



April 2020

#### Meditation, Meanderings and Musings from Pastor Kathy

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Cell 733-2162

Parsonage phone: 375-2427

Together we have entered uncharted territories. Never in human history has a global pandemic been covered so universally, with statistics and research, opinions and rumors, orders from government entities and minute by minute updates that can be extremely helpful as well as sending our minds into dark places that no one wants to go. We are all affected. I am writing this on March 26 so by the time you will read this there will be even more information to consider and lives to hold in prayer.

Together we are about to enter into the most sacred of weeks in the Christian calendar. Our Palm Sunday Service will include symbols and the celebration of Communion with each of us around different tables. Monday through Saturday of Holy Week we will journey ever closer and I will be sending out scripture to consider, knowing that your fellow congregants are pondering that same lesson, as well as a reflective prayer for the day as we journey with Jesus from triumph through great suffering and death. And Easter will be unlike any we've experienced. We will be creating joy from the places we call home and Christ will rise among us. The glory of the stone rolled away from an empty tomb and our response to it will be joined together with that of Mary and Simon Peter and that unnamed disciple. And when we are back together again we will have a truly joyous Easter celebration!

Separated as we are, it could be that this is the best time to pull out our church directory (we have extra current copies in the white mailbox next to the office if you need one or give us a call and we can find a way to get it to you) and hold in prayer a page of names each day knowing that you, too, are being lifted in prayer. Maybe a few of the names are ones you would want to call or email or send a card to in care and concern, strengthening the bonds between us.

If you are looking for additional ways to be of help and support to our neighbors, please give me a call or send a text or email. There will be more assistance needed in the forms of errand-running, calls to make on behalf of organizations that care for the most vulnerable and other opportunities to share the love we are called as Jesus' disciples to spread far and wide, regardless of physical separation.

Consider then this poem written by the Rev. Hope Douglas J. Harle-Mould: (page 4)

Until we are together again, take these words of Paul's sent to the church far away in Rome into your heart and home: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Peace and blessings, *Kathy* 

#### Report of the Financial Secretary, Sandra Grover

2020 Congregational Giving Budgeted: \$ 60,000.00 Congregational Giving Received 1/1-3/27 \$ 9,084,15 Building Use 1/1-3/27 938.35 250.00 1/2-3/27 Fundraising

#### Thank You!



	Church attenuance	
	<u>Adults</u>	Children
3/1	37	5
3/8	22	0
3/15	-	-
3/22	20	1
3/29		

Church attendance

#### **Federated Church Council**

I hope that you are all well. This is a new world and we are learning how to do things outside our comfort zone.

With that being said WASH YOUR HANDS!

The Church Council will meet for the first time on line this Sunday. Since I am staying home, as many are, doing I have not seen all the progress to the Church Parsonage but have seen pictures. Olavi has been overseeing all the progress and I believe that we are almost finished.

Our prayers go out to all of you at this time. The sun is shining and it is good to get out and take a walk. We are blessed to live in Vermont so we can go out and walk with no crowds. I hope that you are getting a call each week from someone in our church to check on you or just have a great conversation. If you have any questions or need help Sandy and or Kathy are in the office on the weekday mornings.

Miss you all Peace be with you Sue Congdon

PS my home number is 802-442-9574

#### **Our Church Council**

Chair Susan Congdon Treasurer Alyson Grzyb

Clerk

Ex Officio Pastor Kathy Clark

Building & Grounds Olavi Wirkki 1. Alyson Grzyb 2. Jeff McConnell

Christian Education Tammy Lang 1. Scott Lang

Finance Brian Allen 1. Herb Taylor 2. Raebeth Hitchcock Worship & Ministry Ginny Wilkins 1. Linda McDevitt 2. Phyllis Warren Sandy Grover 1. Wendy Bahan 2. Gail Rice Missions

NO

UNTIL

**FURTHER** 

NOTICE

#### **April Birthdays**

- 9 Raymond Grover
- 13 Phyllis Warren
- 15 Christopher Daniels
- 20 Annie Howard
- 21 Ward Wilson
- 25 Arianna Barrios

#### **April Anniversaries**

2 – Virginia & Francis Wilkins



\*HAPPY\*

#### Fellowship/Coffee Hour

Many thanks to all who contribute Goodies for Fellowship/Coffee time, and to all who help clean up.



