

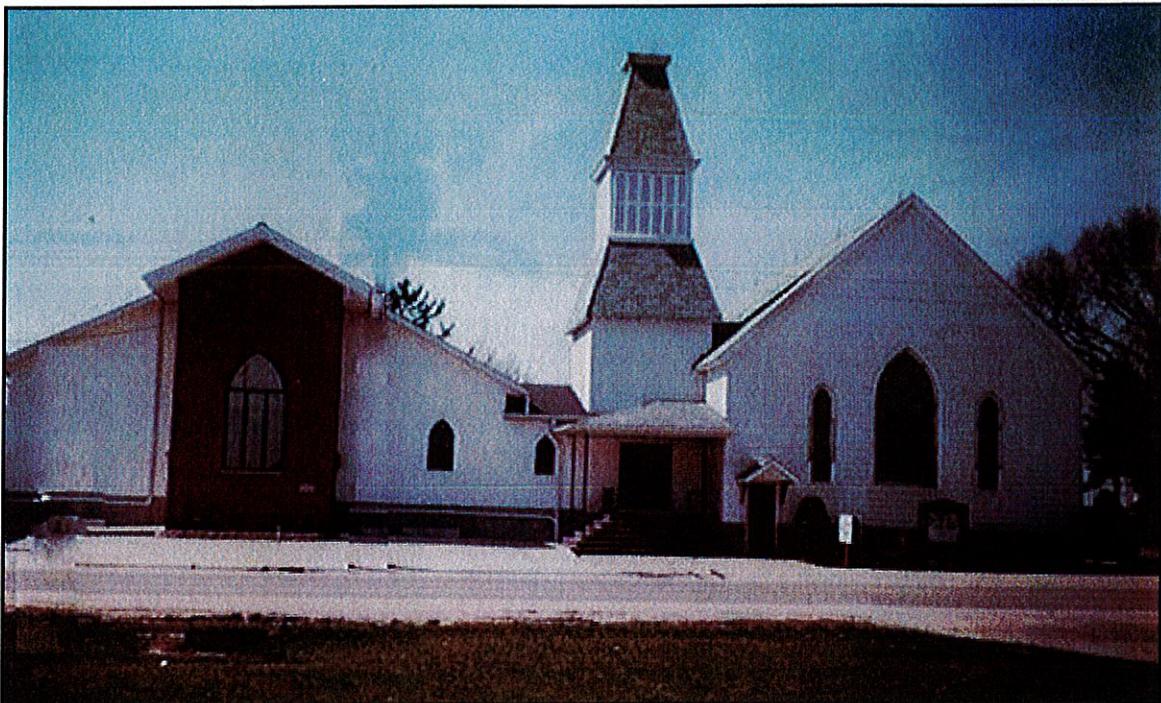
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*The
Chimes*

July 2025 Church News



Freedom Isn't Free
From the Desk of Pastor Joel

The Pilgrims came to America in 1620. They wanted to establish a place where they would be free to worship as they wanted to worship, without fear of reprisal from anyone. The Church of England would not allow them to have that freedom. They had met with opposition in England and so went to the Netherlands. They settled in Leiden, Holland, for a few years, but left there because their children were learning Dutch and the parents feared they were forgetting their English heritage. Having been more agricultural in England, it was very hard for them in the city where they had to learn new trades in different industries. That led them to set out for the New World—America. There were 102 men, women, and children on the Mayflower when they landed in Plymouth, MA, in December of 1620. By the end of that first winter, there were only 47 of them left.

In Plymouth, MA, today there is a Monument to our Forefathers that stands 81 feet tall. This statue represents the values of those early Pilgrims: Faith, Law, Education, Liberty, and Morality—which were all based on Biblical principles—and laid the foundation for our founding fathers for the writing of the Declaration of Independence and later the Constitution.

On July 4th we remember those who fought for our Freedom with thanksgiving and gratitude for the sacrifices they have made so that we can enjoy the freedom we have in this country. However, it seems that “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” (Declaration of Independence), that so many have fought for, that freedom, is in danger of collapsing in our country. If that is the case, then all the sacrifices made were for nothing. We, the followers of Christ, need to be praying for our country’s leaders to listen to those words of the founding fathers because a country divided cannot stand.

