

AROUND THE DALE

The Newsletter of the Calderdale Methodist Circuit

Number 23

February 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,
Have you noticed how our lives seem to be controlled by the retail industry? It doesn't seem that long ago that we were being encouraged to buy for Christmas, whether that was gifts or food. As I prepare this item, I have already seen chocolate bunnies and Easter Eggs on sale even though Easter isn't until the start of April and we haven't even got Valentine's day out of the way yet!

Life seems to be a case of lurching from one event to another, for some it is from one weekend to another. Does anyone remember the advert for Cadbury's Crunchie that had the slogan "Thank Crunchie it's Friday!"? I remember back in the days when I worked as a draughtsman the lads in the drawing office were always talking about their plans for Friday evening, some started talking about them on Monday morning. For some people the treadmill of working and other commitments means that they work simply to get to the weekend or that annual holiday of two weeks in the sun somewhere.

Many today don't get the privilege of even being away from work at the weekend. The technology we have enables people to not only be in touch

with the office but even to carry on working wherever they are. The pressure to do so can be quite high in today's climate where so many are being made redundant and the demand to do as the company **requires** is not easy to refuse. Where do you find peace, rest and renewal in times like this? It's not easy, especially when to do so by having a break adds to the financial burden that is already quite draining.

In a lot of ways, the Church is no different, yet it should be. We often find ourselves lurching from Christmas to Easter to Pentecost to Harvest to Advent to Christmas again. It is right that we celebrate these events, but they should not be the reason for our being. I suppose it's a bit like learning to dance using an instruction book without music.

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The book may show you the technical steps and the movements needed to glide gracefully around a room but that is all. If all we ever do is to keep following the instructions each day we will collapse at the end of it exhausted by the strain of keeping to the rules with no passion or company whilst doing so.

But when music is played the body moves to the music and others can dance along with you and you can enjoy the event together. God has given us an instruction book, the Bible, but he has also given us the music to dance to

which we hear through the Holy Spirit. I pray that this year will be a new way of living for you as you read the instruction book again, or maybe for the first time, but also listen for the music and allow that to guide you through your daily living as we journey through the year. In doing so, the pressures from others, whether the retail industry or employers, can be eased and shared with those dancing alongside you.

God Bless

Henry

LENTEN JOURNEY 2021

Brighouse to Todmorden led by the Circuit Mission Enabling Team

On this Lenten Journey we will walk together (physically or virtually), experience something of the nature and wonder of God's creation while reflecting upon our place within it. The walks are intended to help us focus on God in the great outdoors and allow a different form of worship while we travel

together (socially distanced of course). There will be items to collect along the

way or bring along that will help us in our reflection and worship. The walks will take place each week on a Friday morning beginning at 10:30 am and may be repeated

another time. There will be 4 stops on each walk and an opportunity to get a coffee along the way on most walks.



Lenten Journey continued . . .

Our journey will begin in Brighouse and end in Todmorden following the Canal throughout the 6 weeks. If you would like to physically do the walk by yourself or with someone in your bubble, the start points can be found on the Circuit web site where you can download them or they can be obtained from the Circuit office via email.



You can also follow the walks and reflections via Video's on the Methodist Church in Calderdale Youtube Channel. This can be done while on your walk or wherever you do it virtually. You will be able to pause the video at the appropriate time to take longer to think and reflect as you choose.

Walking the Way

Walking The WAY is a series of walks and reflections that help us to worship and focus on God, our surroundings and ourselves.

All are welcome to join in. There is a chance that we may live stream the walks on the Methodist Church in Calderdale FaceBook page each Friday morning from 10:30am and at the stops

along the way. This will depend upon network coverage and signal strength. The virtual videos for each week will be posted on social media platforms as described above. This will enable you to do the reflections at a time that suits you.

The actual walks vary in time, up to three hours if walking there and back to the start point. At the start of each walk it will say how far it is and possible timings. Perhaps you may wish to get public transport or a pre-arranged lift to get back to the start point to collect your vehicle. Please make sure you have appropriate clothing and footwear if walking.

As part of our Discipleship and mission, perhaps this is something you might like to do or invite someone to join in with virtually or physically, if safe to do so.

