

# Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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## The Pastoral Perspective

The Pew Research Center reported last December that “Partisanship continues to be *the* dividing line in the American public’s political attitudes, far surpassing differences by age, race and ethnicity, gender, educational attainment, religious affiliation, or other factors.” To anybody who has been paying even the slightest attention to the world around us, this is not surprising news. It is, however, sad and disturbing. Rather than being a civic forum where citizens can find solutions to difficult problems, politics has now become a source of intense division. What should be a way for us to build a common wealth together has instead become a way for us to separate ourselves into warring camps.

As Christians, we need to face this reality with honesty, courage, and humility. We supposedly give our allegiance, our loyalty, to the God we know in and through Jesus Christ. We look for answers to life’s great questions in Scripture. This all sounds obvious, but we know the truth is more complicated. All too often, church-going people seem to take their cue from political convictions. This is the case for people on both the right and the left. The practice of Christian faith all too often is the pursuit of a political platform.

None of this is new; the problem has existed for a long time. But in this election year, it is especially important that we recognize what is going on—and not just with others but ourselves. One of my mentors once pithily said, “Church and state are not the same as faith and politics.” We should bring our morals into the voting booth, even as we seek to keep the church out of government—and the government out of the church.

One of the great things about our country is that religion has always flourished without the involvement of the state. In America, it has been the responsibility of dedicated people to make their individual

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## Daily Lenten Reflections from the Rev. Steve Silver

Every day from Ash Wednesday (2/26) through Easter Sunday, receive a devotional reflection by email. Sign up by contacting [silver@fcleeb.org](mailto:silver@fcleeb.org).

# SUNDAY SERVICE

## FCC ANNUAL MEETING AND POTLUCK

**Sunday, February 9, 11:15 am**

*Following Morning Worship*

The Annual Meeting of First Congregational Church of Lebanon, NH, will be held in the Parish Hall on Sunday, February 9, 2020, immediately following the worship service, for the purpose of:

1. The election of all officers provided for under the CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of the church.
2. To hear the reports of all officers, committees, and organizations, as required under the CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of the church.
3. To consider and act upon any other matters relating to the general church welfare that may properly come before this meeting.

### ***Family Potluck and Fellowship Following***

**All are welcome—please bring a favorite dish to share with your congregation!**

## ***IT'S Still SOUPER BOWL TIME!***

This year's SOUPER BOWL is off to a robust start, but let's finish strong and surpass 250 cans! Our total collection will be distributed among HEADREST, the UV HAVEN, and LISTEN COMMUNITY SERVICES.

***Donations accepted until February 16; look for collection boxes in the Parish Hall. Thanks!***

Please note that the SOUPER BOWL will serve as our shopping cart collection in February.

## **Community Dinner**

**Sunday, February 23, 5:00 pm**

*Leader: MARCY CHONG AND FRIENDS*

Many thanks to Marcy Chong for volunteering to organize our monthly dinner! Please lend a hand in providing this important meal to our friends and neighbors, especially if this is your first time.

***Look for sign-ups soon in the Parish Hall.***

## LENT BEGINS FEBRUARY 26



*Ash Wednesday  
Ecumenical Service*

**February 26, 7:00 pm, at FCC**

***Please join us as FCC hosts this annual community service to mark the start of the holy season of Lent.***

## **Lenten Lunch Bag Offering**

Beginning MARCH 1, the Children's Community Corner will distribute decorated collection bags for our annual Lenten Lunch Bag Offering. This year the children are still deciding which beneficiaries to support with this collection, locally and globally.