How much more, then, should we be thankful to God for the gift of spiritual freedom that He gave to us by going to the cross in our place. That freedom is something that no war, no words, no enemy can take away from us. Let us pray and work together so that this great country will stand on those principles of the early Pilgrims and to the glory of our God!

Galatians 5:1;13a (in the International Childrens’ Bible):

We have freedom now because Christ made us free. So stand strong. Do not change and go back into the slavery of the law. ¹³ My brothers, God called you to be free.

Seward Congregational Church Chimes July Announcements

BIBLE STUDY: Will meet on July, 2, 9, 23 and the 25 at 6:30 p.m.

CONGRGATIONAL MEETING: The Church Council has called a congregational meeting for Sunday, July 13th, after the service, to vote on giving the Trustees permission to enter negotiations with the renter, on selling the Aurand property.

DIACONATE: The Diaconate will meet on July 23, at 11:30 a.m.

TRUSTEE'S: The Trustee's will meet on July 16, at 6:30 p.m.

GUEST SPEAKER: Looking forward, Pastor Lee Eclave will be our guest speaker on July 27th. Pastor Joel will be out of town that weekend.

REMINDER: All contributions for the CHIMES newsletter are due to the Office by the 3rd Friday of every month.

MONTHLY SUMMARY

	May	
General Fund	Income	\$3,851.00
	Expense	\$8,571.76

Monthly Budget \$7,338.59

January-May
\$29,312.61
\$46,434.86

July

BIRTHDAYS

9 Whitney Shank, Julie Gasior
11-Shirley Myers
14-Bryan Allen,
16-Bev Allen
20- Mark Klinger
21-Jennifer Lloyd (Woods)
23-Adam Hazzard
25-Duane Lovett, Scott Whitney,
Ashton Kendall
26-Jim Merchant

ANNIVERSARIES

6-Randy & Teresa Gobeli
26- Mike & Bev Weerda
27-Jerry & Brenda VanHauen

SEWARD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH BOARD OF TRUSTEES

WEDNESDAY JUNE 18, 2025

Meeting was called to order at 6:44 pm. Char opened meeting with prayer.

Present: Char Remer, Brenda VanHauen, Jean Mennenga, Tari Woods, Nancy Kirby.

Secretary Minutes were read and approved. Motion by Tari, Second by Jean.

Treasurer Reports were given by Tari, (Sunday School.) Brenda & Jean. All reports were Approved. Motion by Tari Second by Nancy.

Pastor Joel's report was reviewed and discussed.

Old Business: No update regarding 501 (c)(3)

CCCC in Orlando is confirmed.

Sermon access in Nursery was discussed.

Windows in courtyard were discussed.

New Business: Rental Property (Aurand) was discussed.

Landscape Needs: Char weeded Parsonage and around church.

Meeting adjourned @ 7:47 pm. Motion Char, Seconded by Tari

Next meeting date: Wednesday July 16, 2025.

Submitted by Nancy Kirby

Diaconate meeting minutes for June 4th, 2025

Meeting called to order by chairman Teresa Gobeli at 11:34am. Present were Teresa, Bev Weerda, Bev Hilton, Delores Poppen, Karleen Merchant, Barb Daubs and Pastor Joel Hicke, who opened the meeting with prayer.

Karleen read the minutes from the May meeting. Motion by Barb to approve, 2nd by Bev. Minutes approved

Bev W. gave the treasurers report. There is \$891.15 in the account. Motion by Karleen to accept, 2nd by Delores. Report approved.

Pastor Joel gave a list of May visits and calls. He was given some additional names of people to visit. Also, he reported that he will be gone on August 3rd. as he will be attending the CCCC annual meeting.

Under old business, VBS was discussed. Pastor Joel volunteered to do the Thursday lesson, as the other days are covered. We have got all the supplies that were requested for crafts.

Those bringing pies for Father's Day Fellowship, shared what kind they will be making. Still could use one more pie.

