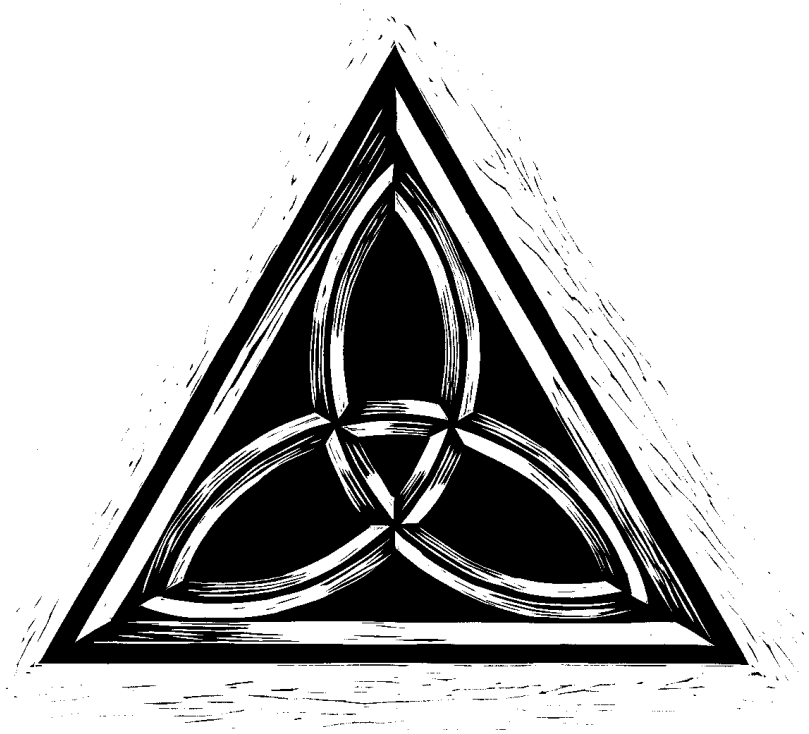


Trinity Sunday

June 15, 2025



St. Mark's Episcopal Church Coldwater, Michigan

~We strive to love and serve all people in the spirit of Jesus Christ~

St. Mark's is an open, loving family of God guided by Scripture, Tradition, and Reason. We encourage spiritual growth while supporting diversity and the freedom to be yourself. We offer God's joy, hope, and healing to all. We welcome all persons, and we affirm that full participation in the life and leadership of St. Mark's church is accorded to all, regardless of race, color, sex, ethnic or national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disabilities, or age.

Rector: Deacon J. Barrett Lee, Obl OSB

Email: stmarks.barrett@gmail.com

Parish Office: (517) 278-5752

The Word of God

Penitential Order

1 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!
*2 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! All the saints a - dore thee,
3 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Though the dark - ness hide thee,
4 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y! 7

Ear - ly in the morn - ing our song shall rise to thee:
cast - ing down their gold - en crowns a - round the glass - y sea;
though the sin - ful hu - man eye thy glo - ry may not see,
All thy works shall praise thy Name, in earth, and sky, and sea;

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Mer - ci - ful and might - y,
cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim fall - ing down be - fore thee,
on - ly thou art ho - ly; there is none be - side thee,
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Mer - ci - ful and might - y,

God in three Per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty.
which wert, and art, and ev - er - more shalt be.
per - fect in power, in love, and pu - ri - ty.
God in three Per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty.

The people standing, the Celebrant says

Blessed be God: most holy glorious, and undivided Trinity.