# WELCOME please, be good

#### **April Helping Hands**

Lay Reader: Karen Underhill

**Council Member:** 

April 5:

Usher:

Communion Servers:

Greeter: Michelanne Sylvester

April | 12:

Usher: SERVICES

Greeter: Karen Underhill

<u> April 19:</u>

Usher:

Greeter: Ginny Wilkins

April 26: Usher:

Greeter: Linda McDevitt

Altar:

Coffee, Conversation, Fellowship following worship. Join Us

**Sign-up Sheets** for opportunities to serve God and our Church family are in Bailey Hall.: Altar, Usher, Sunshine, Communion servers, flowers, Sunday School, readers, etc.

Thank you.

#### **Altar Flowers**

## NO ALTAR FLOWERS DURING LENT

### Southwest Association, UCC Prays for their Churches

Each week one of the churches in the Southwest Association, UCC, will be prayed for by the other churches in the association.

**April 5:** First Congregational Church of Hubbardton

**April 12:** First Congregational Church of Manchester

**April 19:** Congregational Church of North Bennington

**April 26:** Pawlet Community Church

#### Lectionary Readings for April

**April 5:** (Palm Liturgy) Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29;

Matthew 21:1-11

(Passion Liturgy) Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 26:14-27:66

<u>April 12:</u> Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

Colosians 3:1-4; John 20:1-18

**April 19:** Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Psalm 16

I Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31

April 26: Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

I Peter I:17-23; Lu,e 24:13-35

#### Across Six Feet of Separation — A poem for such a time as this

Across six feet of separation

the virus can't spread, but fear can run rampant—

you afraid of me, me afraid of you.

Across six feet of separation,

our world careens in tumult, our minds in shell-shocked muddle-

too aghast to see the way ahead.

Across six feet of separation

my grandkids can no longer race into my arms-

banned from even nearing my house.

Across six feet of separation

one daughter is laid off from her restaurant,

one risks her health daily, nursing the disabled at her group home.

Across six feet of separation

our church can't enact its five-amazing-minutes of Passing the Peace—

can't even gather to pray or hear holy words of promise.

Inside six feet of separation

a presence pulsing with consoling calm and soothing balm,

whispering near our ear, "Be still...and know that I am God."

Inside six feet of separation

is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen—

"Fear not, I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are mine."

Inside six feet of separation

are the outstretched arms of our Teacher, spanning the gap—

the Stillpoint of our turning world.

Inside six feet of separation

there is a voice in the storm, commanding, "Be still!"-

and in the ensuing silence...a peace so serene we weep.

*Inside six feet of separation* 

a song fragment wells up within us, unbidden, transcendent—

till suddenly we realize why...and sing unabashed and free.

Spanning six feet of separation

I warmly greet each passing stranger formerly ignored: "Be safe!"—

and they reply, "We'll get through this together!"

Spanning six feet of separation

I use American Sign Language to tell people, "Peace be with you,"

and as they mirror me, our hands caress across spider-web touch.

Spanning six feet of separation

I escape outside for a walk, blustery wind blushing my face,

then inexplicably burst into run—joy irrepressible.

Spanning six feet of separation

I sense tree roots beneath my feet, linked by fungal networks to other trees,

and I pause in awe at the anthem encompassing me.

*Spanning six feet of separation* 

I see another world is possible—each soul a daughter or grandchild of mine,

each moment a trust-fall of reconciling hope.

Across six feet of separation

generations of the faithful join us to leap the rift, as fearlessly we sing a new song:

"We are held in holy hands, by a Love That Will Not Let Us Go."

#### **Prayer Shawl Ministry**

Keep Knitting, crocheting, handiwork.

We'll gather when possible.

Questions?