Pulpit fill for this Sunday, June 8th will be Pastor Brad Reardon. On July 27th, Pastor Lee Eclov will join us to give the message. Bev H. will work on the August 3rd pulpit fill, as she has two suggestions given her, but neither one were available in July.

The Community pancake breakfast in September was tabled until the next meeting.

Our next meeting will be July 23rd at 11:30am. There will be no August meeting. In September we will change time, as Bev H will not be available mornings.

Tari Woods and Bev H are still looking into Sunday School material for Fall.

With no further business, Bev W made motion to adjourn, 2nd by Bev H. Meeting adjourned at 12:22pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karleen Merchant, secretary



June 22, 2025 Church Council meeting

Meeting called to order by Char Remer. In addition to Char, those present were, Tari Woods, Teresa Gobeli, Karleen Merchant and Pastor Joel. After short discussion about reason for calling meeting, Teresa made a motion to call a Congregational meeting on July 13th to vote yea or nay, on giving the Trustees permission to enter negotiations with renter, on selling the Aurand home property. 2nd made by Karleen. Motion approved.

It will be announced from the pulpit next week and also be in the Chimes.

Respectfully submitted,

Karleen Merchant

July 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	3	4	5
6 Worship Service 9:00 a.m. Fellowship following the service	7	8	9 Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	10	11	12
13 Worship Service 9:00 a.m. Congregational Meeting Fellowship following the service	14	15	16 Trustee's 6:30 p.m.	17	18	19
20 Worship Service 9:00 a.m. Fellowship following the service	21	22	23 Diaconate 11:30 a.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	24	25	26
27 Worship Service 9:00 a.m. Fellowship following the service	28	29	30 Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	31		

2025 VBS report

We had a very successful four-day VBS this year! 37 children participated and enjoyed the Bible stories, crafts, music, recess and refreshments. They learned about creation, Noah and the rainbow, Joseph's coat and his dreams, and Jesus. For crafts they made tie-dye shirts, rainbows, picture frames and bracelets. We thank everyone who made this possible. The last day, we had a short program, so everyone could come and enjoy the songs they learned. Hats off to all the volunteers!

Teachers

Sydney
Laura
Char
Pastor Joel

Kitchen help

Ella
Teresa G.
Delores
Jean M.

Sound

Jackie F.
Domynic

Music

Karleen

Helpers

Evelyn
Tari W.
Carsen

Crafts

Sarah L.
Nancy K.
Tari W.
Adriane T.

Cookie and snack donations

Jacki C.
Teresa G.
Theresa A.
Peggy
Delores
Ella

Recess

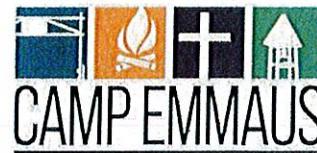
Abby
Brock
Barb D.
Brenda V.
Teresa G.



VBS 2025



THE EMMAUS ROAD



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www.campemmaus.org

CAMP MANAGER'S CORNER



I don't binge-watch much of anything ... but when I do, I'm fully invested. I recently watched *House of David* on Amazon Prime and thoroughly enjoyed the show's take on the events that led up to the battle where David faced Goliath.

One scene struck me. It's where David is out tending the sheep at night after having had an argument with his father, Jesse, about not being able to go and fight with his brothers against the Amalekites. So, he's frustrated, angry, and lying on his back out in the fields and looks up at the night sky and asks, "Show me who I am."

Some of our most raw and honest moments are when we are looking up at the sky/stars/heavens and asking God to show us our purpose or God's will for our lives. It's no mystery that when we are lost in the bigness of creation, we ask big questions. I wonder how many of us still lie on our backs and look at the night sky and ask such questions?

There's something mystical that happens at camp when we intentionally slow down and look up. We're open to the fresh possibilities that may emerge in our hearts and souls. How many campers only feel safe enough to ask that question when they are at camp?

Those questions become like prayers and express a deep desire for God to illuminate the right course in our lives. My prayer for this coming summer camp season is that we would remember what it means to be created and loved by God and to seek God's purpose for our lives. And I pray that we too, would seek to ask God as we get lost in the night sky, "Show me who I am," trusting that the same God who set the stars in place is ready to guide our steps.

