

February 2017 KEEPING IN TOUCH

NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. PAUL LUTHERAN AND ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF FAITH

Church Staff

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Interim Lutheran Pastor

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Refugees

How you can help. *Page 8*

A personal story. *Page 9*

Our Mission

Saint Paul Community of Faith is an open, affirming and diverse community of faith representing two Christian traditions, that of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and that of the Roman Catholic Church.

Each tradition maintains and honors its own heritage, and each worships according to

its own liturgical practices. As one community of faith, the members of the respective traditions work together in social outreach and shared hospitality. Together, we rejoice in the manner in which diversity has enriched, nurtured and challenged the life and ministry we share in Christ and regret actions and attitudes

throughout the Church that may have inhibited or prevented access to Word and Sacrament because of age, race, socio-economic or marital status, physical or mental capacities, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

We are a Reconciling in Christ Community.

Thoughts from the Pastor



God tells us: Welcome the stranger

One of the foundational stories of the Bible, of Jewish faith and a base for Christian faith is the Exodus. God answering the cries of a people oppressed by a tyrannical government. God leading them into a strange land as immigrants. God making a covenant with them to always remember that they were once strangers, immigrants, aliens and to welcome others. The books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy all say, "Do not ill-treat foreigners because you were sojourners yourselves in Egypt." And in Matthew Jesus tells his disciples that to welcome a stranger is to welcome him.

These texts do not consider political positions. They are commandments to all. As Christians we have a duty to care for and welcome refugees and immigrants. Pope Francis has said "It is hypocrisy [and un-Christian] to call yourself a Christian and chase away a refugee or toss out someone who is in need of help."

Today our actions and our words are needed in the world, we are the hands and feet of Christ and now we need to go to work. There is a list of ways to become involved in this newsletter (see page 8), please find the one that works for you.

Our other major task is to pray. Pray for the refugees and the banned, for their families and friends. And pray for the members of our government that they follow the dictates for their own faith traditions to care for those in need. Praying even for the ones we are appalled by. For prayer changes minds and decisions. Let your government officials know you are praying for them to exercise mercy and grace to all.

This is the season of light, so let's turn up candle power!

Blessings, Pastor Penni

Congregational Meeting Recap

Unanimous Backing for Single Sunday Service Time

By **Joe Hanel**, former council president

We had a packed room for our congregational meeting on Sunday, Jan. 29, and the congregation made several important decisions for the life of our church.

We approved changing our budget year to run from July to June, instead of the calendar year. This is likely to make it easier to manage the budget, because December — when most churches see their largest offerings — will not fall in the middle of the budget year. The congregation also approved a six-month extension of the current budget, and we will vote on a 2017-18 plan after this spring.

New members were elected to the council. Jeff Parrot is your new council president (replacing Joe Hanel) and Lori Eastman is your new vice president (replacing Bruce Balliet). Maryanne O'Brien was re-elected as secretary and also as chair of the Education Committee.

Pastor Penni gave an overview of the interim

process and shared her goal of having a new pastor called by December. The process depends on how much all of us can engage and how much time we can devote to it. Several volunteers will be needed to help complete the interim work, which will help us decide where we are going as a congregation.

Father Don discussed the autumn focus groups. See Page 7 for details.

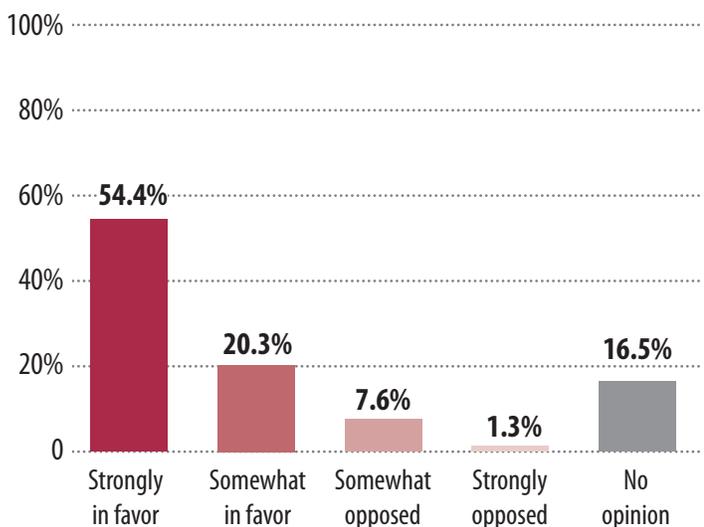
Pastor Penni also introduced Lori Arias, who is our temporary office assistant. Lori will be with us for a few months to help get our office in order.

