



Centenary United Methodist Church

PO Box 111

82 S. Hancock St.

Pentwater, MI 49449

The Circuit Rider

MARCH 2024



Centenary United Methodist Church

Rev. Dr. Vaughn W. Thurston-Cox, Pastor



Church Office: (231) 869-5900

Office Hours: Mon - Thur, 9am - 12pm

Email: pentwaterumc@gmail.com

Website: pentwaterumc.org

Facebook.com/5H20centenaryumc



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Our Vision: To be the Breath of God in Community

Our Values: Loving God, Serving Others, Welcoming All

Circuit Rider



The Pastor's Pen

Rev. Dr. Vaughn Thurston-Cox

I hope you enjoy our newsletters as much as I do. The last few months I have enjoyed them even more, with the addition of "View from the Pew," an article submitted by someone in the congregation on a topic of their choosing that highlights the intersection between faith and life. Roy Martens and David Kersten have both contributed. This month Mark Trierweiler follows the lead of our annual conference leadership by tackling the question of gun violence. He begins by highlighting United Methodist teaching, including advocacy for universal background checks

and regulated sales of firearms through licensed dealers. Read the article to find out where Oceana County falls in firearm death rate.

Of course, we are in the midst of Lent and almost halfway to Easter. I hope you have found this series as profound as I have, confronting failure, suffering, and death. Each of these are places God makes holy by his presence, places he redeems. Over the next few Sundays we will come alongside Judas, the women at the cross, and the crowds. Join us 6:30 PM, Thursday, March 28, for Maundy Thursday. The service will be led by Roy Martens and David Kersten. The following day at 7:00 PM we commemorate Good Friday at Ludington UMC with participation from a variety of churches and our own Bell Choir! I hope you can make time for both those services over Holy Week. Easter Sunday celebration will begin with breakfast at 9:00 AM. Please bring an egg casserole or pastry to pass. We will continue with worship at 10:30. Invite a friend.

Meanwhile we are trying something new as a council. We are blessed by everyone here, who comes with lifetimes of experience in fields ranging from



The Pastor's Pen *continued from page 2*

teaching to coaching to higher education to business and nonprofits. This year on council we are giving each person an opportunity to share one insight after years of leadership in their field. I began in February. I can say any number of things after twenty-one years in ministry, but I chose to say that leadership necessitates grace. Always. I think leadership necessitates grace because most people come to bring their best, but we are not always at our best when we come, including me. We need the space grace creates in relationship. To bear one another's burdens, because sometimes the burdens being carried are ours. Bart will share his own insights next month.

That flows right into our new Sunday morning small group titled Courageous Conversations, a resource created by the General Board of Discipleship designed to offer churches tools for difficult conversations, especially around General Conference. It will be offered for four weeks and recorded.

A final note of thanks to you, our generous congregation, and celebration. We ended the year with a surplus. A portion of the surplus was set aside for distribution to both local and global ministries including the United Methodist Committee on Relief (\$5,000), Haitian Assets for Peace International (\$1,000), the Children's Nutrition Program in Haiti (\$1,000), Feeding America West Michigan - Pentwater's Mobile Food Pantry (\$1,000), the Hispanic Center in Hart (\$500), the Baldwin Center (\$500), and the Tansen United Methodist Hospital in Nepal (\$400). We are grateful not only to be the breath of God in this community but the world.

Be the Breath,

Pastor Vaughn

Spread more
hope
not more fear.

Pick up
your sign
at worship or
in the church
office.



Gun Violence: A uniquely American Problem



As anyone who knows me can attest, I'm passionate about social justice issues. I wasn't certain gun violence was one of them. When I completed my research, I realized just how wrong I was. It's a big one! Indeed, the problem of gun violence is so large and burgeoning, I decided it was too staggering to address in a single article. Future articles will be required to

even make a dent in what has become a problem of epidemic proportions in Michigan and the U.S.

To quote from UMC's Church & Society, "All forms of violence are detestable, but guns make violence more deadly and more frequent." While this statement is undeniably true for me, I reasoned that deadly gun violence happens in Muskegon or Detroit, not sleepy Oceana County.



View from the Pew continued from page 4

Wrong! According to the Centers for Disease Control, Oceana County falls into the second highest category for firearms deaths per 100,000 residents. How can this be true?