For more information you can contact Rev Paul Welch revpwelch@gmail.com or any member of the Circuit Mission Enabling Team via the Methodist Church in Calderdale Circuit Face Book Page or Circuit Website.



On Good Friday there will be a reflection walk beginning at Mount Zion 10:30am going around Ogden Water and back to Mount Zion.

Adapting our worship in the third lockdown.

We now include a quiz of 10 questions in our regular Keeping In Touch newsletter, to keep the grey matter ticking over, and just for a bit of fun! Joan kindly produces these mini quizzes for us. The first one is below, and the subject is cakes!

The answer to every question is a cake. See how many you can find! Good luck!

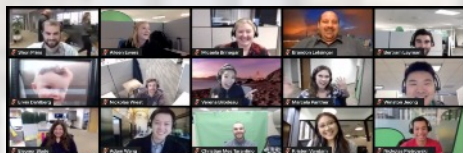
Cakes Galore

1. Ideal decorations for the Christmas tree.
2. Cockneys only have them when the sun shines.
3. A favourite of The Goons?
4. Traditionally eaten on Bonfire Night in Yorkshire.
5. A few slices of this could make a colourful chess board.
6. The lepidopterist will love this one.
7. An almond treat from The Firth of Tay.
8. Was Albert ever offered a piece?
9. They only cost a penny or less!
10. You should be clean after finishing these.

The answers to these are found in small type at the bottom left of the next page. For Christ Church members you will also get these answers in Keeping In Touch Edition 22 so you may wish to ignore the answers here!

Careful scrutiny of the regulations after the announcement of the current lockdown revealed that this time, Covid secure churches were officially allowed to continue opening for worship. We questioned this – although allowed to open is this the right thing for our church?

We noted that the previous Sunday to the announcement it had been incredibly icy and many people sensibly had decided to stay at home and joined the worship on Zoom. Others had braved the weather to attend but many of these only did so because they had a duty to do and if this had not been the case they would have stayed safe at home.

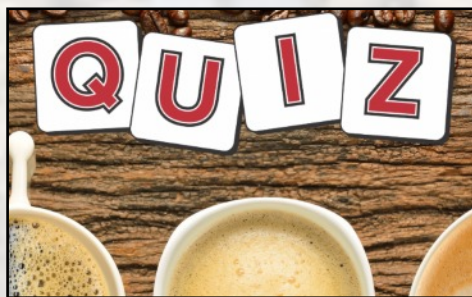


We were concerned about this and therefore made the decision to close the church during this lockdown and move all our services onto Zoom again. This carefully thought out decision was made with the health and safety of our Church Family at the forefront. We felt that by keeping our doors closed this time we show the community around us that we care about their health and well-being too. Our Church Family will not feel the need to attend and therefore possibly put themselves at risk by doing so.

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Rev Colin, Caroline and Debbie have taken many of these services and our newly formed "Media Team" have learnt lots and lots over the weeks! We are still tweaking different aspects of our live streaming. Debbie recently set up the Christ Church YouTube channel and we have recently purchased a better camera for when we eventually return to the church building for worship. We are hoping to improve our videos of the services by being able to zoom in closer to the preacher and readers, from the balcony. It's very much a learning curve for us all!



Christ Church Wednesday Coffee Morning & Quiz

Every Wednesday from 10.00 am till 11.30 am we hold our coffee morning & quiz. (The quiz is at 10.30). The link for this is <https://bit.ly/3mWUsW6> or use meeting ID: 836 7407 4150
Passcode: 123456

You can also join on an ordinary telephone 0131 460 1196. You will be asked to enter the meeting ID which is 836 7407 4150 and the Passcode 123456. If you have the morning free why not join us?



Good News! On 4th December 2020 we heard the great news that Hipperholme Christ Church Activities had been voted the winner of the 'Staying Well Lower Valley Award' as part of the Staying Well Awards for Calderdale. This was for all the activities organized for the benefit of our community e.g. Keep Fit, Tai Chi, Art, Kurling and a number of Staying Well Days where much information and lunch was provided. A huge thank you to Cathy Roper and her willing helpers for this excellent work. Sadly these activities are temporarily closed due to current restrictions.