Speak with Raebeth Hitchcock

375-9294

We pray that God will continue to bless this ministry, its participants and the shawl recipients.





#### 2020 Scholarships

Each year, thanks to a generous bequest from the estate of June Bentley, the Federated Church of East Arlington is able to give out scholarships for local students who are extending their educations past high school. Please visit our website,

www.federatedchurchofeastarlington.org, and click on the "Faith in Action" tab to get to scholarship information. There are two applications - one for students graduating from high school and heading off to college for the first time, and one for those who are continuing their education, whether undergraduate or graduate, after their first year of college. Both types of applications are due by April 15th. We look forward to hearing from you!



#### Adventures in Reading

Ginny Wilkins, Phyllis Warren, Sandy Grover, Marie Davies, Kathy Clark and Janet Wilson attended out March 7th get-together discussion on books read and suggested. We may have had fewer attendees than usual but we still gave a lot of information to each other. Thank You.

Members, please start to put your reading and suggestions for year 2019-2020 report. I am requesting it be to me by May 15, 2020.

In many ways, these past thirty days, there's been a concerned world all around us. This rampant infection possibility has jolted us from our near normal lives into fear and much changed behavior—some good, some crazy. Let us continue to pray every day for wellness for all and sustain appropriate habits to help our wellness for all.

Janet Wilson,

Coordinator

What can we do while staying physically distant from

each other?

READ!

READ!

READ!



#### April 2020

#### Welcome to Worship

#### Beloved ones,

In the midst of these hard and strange times where we are hunkered down at home and concerned for our own well-being and so many others, I invite you to consider being a part of our on-line Services of Worship at 10:00 a.m. every Sunday until we are able to be together in person. We will be using Zoom to worship. You have 2 options for joining us in person.

One is to log into this connection:

#### https://zoom.us/j/111539596

You may want to do this sometime between now and Sunday at 10 a.m. so that you are logged in and then you will be able to tap on this link in time for worship and go straight there.

The other option if you don't have strong WiFi or a poor connection is to phone in at 1-646-876-9923 and you will be asked for the Meeting ID and you should enter 111 539 596 followed by the # sign and you will be connected.

What you should know is that I will be on the site as of 9:30 a.m. and you will be muted when you enter but I will know you are there as the host. Be sure you have your audio on so you can also hear us. I may then unmute you to say hi but because there will be quite of few of us on, you will hear and see everything happening with the service, including the music Mary Edwards will be playing from her living room, but having all of your lines unmuted distorts the audio. The only exception will be when we offer the Lord's Prayer together and during Joys and Concerns. If you have a Joy or Concern you want to email me ahead of time please do or you can message during the time I ask for them(you'll see a box on the screen to do that) or you can wave to me. There's a button for that, too, and then I can unmute you. See or hear you at church! Kathy

#### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Sunday School is going well. On Sunday, February 23rd, we had 7 children. How nice to see so many.

Dinner Church is going well. We can always use volunteers eventually.

Thanks so much!
Tammy Lang-Christian Education

Children's Sunday School



We all miss each other and the children.





#### **Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation**

**Praying in Crisis** 

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

CAC faculty member Brian McLaren is an author and contemplative activist. He spent over twenty years as the pastor of a church where he lived, worked, and prayed with people in good times and bad. Responding to crises is not theoretical for him, but a deeply felt and lived experience which comes through so clearly in these words. I hope you will feel encouraged to take this practice to your own time of prayer in the days, weeks, and months ahead.