We were all horrified by the Las Vegas shooting. Then came the Orlando nightclub, Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook Elementary, and El Paso shootings. Two years ago, the Oxford High School mass shooting made national news, not because it was the first in Michigan; it was actually the 24th mass shooting of 2021.

United Methodist Church (UMC) Resolution #2428 strongly asks the denomination's congregants to advocate for actions that would prevent or reduce gun violence, which are at, or near, all-time highs. They include:

- Universal background checks on all gun purchases

- Ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty

- Ensuring all guns are sold through licensed gun retailers

- Prohibiting all individuals under restraining order due to threat of violence from purchasing a gun

- Prohibiting persons with serious mental illness, who pose a danger to themselves and their communities, from purchasing a gun

- Establishing a minimum age of 21 years for gun purchase or possession

- Banning large-capacity ammunition magazines and weapons designed to fire multiple rounds each time the trigger is pulled

The Resolution goes on to state that "...United Methodists must regularly remind their elected officials how their faith informs their understanding of this issue. Write to your local and national representatives today."

I'm nearly out of words for this issue of the Circuit Rider, but next month I will attempt to address another facet in what has become a uniquely American crisis, which now accounts for a third of all mass shootings in the world.

Consider this to be the first installment.

Mark Trierweiler

Quiet Corner - Prose and Poems for a Praying Community

“Let Heaven and Nature Sing”

Trees have always “spoken to me” since I was a child, climbing as high as possible to see a wider view of the world. I love trees. There is a favorite “resting tree” deep in the woods that I visit occasionally. God is there, too. Tonight I hear the wind outside my open window, whispering so beautifully through the pines and oaks. It feels like the heaven I imagine—warm and welcoming, quiet and peaceful. **Is it possible this is Heaven on earth?**

A Forest of Desire (excerpt)

I walk the soft earth
and the trees announce
my presence to one another.

(From “Love Holds You: Poems and Devotions for Times of Uncertainty” by Christine Valters Paintner - Poet, Hermit, Mystic - Ph.D in Christian Spirituality from Graduate Theological Union - Resides in Galway, Ireland)

Do you have a forest, woodland, or special tree you like to connect with?

Woods Quiet

I think trees love twilight, they trap it in their leaves, They hoard it among their branches, they draw it around them as a garment. As trees love twilight, so those who walk in the woods love quiet. Woods quiet fills their eyes, they treasure it in their hearts. It is an intangible garment making them strangely invulnerable to little irritations. Woods twilight rests tired eyes, but eyes which hold woods quiet rest tired spirits. (From “Through the Arch of Experience,” 1970 by Faith Johnston—M.S. in Biology from University of Chicago—a 46-year member of the biology faculty at Central Michigan University)

How do you rest your tired spirit?

A Wilderness Pilgrimage - Their Slow Way

Let these woods have their slow way with you. Patient pines that hold their green through all the frozen seasons, lichen-covered rocks that live indifferent to time’s passage—these will teach you how to bring your life to ground. The fractal chaos of the forest floor, its white anemones, spiked grasses and dead leaves, the fallen trunks and branches splayed out like pick-up sticks - these will teach you how to live freely, with abandon, and feed the roots of new growth when your time has come. (From “On the Brink of Everything?” by Parker Palmer - writer, speaker, activist with a Ph.D in Sociology from University of California, Berkley - his work has been recognized with 13 honorary doctorates.)

When/where/how do you feel grounded?

And there is always the poem by Mary Oliver, “When I Am Among the Trees”. And Psalm 84: 1-4. So many wonderful nature poems and books to feed your spirit - so little time.

Compiled by Sandy Lyon



Prayers & Squares

“ God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” - Psalm 46:1

“In like a lion, out like a lamb.” March is a month of unpredictable weather...yet it leaves us with the promise of new life. After a season of darkness and going within, there is an urge to step out and begin planning ‘the next thing’.

Yet, what I’ve learned from this past year is that change and unpredictability is the new norm...which makes trying to plan with the goal of ensuring a positive outcome not very effective. So, it makes one wonder if there is anything we can anchor ourself to!