Answers to the cake quiz:-

1.Fairy cakes 2. Currant buns 3.Eccles cakes 4. Parkin 5. Battenberg, 6. Butterfly buns 7.Dundee cake 8. Victoria sponge 9. Hot Cross buns 10. Bath buns

Read any good books lately!

I've always been drawn to books written for a younger audience especially those that carry a message even if it's not immediately obvious. Some moral themes can jump straight out at you – others require a bit of oblique thinking. At the moment, because it is snowing again (yippee) I find called to mind Winnie the Pooh and the snowy poem sung by him and Piglet – 'The more it snows, Tiddely pom, The more it goes, Tiddely Pom, The more it goes. Tiddely Pom, On snowing.'



Here are two completely different characters (yes, I know they are not real) with a different outlook on life. Winnie, always in search of his ultimate goal - more honey and Piglet, who seems to have no goal at all but just feels thwarted by all the disappointments that life throws at him. He's always on the end of a rough deal. Which of these two could you be?

Hopefully not that other unforgettable character Eeyore – doleful and downcast as life deals him blow after blow and when the occasional good deed does

seem to be coming his way, he is almost too gloomy to appreciate the gesture.



I hope that we are Pooh searching for a goal and making everything as positive as we can – difficult at the moment, but hopefully we can home in on that goal and like Piglet see that occasionally something will happen that we can turn into a positive. But, you might say what is our goal – to be comfortable with ourselves as we seek an acceptance of our circumstances whatever they may be and however much we rail at them. Yes, to strive for that which seems to be out of our reach and to be content with the striving and not feel downcast because we haven't quite reached it.

If we reach our goals too easily then we can lose that sense of purpose, that sense of inquisitiveness, that sense of yes OK and what now?

Does faith come into this? Surely it must. Can we imagine an existence without faith? Do we implicitly accept that faith is what helps us along, supporting us through the rough and dark times and rejoicing at the good, helping us to appreciate the plight of others, sharing their grief and being joyful at their joys?

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Surely a joy shared is a joy spread so that all may experience that heart-warming moment. Can the same be said of sadness – is sadness shared a sadness lessened? Is joy shared joy diminished? Our joy will be reflected back at us when shared with another. Sadness is comforted when we know that someone else understands how we feel. Is this how faith and sharing see us through whatever life throws at us?

DO YOU SHARE YOUR FAITH?



Back to Winnie the Pooh and Piglet when Piglet's balloon (an intended present for Eeyore's birthday) that he was so excited about bursts and ends up as an unrecognisable small piece of damp rag, but he gives it anyway to a gloomily appreciative Eeyore.



We've all had those moments and know exactly how he feels. Read Chapter 6 of A A Milne's book – 'In which Eeyore has a birthday and gets two presents' - It could bring a bit of perspective.

St. Matthew's

We are coping again with lockdown. Each Sunday we have an order of service on our website and Facebook page. Our Church Council Secretary, Richard Kay compiles this for us with the readings from the lectionary, suggestions for hymns and organ preludes and postludes from YouTube videos, and Revd Stephen Hannam writes a homily. The latter is also printed in the weekly newsletter for those who do not have Facebook, and paper copies are printed and delivered wherever possible to our members who do not have computers.



We have a momentous event ahead of us in 23rd February, when our new incumbent, Revd Michelle Petch will be licensed to the benefice of St Matthew's and St John's.

This service will not be open to the public because of lock-down but will be transmitted by Zoom. Michelle is a local lass and we look forward to welcoming her and her family to Rastrick.

At present she is curate at Holy Trinity and St Jude's in Halifax. Please pray for Michelle as she joins our church family and settles in. It will be very strange for us all as we are not able to meet her personally in the current situation.

Northowram – Cul-De-Sac Carols

As we and, as it turned out, the other two churches in Northowram, were to be closed over Christmas, giving no local access to a Christmas service, we decided that we should take Christmas to the community.

The other two Churches provided financial assistance and helped by delivering publicity

leaflets to the cul-de sacs we planned to visit. We decided a Nativity scene on the back of a flat back van complete with pre-recorded carols, Bible verses and prayers was the way forward.