When we call out for help, we are bound more powerfully to God through our needs and weakness, our unfulfilled hopes and dreams, and our anxieties and problems than we ever could have been through our joys, successes, and strengths alone. . . . [1]

Anxieties can gray the whole sky like cloud cover or descend on our whole horizon like fog. When we rename our anxieties, in a sense we distill them into requests. What covered the whole sky can now be contained in a couple of buckets. So when we're suffering from anxiety, we can begin by simply holding the word *help* before God, letting that one word bring focus to the chaos of our racing thoughts. Once we feel that our mind has dropped out of the frantic zone and into a spirit of connection with God, we can let the general word *help* go and in its place hold more specific words that name what we need, thereby condensing the cloud of vague anxiety into a bucket of substantial request. So we might hold the word *guidance* before God. Or *patience*. Or courage. Or *resilience*. Or *boundaries*, *mercy*, *compassion*, *determination*, *healing*, *calm*, *freedom*, *wisdom*, *or peace*. . . . [2]

Along with our anxieties and hurts, we also bring our disappointments to God. If anxieties focus on what *might happen*, and hurts focus on what *has happened*, disappointments focus on what *has not happened*. Again, as the saying goes, revealing your feeling is the beginning of healing, so simply acknowledging or naming our disappointment to God is an important move. This is especially important because many of us, if we don't bring our disappointment to God, will blame our disappointment on God, thus alienating ourselves from our best hope of comfort and strength. . . .

Whether we're dealing with anxieties, wounds, disappointments, or other needs or struggles, there is enormous power in simple, strong words—the words by which we name our pain and then translate it into a request to God. *Help* is the door into this vital practice of petition, through which we expand beyond our own capacities and resources to God's. . . .

Through this practice of expansion and petition, we discover something priceless: the sacred connection can grow stronger through, not in spite of, our anxieties, wounds, disappointments, struggles, and needs. The Compassionate One is our gracious friend, and we don't have to earn anything, deserve anything, achieve anything, or merit anything to bring our needs to God. We can just come as we are. [3]

Continued from page 6

#### **Gateway to Action & Contemplation:**

What word or phrase resonates with or challenges me? What sensations do I notice in my body? What is mine to do?

#### **Prayer for Our Community:**

O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings. Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other's burdens and the weight of glory. Listen to our hearts' longings for the healing of our world. [Please add your own intentions.] . . . Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking, we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God, amen.

Listen to Fr. Richard read the prayer.

#### **Story from Our Community:**

[In] mid-February my husband passed away. Ten days later, his sister passed. Grieving has been chipping away for several years as I cared for and watched them suffer. I did not anticipate that grief would arrive with a new face via the coronavirus. For now I take comfort in the words of Henri Nouwen: "Hope frees us to live in the present, with the deep trust that God will never leave us." I think what God is asking of me is to trust and take one day at a time. Not always easy, but there it is. —A. Byrne Share your own story with us.

- [1] Brian D. McLaren, Naked Spirituality (HarperOne: 2011), 104.
- [2] Ibid., 116–117.
- [3] Ibid., 119–120.

Image credit: Agitated Sea at Étretat, Claude Monet, 1883, Museum of Fine Arts, Lyon, France.



! Please submit your articles for the May 2020 issue of the newsletter by

#### **April 25th**

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation!

"We, the members of the Federated Church of East Arlington, declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming and Reconciling congregation. With God's help, we include all persons in our fellowship, embracing and celebrating differences of gender identity, marital status, age, mental and physical ability, and sexual orientation, as well as racial, ethnic and socio-economic background. We welcome into our community everyone who seeks to share in the work and worship of the church of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."



Contact Sandy Grover: sandragrover@gmail.com; 375-4982; church office 375-2548 or church email federatedchurch05250@gmail.com

#### CLIPBOARDS NEED NAMES

Choir Ushers Communion Servers
Altar Sunshine Flowers
Sunday School Teachers and Helpers
Special times of need: dinners, etc.

We are a family, we love each other, we need each other, we are loved by God.



Sign up sheet is on "Do Something" in Bailey Hall.

#### **WEBSITE NEWS**

federatedchurchofeastarlington.org

If you would like to add anything (pictures, articles) to the website or have suggestions, contact

Sue Wirkki, 375-9471 sue@wirkki.org
Like the Federated Church of East Arlington on
Facebook.

#### Bring your own cup or mug

There is a tray on the pass through counter in the kitchen.

You are welcome to bring your own coffee cup or mug to use each Sunday at Fellowship/Coffee time and it will be placed on the tray after being washed.