A prayer I read recently by public theologian Kate Bowler speaks to this so I’d like to share it: “Remind me to pray: come Lord and quiet the worry. I step, and you steady me. I give, and you keep my hands open. I act, and you fortify me with courage to try and try and try again. This life is uncertain, Lord, but your love is not. You tell the story of my life regardless of how little I know about how it ends, except to say, you were there since the beginning and you appear on every page.”

Besides the assurance of God’s faithfulness, it helps to be anchored in fellowship and service with my partners from Prayers & Squares. In going over our stats the other day I found that we had given over 82 pocket squares last year...and 98 quilts since the start of our ministry. If you hear shouts of joy and raucous laughter in the halls of UMC soon that will be us celebrating our 100th quilt!



Jeanne Oakes snuggling her prayer quilt



Tony enjoying his prayer quilt

In February we gave away quilts to the following recipients: Tony, a longtime friend of Diane Larson, who has had multiple surgeries for back issues and is learning to walk again; Savannah, the great-granddaughter of Earleen Barber, who was recently baptized; Rommie, a friend of Pastor Vaughn, who is awaiting a lung transplant in a Grand Rapids hospital; Monica Daniels, the daughter of Donna Renshaw, who is in treatment for cancer; and, Jeanne Oakes, the sister-in-law of Linda Trierweiler.

As we turn over into the month of March may you be filled with blessings of hope and new life.



Happy St. Patrick’s Day **Carrie Roberts**

Joys in the Congregation . . .

Program Coordination Team welcomed Jean Russell Monday. She came by ZOOM but told us to expect her soon in our midst. Good news and congratulations, Jean!

Richard and Joan Wild are noting progress in Richard's care. His weekly treks to a care clinic in Manistee Hospital may be coming to an end soon. This cheers Joan as she would like you to know. They also want to let our congregation know how much they appreciate the prayers, support, and Friday rides.

Lillianna and Savanah joined us for worship last week and made wonderful use of our nursery. Thanks for all of the careful and pristine additions to it. We can give the blue rabbits rides in the cart, feed the dolls from the toy stove, and wash the dishes in the toy sink.

More joys? Let us know.

Community Dinner Menus For March*

March 6 Bean and Cheese Enchilada
Mexican Rice
Esquites (Corn Salad)
Torrilla Soup Monterey
Delicious Donated Desserts

March 13 Shepherd's Pie
Braised Cabbage
Irish Flag Salad
Irish Soda Bread Buns
Mulligatawny Soup
Delicious Donated Desserts

March 20 Chicken and Dumplings
Buttered Corn
Coleslaw
Ham and Bean Soup
Delicious Donated Desserts

March 27 Ham Loaf
Praline Yams
Vegetable Alfredo Pasta Bake
Hot Cross Bun
Fruit Salad
Delicious Donated Desserts



* Menus may change based on availability of food.
[Click here](#) for the current week's menu.

Free Homemade Frozen Dinners and Soups

We have homemade
frozen dinners and soups
available to everyone.

Pick up available during office hours,
Monday - Thursday 9 am to 12 pm
and Wednesdays during
Community Dinner 12 to 6 pm.

There is no charge for the meals.
We operate on free will offerings.

Please spread the news to
friends and neighbors.
Great for anyone
who could use a pick-me-up!

Made
possible in
part by the



Potluck's a Coming!

Sunday, March 17th is our third and final midwinter all church potluck.

With a St Patrick's Day date, we'll feature CABBAGE ROLLS and ask you to bring a salad, dessert, rolls, appetizer to add to the table. 11:30 following worship service.



Sunday, March 17, 11:30 am Fellowship Hall.

Easter Breakfast – March 31



Join us for Easter Breakfast
at 9 am before the 10:30 Worship Service.
Knowing that we have such good cooks
(think of the 10 chili soups that appeared at the potluck in February),
we are asking for “egg casseroles” or strata
or your favorite pastry.

Volunteer to Set Up Communion



Looking for a new opportunity to serve the church by giving a small amount of time and talent? In 2024, the Worship Team will be posting a sign up sheet for preparing communion elements. The task involves cutting bread into cubes, pouring juice into communion ware, placing on the altar and cleanup after the service. There are written instructions available. Generally, communion is served on the first Sunday of each month. Please consider serving. Look for the [SignUp Genius dates](#).