Finally, the congregation voted unanimously to move to a single service time on Sundays. The council will make the final decision on the time of the service and the date to make the change.

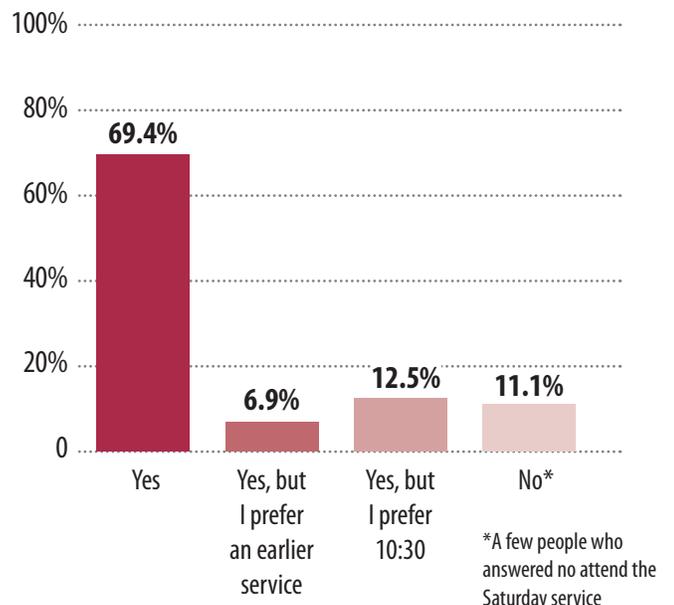
More than 80 people answered an email survey about the change, and the results showed strong support for consolidating into a single Sunday service. See the graphs below for the results of the survey.

Survey responses: Email survey taken January 13-21, via SurveyMonkey. 86 respondents.

How do you feel about switching to a single Sunday service?



Would you attend the Lutheran liturgy if it were offered at 10 a.m.?



Our Iceberg is Melting



St. Paul Adult Forum *Epiphany 2017*

Join us every Sunday in Epiphany as we study together *Our Iceberg is Melting: Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions* by John Kotter.

Reading and discussing this little book will set us on the path of transition that we are undertaking this year with the help of our new interim, Pastor Penni Walsh.

You can order the book from the Tattered

Cover, Amazon, or wherever you get your books. The Tattered Cover will take about a week. The most important part of this book study will be the discussion that takes place there as we work together to learn who we are and where God is guiding us to go. (And Pastor Penni promises a penguin for everyone!)

For any questions at all, speak with Pastor Penni Walsh, Maryann O'Brien, or Jim Harrer. We hope you will all join us on this journey.



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Help Metro Caring with Time, Food Donations

In January, the Denver Post named Metro Caring as the "Non-profit of the Month." The award was recognition of our work up to this point but it is also a marker of where Metro Caring is going in the future. The food pantry is off to a very strong start in 2017. We need your help by volunteering and donating the following non-perishables: dry beans, canned tuna, dried fruits, honey, whole grain pasta, rice, peanut butter.

Your Help is Welcome! *Volunteering at St. Paul*

By Anna Hanel

Do you want to help out on Saturday evenings or Sunday mornings by serving as an usher once a month? Or bringing in treats and helping set up Coffee & Conversation on Sunday mornings? Perhaps you'd like to sing in the choir, help teach kids in Children's Church, or help out with grounds work like planting flowers or vegetable seedlings outside the building in the spring.