Respectfully in Christ, Randall Westfall

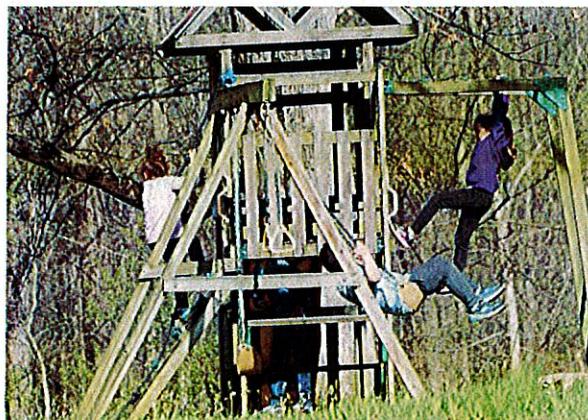
2025 SUMMER SCHEDULE

June 20-22	CIT Training
June 21-22	Elementary (K-Grade 2)
July 6-12	Survivor Camp @ Camp Mack (Grades 6-8)
July 13-19	Senior High (Grades 9-12)
July 20-26	Middle School (Grades 6-8)
July 27-31	Intermediate (Grades 3-5)
Aug. 1-3	Young Adult/Young at Heart (Ages 18+)
Aug. 3-6	Target Sports Camp
Aug. 7-9	Women's Camp
Aug. 29-Sept. 1	Labor Day Family Camp
Sept. 13	Camp Celebration Day & Lunch

SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Yes, there's still time! Register today at campemmaus.churchcenter.com/registrations (or follow the link from the Camp Emmaus web page).

IN THE SWING OF SPRING



Dozens of Camp Emmaus supporters, including a sizeable group of kids, came for the now-annual Spring Into Camp event on April 26. The day included a hike, target sports, games, a cookout, and visiting and exploring the grounds as camp previewed its summer season.



READY TO RESCUE! Camp Emmaus welcomes Raiden Zimmerman, a member of Mount Morris Church of the Brethren, as its lifeguard and support staff for this summer. Raiden was a senior high camper last year, and camp is glad to have him return in this new role.

AND ... SUNDAY SWIMS ARE BACK! With a new lifeguard comes the return of Sunday swim times at camp! The camp pool will be open to the public 1-4 p.m. Sundays through the summer; cost is \$5 per person.

The camp board adopted the following mission statement at its winter meeting:

Camp Emmaus is an outdoor ministry that seeks to create a welcoming space where all can experience the healing powers of creation and be called to live a life of service, peace, and deep connections with one another.

CAMP BOARD: Sara Garner, chair; Gary Baisden; Patrick Benassi; Michelle Bowman; Amanda Burch; Shannon McNeil Smith; Monica Rice Frye; Mike Sondgeroth; Jonathan Stauffer; Callie Surber; Daniel Radcliff, interim financial secretary; Randall Westfall, camp manager

Photos by Jim Miner and Randall Westfall

THE SANDLOT



A new load of sand has done wonders to spruce up a couple of popular play spots around camp! The gaga pit and the volleyball court both received a new sandy surface just in time for summer campers and rental groups to enjoy.

CAMP NEWS & NOTES

- A great escape: The group at the **Escape to Emmaus** birdwatching day in early May spotted 33 different types of birds! Look for Escape to Emmaus days again in the fall.
- Several dozen people came to camp for this year's Memorial Day **Family Camp weekend**. A directors' meeting also took place during the weekend, and numerous volunteers from area congregations came that Saturday and the week before to do **camp clean-up** and get all the facilities ready for the summer.
- As always, please consider **giving a gift to camp**: Mail a check, or visit <https://campemmaus.churchcenter.com/giving>.