**The Lenten offering allows FCC's children to help kids in different circumstances, encouraging them to see stewardship as a way to share God's love.**

You are asked to use the decorated bags to collect the savings from a regular sacrifice during Lent—perhaps skipping a daily latte; foregoing munchies when watching TV; or having dinner at home and contributing the cost of eating out. **Whatever you sacrifice, please plan to return your donations on PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 5.**

## HOLY WEEK IS APRIL 5-12

## **SCOUT SUNDAY IS FEBRUARY 16**

For years FCC has proudly served as the charter organization for Scout Troop 279 and Cub Scout Pack 279, offering meeting space and supporting Scouting programs year-round. We recognize this faithful relationship this month by inviting the Scouts to help lead worship. **Please join us!**

## **Queued for Coffee Hour**

**February—Christian Education**

**March—Diaconate**

**April—Mission and Social Action**

# F E B R U A R Y   2 0 2 0

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>26</b> <b>10a</b> Worship/CCC <b>11:15a</b> Bd of Govs <b>5p Community Dinner</b>	<b>27</b> <b>5:30p</b> Cub Scouts (AoL/Girls)	<b>28</b> <b>7p</b> BSA Troop 279	<b>29</b> <b>5:30p</b> Cub Scouts (Webelos/Tigers) <b>6p</b> UVPRN <b>7p</b> Bel Canto Chamber Singers	<b>30</b> <b>7p</b> Choir <b>No</b> Valley Improv	<b>31</b> <b>11:45a</b> LHS Life Skills Class <b>7:30p Anonymous Coffeehouse</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b> <b>10a</b> Worship/CCC (Communion) <b>11:15a</b> MSA	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> <b>7p</b> BSA Troop 279	<b>5</b> <b>5:30p</b> Cub Scout Pack Committee <b>6p</b> UVPRN <b>7p</b> Bel Canto Chamber Singers	<b>6</b> <b>5:30p Johnny Gandelsman Master Class</b> <b>7p</b> Choir <b>7p</b> Valley Improv	<b>7</b> <b>11:45a</b> LHS Life Skills Class <b>7p LOH on Location: J. Gandelsman</b>	<b>8</b> <b>7p William Ogmundson: American Beauty</b>
<b>9</b> <b>ANNUAL MEETING SUNDAY</b> <b>10a</b> Worship/CCC <b>11:15a FCC 2020 Annual Meeting and Potluck</b>	<b>10</b> <b>5:30p</b> Cub Scouts (AoL/Girls) <b>7p</b> Diaconate	<b>11</b> <b>7p</b> BSA Troop 279	<b>12</b> <b>8a-4p</b> NH-WIC <b>5:30p</b> Cub Scouts (Webelos/Tigers) <b>6p</b> UVPRN <b>7p</b> Bel Canto Chamber Singers	<b>13</b> <b>7p</b> Choir <b>7p</b> Valley Improv	<b>14</b> <b>11:45a</b> LHS Life Skills Class <b>7:30p Anonymous Coffeehouse</b>	<b>15</b> <b>7:30p Classicopia: Go Tell It on the Mountain</b>
<b>16</b> <b>10a</b> Worship/CCC	<b>17</b> <b>PRESIDENTS' DAY</b> <b>12:45p</b> Spiritual Directors Group	<b>18</b> <b>7p</b> Church Council <b>7p</b> BSA Troop 279/Committee	<b>19</b> <b>5:30p</b> Cub Scouts (Webelos/Tigers) <b>6p</b> UVPRN <b>7p</b> Bel Canto Chamber Singers	<b>20</b> <b>12:30p</b> Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Assn (CoCM) <b>7p</b> Choir <b>7p</b> Valley Improv	<b>21</b> <b>11:45a</b> LHS Life Skills Class	<b>22</b> <b>8a-3p NHC-UCC Prepared to Serve (Pembroke, NH)</b>
<b>23</b> <b>10a</b> Worship/CCC <b>11:15a Hearts You Hold (Presentation)</b> <b>11:15a</b> Bd of Govs <b>5p Community Dinner</b>	<b>24</b> <b>11a-7p</b> NH-WIC <b>5:30p</b> Cub Scouts (AoL/Girls)	<b>25</b> <b>7p</b> BSA Troop 279	<b>26</b> <b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b> <b>5:30p</b> Cub Scouts (Webelos/Tigers) <b>6p</b> UVPRN <b>7p Ecumenical Service at FCC</b>	<b>27</b> <b>7p</b> Choir <b>7p</b> Valley Improv	<b>28</b> <b>11:45a</b> LHS Life Skills Class <b>6-9p</b> Leb Rec Dept Quilters	<b>29</b> <b>9a-5p</b> Leb Rec Dept Quilters
<b>1</b> <b>10a</b> Worship/CCC (Communion) <b>11:15a</b> MSA	<b>2</b> <b>5:30p</b> Cub Scouts (AoL/Girls)	<b>3</b> <b>7p</b> BSA Troop 279	<b>4</b> <b>5:30p</b> Cub Scout Pack Committee <b>6p</b> UVPRN <b>7p</b> Bel Canto Chamber Singers	<b>5</b> <b>7p</b> Choir <b>7p</b> Valley Improv	<b>6</b> <b>11:45a</b> LHS Life Skills Class	<b>7</b>

