cup and drink, this is the blood of Christ, shed for you. (*please drink from the cup*)

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

The body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, in this simple meal you have set a banquet. Sustain us on the journey, strengthen us to care for the least of your beloved children, and give us glad and generous hearts as we meet you on the way.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Take pictures of your home altar/ofrenda and send them via email to the church office.

Write up an Advent or Christmas memory to share in the December Newsletter. Those, and the pictures of your ofrendas, need to be sent to Courtney no later than Monday, November 9.

BLESSING

May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad! The blessing of God, Sovereign, ✠ Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always.

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #423 *Shall We Gather at the River*

1 Shall we gather at the river,
 where bright angel feet have trod,
 with its crystal tide forever
 flowing by the throne of God?

Refrain

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
 the beautiful, the beautiful river;
 gather with the saints at the river
 that flows by the throne of God.

2 On the margin of the river,
 washing up its silver spray,
 we will walk and worship ever,
 all the happy golden day. *Refrain*

3 Ere we reach the shining river,
 lay we ev'ry burden down;
 grace our spirits will deliver,
 and provide a robe and crown. *Refrain*

4 Soon we'll reach the shining river,
 soon our pilgrimage will cease;
 soon our happy hearts will quiver
 with the melody of peace. *Refrain*

Text: Robert Lowry, 1826-1899

DISMISSAL

Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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