The Worship Team is looking for someone who may be interested in enriching worship through the visual arts.

- ♦ Banners?
- ♦ Altarscapes?
- ♦ Moving Power Point slides?
- ♦ Pictures?
- ♦ Or maybe something we haven't dreamed up yet.

If that sounds like you, please contact Marsha Barter, marshab100@gmail.com, 231-869-5756.



ASK - Just Ask!

Centenary is a caring church. Where we “snag up” is in making all the connections. In our brave new post-COVID world privacy is a concern and isolation is a concern. No one wants everyone to know all their business and yet many report feelings of loneliness.

We have a prayer list but often do not know enough beyond a generalized concern. Many private concerns go unvoiced. Centenary Cares is the small group that follows and connects with those in our congregation who need a hand sometimes. If you are in a nursing home, at home, taking care of someone, or recovering from surgery, there are so many ways we can help.

A steady crew of members has just expanded now including: Earlene Barber, Judy Claiborne, Marilyn Cluchey, Elaine Curtis, Judy Jankowski, Sandy Lyon, Karen Saint Denis, and Anne Soles. Many others in the congregation have been helpful and can lend a hand. Our networks of care are informal, extensive, and private.

We are listening . . .

we may be asking . . .

and we definitely want to hear about congregational and community needs!

Thank you! Thank you all. Let us hear from you. **Anne Soles & the Centenary Cares Team**

Month of March 2024 at a Glance

For the most up to date schedule and details,
go to pentwaterumc.org/calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 10:30am - Worship @ 11:30am - Fellowship Time	4 Circuit Rider Articles Due 10am - Senior Stretch @ 10:30am - Prog Coord'n 1pm - Set up for UWF Brunch 2pm - Meditation Group @	5 8:30am - UWF Lenten Brunch 1pm - Community Dinner 1pm - PSC Board @ Wesley 6:30pm - euchre @ Wesley	6 9am - Community Dinner 5pm - Community Dinner 6:30pm - Bell Choir @ Music	7 9am - Frozen Meals 10am - Senior Stretch @ 7pm - Transforming Grace	8 10am - Prayers Squares @	9
10 UMCOR Sunday 9:15am - Courageous 10:30am - Worship @ 11:30am - Fellowship Time	11 8am - PSC Caramel Corn @ 10am - Senior Stretch @ 10:30am - Finance & Op's 6:30pm - Pentwater Lake	12 9am - Community Dinner 9am - PSC Caramel Corn @ 10:30am - Worship Team @ 6:30pm - Euchre @ Wesley	13 9am - Community Dinner 5pm - Community Dinner 6:30pm - Bell Choir @ Music 6:30pm - Property	14 9am - Frozen Meals 10am - Senior Stretch @ 10am - Service Club @ 7pm - Jr. Women's Club @ 7pm - Transforming Grace	15 10am - Prayers Squares @	16
17 9:15am - Courageous 10:30am - Worship @ 11:30am - Potluck @	18 9am - Cargiver's Support 10am - Senior Stretch @ 2pm - Meditation Group @	19 9am - Community Dinner 6pm - Church Council @ 6pm - Council Zoom Link @ 6:30pm - euchre @	20 9am - Community Dinner 5pm - Community Dinner 6:30pm - Bell Choir @ Music	21 9am - Frozen Meals 10am - Senior Stretch @ 10am - Service Club @ 7pm - Transforming Grace	22 10am - Prayers Squares @	23
24 Palm Sunday 9:15am - Courageous 10:30am - Worship @ 11:30am - Fellowship Time	25 Circuit Rider Articles Due 10am - Senior Stretch @	26 9am - Community Dinner 6:30pm - euchre @ Wesley	27 9am - Community Dinner 5pm - Community Dinner 6:30pm - Bell Choir @ Music	28 9am - Frozen Meals 10am - Senior Stretch @ 10am - Service Club @ 6:30pm - Maundy Thursday	29 10am - Prayers Squares @ 7pm - Good Friday	30
31 Easter Sunday 9am - Easter Breakfast @ 9:15am - Courageous 10:30am - Worship @						

For the most up to date schedule and details, go to pentwaterumc.org/calendar

Church Council Meeting Minutes

Centenary United Methodist Church

February 20, 2024

In Attendance: Susan MacGregor, Mat Hacker, Beth Russell, Bart Zachrich, Elaine Konyha, Anne Soles, Pastor Vaughn Thurston-Cox, Sandy Lyon, Elaine Curtis, Gene Jankowski, and Harry Barter.

