



# The Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ



## Purpose (from the Gospel of Matthew):

*To love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves*

## Vision:

*United in Christ's love, a just world for all*

## Mission:

*United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all*

## Weekly E-News Spring Edition

June 24, 2021

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## Message from the Conference

Dear Beloved Community in the Vermont Conference,

I don't know about you, but I am finding that the process of deciding what and when to open and under what circumstances is still stressful. It is stressful just like dealing with this highly contagious disease and like the decisions we made to not be physically together until a safer time. I feel a bit guilty for not being more joyful and relieved that we are finally getting beyond the need for constant vigilance. I AM joyful to reconnect, to hug, to share meals. There are, however still decisions that have to be made and the desires and concerns of others to honor. Further, this hasn't taken away the exhaustion so many are feeling and replaced those feelings with instant energy. There is mourning to go through though we are not talking about this. Many people are now experiencing delayed grief for loved ones who died during and/or of Covid.



So, this is a reminder to be gentle with yourself and others. Rather than running full steam ahead as in person congregational life begins to return, I believe there is wisdom in starting slowly and giving our bodies, minds and spirits time to rest and heal. Summer offers opportunities for rest and recreation, for a slower pace of life and for doing the things we love like hiking, swimming, kayaking, napping in the hammock, making music, practicing whatever gives us joy.

It will take time to sort out what has happened and what has happened to us so we can together make meaning, be willing to name the losses and be brave enough to say out loud what needs not to be returned to and what else we may be called to. It is only by intent, by not running as fast as we can towards the next thing that the Spirit has the chance to get our attention and speak to our hearts.

Here's hoping that you will have a Spirit/heart/healing/resting and reconnecting time in these summer days.

In peace and hope,  
Lynn



## New News!!!



### 2021 Clergy Convocation Registration is OPEN!!!

**Monday, Oct 4th – Wednesday, Oct 6th**  
**At The Craftsbury Outdoor Center**  
(\*\*\*note the NEW location\*\*\*)

**Theme:** *“Leaning Into Change When We Don’t Know  
Where We Might Land”*

Just like riding a bike, when the roads ahead of our communities shift, we need to both turn and lean into the turn to keep our balance. In this post-Covid season, we know we need to turn, but knowing how and which way to lean is both essential and hard to imagine when we can't see the path ahead. This convocation is about learning how to lean into a turn in community, discerning the path together and building the muscles and practices to stay balanced and agile in the face of turns.

You can currently register at *\*Early Bird\** prices, however these will go up by the end of the summer.

Read 2021 Clergy Convocation brochure [here!!!](#)

**REGISTER HERE!!!**



### New ONA Page on VTCUCC Webpage!

What better way to celebrate Pride Month than with an updated ONA Page!?!

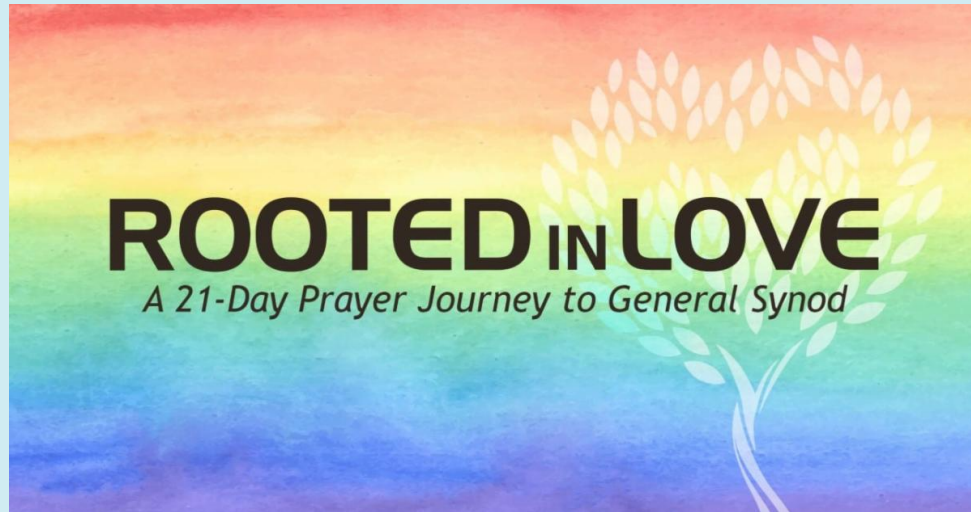
**Find it HERE!**

If your church is ONA, please feel free send in a photo or two that you think best



captures the spirit of your congregation. The photos can be of your church itself, a super fun function, or anything else you feel would look great on the ONA page!