We began on Friday afternoon by collecting the hired van. The hire company had generously given us a bigger van, considerably longer and slightly narrower, than the one ordered. Unfortunately, this

meant that the carefully constructed nativity scene didn't fit. With the help of a large saw, "O Little Town of Bethlehem" became "O Littler Town of Bethlehem," Mary and Joseph had to become socially distanced and the sheep relocated but, by 10 pm all was ready.



On the Saturday before Christmas, Mary and Joseph began their tour of Northowram presenting the baby Jesus to the community (liturgically perhaps a few days early but ...). The first half a

dozen stops went well. Then disaster struck as the borrowed sound system stopped working.

Three hours and countless phone calls later we had to call it a day and returned to St Matthew's car park to take the nativity scene

apart ready to drive home. At that point the heavens opened, the wind blew, the rain lashed down. We were soaked, dispirited and very very cold. Frantic phone calls on the Saturday evening

ensued in an attempt to rescue the planned Sunday stops.

By Sunday morning we had dried out and recovered feeling in our fingers and



toes. A volunteer came to the rescue with the loan of a generator to power the sound system and the sun was shining. Following some last-minute juggling of the planned route we managed to make a further 16 stops

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and were able to catch up on some of the ones missed on Saturday. Unfortunately, a few streets still missed out; the combination of the bigger van and the number of parked cars made



some places inaccessible but we did turn up the volume a bit on adjacent streets!

So, what did we learn?

First of all, that many people were glad to welcome the Christmas story into their neighbourhood and openly used the opportunity to tell their children the nativity story. In some streets, there was a real sense of anticipation with one little girl waiting at her front window for four hours for us to arrive and was so excited when we finally appeared.

People opened their windows, stood on their doorsteps, came into their gardens and sang and in some cases danced. What a joy!

We learned that the sense of community and of neighbours looking out for one another is very much in evidence in Northowram and that people are generous in offering hospitality and appreciation.

We learned that some of the livelier carol tunes are perfect for dancing and that small children are fascinated by

large wooden sheep.

We learned that when we were cold and wet, we had the privilege of being able to return to a warm home, dry clothes and a hot meal. There are many this winter who have none of those things.

We learned that people were happy to give their time and equipment to assist make this event happen.

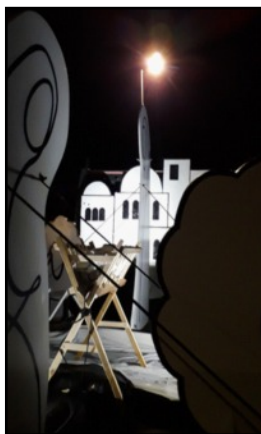
Oh, and we learned that someone who has just finished a night shift and gone to bed does not appreciate Christmas carols outside their window at 10.30am on a Saturday!

What did people say?

On the Northowram Facebook page somebody commented that they had

been out for their exercise and that it was lovely to hear carols drifting all around the village and that it had made their Christmas.

One lady came to say "that our 25 minute slot had done more for her than a



recent church service!"

Several people came to say that they knew we weren't able to accept donations but that they would do so at the church to assist pay for the event (and they did!).

Sorry but we can't repeat any of the comments from the night shift worker!

I think it is fair to say that most people are feeling the effects of this latest lockdown and probably wondering when normality will return. What will the new normal be like? So many thoughts and feelings overtake us, especially as the dark days of January cast their shadow over us.

I would really like to lift that feeling of gloom and concentrate on Hope which comes to us through prayer.

***'Prayer is the soul's sincere delight,
uttered or unexpressed . . . '***

We at Brighouse Central had a few 'in person' services before we were back into lockdown again. The services continue, as before, but without a congregation. Thanks to those working the technology, the musicians and those willing to preach we are able to offer online worship through Facebook and have reached many people beyond our usual church congregation and beyond our town of Brighouse. This surely is Mission.

It has been a difficult time for many within our church community with several of our church family being faced with bereavement. At such a time we reach out with love and prayers to support them in their grieving.

Many are supporting each other through

telephone conversations, WhatsApp groups, emails and the sending of letters and cards. Prayer groups and Bible study groups continue to meet as do Fellowship groups and coffee mornings, all through the Zoom platform. Our Minister, Rev Mark, is encouraging all to join or start a small group, emphasising that prayer should be the bedrock of who we are and what we do.