## Arlington Area Food Shelf 2020

Our goal: 2,020 pounds Received to date: 76 pounds



Food Pantry Donations Needed



#### FROM THE OFFICE

If you know of a prayer request to add or change in the bulletin, please let the office know by Thursday.

Thank you, Sandy

#### April 2020



#### Beloved in Christ,

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As your episcopal leader and a member of the Council of Bishops, I have heard many comments, questions, and perspectives regarding the upcoming 2020 General Conference. There are many proposed plans to restructure and reorganize the United Methodist Church, which are creating many emotions ranging from fear, anger, frustration, and pain to comfort, hope, and joy during these uncertain days.

As I reflect on all I've heard, I wonder: Who will we, who call ourselves Methodists, be the day after the General Conference? Whatever the decision, what distinctive marks will identify us? How will we be characterized by others?

While contemplating what lies ahead, I recalled these words from my 2012 episcopal address in which I reflected on the history of Methodism's impact:

Back when the United States was making an impression on the world with its innovation, technology and advances, the Methodist Church was also making a huge impact in this country and the world. This was illustrated when former President Theodore Roosevelt embarked on a European visit shortly after leaving office.

The United States was on the rise and the whole world was taking notice ... The Methodist Church at that time, around 1910, was a powerful voice shaking the foundations of the world with its witness.

When plans were being made for Theodore Roosevelt's visit to Europe and his meetings with various heads of state, everyone wanted to see him. He was surely one of *the* most popular persons in the world. One of the stops on his tour was the Vatican.

Edmund Morris writes in his biography of Roosevelt that "The Vatican advised [Roosevelt] that Pope Pius X would grant him an audience on the fifth of April 1910, providing that he did not embarrass his Holiness by associating with any Methodists in Rome." (Edmund Morris, *Colonel Roosevelt*. New York: Random House, 2010, p. 35.)

#### Methodists? Really?

Who were these Methodists that the Pope, serving in 1910, would caution a former president against meeting? At the time, the Methodists, including the former Methodist Episcopal, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church, were starting an average of one new church per day.

These Methodists were part of the largest and most influential Protestant denomination in the United States and engaged in mission activities in countries all over the world.

These Methodists were characterized by a fervent and deeply rooted spirituality. They gathered in small groups to hold one another accountable for their faith and celebrated together in worship in cities, towns, and rural areas across the United States.

In a meeting of District Superintendents not long after this period, at which every single District Superintendent was present, the most remarkable thing was that every possible population area in the United States was represented by those gathered in that room.

(Continued from page 7)

If someone were to call out the name of the tiniest hamlet in the U.S., one of those Superintendents would have risen and said, "I represent that hamlet. That is in my area." These Methodists were shaking up the world's understanding of what it meant to be Christian and active in the world.

That used to be us ...

Teddy Roosevelt, who was from the Dutch Reform Church, was happy to talk with Methodists and the Pope; and said that he, and he alone, would decide with whom he would visit.

Recalling Pope Pius X's fear of Methodists and their power, I cannot help but hope that no matter the outcome of the 2020 General Conference, the people of God, Methodists from all theological perspectives, will reclaim our history.

That we will become serious about our Christian witness and our passion for justice and peace to ensure that every child of God has a place in the new expressions of Methodism emerging out of the United Methodist General Conference.

On the day after the 2020 General Conference, and every day following, that we will honor one another as children of God, irrespective of our theological differences, and become serious about living out our baptism as people with Wesleyan DNA, so we may become a powerful movement again.

As we journey through this Lenten season, with these thoughts in our minds, may we recite this version of a Franciscan benediction that is copied from <u>Brian D. McLaren's website</u>:

May God bless us with discomfort

At easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships

So that we may live from deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with anger

At injustice, oppression, and exploitation of God's creations

So that we may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless us with tears

To shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger, and war,

So that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and

To turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless us with just enough foolishness

To believe that we can make a difference in the world,

So that we can do what others claim cannot be done:

To bring justice and kindness to all our children and all our neighbors who are poor.

Amen.