\*\*\*However, please make sure these are photos that have releases, that you have taken yourself, or a congregant has taken and given you permission to use.\*\*\*



### UCC officers: 'Join us in prayer for our time together'

*"Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." -*  
Philippians 4:6-7

Each biennium the United Church of Christ gathers as the General Synod to discern the Spirit's calling to the church in this present day. **General Synod 33** will begin on July 11, 2021, with opening worship and will continue through July 18, 2021. Although General Synod convenes to conduct the business of the Church, we approach this work in a spirit of worship. In that spirit, beginning June 20 and continuing throughout Synod, we invite the entire church to join us in prayer for our gathered time together.

[Read More Here](#)

## Remembering Rev. Hal Harrison



### Memories of Hal Harrison from the Purintons

#### Barbara:

I met Hal in 1975-6 when I was at Andover Newton and attended a Christian Education workshop at Silver Lake. When Charlie and I were installed in 1978 as co-pastors at the Second Congregational Church of Jeffersonville, Hal and Betsy gave the sermon. We asked them because they were both pastors and we sought role models in what we were told was a "new model for ministry." Hal and Betsy attended our wedding in Newfane, we still use the ceramic maple syrup pitcher they gave us as a wedding gift.

There followed many years of working with Hal when I was on the Christian Education Department heading various committees. He cared about sharing faith and engaging spiritual seekers of all ages. He was also just a wonderful caring, man who was interested in every little detail. It was special to see him at a Retired Pastors Boundary

Training in early 2020 and to have one more chance to share a hug and a hello.

Charlie:

Hal was part of the triumvirate of Revs. Charles Chamberlain, Conference Minister and Rev. John Nutting, the other Associate Conference Minister; a team that nurtured our co-pastorates. This team modeled leadership, the necessary challenge of congregational leadership, and were a good part of why we are still here!

1969: I first met Hal when I was in 9th grade, at Silver Lake Conference Center in Connecticut. Amid Anti-Vietnam War anthems, Hal embodied peace, and modeled welcome for all of us awkward teens. Certainly my vision of what the church could be was formed in large part during those church camp weeks.

1979: Hal was the supervisor (wrangler? wise elder?) of the summer pastors and VBS cohort, when I interned at Bethany Randolph. Every couple of weeks we would all meet with Hal, (and often Betsy) for fellowship, fun, and support. We had trouble choosing whether we would go out for beer or ice cream cones, but we always loved being with Hal.

1990?: Hal led a Bible study with several hundred people at an Annual Meeting in Rutland. He brilliantly and humbly talked us through Romans 5:3-4, eliciting ideas and insights from all gathered, bringing the text to life in ways that I still remember 30 years later. What a gift!

Hal was an attentive listener, radiant with deep kindness, and cheerful in life and faith. I am so glad he has been a part of my life and my ministry-- for more than 50 years!

Martha Beckwith Peck

Do you have a favorite story about Rev. Hal Harrison?

Though he may no longer be with us, we can still share his joy, wisdom, and inspiration.

We are looking for your fondest memories to share with the rest of the Vermont Conference to further the already enormous reach he had.

Please help us celebrate his remarkable life by sharing your story [here](#).



THE REVERENDS HAL & BETTSY HARRISON  
(Married 1959)



# HAL & BETTSY

KNEW THE JOYS & COSTS OF SEMINARY.

THEY MET AT ANDOVER NEWTON; WERE ORDAINED;  
AND THEN MENTORED, COUNSELED & ENCOURAGED  
GENERATIONS OF CLERGY.