The meeting was called to order with a prayer from Pastor Vaughn at 6:00 PM.

Pastor Vaughn introduced a *Minute on Leadership* with his idea that Leadership necessitates grace, always. In future each meeting will begin with a *Minute on Leadership* from a council member.

Council was reminded that Courageous Conversations will start on March 19 th during the Sunday School Hour. He showed a video from online from the first session.

#2. The agenda was presented and approved with no additions.

#3. Minutes from last month were presented and approved with no additions.

#4. Beth Russell was presented as a candidate for Vice Chairman of the Church council.

MOTION: Approve appointing Beth Russell as Vice Chair of the Church Council for one year.

Made by: Anne Soles, Seconded by Sandy Lyon, VOTE: unanimous approval

Second order of business was to elect 1 or 2 individuals to the SPRC for 2024.

#5. Approval of Chairperson on Program Coordination, Finance and Operations and Property Management.

MOTION: To Affirm the leadership of Property Management – Mat Hacker, Finance and Operations – John Faas, and Program Coordination – Anne Soles for a period of one year.

Made by: Elaine Curtis, Seconded: Beth Russell, VOTE: approved unanimously.

#6. Approval of spending \$9,400 on Missions as discussed in previous meeting.

MOTION: To approve the Mission Projects as presented by Susan MacGregor.

UMCOR 999895 \$2,500

UMCOR 302600 \$2,500

HAPI Project \$1,000

Children's Nutrition Program in Haiti \$1,000

Mobile Food Pantry \$1,000

Hispanic Center in Hart \$500

Baldwin Center \$500

Tansen United Mission Hospital \$400

Made by Elaine Curtis, Seconded by Sandy Lyon, VOTE: passed unanimously

Continued on page 14

Church Council Meeting Minutes continued from page 11

- #7. Council Goal Two – Definition of Discipleship, Education Committee will work on this and will report at the March Council Meeting.
- #8. Ministry Workshop, Saturday April 20, The Council reviewed the proposed agenda for the Strategic Planning Meeting on April 20. The agenda was approved with minor changes.
- #9. Council discussion of the possibility of Centenary UMC working together with St. James Episcopal during the time that they are looking for a pastor. It was agreed that Bart will call St. James’ Council chair and ask if they have any needs.
- #10. Council Members on Ministry Teams. Council reviewed which ministry teams were represented on the Church Council. A Chart was presented as a future agenda item listing Centenary Policies and Procedures and which ministries were responsible for updating and/or approving them. The Kitchen was added to the list.
- Next meeting will be March 19, 2024. Bart Zachrich will present the *Minute in Leadership*.
- The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.



We are now using **Signup Genius** to sign up and serve in several ways. Please click on the links if you can share your time and talents with us!

- [Community Dinner volunteers](#)
- [Liturgist](#)
- [Children’s Time Leader](#)
- [Hosting Fellowship Time](#)
- [Ushers](#)
- [Communion Set Up](#)

You can also sign up using our bulletin board.