The room that connects our worship centre to our school hall is called 'The Link' and has a glass frontage, built to give the people of the town an opportunity to see that the church is a vibrant place of activity within the community. A Prayer Tree has been created by our Minister's wife and can be found on the Link window. A small number of leaves are to be added week by week with some coming from Rev Mark for people or situations he is aware of, some sent by others and in the event there are no prayers to add, prayers will be added for those on our Pastoral List. In time we hope to invite prayers from the wider community.

We offer our prayers for each and every church in our circuit with the **Faith** and **Hope** that the Calderdale Circuit can move forward in **Love, Unity and Trust**.

Every Blessing

Susan Yates, Senior Steward

St Andrew's

Since last time our Church 'Buildings' re-opened and sadly closed again which meant Christmas was certainly very different last year! Nevertheless for the Church Family at St Andrew's it was a very meaningful time of celebration and the love and generosity shared by our Church family was outstanding and certainly showed the true meaning of Christmas to those friends who would normally have been sharing with us in our various group Christmas Celebrations through our weekly/monthly happenings.

Following an appeal for small Christmas gift items to make up Christmas bags for taking out to members of our Monday Kitchen Group; Knit & Natter Group; Ladies Club; YW's; Men's Supper Club; Church Mum's & Toddler Group, the gifts began to pour in and we (Stella and Leah actually) were able to make up over 70 beautiful Christmas Gift Bags which were delivered during the week-end before Christmas and afterwards Stella wrote 'The generosity of St Andrew's congregation is unsurpassed. The Christmas bags have been received with such joy. A small selection of comments received from the recipients are as follows:

- "Please thank 'the team' who have made this possible – it has just made our Christmas."
- "Oh, how lovely! I can't believe you



thought of me".

- "Thanks for the wonderful Christmas bag. I am truly grateful for the lovely things, and the angel is on top of the tree."
- "Thank you for the Christmas bag – a lovely gift, and so nice to know you are thinking of us."
- "What a lovely bag of surprises! I do appreciate it very much! What a lovely gesture when we are enduring so much isolation. My heartfelt thanks to everyone involved." . . .

This is what it has meant for us to share the love of God, particularly to those who normally come to share in what we offer as a Church community to the community outside our Church. We participated in the Circuit Messy Church Group's Advent and Christmas gift bags for Messy Church children and they were also excitedly received from

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outside Church at the end of November.

We supported the work of the St Augustine's Centre, The Gathering Place and the Food Bank with gifts of toys, food and quite literally car boots full of knitting – all very gratefully received and very much appreciated.



During the short period when the Church building was re-opened for worship our zoomed Sunday Worship services continued in tandem and it was good to be able to share with each other in this way, but sadly for all our Church congregations 'lock-down' came again all too soon and we are back to Zoom only services.

It has been really good to be able to share in the Services being held in our other Calderdale Circuit Churches and this has enabled us to put faces to names and that is more than good.

Our Church Zoom Services and WhatsApp groups continue to thrive and it is such a relief to be able to share the fun moments and also the sad and lonely moments with each other.

Sadly at St Andrew's over the last six

weeks we have recorded the deaths of three of our dearly loved friends and church family members which has been a huge blow to us all. They and their families have been in our constant thoughts and prayers and brings home to us all just how hard it is at such times when you cannot share a hug with those lost in their grief and sometimes we wonder if things will ever get back to 'normal' again . . .

BUT . . . last night the thoughts of our WhatsApp Group turned to Spring and the talk of seeing signs of Snow Drops, Daffodils and Crocus in the dark, hard ground which helped us to remember that even through the trauma of the present time and the long term effects of the Covid19 pandemic that our loving Lord continues to support and bring comfort to us all and with the news of the long awaited vaccination programme being put into action and the knowledge that many of our friends and family have already had their first 'jab' helps to see the light at the end of the tunnel coming a little closer (but quite sad when you think that the highlight of the coming week is a trip to Boots chemist to get the jab!).

The days are lengthening and today the sun is shining and the words of the hymn by Joseph Hart ***'We'll praise him for all that is past and trust him for all that's to come'*** help to give us all hope for the future and bring nearer the time when we can all meet safely together again.