TO HONOR HAL & BETTSY,  
WE ARE ESTABLISHING A FUND IN THEIR NAME  
THROUGH THE VERMONT CONFERENCE  
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.

*"A scholarship in my parents' name... would be the height of immodesty.  
And the family's great joy." - Jeremy Harrison*

ONCE FUNDED TO SIZE, THESE GIFTS WILL BE TRANSFERRED  
TO ANDOVER NEWTON SEMINARY AT YALE  
WITH THE INTENT OF FUNDING AN ENDOWED  
HARRISON SCHOLARSHIP.

YOU MAY SEND GIFTS TO: HARRISON FUND  
c/o VTCUCC, 36 NORTH MAIN STREET, RANDOLPH, VT 05060 OR [WWW.VTCUCC.ORG](http://WWW.VTCUCC.ORG)

## Rev. Thomas D. Steffen

1934 - 2021



"Rev. Thomas Steffen passed on to eternity June 14, 2021. Tom faithfully served Second Congregational Church of Bennington as pastor 1965-94 and pastor emeritus 1995-2021. A memorial service is planned for Fri. July 30, 3pm at Second Congregational Church and will be livestreamed online."

-Rev. Mark Blank

[Read his full obituary here](#)

## **Boundary Training 101!**

**SAVE THE DATE: September 1st, 2021**

**The Vermont Conference will be offering an in-person boundary training on Wednesday, September 1st, during the day - details to follow.**

**Please note that all clergy - licensed and ordained - need regular Boundary Training, so Save the Date!**

## **Service of Remembrance at South Hero Congregational Church**

A Service of Remembrance, Reflection and Renewal will be held Saturday, June 26 at 4pm at the South Hero Congregational Church, UCC at 24 South Street, South Hero. This service is designed to remember the three losses of these past 15 months – the death of loved ones from Covid 19, the death of loved ones from illness or other causes unrelated to Covid 19, and all the other losses of these times: school, work, family gatherings and more. The service will include readings, gentle music, time for reflection and honoring the losses of our lives and the memory of our dear ones. This service is open to all who wish to attend. No need to be a member of the church or resident of the Islands to attend. The service will be held indoors and will follow current Vermont guidelines for gathering. Please bring a picture of your loved one to display on a wall of remembrance. For more information, please contact the church office at 372 4962.



## **Practical Resources for Churches** *consultants | workshops | webinars | resources*

### **Saving Your Church Money with the Employee Retention Tax Credit**

Thursday, July 15

2:00 - 3:00 PM

Leader: Elaine Sommerville

Does your church have employees for whom you pay Social Security taxes? If so, the church may be eligible for the employee retention credit, a CARES act provision that has been extended through December 31, 2021! The employee retention credit may provide a church with up to \$7,000 per employee for employees that are not ministers. Learn more.

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### **We Are All Children of God - creating intergenerational church Online, In-Person, and Hybrid**

Tuesday, August 17

2:00 - 3:00 PM Eastern



How do we create church (not just worship) where all ages are truly invited? How do we do this online? in person? hybrid? Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me." In this directive, we are called to create church that leaves no one distanced or left out from learning about and experiencing the love of Jesus. This webinar will explore some of the opportunities churches have to engage people of all ages in the life of the community. We'll look at worship models, community standards, and safety measures meant to create space, both online and offline, for congregants to come together and practice faith in the ancient way of intentionally intergenerational community.

Find many more offerings from Practical Resources for Churches [here!](#)



## Peacemakers Pulpit- June 2021

Rev. Marjorie MacNeill

In mid-winter of 2019 and 2020, my daughter joined me in Arizona for wonderful birding and for visits to Arizona-Mexico border missions where we brought needed supplies donated by Vermonters. We had to postpone travel this year but have kept up with changing situations/needs there, nevertheless.



We worshipped at The Good Shepherd UCC in Sahuarita AZ (<https://thegoodshepherducc.org>) whose pastor/people have long been concerned about just treatment for those crossing the border. We brought supplies and generous donations from Vermont.