Now there is one place where you can get information on how to volunteer at St. Paul and learn who to contact when you want to sign up. We've created a shareable document that is accessible at this link:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cTuReK5L9Lf17Lw4unzUiEB_o-FtqqMSN1We9YZhuxg/edit?usp=sharing

We are also posting this information on our bulletin boards, and plan to have copies available at upcoming services. St. Paul needs helpers of all sorts to not only assist our pastors during weekend services, but help create a welcoming atmosphere at the church by preparing coffee on Sunday mornings, making the grounds beautiful, planning special events and gatherings and more!

The volunteer opportunities document is a work in progress, so please feel free to email me at annabhanel@gmail.com or call me at 303-332-8761 if you have any corrections or updates. Thank you to everyone who gives their time.

THEATRE & THEOLOGY



Our fifth play, ***Two Degrees***, will be presented at the Jones Theatre, the quirkiest and smallest (200 seats) playhouse which is located at the corner of Speer and Arapahoe.

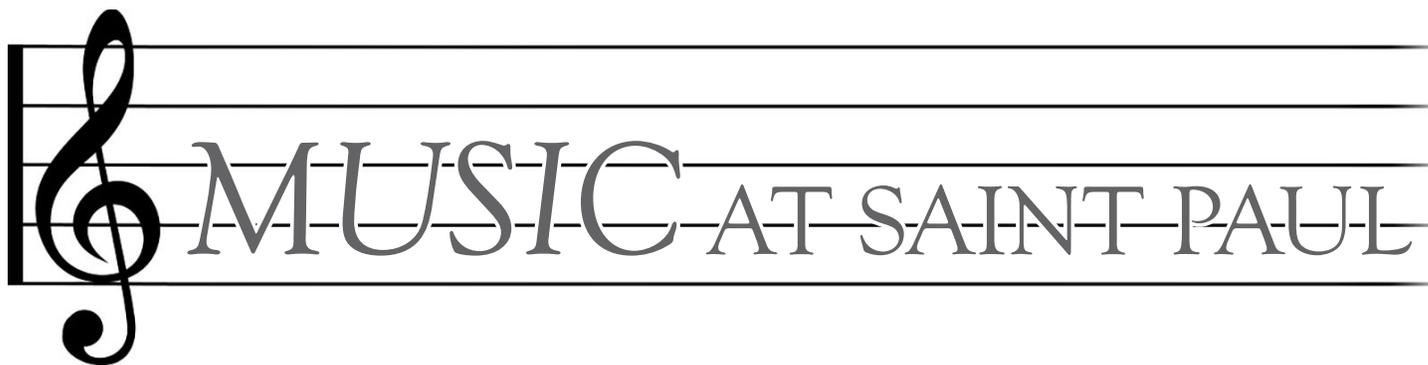
The smallest changes can lead to the biggest impact and no one knows that better than Emma, a scientist studying climate change in Greenland. Still grappling with the unexpected death of her husband, she is invited to the Nation's Capitol to share her findings at a Senate hearing that could define her career and her cause. If she can't overcome her tumultuous struggle, her dedication and sacrifices may not be enough to make the difference in the world that she has always wanted.

We will see this play on 03/07/17 with a reservation deadline of 02/14/17. Tickets cost \$35.00 made payable to The Rocky Mountain Synod. Note on check: T&T – Two Degrees – St. Paul. Mail to Dorothy Stenman; 818 Logan Street, #1203; Denver, CO 80203-3125.

Lunch Bunch: Jose O'Sheas

Grab your sombreros and your shamrocks! The Lunch Bunch is going to Jose O'Shea's! At noon on Thursday, February 2nd join your friends in a great Mexican feast, starting with nine types of margaritas! Saddle up Old Paint and mosey on over to 385 Union Blvd. in Lakewood. Call Janice Ahrendt at 303 797-7288 to reserve your place south of the border.