*Love to all from the
St Andrew's Church Family.*

It was a very busy time during Advent and over Christmas and New Year as we transferred activities normally done in the 'physical' into the 'virtual'.



The Posada

The Posada was a series of films following Joseph and Mary on their way to Bethlehem with a relevant reflection alongside it. Messy Advent, as well as 60 activity bags delivered to a local primary school, we adapted as a team the activities and story to also be a series of films which were posted on social media and YouTube. There are over 70 videos now posted on YouTube which can be found on The Methodist Church in Calderdale's channel.

Puppet Assemblies

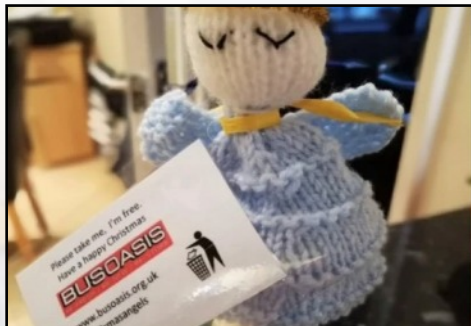
Christmas and New Year 'Puppet' assemblies were done with Rev Paul and sent to 3 local primary schools and also shared on social media for those who are being home schooled, and again if you would like the link to share with your local schools, please contact me.

Christmas Unwrapped

'Christmas Unwrapped' was hosted by Circuit Mission Enabling Team and was a series of 4 weekly discussions based on 4 topics associated with Christmas. People across the Circuit joined in and enjoyed the informal discussion groups.

We delivered 30 'blessing bags' to the folk at Blackburn House, filled with small gifts, a Christmas message and a special hand made Christmas card from the children at one of the local primary schools. They were so appreciative of this small act of kindness, and we were able to chat to them outside their door for just a few minutes, all at safe distance of course. We look forward to going back down there to work with them as soon as possible and also start the Daisy Chain Dementia café back up with our project partners.

Christmas Angels



The Christmas Angels were a great success again as we 'yarn bombed' Calderdale in the lead up to Christmas. Many folk sent messages or posted photos of their finds . . . its now time to start knitting chickens again for Easter. If you would like a crochet or knitting *Continued on next page . . .*

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pattern, please let me know and I will coordinate the labels across the Circuit as usual. Let's bring some joy to our community in the form of a small, knitted chicken, made with love.

Community Christingle



Paula led a community Christingle aimed at non church folk. We invited several friends with children to join in, hear the story and we made our Christingles together. It was posted across social media.

Unfortunately, due to the current restrictions it will be no surprise to hear that, other than taking the Busoasis van out for regular maintenance runs, we are not able to be out and about in the community yet. We will be out working alongside our partners as soon as we can be, sharing the good news of Jesus. There are/will be many people who will need to see, feel and hear the gospel in practical ways as we all work together to come out of Covid.

Working together as the body of Christ is the only way forward to address the needs of the community, 'Church' and ourselves.

I am currently on 50% furlough for the foreseeable future, but I am still contactable on:

staff.busoasis2013@gmail.com

or via the Circuit Office

office@calderdalemethodists.org.uk

Sharon Longman

Where's Jesus - can you find him in this picture?



Circuit Website

[www.calderdale
methodistcircuit.org.uk](http://www.calderdalemethodistcircuit.org.uk)

This was launched at the beginning of September. If you spot anything you think is incorrect please let us know in the office as we are the ones who will now be maintaining it. It is still a work in progress so please bear with us as we learn the ropes! ☺

We would still like some photos of events relevant to your church that we can add to your church pages to replace the generic ones that were on view at it's start. Also any news stories that you would like to share with the rest of the Circuit and any others who might look at the website.

*Janet and Lynne – Circuit
Administrators*



Be assured the
Methodist people
are praying for the
world at this time



The **Methodist** Church 
www.methodist.org.uk

THE GOSPEL According to **PEANUTS**

It is hoped that Issue No. 24 of this News-letter will come out soon. The Circuit Office is currently closed but material can still be sent to office@calderdalemethodists.org.uk Please send items as soon as you have them available

Around the Dale

The Newsletter of the Calderdale Circuit
of the Methodist Church

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