In Cochise County we visited a Presbyterian mission in Douglas AZ. In 2019, we brought supplies for their cross-border children's programs. By 2020, their focus was on families forced to wait for asylum in Mexico. We made a substantial donation from Vermont churches toward that outreach. This spring, Border Patrol was suddenly able to release large numbers of asylum seekers into Douglas where the whole town rallied in amazing ways to "welcome the stranger" and (<http://fronteradecristo.org>) shifted their focus once again.

In Tucson, the Casa Alitas Catholic Community Services shelter assisted hundreds of asylum seekers in 2019, reached across the border of necessity

in 2020, but welcomed many this spring at their beautiful Tucson shelter. (<https://www.ccs-soaz.org>) We brought needed basic clothing in 2019, generous checks in 2020, and continue to support their efforts.

In 2020, Episcopalians, the UCC, and ELCA Lutherans – began Cruzando Fronteras (<https://fronteras.azdiocese.org>) at St. Andrews, Nogales AZ, to create safe shelter in Nogales MX for waiting asylum seekers. With your support, we provided backpacks, sleeping bags, clothing, and toiletries for their cross-border outreach. Now, the program assists folks from that shelter who are finally allowed to join family here.

Political decisions created changing situations for asylum-seekers. Border programs have been adaptive as needs have shifted even since 2019. Support, education, and prayer are needed. AZ programs are grateful to Vermonters for our concern and long-distance help.



## **Jean Daley's Celebration of Life**

**\*\*\*Correction\*\*\***

Jean Daley's Celebration of Life will be at Malletts Bay UCC on Saturday, July 10th at \*\*\*11 a.m\*\*\*.

We request that anyone who is not fully vaccinated to wear a mask.

In 1978, Jean was a founding member of the new church start, Malletts Bay Congregational Church United Church of Christ in Colchester, VT and held numerous positions over the years.

You can read her full obituary [here](#).

## **Seeking Church musician/music director for**

## **North Pomfret Congregational Church, United Church of Christ**



Music Director/church musician shall be responsible for organizing and directing church choirs and coordinating special music. Musician will also have the responsibility of providing the sources of music used in the worship services, working with the Minister in selecting the weekly music.

Send resumé and inquires to [\*\*Npomfretcc@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:Npomfretcc@gmail.com) or North Pomfret Church, PO Box 308, North Pomfret, VT 05053



## **Gorgeous FREE Pulpit!**

Laurie Krooss (Minister of Second Congregational Church in Londonderry) was recently given a handmade pulpit. It is made of Aspen! Sadly, they do not have room in Londonderry for it, so she would love to pass it on to someone who can use it. She is also happy to assist with transporting it to its new home. If you or your church are interested in this marvelous piece, please contact Laurie [here!](#)



### **A Call to all Racial Justice and Environmental Justice Advocates:**

#### **Action on Line 3 Pipeline in Northern Minnesota**

Recently, a group of activists in Minnesota, including both Indigenous and Faith Leaders, have put out a call for people of faith to join in opposing the Line 3 Pipeline that Enbridge Corp. is already in the process of building. This Pipeline is expected to carry tar sands oil across sacred Indigenous lands, as well as numerous bodies of water including the headwaters of the Mississippi. While we celebrate the cancelling of the Keystone XL Pipeline, it's time now to step up to oppose this equally destructive project. Both the Minnesota and National offices of Interfaith Power and Light are very much engaged with this issue, as is our own UCC Environmental Justice Ministries office.

They are eager for our support, so I encourage you to check out the materials with these links, and lift up your voice in faithful witness on behalf of our sacred Earth and our Indigenous brothers and sisters:

Interfaith Power and Light info, including suggested email to President Biden:

[Line 3 actions June 2021.pdf - Google Drive](#)

Read the entire article [here!](#)

## **Service for Martin "Charlie" Hanley**

Martin "Charlie" Hanley, father of Terry Hanley (former Assistant Pastor of the Federated Church of Castleton) passed into the next phase of his journey on May 8, 2021, some 15 years after receiving a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease. His service will be held at Grace Congregational Church UCC in Rutland on Sunday, June 27th at 1:30 PM.

His full obituary can be found [here](#).



## **In Need of Your Prayers**

Please continue praying for Marisa Laviola's brother who remains gravely ill.