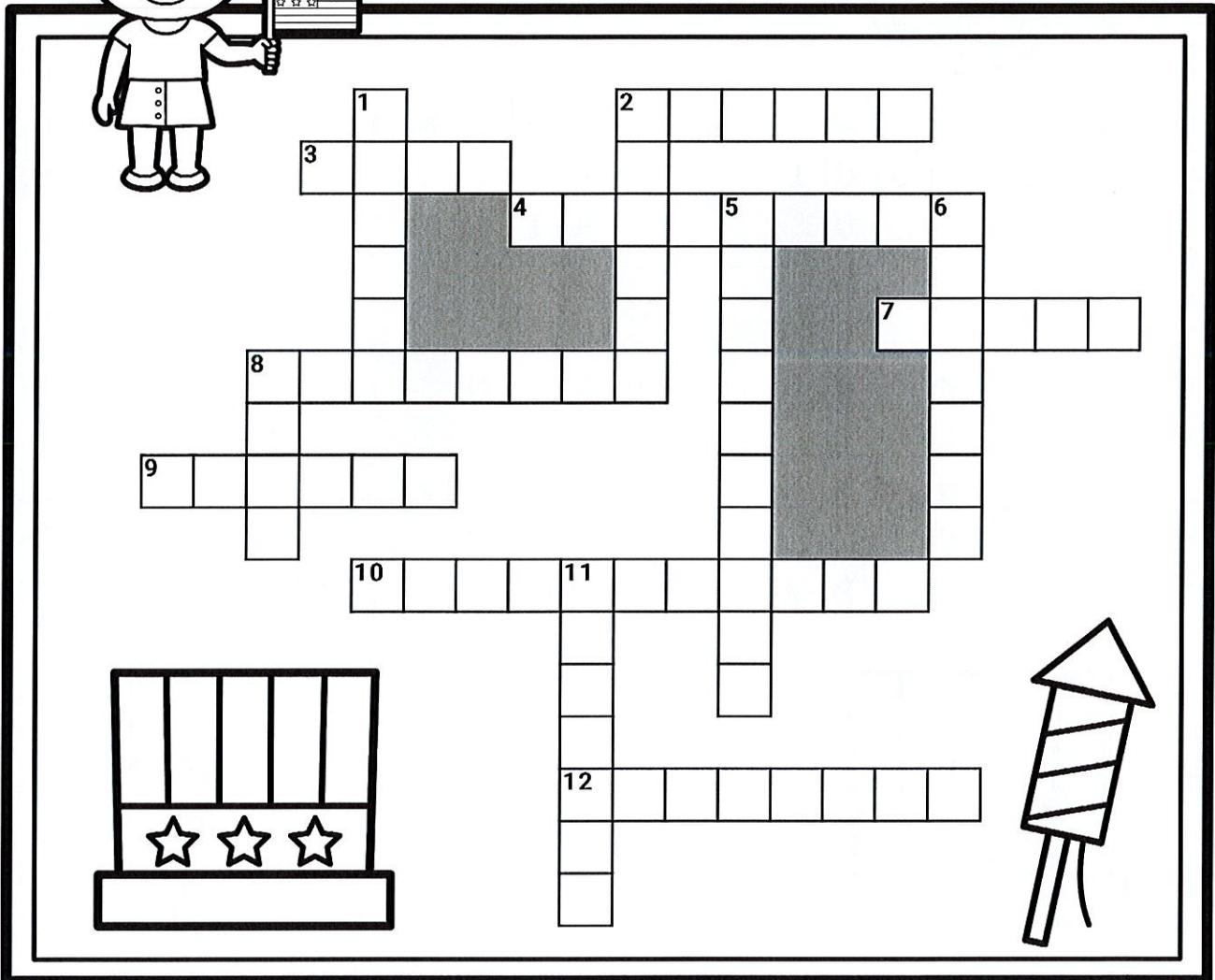
“Where the spirit of
the Lord is, there is
freedom.”