People **And blessed be God's reign, now and for ever. Amen.**

The Celebrant says

Jesus said, "The first commandment is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these." *Mark 12:29-31*

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

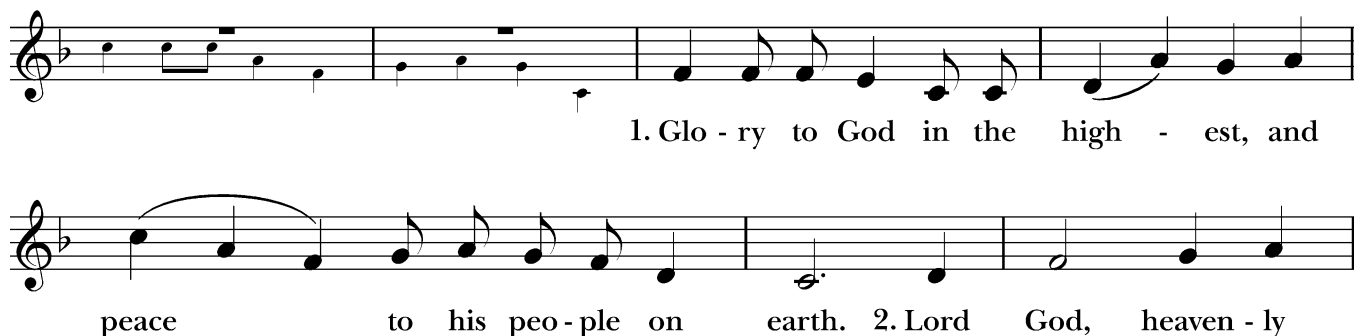
Silence may be kept.

Minister and People

**God of all mercy,
we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done,
and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. Amen.**

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

The following is sung, all standing



1. Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and
peace to his peo - ple on earth. 2. Lord God, heaven - ly

King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we

give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry. 3. Lord Je - sus

Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, 4. you

take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy

on us; 5. you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re -

ceive our prayer. 6. For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One,

you a - lone are the Lord, 7. you a - lone are the Most

High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spi - rit, in the

glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

Music: Robert Powell (b. 1932), rev. Setting: Copyright © Church Publishing Inc.

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Celebrant Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lessons

FIRST READING: Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

A Reading from the book of Proverbs.

¹Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice? ²On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; ³beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out: ⁴“To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live.

²²The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. ²³Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. ²⁴When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. ²⁵Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth—²⁶when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world’s first bits of soil. ²⁷When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, ²⁸when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, ²⁹when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, ³⁰then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, ³¹rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Remain seated.



¹O LORD our Governor, *

how exalted is your Name in *all* the world!

²**Out of the mouths of infants and children ***

your majesty is praised a-bove the *hea*-vens.

³You have set up a stronghold against your adversaries, *

to quell the enemy and the avenger.

⁴**When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, ***

the moon and the stars you have set in their *cours*-es,

⁵What is man that you should be mindful of him? *

the son of man that you should *seek* him out?

⁶**You have made him but little lower than the angels; ***

you adorn him with glo-ry and *hon*-or;

⁷You give him mastery over the works of your hands; *

you put all things under *his* feet:

⁸**All sheep and oxen, ***

even the wild beasts of *the* field,

⁹The birds of the air, the fish of the sea, *

and whatsoever walks in the paths of *the* sea.

¹⁰**O LORD our Governor, ***

how exalted is your Name in *all* the world!

SECOND READING:
Romans 5:1-5

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Church in Rome.

¹Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
²through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast
in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also boast in our
sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces
character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not disappoint us, because
God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been
given to us.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

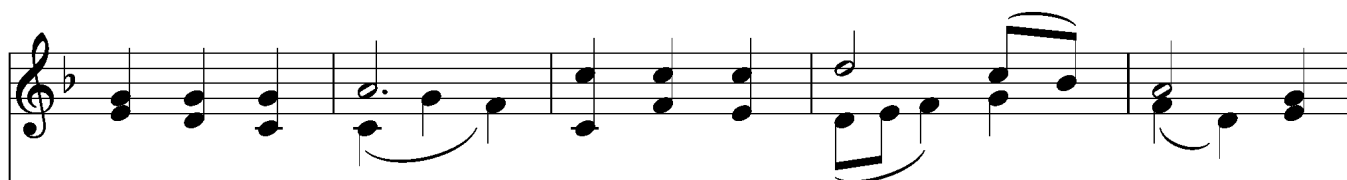
All stand.