CUMC Holy Week 2024

Palm Sunday

Sunday March 24, 10:30 am

Centenary United Methodist Church

Maundy Thursday Service

Thursday March 28, 6:30 pm

Revs. David Kersten & Roy Martens

Centenary United Methodist Church

Good Friday Service

Friday March 29, 7 pm

Ludington United Methodist Church

Ecumenical participation from a variety of
churches and our own Bell Choir

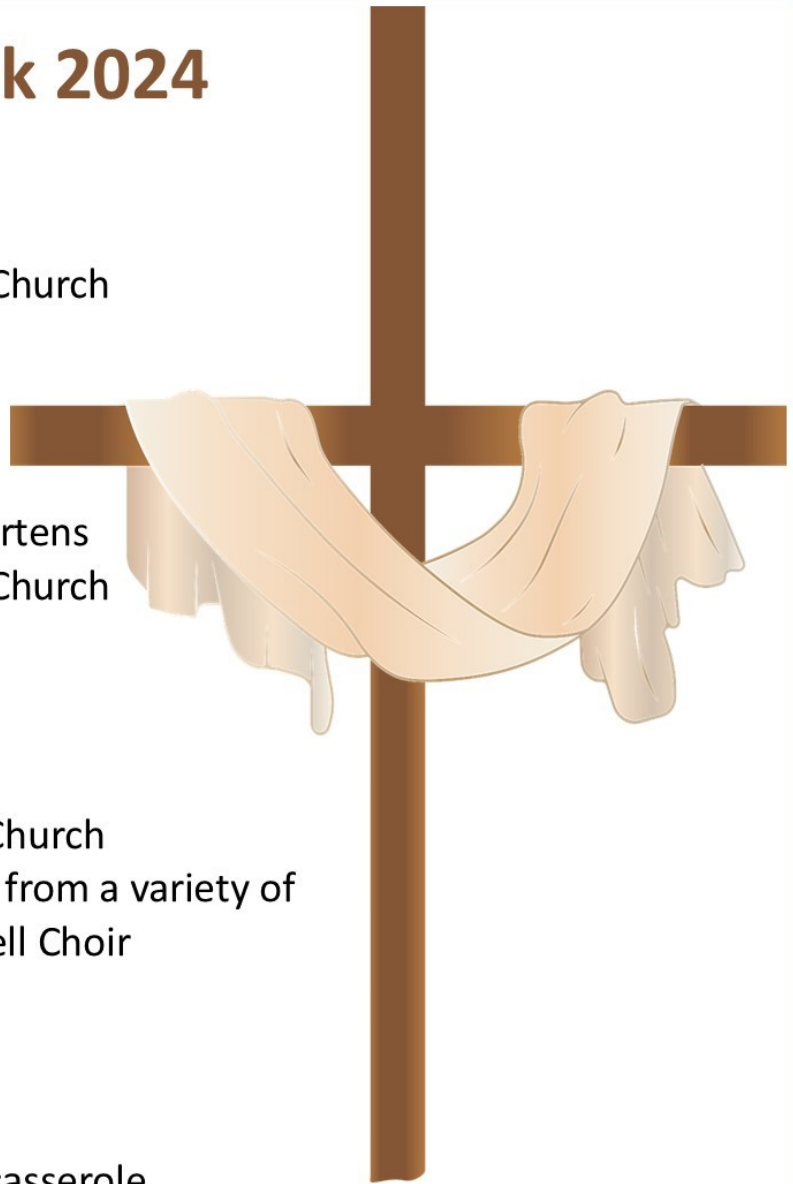
Easter Sunday Service

Sunday March 31

9 am Breakfast, Bring an egg casserole
or pastry to pass.

10:30 am Worship.

Centenary United Methodist Church



Courageous Conversations

New Small Group begins
Sunday, March 10, 9:15 am

in the
Wesley Room



Friends & Family of
Bill Bluhm
Rommie MacDonald

Diane Carlson
Harry Wallin
Richard Bieri

Kristin Forester
Jerry Overla
Jean Russell
Jackie Woodley
Evelyn Jacks
Winter Vaughn
Mat Hacker
Kaycee Bylsma

Cancer Treatments
Monica Daniels
Susan Defrites
Norb Capistrant
Jeff Klein
Ronda Hamelen Jenkins
Cindy Williams
Ernie Beauvais
Dale Trierweiler
Richard Wild



Birthdays

Karen Saint Denis	03/15
Shannon Larson	03/15
Jim MacGregor	03/28
Sylvia Shrauger	03/31



Anniversaries

Steve & Beth Russell	03/20
Matt & Susan Hacker	03/22

*Names will remain on the list for four weeks and they can be resubmitted.
Please submit updates or corrections to the Pastor*

Help Us Grow: Give Electronically

Electronic gifts are fast and secure, and they reduce administrative costs, allowing more of every dollar to fund the important work we are called to do.

- Give anytime, anywhere to your favorite funds
- Schedule and manage recurring donations
- Make one-time donations to special appeals
- Pay for events, programs and other activities

If you would like to give electronically, visit our website or contact the church office.



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GIVE PLUS⁺

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