If your event is missing or incorrect, please notify us at [church@fccleb.org](mailto:church@fccleb.org) or 603-448-4281.

## COMMITTEE NOTES

### BOARD OF GOVERNORS

At its January meeting the Board of Governors followed up on the **Parsonage** energy audit with plans for obtaining estimates for the work recommended. Two companies will conduct walk-through consultations in order to draft proposals. The group is also researching contractors to repair the Parsonage sewer line.

Plans for kitchen-vent and Sanctuary **insulation** are also ongoing, to be coordinated with Wayne Braley. The Braley family has been preoccupied with the passing of Laurie's brother Ed Leavitt, but Wayne was able to complete the installation of a railing on the chancel steps in late January. Wayne's work has been excellent for many years, but it may be useful to have other options for times when Wayne is too busy with his regular workload.

Reviewing **snow-removal** duties, the group commended Chip Silver's improving efforts but recognized the limits of his age, experience, and schedule. Terry Ellison has

offered generous assistance, but we may also have to accept a degree of imperfection in this area.

Wendell Smith has continued to work with the **Scouts** to evaluate their storage needs, which pose some challenges relative to the clearance of the dirt cellar under the Sanctuary. It was suggested that a Scout representative could attend a future Board meeting.

All current members of the Board of Governors will continue serving in the new year. John Gilliatt was nominated to remain chair, and Walter Scott will continue as vice chair and secretary.

### CHURCH COUNCIL

Nan Parsons reported to Council that Sunday-morning programs in the **Children's Community Corner** are going well. Responding to a question about coffee-hour snacks for children, she confirmed that the kids have snacks downstairs during the service.

Brian Clancy reported that the **Music Committee** had not yet met as a group to discuss next steps in the search for a successor to Henry Danaher, although he has spoken individually with some committee members. There are no urgent leads to follow as yet, and Susan Sorensen is a reliable interim option who is available to stay for an extended period while a search is conducted. The new search committee will be formed in February.

The Rev. Steve Silver reported on the work of our **campaign planning** group: Kathy Beckett, Amy Driscoll, Corrine Erskine, Barb Jones, Barb Laro, Sue Pratt, Jon Scott, and Wendell Smith. They've discussed three main purposes—Community Care (renovation of the kitchen and other facilities for congregational service), Creation Care (resource conservation and environmental stewardship), and Mission (a pledge to direct 10% of the campaign total toward local and global outreach). A central issue is our willingness to

*From Church Council and the Nominating Committee*

### Volunteer Opportunities Available

Have you found an ideal service opportunity for yourself at FCC?  
Are you interested in a particular program or committee? Do you have creative ideas for aspects of congregational life or governance?

#### ***We want to know!***

As we begin the new year and a new term for FCC's volunteer committees, Church Council and the Nominating Committee ask you to consider how you might best contribute your skills, interests, and energy to the church's operations, ministries, and mission.

**If you're interested in learning more about a committee or available opportunities for service and ministry, please contact the church office or Barb Jones (603-863-9664 or [basketmaker@icloud.com](mailto:basketmaker@icloud.com)).**

### February Meetings

Mission/Social Action	2/2, 11:15
<b>2020 ANNUAL MTG</b>	2/9, 11:15
Diaconate	2/10, 7:00
Church Council	2/18, 7:00
Board of Governors	2/23, 11:15

### March Meetings

Mission/Social Action	3/1, 11:15
Diaconate	3/9, 7:00
Church Council	3/17, 7:00
Board of Governors	3/22, 11:15



## COMMITTEE NOTES

present these purposes effectively and persuade both members of the congregation and others in the wider community to contribute to them. The campaign will be brought to the full congregation at Annual Meeting and extend for a three-month period; pledges made in that time can be fulfilled over 3-5 years.