Robin Hoag's son Matthew, just 22 years old, is being treated for Ewing's Sarcoma. This is a recurrence after a year of chemotherapy and radiation to the tumors in his pelvic/abdominal area, lungs, and bones. Robin is the Office Administrator for Second Congregational Church in Bennington.



## **EVENTS AROUND THE CONFERENCE**

(Please let us know what your Congregation is up to by sending an email to [VermontConference@gmail.com](mailto:VermontConference@gmail.com) .

You may just see yourself or someone you love in the eKit or our Facebook page!)

## **Follow The Hope Fund!**

The Hope Fund now has a live page on the Vermont Conference Website! It is a great place to find information about the Fund, as well as see what Churches within the Conference have done to make their communities a better place!

[You can read all about it here!](#)







## WANTED: PART-TIME OFFICE COORDINATOR

Greensboro United Church of Christ is seeking a multi-skilled individual to manage the office of a small, progressive, socially engaged church.

[You can find more information and apply here!](#)



### The Racial Justice Task Force Needs You!!

*"I joined this group because I've come to realize that all the issues of justice are interconnected, in the spirit of Traci Blackmon's keynote on Crossroads. My own passion is the*

*environment, and you can't separate a healthy environment out from racial justice, since unhealthy environments have disproportionate impacts on communities of color, causing immense suffering. In the group, I appreciate the way we've explored many facets of activism around this issue, ranging from self-examination and book study, to political witness, to community collaborations, and as an activist myself, I've gained insight into the ways these different forms of racial justice advocacy all work together."* - Fred Taylor

You can learn more (including how to join!!!) [here!](#)



### Outdoor Ministry Camp

Register online for a week at Horton Center this summer!

[www.hortoncenter.org](http://www.hortoncenter.org)

Watch this! <https://youtu.be/rLZm8fzCV2Y>

Join us for.... **VT Takes a Hike to the Mtn**

**Deans: Laurie Chipman & Diane Tinkham**

*for those going into 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> in the fall*

**July 18-24, 2021**

*VT @ the Lake is taking a hiatus from the lake at Rock Point and hiking to the Mountain! Come join us up at Pine Mountain and unite with middle schoolers from the Green (VT) and White (NH) Mountains. God's spirit will be in all we do at camp this week as we hike, play, pray, sing, rock climb, do some arts and crafts, and discover our own courage through games, challenges, and much more!*

We have 2 awesome counselors lined up so far!

Pastor Ed Sunday-Winters (Greensboro Congregational) & Jeffrey

Tuper-Giles (Barre Congregational)!

These are two fun guys who have a big heart and a love for God, youth & nature!

Are you 18yrs or older? Love the outdoors and spending time helping young youth? Watch this

one! <https://youtu.be/gecZ0v3BGZk> Then reach out to Laurie

Chipman [lchipman@fcej.org](mailto:lchipman@fcej.org) Counselors get a reduction in cost for their own child/youth to attend a camp this summer. No cost for counselors. Volunteering will be the most fun you've had in a real long time. You'll be exhausted every night and will sleep deep, breathing in the fresh mountain air, not to mention worship on Chapel Rock! Click on 'volunteer' on their website for more information. *(College youth – this looks great on your resume!)*



## NEWS UPDATE from Horton Center

### \*\*\*\*COVID Testing Update\*\*\*\*

NEW: Anyone who is fully vaccinated does not need to get a COVID test completed before coming to camp. This applies to volunteers and campers. Everyone will still be tested upon arrival on the mountain, but if you're two weeks or more out from your last dose of a COVID vaccine you no longer need to provide proof of a negative test result within 7 days of arriving!

This means that we will need a copy of your vaccine card or some other way of proving you are fully vaccinated on hand. Please email me a copy of your proof, and have your counselors do the same. If we do not have proof of your vaccination, you will need to get tested within seven days of your arrival at camp.

ALSO if you're 18 or older you could:

- Be a Counselor for a week and change the lives of our young people at camp. Check out the [video](#) to find out why "We Need You!"
- Be part of the Summer Staff! Get more info and details [Here!](#)

Churches: We have provided two 'Virtual Bulletin Inserts' [Come to your camp](#) and [Come to your camp2](#)) for you to add to your church e-news letter, your Sunday bulletin, or your Sunday worship videos to help us get more campers to camp!