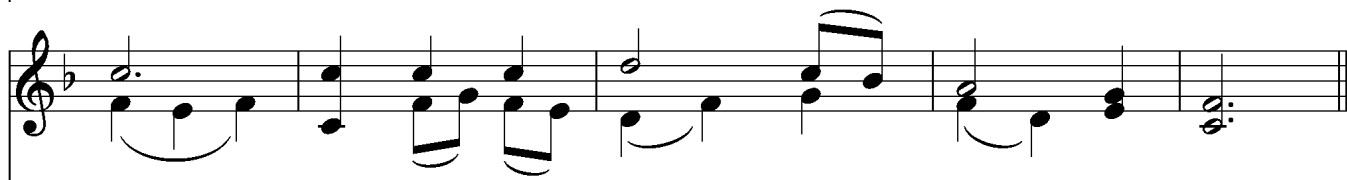
1. Come, Ho - ly ghost, Cre - a - tor blest, And in our
 2. O Com - fort - er, to thee we cry, Thou heav'n - ly
 3. O Ho - ly Ghost, through thee a - lone, Know we the
 4. Praise we the Lord, Fa - ther and Son, And Ho - ly



1. hearts— take up— thy rest;— Come with thy grace—
 2. gift— of God— most high;— Thou fount of life,—
 3. Fa - ther and— the Son;— Be this our firm—
 4. Spir - it with— them one;— And may the Son—



1. and heav'n - ly aid— To fill the hearts— which— thou hast
 2. and fire of love,— And sweet a - noint - ing— from a -
 3. un - chang - ing creed,— That thou dost from— them— both pro -
 4. on us be - stow— All gifts that from— the— Spir - it



1. made,— To fill the hearts— which— thou— hast made.
 2. bove,— And sweet a - noint - ing— from— a - bove.
 3. ceed,— That thou dost from— them— both— pro - ceed.
 4. flow,— All gifts that from— the— Spir - it flow.

GOSPEL:
John 16:12-15

All stand.

Deacon The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

[Jesus said to his disciples,] ¹²“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

THE SERMON

There are several different kinds of knowledge.

First, there's book smarts, like knowing that tomatoes are a fruit and not a vegetable.

Then there's practical wisdom, like knowing that it's not a good idea to put tomatoes in a fruit salad.

And then there's philosophy, like wondering whether that means ketchup is technically a smoothie.

Today, we're going to be talking about that third kind.

Today, we celebrate Trinity Sunday, conventionally known in the Episcopal Church as "associate rector appreciation Sunday" because this is the week that senior rector's most often take as their vacation. They would much rather leave the explanation of complicated and abstract concepts to those younger clergy who have more up-to-date seminary training. Since we don't have an associate rector in our parish, and I failed to accurately calculate the week of my vacation, this enviable task has now fallen to me.

So, instead of building up to a conclusion, I'm going to cut straight to the chase. Here's the main thing I'm going to say about the mystery of the Trinity:

If you think you understand the mystery of the Trinity, you do not understand the mystery of the Trinity; if you do not understand the mystery of the Trinity, you understand the mystery of the Trinity.

Got it? Good. Amen. Let's all get out of here before the Methodists get the good lunch tables at the diner.

Of course, the problem is that this little riddle leaves us right back where we started, so we end up going around and around until our heads fall off... and that's the point of the whole thing.

The mystery of the Holy Trinity is the primary Christian concept of God. According to the historical documents of the Anglican theological tradition, "we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance" (The Creed of St. Athanasius, BCP 864). The three Persons of the Godhead are "of one substance, power, and eternity" (Articles of Religion, BCP 867). Don't worry, I can hear all of you mentally checking out, as we speak.

