



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Our Mission

*Growing Disciples - Making Christ Known*

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FEBRUARY 18, 2026

ASH WEDNESDAY / IMPOSITION OF ASHES

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

12:15 AND 7:00 PM

*On Ash Wednesday, we begin a forty-day journey toward Easter with Christians around the world. Today is a day of fasting, repentance, and the imposition of ashes, reminding us that we will all die and return to the earth. As a fitting fast, Isaiah reminds us, "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?" We are encouraged to remember that God is "slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love."*

GATHERING

*Lenten offerings may be placed in the plate at the entrance to the sanctuary.*

*The congregation is invited to join in the **BOLD** responses.*

*In Silence We Gather for Meditation and Self-Examination*

*The service begins with prayer.*

**Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Invitation to Lent and Confession**

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' Passover from death to life, and of our life being renewed in Christ.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent – self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love – strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection. Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*The congregation kneels or remains seated.*

Most holy and merciful God,  
**We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault, in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

We have shut our ears to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

**Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May our Lenten fasting and good works be signs of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## Kyrie

“Savior, When in Dust to You” ELW 601 stanza one

ABERYSTWYTH



1 Sav-ior, when in dust to you low we bow in hom-age due;



when, re-pen-tant, to the skies scarce we lift our weep-ing eyes;



oh, by all your pains and woe suf-fered once for us be-low.



bend-ing from your throne on high, hear our pen - i - ten - tial cry!

Text: Robert Grant, 1779-1838, alt. Music: Joseph Parry, 1841-1903

## Imposition of Ashes

*You may come forward to receive the ashes. The pastor marks the forehead of each person saying:*

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

*Ashes are a sign of our mortality. After receiving the ashes, please return to your pew seat and remain in prayer and silence until all have finished.*

## Music at the Imposition of Ashes

“Our Father, We Have Wandered”

Tune by Hans Leo Hassler

Settings for organ by Johann Sebastian Bach & Michael Burkhardt

*The pastor continues,*

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,  
**that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,  
**bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

## Forgiveness

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

**Amen.**

**Anthem** (7:00 pm)

“Dust and Ashes”

David Haas

*Dust and ashes touch our face, mark our failure and our falling. Holy spirit, come, walk with us tomorrow, take us as disciples, washed and wakened by your calling. Refrain: Take us by the hand and lead us, lead us through the desert sands, bring us living water, Holy Spirit, come. Dust and ashes soil our hands, greed of market, pride of nation. Holy Spirit come, walk with us tomorrow, as we pray and struggle through the meshes of oppression. Refrain*

## WORD

### First Reading

#### Isaiah 58:1-12

<sup>1</sup>Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. <sup>2</sup>Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. <sup>3</sup>“Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. <sup>4</sup>Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. <sup>5</sup>Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? <sup>6</sup>Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? <sup>7</sup>Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? <sup>8</sup>Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. <sup>9</sup>Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among

you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, <sup>10</sup>if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. <sup>11</sup>The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. <sup>12</sup>Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

*The Word of the Lord.*

**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 51:1-17**

(read responsively)

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

<sup>4</sup>**Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.**

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

<sup>6</sup>**You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.**

<sup>7</sup>Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

<sup>8</sup>**Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.**

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

<sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.**

<sup>11</sup>Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup>**Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.**

<sup>13</sup>Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

<sup>14</sup>**Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.**

<sup>15</sup>O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

<sup>16</sup>**For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.**

<sup>17a</sup>The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;

<sup>17b</sup>**a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

**Second Reading**

**2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10**

<sup>20b</sup>We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. <sup>6</sup>As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup>For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! <sup>3</sup>We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup>but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup>beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup>by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, <sup>7</sup>truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup>in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; <sup>9</sup>as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup>as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

*The Word of the Lord.*

**Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand as able.*

## Gospel Acclamation

“Return to the Lord, Your God” from *Holy Communion Setting Four* (ELW pg. 151)



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,  
slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

## The Holy Gospel

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

*The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 6th chapter.*

### Glory to you, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup>“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. <sup>2</sup>“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>5</sup>“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>16</sup>“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>19</sup>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

### Praise to you, O Christ.

*Please be seated.*

## Homily

*“Where is your treasure?”*

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

*Please stand as able.*

## Hymn of the Day

“Our Father, We Have Wandered” ELW 606

HERZLICH TUT MICH VERLANGEN

Text: Kevin Nichols, 1929-2006, © 1998 International Committee on English of the Liturgy, Inc. Music: Hans Leo Hassler, 1564-1612 arr. Johann Sebastian Bach, 1685-1750

1. Our Father, we have wandered and hidden from your face;  
in foolishness have squandered your legacy of grace.  
But now, in exile dwelling, we rise with fear and shame,  
as, distant but compelling, we hear you call our name.
2. And now at length discerning the evil that we do,  
behold us, Lord, returning with hope and trust to you.  
In haste you come to meet us and home rejoicing bring,  
in gladness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.