MUSIC AT SAINT PAUL

Reformation Commemoration Continues on Feb. 29

Our musical commemoration of the Lutheran Reformation and the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation at Saint Paul continues this month when, on **Transfiguration Sunday, 29 February 2017**, the Saint Paul Choir pays tribute to the musical reforms of the Counter-Reformation by singing the *Missa brevis* ("Brief Mass") of **Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina** within the context of the Holy Communion liturgy. While rejecting most of the theological, liturgical, and musical reforms advocated by Luther and his fellow reformers in the sixteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church did ultimately come to the realization that some reform within the church was necessary and thus initiated what has come to be known as the Counter-Reformation by calling the Council of Trent, which

met from 1545 through 1563. Among the issues addressed by the Council were concerns about the use of music in worship, including compositional techniques that obscured the meaning of the text, musical practices that interfered with or ignored liturgical sensibility, and secular influences inconsistent with the dignity of the liturgy. As summarized by one author, the Council of Trent ultimately had "a profound influence upon church music in succeeding generations" and "gave the use of music in . . . worship a new meaning and a spiritual infusion" in the Roman Catholic Church. Plan now to worship with us on Transfiguration Sunday to experience this rich treasure from the musical heritage of the Saint Paul Roman Catholic Community.

Saint Martin's Chamber Choir on 19 February

On **Sunday, 19 February 2017, at 3:00 pm**, Denver's own **Saint Martin's Chamber Choir**, led by Artistic Director Timothy Krueger, will perform a program entitled, *Winter Winds*, featuring music from Scandinavia and the Baltics inspired by the experience of winter and composed by those who know it best. Visit www.stmartinchamberchoir.org for more information.

Ars Nova Singers on 26 February

On **Sunday, 26 February 2017, at 4:00 pm**, the Boulder-based **Ars Nova Singers**, in collaboration with **String**, a consort of viols, will present *Music of the Renaissance: Voices and Viols*, a program of Renaissance masterworks from the 15th through the 18th centuries under the leadership of Artistic Director Thomas Edward Morgan. Visit www.arsnovasingers.com for more information.

Colorado Repertory Singers on 17 and 18 March

On **Friday, 17 March 2017 at 7:30 pm** and again on **Saturday, 18 March 2017 at 2:00 pm**, the **Colorado Repertory Singers**, along with singers from **Broomfield High School**, will present *Cathedral Classics*, a program of sacred choral music featuring the *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore* of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, accompanied by orchestra under the baton of Music Director Kyle Fleming. Visit www.coloradorepertorysingers.org for more information.

Review of Autumn Focus Groups

By Father Don Sutton

Background

Three opportunities were provided for members of the St. Paul Lutheran and Roman Catholic Community to express their opinions and offer their insights on the current status and future direction of the community. We were fortunate to have the presence of a trained group facilitator who was not affiliated with St. Paul and who was only minimally familiar with the community. Participants were asked to respond to the following questions on an individual basis first and then collectively:

- What draws you (or keeps you) at St. Paul?
- What are the most important activities of St. Paul?
- What are opportunities or challenges for St. Paul as it moves into the future?

After answering the questions individually, the members were given an opportunity to explain their responses as well as to ask questions about the responses others had made. They were then asked to indicate from the cumulative lists of all responses those which they considered to be the most important. Each participant was limited to the number they could indicate in order to be able to develop a hierarchy or priority in the lists.

The responses that generated the most discussion and interest included:

- Liturgy or worship/preaching
- Community/fellowship
- Outreach/social action
- Budget/financial issues

Topics which were identified as of great importance to St. Paul include **liturgy and preaching**. Comments included "gospel based", educational and thought provoking, educational and motivational. Weekly Eucharistic Liturgy was a high priority and its quality was described as intentional and high quality.

Music was mentioned as important for the liturgy and valued; there were some suggestions as to more variety in style and the use of more familiar

and easier to sing hymns.

Community, fellowship, openness and inclusivity were also mentioned as essential to the identity and mission of St. Paul. There was strong support for the ecumenical nature of the community and the good relationship and value of its Lutheran-Roman Catholic nature. There was an expressed desire for more opportunities for socializing, both as nurturing to the wider community and strengthening the individual sense of identity for the members.

Outreach to the city, the poor and marginalized were also mentioned as essential elements of the St Paul identity. **Street Reach** was endorsed as a valuable activity, although there is confusion about the exact manner in which it is connected to St. Paul and a desire to clarify that relationship. There were suggestions/requests about better publicity and marketing, better and more welcoming signage on the church building, and improved exterior lighting. Renewed participation in Lutheran Advocacy and activity at the legislature was also mentioned. Outreach to other downtown churches and Lutheran churches was suggested.