This is why I started with my main statement: If you think you understand it, you don't understand it; if you don't understand it, you understand it. It's like wondering whether ketchup is a smoothie. The question itself supposed to break your brain, not to break it down, but to break it open and leave you slack-jawed in awestruck wonder at the unknowable mystery of ultimate reality.

The doctrine of the Trinity is not explicitly outlined in the Bible. It gradually came together, over the course of several centuries, as the greatest minds of the early Church contemplated their experience of God. Beginning with the monotheism of the Jewish tradition, the earliest followers of Jesus realized that they were, in some way that they couldn't understand, experiencing the very presence of the God of their ancestors through this individual human being. How was that even possible? They had no idea; they just experienced it to be true. And then, just as mysterious, they continued to experience this Jesus as a living presence in the midst of their community after his death. How was that even possible? They had no idea; they just experienced it to be true. Their knowing had neither the categorical certainty of book smarts nor the effectiveness of practical wisdom. Their knowing was a knowledge of the heart: more like falling in love than solving a math problem. As the philosopher Blaise Pascal famously said, "The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing."

After almost three hundred years of contemplation, the bishops of the early Church finally settled on the mystery of the Trinity as their non-answer to a question that, by its very nature, can never be answered.

Whenever some innovative theologian claimed to have solved the mystery, the bishops of the Church were quick to stand up and pronounce that answer as a heresy, not because they thought that they had a monopoly on the truth, but because they believed that the main thing is to keep the question open.

If you think you understand the Trinity, you do not understand the Trinity; if you do not understand the Trinity, you understand the Trinity.

I love this central commitment of our faith tradition. We don't claim to have the answers to ultimate questions. We sit in awestruck wonder before the mystery of reality. This is why I like to say that I couldn't be a Christian, if I wasn't also an agnostic.

The ultimate unknowability of the mystery of God affords Christians a certain playfulness, when it comes to expressing that mystery in various ways. The language of our tradition tends to default to language that is very personal, very masculine, and very hierarchical. Most of our prayers use words like "Father" and "Lord" to describe the mystery of God, but the witness of our sacred Scriptures point to a wide array of metaphors for expressing our faith in God.

In addition to the exclusively masculine language of Father, the Bible also describes God as a “Mother” (Isaiah 66:3). In addition to the hierarchical language of Lord, the Bible also describes God as a “Servant” (Luke 22:27). In addition to the numerous personal metaphors for God, the Bible also describes God as a “Mighty Rock” (Psalm 62:7), “Living Water” (John 7:38), “Rushing Wind” (Acts 2:2), and “Consuming Fire” (Hebrews 12:29). As I mentioned in a previous sermon, Jesus even compares himself to a chicken in Matthew 23:37.

Therefore, kindred in Christ, since the Bible itself gives us such a wide array of metaphors for the Divine, and since the bishops of the early Church were so doggedly committed to keeping open the question of God’s unknowable nature, we too ought to remain open to exploring a wide variety of metaphors for God.

God is with us always and in all things. Therefore, let us also look for her, for him, for them, for it, always and in all things. How is God like a cloud or a tree? How is God like a chair or a bookshelf?

Jesus, in his parables, often pointed to agricultural metaphors that were common to the everyday experience of ordinary people, when describing the realm of the divine. For Jesus, the realm of the divine was like a woman baking bread (Matthew 13:33), like crops growing in a field (Mark 4:26-29), like a merchant trading in the marketplace (Matthew 13:45-46),

like a small seed growing into a great tree (Matthew 13:31-32). This is not an exhaustive list, by any means.

I want to encourage you today to be playful in the many ways that you imagine God to be present in your life. The language we use about God matters, not because we have to be careful to get it right, but because we cannot get it wrong. Everything is potentially a symbol of God, yet nothing fully encapsulates the mystery. Whenever we try to put God in a box, whether that box is Pope-shaped, Bible-shaped, Church-shaped, man-shaped, or colored white, we commit the sin of idolatry and close ourselves off to the great mystery of the divine.