3. O Lord of all the living, both banished and restored,  
compassionate, forgiving, and ever-caring Lord,  
grant now that our transgressing, our faithlessness may cease.  
Stretch out your hand in blessing, in pardon, and in peace.

*Please be seated.*

### **Prayers of Intercession**

(Pastor McKenzie, prayers)

*The congregation may sit or kneel for the Prayers.*

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all in need. *A brief silence.*

God of the oppressed, we pray for the church to loose the bonds of injustice in this nation and around the world. Strengthen your church to fast from the cultures of war, materialism, and oppression that surround it in this world that we might act to help repair and rebuild our world with compassion, justice and mercy for all people. God, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of creation, we pray for the earth. As you once brought life forth from the dust, continue to breathe healing and renewal into all creation, nurturing the cycles of life and death with the rebirth that comes only from you. God, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of the nations, we pray for an end to wars and conflicts that reduce nations and communities to ash. Turn nations and their leaders away from serving their own interests, and away from oppressing the weak and vulnerable, so that all nations might genuinely care all people, for we are all your beloved children. God, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of the suffering, we pray for all who live with pain and anxiety, illness and addiction. Comfort all who dwell in the dust of grief that they may know the resurrection life and the presence of your Son, Jesus. God, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of community, we pray for those who accompany the dying: for first responders, healthcare and hospice workers, chaplains, and those who accompany families in the burial of the dead. Sustain them as they serve their neighbors and communities in life and in death with dignity and love. God, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of the cross, we give thanks for the saints who followed the voice of your Son, carrying the cross throughout their lives, suffering with those who suffer. Strengthen us with the promise that from the ashes of death we will know Christ's resurrection. God, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

**Amen.**

*Please stand as able.*

MEAL

### **Holy Communion**

**The Great Thanksgiving** (spoken)

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### **Words of Institution**

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
Broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

### **Invitation**

Jesus draws the whole world to himself.

Come to this meal and be fed.

*Please be seated.*

### **Distribution of Holy Communion**

*Holy Communion is offered by intinction continuously in front of the Lord's table. Gluten free wafers and grape juice are always available.*

### **Communion Music**

“The Glory of These Forty Days”

Tune ERHALT UNS, HERR by Joseph Klug  
Organ setting by Johann Gottfried Walther

“Treasures in Heaven” (7:00 pm)

Joseph W. Clokey  
Kate Suchanek, soprano; Choir and organ

*Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heav'n. for where you treasure is, there will your heart be also. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you, for ev'ry one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