2 Corinthians 3:17



FOURTH OF JULY

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

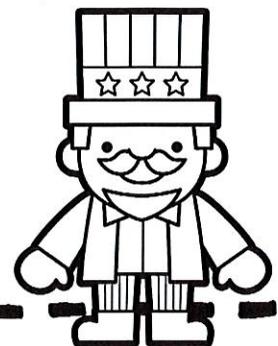


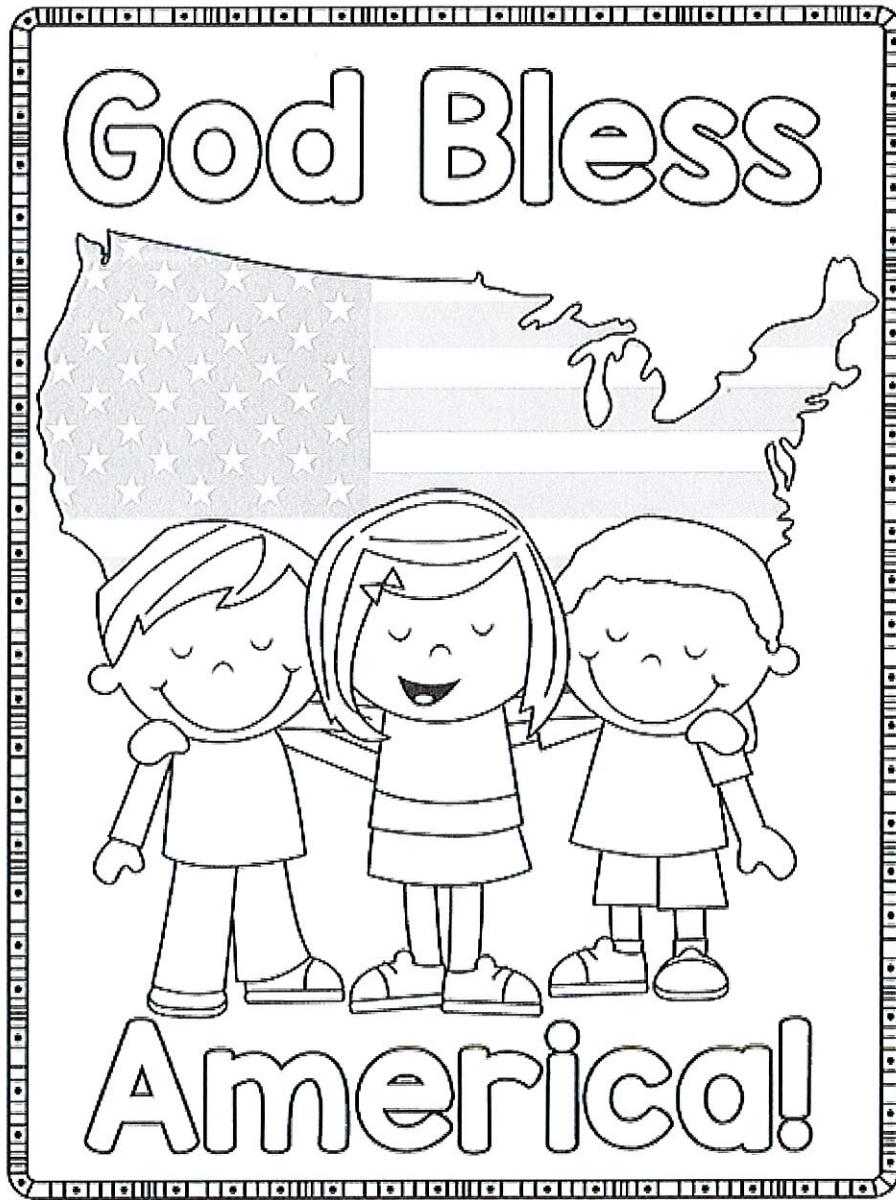
Across

2. A large outdoor meal with friends and family
3. The month when we celebrate Independence Day
4. A bright explosion in the sky during celebrations
7. Hot dogs and hamburgers cooked on this
8. Outdoor cooking on the Fourth of July
9. Independence Day is also called the _____ of July
10. This document declared America's independence
12. Sweet frozen treat perfect for hot July days

Down

1. The season when we celebrate Independence Day
2. People march in this during celebrations
5. The first president of the United States
6. Stars and _____ on the American flag
8. Red, white, and _____ are the colors of the American flag
11. The country that celebrates Independence Day





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