God is with us always, and in all things, therefore let us keep open the question of what God truly is. Let each of us remain humble in our own conceptions of God and tolerant of the expressions of others. As brothers, sisters, and siblings, let us stand side-by-side, following the example of the Bible and the early Church, and maintain a posture of awestruck wonder before the divine mystery that is beyond our understanding.

All stand.

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

All remain standing.

Sisters and brothers, we have been baptized into a holy mystery. As Christians, let us pray to God, saying, “Unity in Trinity, bend your ear. Trinity in Unity, hear our prayer.”

Glory to you, Lord God of our forebears. Guide your Church into all truth by your Holy Spirit. Fill our hearts with hope so that we may fulfill the ministries to which we have been called with faith and boldness.

Silence

Unity in Trinity, bend your ear.

Trinity in Unity, hear our prayer.

Glory to you, Lord God. You delight in the human race. And so we trust that your heart breaks with the brokenhearted. Comfort all those who suffer because of natural disasters.

Unity in Trinity, bend your ear.

Trinity in Unity, hear our prayer.

Glory to you, Lord God. You established the heavens and marked out the foundations of the earth. Let all of creation praise you forever.

Invite the congregation to add their thanksgivings, followed by silence

Unity in Trinity, bend your ear.

Trinity in Unity, hear our prayer.

Glory to you, Lord God. By endurance you bring forth character in your people. We remember before you, O God, all those who have died in service to a higher cause. For their courage and care, we give you thanks.

Silence

Unity in Trinity, bend your ear.

Trinity in Unity, hear our prayer.

Glory to you, Lord God. We pray for our loved ones because our hope is placed in you, and hope placed in you, O God, does not disappoint. Bless and heal those for whom we pray.

Invite the congregation to add their petitions, followed by silence

Unity in Trinity, bend your ear.

Trinity in Unity, hear our prayer.

Glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory.

Silence

Unity in Trinity, bend your ear.

Trinity in Unity, hear our prayer.

The Celebrant says

Almighty God, by your Holy Spirit you have made us one with your saints in heaven and on earth: Grant that in our earthly pilgrimage we may always be supported by this fellowship of love and prayer, and know ourselves to be surrounded by their witness to your power and mercy. We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whom all our intercessions are acceptable through the Spirit, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

The Celebrant says

Through Christ let us continually offer to God the sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his Name. But do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. *Hebrews 13:15, 16*

Refrain

In the night, in the day, we give praise to the Trin - i - ty, Cre -
a - tor, Re-deem - er, Sus - tain - er of life, sing-ing
praise, liv - ing praise, breath-ing praise to our God of glo - ry,
al - le - lu - ia — for - ev - er, al - le - lu - ia!

Final ending

Verses

1-3 Blest are you, God of all Cre-a - tion, through your good-ness
we have life; hearts of thank - ful - ness, hands of play - ful - ness,
bod - y, mind and voice, spi - rit too, re - joice,
work of field and vine, now our bread and wine,
voic - es re - sound - ing in praise.
sing - ing re - news all our days.
gift of the har - vest we bring.

D.C.

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As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

People and Celebrant

**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.**

All stand.

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

Then the Ministers and the People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

1 Lead us, heaven - ly Fa - ther, lead us o'er the world's tem -
 2 Sa - vior, breathe for - give - ness o'er us; all our weak - ness
 3 Spi - rit of our God, de - scend - ing, fill our hearts with

pes - tuous sea; guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
 thou dost know; thou didst tread this earth be - fore us;
 heaven - ly joy; love with ev - ery pas - sion blend - ing,

for we have no help but thee, yet pos - ses - sing
 thou didst feel its keen - est woe; yet un - fear - ing,
 plea - sure that can nev - er cloy; thus pro - vid - ed,

ev - ery bless - ing, if our God our Fa - ther be.
 per - se - ver - ing, to thy pas - sion thou didst go.
 par - doned, guid - ed, noth - ing can our peace des - troy.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People

Thanks be to God.

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