In advance of **Annual Meeting** on February 9, Steve noted that report preparation and budget planning were largely complete. The primary challenge in our volunteer roster is the need for a new Treasurer, as Terry Ellison is stepping down from that post. (Terry will continue until a successor is found.)

Amid Steve's regular duties within and beyond the congregation, he and the Diaconate are considering

our role in the **NH Conference** and the national UCC. Conference Minister Gordon Rankin, who has subsequently discussed this issue with Steve, will visit FCC as a guest preacher on March 22.

**Stewardship** chair Jon Scott noted a successful pledge process for 2020. We have received 32 commitments thus far for the year, more than in recent years. Jon highlighted one particularly generous gift supporting our music ministry, directed in part toward FCC's efforts to provide music for the wider community.

### DIACONATE

In January the Diaconate planned to revisit the **membership** review following Annual Meeting. The

group also confirmed that three deacons eligible for reelection will be continuing, while Linda Gerlach and Dawn Troutman have agreed to join the Diaconate. Barb Teeter will succeed Barb Jones as Senior Deacon, as the latter finishes her second full term. Alyson Danyew-Ellison will continue as Diaconate Treasurer, and Bob Gerlach will remain Secretary.

In his **pastor's report**, the Rev. Steve Silver noted that the spring meeting of the Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Association will be held March 8 in East Corinth, VT. The meeting will include an ecclesiastical council for Eliot Fay, so FCC representation is important. Steve also gave updates on the campaign planning process and interim music plans.

## Doing Good, Sharing Gifts: Stewardship and Our Faith

*"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."*

As **Hebrews 13:16** reminds us, when we participate in Stewardship with our time, skills, and resources, we're not just being philanthropic or community-minded—we are making a sacrifice. When the Israelites presented their offerings at the temple, they were engaged in worship, as we are each year when we make our pledges. Let our sacred, holy work here at FCC please the Lord, as we strive to better the world.

**We are grateful to have received 32 pledges so far for 2020!** Regardless of its size, your stewardship commitment is vital to FCC's mission and ministry. Thanks to all for doing good and sharing gifts!

*Offering envelopes for 2020 are in the Parish Hall. Please help yourself to a box and record it on the list.*

### The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

houses of worship work. As Congregationalists, we should be especially leery of government entanglement with our faith—the only authority we should welcome is that of God.

Times change, and it is easy to lose sight of what makes us distinctive. This fall we will have another election, and we will commemorate the arrival of the Pilgrims on these shores 400 years ago. My hope is that we will let our politics serve our faith and not the other way around, for it is God, not any political party or candidate, who is the source of our strength, our hope, and our salvation.

Yours faithfully,

*Steve*

## Prepared to Serve 2020



**Saturday, February 22, 8:00–3:30  
Pembroke Academy, Pembroke, NH**

*Prepared to Serve* is a training event for members of the NH Conference (UCC), offering workshops on topics ranging from stewardship, leadership, and finance to service, mission, and Christian education. All are invited to participate in this enriching day of classes, exhibits, and worship.

**FEE: \$40 online (through 2/12) / \$55 at the door**  
(Includes resources, breakfast, and lunch.)

**Registration and details at [www.nhcucc.org](http://www.nhcucc.org).**

*From the Mission and Social Action Committee*

## Hearts You Hold Meeting the Needs of Immigrants, Migrants, and Refugees

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, AT 11:15 AM**

Please join us after worship on February 23 for a conversation with Eloise Ginty, founder of **Hearts You Hold**, an organization that offers immigrants, migrants, and refugees new, self-chosen items they may need or want. HYH and its local partners help recipients determine these items and how to obtain them. Donors then fund purchases—from diapers to bikes, clothing to appliances—on HYH's website.