Current Work at St. Paul

A number of suggestions/concerns are already being addressed and/or can be implemented (or re-instituted) immediately.

- The interim pastor is prepared to visit the sick and those unable to come to church regularly.
- An office manager has been engaged to organize records include membership lists and databases; this should also facilitate better organization of volunteers.
- Some non-liturgical, socializing activities are being scheduled every month for the whole community in addition to small group activities like Theater and Theology and the Book Club.

Degree of Urgency

Budget issues and a strong stewardship program were seen as very urgent. Many voiced concern about a budget which exceeds income and relies on reserves to cover expenses.

Supporting Refugees - How You Can Help

By Anna Hanel

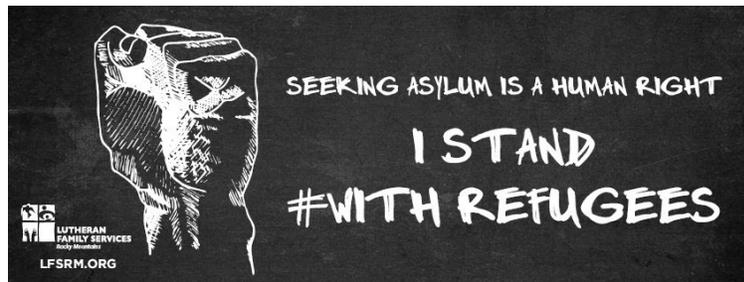
Many of you volunteered your time and money last year when our congregation joined others in creating Welcome and

Baby Baskets for newly arrived refugees getting assistance from Lutheran Family Services (www.lfsrm.org/refugee-asylee; 303-980-5400).

LFS is one of the many nonprofit organizations across the country that helps resettle people fleeing war and persecution. Many of you are also aware of President Trump's executive order that severely restricts immigration from seven Muslim countries, suspends all refugee admission for 120 days, and bars all Syrian refugees indefinitely. More than 2,000 religious leaders, including ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, immediately sent a letter to President Trump denouncing the move, saying "The U.S. Refugee Resettlement program has been and should remain open to those of all nationalities and religions who face persecution."

It has been a trying time for our friends at Lutheran Family Services, who have helped thousands of refugees resettle in Colorado. I've been in touch with volunteer coordinator David Cornish, who says "Inevitably, this will lead to job cuts. More importantly this will do irreversible damage to the refugee resettlement process and infrastructure; it will inhibit, if not destroy, some of the many programs that help refugees achieve self-sufficiency. There will be imminent layoffs."

The folks at LFS are still trying to figure out what to do next. But they urge people who support the resettlement program to do two things right now: donate money, and let your voice be heard. Donations will help LFS workers continue to assist refugees in Colorado. You can donate online at: <https://lfsrm.worldsecuringsystems.com/about/Donate>. LFS is also asking supporters of the program to contact their representatives in Congress and the President (through calls, emails,



and tweets) and urge them to denounce this executive order and work to keep the resettlement program strong. I've called our two senators and my congressman and tweeted at all of them and President

Trump this week. I tell them my family was granted political asylum (1983!), and the resettlement program shows America's commitment to freedom; that we want these people in this country, and that I and others stand behind that belief with our time and money by volunteering to help them. Ceasing to help refugees will not make us safer.

Here are additional ways to get involved and be notified of advocacy opportunities:

- Follow LFS on Facebook for the latest updates: <https://www.facebook.com/RockyMtnRefugee/>
- Follow the group "Colorado Welcomes Refugees" on Facebook, it shares information about events and advocacy on behalf of refugees: <https://www.facebook.com/COWelcomesRefugees>
- Sign up for email updates from the African Community Center (the other refugee resettlement agency in Colorado): <http://www.acc-den.org/> Tel: 303-399-4500.
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services Stand for Welcome: <http://lirs.org/> (Click on ACT)
- Rocky Mountain Synod Lutheran Advocacy Ministry: <https://www.rmselca.org/advocacy> Tel: 303-777-6700.
- Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition: <http://coloradoimmigrant.org/> Tel: 303-922-3344. Sign up for their news alerts and advocacy opportunities. They are a true coalition and have influenced policy and supported immigrant communities across the state to pursue just policies. They have always also advocated for the rights of LGBT immigrants.