Let this be our Lenten prayer for the edification of our souls and minds, and let it be our prayer for the delegates of the 2020 General Conference.

And whatever comes ...

may the plans of God become ours

may the love of Christ fill us anew,

may the guidance of the Holy Spirit take us to new roads

in ministry and mission.

Have a blessed Lenten season!

In Christ's love,





#### Dear Community,

During this public health crisis, United Counseling Service is prepared to serve our clients with mental health, substance use disorder, and intellectual and developmental disability needs.

The health of our consumers and employees is of the utmost importance to UCS. We have taken measures to minimize the risk of exposure of COVID-19 to our staff, clients and the community. Non-essential staff are working from home and we have implemented several measures to remain connected with our clients including offering telehealth and telephonic options as well as remote access to the Emergency Room for screening and evaluations.

We are currently working with Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC) to develop a plan to keep people who are in mental health crisis out of the Emergency Department (ED) and come directly to UCS for help. In an effort to keep children out of the ED, Family Emergency Services (FES) and Psychiatric Urgent Care for Kids (PUCK) hours have been increased to offer services 7 days a week from 8 am-8 pm. At this time, all services are offered remotely using telehealth or telephonic options. Clinical workers can speak with children and families via phone or video conference and aid parents in de-escalating children in crisis. In addition, if necessary, sensory tools and information packets can be dropped off to families to use with youth who are having issues self-regulating.

Additionally, our Early Childhood Services is providing childcare to a limited number of families who are essential workers at SVMC. Our group homes are fully staffed, and guidelines have been put in place to minimize risk, including no visitors and closely monitoring the health of staff and residents.

With the rapidly changing scene, we will keep the community current on changes to our services. The health of our clients, employees and community members is of the utmost importance to UCS. But know we are here to help and can be reached at 802.442.5491.

#### Lorna Mattern

Executive Director, United Counseling Service





#### **FINANCIAL TEAM**

I expected to write a very different message. The Flu Crisis has upset the apple, pear, banana, kumquat, and every-other-fruit cart.

For the last few years, the church council has projected \$60,000 in giving each year from the congregation what we call "the plate." This is the most vital part of our annual income. The more we get from giving, the less we take from our endowment.

Alas, we can't pass the plate online.

The church has been closed for services for two weeks. Take advantage of worship on Zoom. It works.

That said, closing our buildings isn't a savings strategy. If you're a regular churchgoer and give each Sunday, please send the church a check. The Federated Church is partnering with local organizations to address the range of emergency needs the Covid-19 disaster is causing. Church volunteers and Kathy are checking in with folks on a regular basis. The church is more active than ever, but in crazy new ways.

On our portfolio, let's not go there just now. We're conservatively invested but, as you know, the markets are topsy-turvy on steroids. Things will settle down soon, we hope and pray.

There are different ways to give to the church. Most of us give by putting cash or a check in the plate on Sunday. My giving is taken out of my checking account automatically each month on a set day. Sandy can set this system up for you.

Right now, I'm asking you to continue to dedicate to the church the money you normally give on Sunday. Please send a check to the office.

The Lord has been looking after us and will see us through.

Brian Allen, Chair Church Council Finance Team

#### **Pandemic**

What if you thought of it as the Jews consider the Sabbath—the most sacred of times?

Cease from travel.

Cease from buying and selling.

Give up, just for now,

on trying to make the world

different than it is.

Sing. Pray. Touch only those

to whom you commit your life.

Center down.

And when your body has become still, reach out with your heart.

Know that we are connected

in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.

(You could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives

are in one another's hands.

(Surely, that has come clear.)

Do not reach out your hands.

Reach out your heart.

Reach out your words.

Reach out all the tendrils

of compassion that move, invisibly,

where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love-

for better or for worse.

in sickness and in health.

so long as we all shall live.

-Lynn Ungar



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Visit us on Facebook

The mission of The Federated Church of East Arlington is to welcome all, follow Jesus Christ together, and live God's Word with compassionate service.

April 2020 Newsletter









3/10/2020



3/12/2020





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