*Please stand as able.*

### **Post-Communion Blessing**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and keep you in his grace.

**Amen.**

### **Post-Communion Prayer**

Let us pray. Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

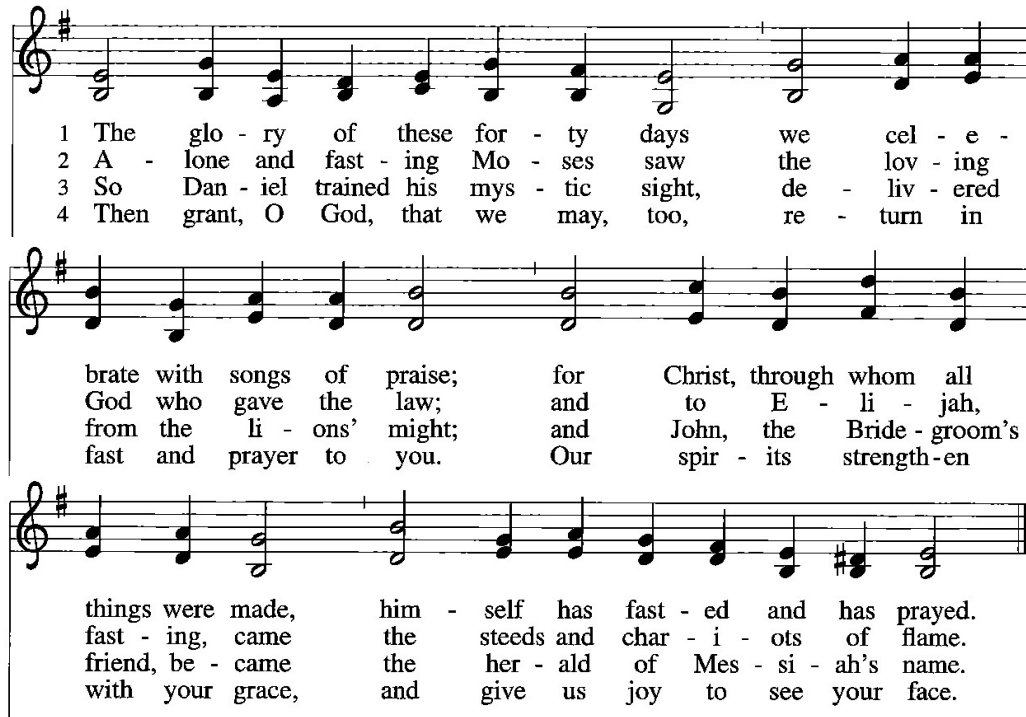
## SENDING

### Sending Hymn

“The Glory of These Forty Days” ELW 320

ERHALT UNS, HERR

Text: Latin hymn, 11<sup>th</sup> cent.; tr. Maurice F. Bell, 1862-1947, alt. Music: J. Klug, *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543 Text Oxford University Press



1 The glo - ry of these for - ty days we cel - e -  
2 A - lone and fast - ing Mo - ses saw the lov - ing  
3 So Dan - iel trained his mys - tic sight, de - liv - ered  
4 Then grant, O God, that we may, too, re - turn in  
brate with songs of praise; for Christ, through whom all  
God who gave the law; and to E - li - jah,  
from the li - ons' might; and John, the Bride - groom's  
fast and prayer to you. Our spir - its strength - en  
things were made, him - self has fast - ed and has prayed.  
fast - ing, came the steeds and char - i - ots of flame.  
friend, be - came the her - ald of Mes - si - ah's name.  
with your grace, and give us joy to see your face.

### SENDING BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ grant you peace.

**Amen.**

### DISMISSAL

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness;

be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good;

render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;

help the afflicted; honor all people;

love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The service ends in silence.*

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Worship Leaders: Pastor Timothy McKenzie; Pastor Alexandra Joy Rode; live streaming camera: A.J. Pridgen; soundboard: Kevin Feezor; musicians: St. Mark's Choir (7:00 pm), Kate Suchanek, soprano; Lester Ackerman, Director of Music Ministry and Organist

**Lenten Mid-Week Worship series:** "Holy Conversations with Jesus" During Lent, please join us Wednesdays (2/25-3/25), at 7 pm in person and live on YouTube, St. Mark's website and Facebook, for the weekly Lenten series.

**Lenten Schedule: Lenten Wednesday Supper** 6 pm-6:45 pm Fellowship Hall, beginning February 25. **Lenten Midweek Worship** 7 pm (in-person and online)

## St. Mark's Prayer List

James Watson, Bonnie Sauer, Sarah East, Phaedra & Scott Snow, Bill Bowden, Harry Kendrick, Kendal Turner, Rochelle Dagenhart, Janice Darnell, Pastor Glen Sea, Mark Barbee, Mark Thornton, Polly Needham, Tom Tolbert, Samuel Davis, Bob Roach, Payton McAdams, Dale Hopp, Bill Coppedge, Marcia Newlin, Andres & Silvia Puky, Ashlyn Bordelon, Betsy League, Carmelita Harris, Lucille Johnson, Marilyn Stevens, Satoko Yamada, Judy Cox, Ross Boheler, Charlene Oppermann, Elaine Ketner Sherman, Gene Ellington, Tanner & Christopher Shirley, Eileen Dunlap, Dannye Olin Bragdon, Mindy Curley, Louisa & Oakley Coburn, Roxi Tolbert, Bill Schwartz, Arlene Fielding, David Kutscher, Danielle Clausen, Joseph Tolbert, and Jay Harbinson.

Please feel free to email Pastor McKenzie with Prayer List and other prayer requests ([pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org](mailto:pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org))



Do you feel like you are in crisis? In Isaiah it is written, "Fear not, for I am with you; do not be dismayed for I am your God." Stephen ministers are here to show the Lord's love and comfort for you in times of trial. If you would like to confidentially speak to a Stephen Minister, please contact Pastor Tim ([pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org](mailto:pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org))

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## *Our Ministers*

**All the people of God at St. Mark's**

**Rev. Dr. Timothy McKenzie, Senior Pastor**  
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**Rev. Alexandra Joy Rode, Associate Pastor  
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