How an Ethiopian Refugee Became My Family

By Carolyn Swenson

Like thousands of Americans, I was deeply troubled by the executive order issued from the White House that temporarily halts all refugee resettlement in the United States, and appears to discriminate based on religion or country of origin. It resonated in a very personal way for me as I reflected on my experience of working in a refugee camp in Sudan for six months during 1985.

As a young nurse, I worked with the International Rescue Committee during the monumental Ethiopian famine of 1984-85. Remember the song *We are the World*? Famine and armed conflict perpetrated by a vicious dictatorship in Ethiopia displaced or killed millions of Ethiopians. People walked often three months to reach squalid, sprawling camps in eastern Sudan. I worked in the Wad Kowli camp that housed 100,000 refugees. During the winter, desert temperatures could be almost freezing at night and up to 120 degrees F during the day.

In the summer, torrential rain pounded the earth and turned it to flowing mud. When I first arrived, there were no latrines in the camp! At one point, Wad Kowli reported the highest death rate ever recorded in a refugee camp. Hundreds of refugees — especially children — succumbed daily to illnesses and conditions that included malaria, measles, cholera, polio, typhoid fever, snake and scorpion bites, and, of course, starvation.

My job was to start a program to work with traditional midwives to improve the health of pregnant women and newborn babies. A young refugee named Tsehainesh was assigned to work with me as my interpreter. She had just finished high school before making the three-month trek to Sudan. We trained 40 midwives, visited pregnant and laboring women; distributed extra food rations;

and counted pregnancies, births, and deaths to report to the United Nations. The midwives showed tremendous fortitude as they nurtured families through unimaginable suffering and loss. And over the course of six months, Tsehainesh and I became like sisters.

I will never forget my final day in the camp. A bridge crossed the river that separated the refugee camp from the housing compounds for aid workers. A Sudanese soldier carrying an AK-47 was guarding the bridge as I said goodbye to Tsehainesh. We believed that we would never see each other again. Love, exhaustion and the unfairness of life seemed more than we could bear. Finally, some kind person seeing that our outpouring of sadness was not going to end, managed to separate us and usher me to the vehicle that would carry me on the first leg of my long journey home.

I stayed in touch with Tsehainesh. She gave birth to two children in another refugee camp. I helped her connect to a resettlement organization. She applied for refugee status and completed the long vetting process that refugees must complete. Then, a little more than four years later, she resettled in Denver! We have been family to each other for more than 30 years now.

It was not possible for me to have my own children but through Tsehainesh I was granted the gift of being a second mom to her four beautiful children. On Friday, January 27, 2017 — the very day that President Trump signed the executive order halting refugee resettlement in the United States — a daughter of Tsehainesh, born in a refugee camp in Sudan, gave birth to a beautiful, healthy baby boy in Denver. May God grant us courage to stand firm and advocate for the millions of displaced, suffering people in the world.



Greek Ampitheatre

Civic Center Park

150 W 14th Ave, Denver

February 4, 2017

1PM-4PM



This event is specifically for showing support to our Muslim neighbors. Make your boldest signs, prepare your loudest voices, and bring your warmest hugs. Our neighbors are in danger and we need to show solidarity in support. As always, this will be a peaceful, family-friendly event.

FEBRUARY 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
				7:15pm St Paul Choir rehearsal		5pm Catholic Mass
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
8am Lutheran Liturgy 9:15a Adult Forum, Coffee 9:30am Choir 10:30am Lutheran Liturgy 11:45am Coffee 12 Bell Choir rehearsal	1-5pm Street Reach 6:30pm Rocky Mountain Ringers Rehearsal			7:15pm St Paul Choir rehearsal		5pm Catholic Mass
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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26	27	28				
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