See you on the mountain.

As always you can contact Tim Hughes with any questions at: [thughes@nhucc.org](mailto:thughes@nhucc.org) or 603-545-9660.

## COVID-19 NEWS



FEMA

### COVID 19 FUNERAL ASSISTANCE

As part of the federal funds allocated for COVID relief, there are monies for funeral assistance for the families anyone who dies of COVID. The number of those filing a claim is much less than the number eligible, and because of privacy rules, the state can't just email a list of families. We need help getting word out there to clergy and funeral homes that this assistance is available, (and retroactive). Please share the attached document with anyone that seems appropriate to help raise awareness about this.

Please read more about this [here!](#)



# Self-Care in a Pandemic



## Resources for resilience support clergy through COVID-19

It's been almost a year since COVID-19 irrevocably changed United Church of Christ churches.

Members have become ill. Many never recovered. Countless buildings remain closed—some reopening, only to shut down again.

Congregations worship and gather virtually. Clergy have to find ways to cope and carry on. As Americans line up for vaccinations, health experts warn against darker days ahead.

Eleven months of uncertainty. The pandemic is taking an emotional toll on mental health and ministers are not immune.

Continue reading [here](#).

The Vermont Department of Health has provided new guidance specifically for Communities of Faith including holidays, services, and events. This includes (but is not limited to) precautions and actions for organizational leaders. It can be found [here](#).



## **Need Extra Support During the Pandemic?**

COVID Support VT is a statewide program offering free and confidential emotional support and connections to resources for anyone needing help. They offer a wide range of supports on their [website](#).



## **SAVE THE DATE!**

**UCCMA Conference 2021 -  
Registration is now open!**

Join the UCCMA online for workshops, worship services, a wonderful concert, vendors and networking. We will be virtually hosted by the First Church of Christ, Congregational, UCC in the historic town of Glastonbury, Connecticut. From Thursday evening through the Saturday 4 pm closing worship service, we provide a plethora of activities that will enhance your music skills and give you resources and ideas for new ways of expressing God's Spirit in these pandemic times. We also provide glimpses of the historic scenery around the church in Glastonbury, which you would have enjoyed if you had come in person as originally planned. Join us instead online for a mental reset and spiritual refreshment with a taste of Connecticut.



[Find out more and register HERE!](#)

## **RESOURCES FOR ONLINE MINISTRY!**



**Do you need help with getting your church services online?  
Find resources and help here:**

[Click here for WorshipWell information and resources](#)

**Worship Resource Links for How to Live Stream- from the Southern New England Conference UCC**

**Free-Use, No-Licensing Music and Worship Materials here**

**Zoom Worship Laboratory Video Tutorial**

**How to prevent Zoom Bombing**

If you have additional resources to share please email the conference office at [VermontConference@gmail.com](mailto:VermontConference@gmail.com) !



### **How to Contact Conference Staff**

We are having some TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES with the email servers, so until further notice the only emails that are working at the conference are:

Conference Minister: Rev. Dr. Lynn Bujnak [llbvtc@gmail.com](mailto:llbvtc@gmail.com)  
Associate Conference Minister: Rev. Paul Sangree [sangreepucc@gmail.com](mailto:sangreepucc@gmail.com)  
Office Administrator: Elise Foster [vermontconference@gmail.com](mailto:vermontconference@gmail.com)  
Ministries Coordinator: Rev. Jackie Lingelbach [vtconmincoor@gmail.com](mailto:vtconmincoor@gmail.com)



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DEADLINE for E-Kit News must be received by **Tuesday of each week.**  
Please send any and all information to Elise at [vermontconference@gmail.com](mailto:vermontconference@gmail.com).

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**Thank You for Your Support!**

**Our Churches Wider Mission Basic Support, Association Dues, and  
Friends of the Vermont Conference make this communication possible.**

**Donate**

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**Connect with us**



**visit our website at <http://www.vtcucc.org/>**

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