**HYH believes immigrants, migrants, and refugees should feel valued, respected, and appreciated, in part by asking them what they need and want.**

***For more, please visit [heartstyouhold.org](http://heartstyouhold.org).  
And join us on February 23 to learn about  
this important service organization!***

## Greetings from EL SALVADOR!

Last month we received another letter from **Mónica Daniela Martínez Sánchez**, the student we're supporting through Epilogos with scholarship funds from the **2019 Lenten Lunch Bag Offering**. We continue to wish Mónica all the best as she progresses in her studies! *(Translated by the editor.)*

**To Everyone at First Congregational Church,**

Warm greetings to all those who belong to First Congregational Church of Lebanon. Mónica Martínez greets you in the hope that this finds you all in good health and blessed by God in both family and work.

The reason for this letter is to express my gratitude for the support and help you have offered. For me it is a great blessing to receive this help, since, thanks to it, I can pursue my studies toward a baccalaureate.

I thank you for the honor you've done me to enable me to receive this blessing. I want you to know that it is my last year of study in the baccalaureate, and it fills me with pride to know that I've come this far—thanks to God, my parents, and you all for helping me achieve the goals and dreams that I've nurtured.

I wish you many blessings, that God will always watch over your lives and fill them with love. I hope that you may continue to be kindly people and help fulfill the dreams of younger people like me. Again, thanks so much for your support; I feel happy to know that I am able to finish my school year thanks to you.

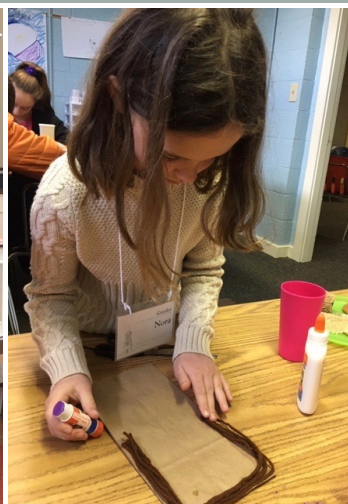
Sincerely,

***Mónica Daniela Martínez Sánchez***

Complejo Educativo Católico San José Villanueva



# THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



**A NEW YEAR FOR THE THREE C'S.** The Children's Community Corner has been flourishing and having fun in worship, in the classroom, and beyond—from the Baptism of Christ to a trampoline park in Concord!





## Thank You, Henry!

In January we bid farewell to Henry Danaher, who has served FCC with distinction as organist and choir director since July 2014. As most are aware by now, in December Henry was offered the position of music director at the Church of Christ at Dartmouth, a wonderful opportunity and significant step forward in his career and professional development.

In five and a half years here, Henry contributed mightily to our worship life with his music and personality. We have witnessed and enjoyed his growth as an organist, and we've marveled at his superb touch and calm confidence as a pianist. The choir has benefited from Henry's passion for choral music, his ambitious and energetic leadership, and his consistently good humor. He invited an assortment of guest musicians to enrich our worship service, many of whom are now familiar favorites, and he integrated FCC into local musical life with open sings, concerts, and other collaborative projects. In building his ever-expanding network across the Upper Valley, Henry admirably represented FCC in the musical community and beyond.

Henry was a devoted member of our church family from an early point, nurturing genuine connections within our congregation beyond his role as simply a musician or staff member. He volunteered and attended congregational events, and his son Finn has grown up with the other FCC kids on Sunday mornings. Henry has worked at FCC, but he's also *belonged* here, in important ways, and we will miss him.

As Steve Silver wrote, in sharing this news with our congregation, "Please know that Henry is not leaving us so much as he is going to CCDC. We should take pride in helping him become the musician he is today. I hope you will join me in wishing him well." Indeed, the congregation joins in thanking Henry and wishing him and his family the very best. And we look forward to seeing—and hearing—him again in the future.





# MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



**Music  
at the  
Meetinghouse**

## UPCOMING CONCERTS

at First Congregational Church

### **LOH ON LOCATION: Johnny Gandelman, Violin—Friday, February 7, at 7:00 pm**

Our partnership with Lebanon Opera House began in 2017 with a stunning performance by this sensational violinist, renowned for his virtuosity with the Silk Road Ensemble, Brooklyn Rider, and artists ranging from Béla Fleck to Renée Fleming. He returns in February to play Bach's complete cello suites on violin.

Admission \$18-33; for tickets and more, visit [lebanonoperahouse.org/events/johnny-gandelman-violin-2/](http://lebanonoperahouse.org/events/johnny-gandelman-violin-2/).

### **William Ögmundson, Piano: American Beauty—Saturday, February 8, at 7:00 pm**

Will Ögmundson returns to FCC with a dazzling program surveying 100 years of American music, from Stephen Foster, John Philip Sousa, and Scott Joplin to George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." Admission by freewill donation (\$25 suggested); for more, visit [www.williamogmundson.com/](http://www.williamogmundson.com/).

### **Classicopia: Go Tell It on the Mountain—Saturday, February 15, at 7:30 pm**

Pianist Daniel Weiser joins mezzo-soprano Laura Compton in a wonderful musical celebration for African-American History Month, with a stirring selection of spirituals and ragtime arrangements. Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; for tickets and more, visit [classicopia.org/concert/go-tell-it-on-the-mountain/](http://classicopia.org/concert/go-tell-it-on-the-mountain/).

### **Revels North Spring Singers—Friday, March 20, at 7:00 pm**

The multi-generational community chorus of Revels North welcomes spring with a popular program celebrating the rich, living tradition of folk music. Admission by free-will donation; more at [revelsnorth.org](http://revelsnorth.org).

### **Upper Valley Music Center Faculty Showcase—Saturday, March 21, at 4:00 pm**

All are welcome to this diverse program featuring the vocal and instrumental excellence of the faculty next door at UVMC. Adults \$15, under 18 free; proceeds benefit UVMC tuition assistance fund. More at [www.uvmusic.org](http://www.uvmusic.org).

### **Classicopia: Dan Weiser and Roseminna Watson—Saturday, April 18, at 7:30 pm**

Pianist Daniel Weiser welcomes back virtuoso violinist and local favorite Roseminna Watson for what's sure to be a wonderful program. Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; for more, visit [classicopia.org](http://classicopia.org).

### **Camerata New England: Spring Piano Trios—Sunday, April 19, at 2:00 pm**

This acclaimed chamber music group returns to FCC with glorious piano trios by Mozart and Brahms. Violinist Omar Chen Güey, cellist Linda Galvan, and pianist Hannah Shields have all performed on international stages. Adults \$28, under 18 free; tickets online at [cameratanewengland.org](http://cameratanewengland.org) or at the door.

### **Lebanon's newest hit... The ANONYMOUS COFFEEHOUSE—Fridays, Feb. 14, Mar. 13 and 27, all 7:30 pm**

FCC is delighted to host this increasingly popular venue for live, local music! An informal "listening room" for established and emerging musicians, each show features several acoustic acts, and patrons may come and go as they wish. Baked goods and non-alcoholic drinks available. And it's all free of charge, so please come and enjoy! For more information, please visit [anoncoffee.org](http://anoncoffee.org) or email [anoncoffeehouse@gmail.com](mailto:anoncoffeehouse@gmail.com).

## **First Congregational Church of Lebanon**

Weekly Worship and Church School: Sundays, 10:00 am • Office Hours: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9-12  
10 South Park Street, P.O. Box 230, Lebanon, NH 03766 • 603-448-4281 • [church@fccleb.org](mailto:church@fccleb.org) • [www.fccleb.org](http://www.fccleb.org)  
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**First Congregational Church of Lebanon**

10 South Park Street

PO Box 230

Lebanon, NH 03766

DATED MATERIAL

PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**Ash Wednesday**  
Ecumenical Service

February 26, 7:00 pm, at FCC

*Please join us for this annual community  
service to initiate the holy season of Lent.*

**FCC-Lebanon**  
**2020 Annual Meeting**

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 11:15 AM**

***Potluck and Fellowship Following***



**Music**  
*at the*  
**Meetinghouse**

**UPCOMING CONCERTS**

*at First Congregational Church*

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