

Christ Episcopal Church

Babylon, New York



Annual Report
2020

Prepared for the
2021 Annual Meeting

January 24, 2020

2020 Parochial Statistics

Burials

April 7, 2020

Thomas Jack Weigel

April 22, 2020

Winifred M. Weber

**2020 Annual Meeting Minutes
Christ Episcopal Church Babylon
January 26, 2020**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mother Clare at 9:05am. She led us in opening prayer for wisdom and guidance and for those parishioners who had died in 2019.

John Foley opened the polls and announced the following slate of candidates: Diane Gaidon for Warden; Desmond Reid and Lynn Simmons for vestry; a one one-year vacancy and a two-year vacancy without a nomination. There were no nominations from the floor. A motion was made to suspend the annual meeting until after the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The motion passed.

The Holy Eucharist, Rite II, was celebrated with Mother Clare presiding. The sermon was the Rector's address to the congregation. Nora Seplavy was presented the Bishop's Medal in recognition of her many years of service to Christ Episcopal Church.

The Annual Meeting Resumed

After a continental breakfast, the annual meeting resumed in Miller Hall at 10:53am by Mother Clare.

Appointment of the Secretary and Tellers

Vikki Boning, Clerk of the Vestry, was appointed secretary for the meeting. No Tellers were necessary.

Reading of the Annual Meeting Minutes of 2019

Bob Norman made a motion to waive the reading of the Annual Meeting minutes of 2019. The motion passed.

Capital Campaign Presentation and Appreciative Inquiry Questions

Bob Norman and Diane Gaidon made a final presentation regarding the Capital Campaign. Kathy Hannan led an appreciative inquiry of the congregation to evaluate favorite memories and experiences over 2019 of our 150th celebration activities, and also to gather further ideas from the congregation of how to continue the celebration for 2020. Memories were: the Gala and connecting with each other and parishioners from the past, the pilgrimage from the Methodist church, learning the history of our church, and the success of the Capital Campaign. Ideas for continuing the celebration were: to continue to strive to maintain a larger presence in the community through various activities, and the addition of a project introduced by Lynn Simmons to honor the work of the women of Christ Episcopal Church.

Treasurer's Reports from the Finance Committee

Pete Palmier, Finance Committee Chairperson, presented a detailed summary of Income and Expenses of 2019, the Balance Sheet from 2019, how well we met our expectations, and how the 2020 Ministry Plan was produced. He spoke about what we need to focus on for 2020 and what changes have occurred and will be occurring with the finances in the coming year, including introducing the idea of changing the financial year or the date of the annual meeting. He answered questions and thanked the committee members. The congregation thanked him for his work in creating this presentation.

Parish Reports

There were no questions regarding the remaining Parish Reports.

Election of Warden and Vestry Members

Nora Seplavy made a motion to accept the slate as presented and for the secretary to cast one ballot. The motion passed.

Election of Convention Delegate and Alternate

Aileen Reuther made a motion for the secretary to cast one ballot for John Foley to be the convention delegate and for Jackie Barnes to be the alternate. The motion passed.

Closing Prayer

Mother Clare led us in a closing prayer. Kathy Carhart made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Vikki Boning
Appointed Secretary

Rector's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting of Christ Church, Babylon Sunday, January 24, 2021

Prayer for the Parish

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear the prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

“At their best, Annual Meetings are wonderful celebrations of parish life. They give parishioners a chance to hear about the breadth of ministry that takes place — both visible (Sunday School) and invisible (Altar Guild). New vestry members are elected, the annual budget for the coming year is presented, and the congregation is given an opportunity to ask questions and offer comments. The Annual Meeting is an invaluable time to take a step back in the midst of the daily grind of ministry to seek the broader view, examine the past year, and look ahead to where God may be calling the congregation in the future.”

-- The Rev. Tim Schenck, Father Tim's Church Survival Guide

What a year 2020 turned out to be! We began the year on a high note in the midst of our 150th Anniversary year, celebrating a successful capital campaign that raised \$205,000 with a plan to spruce up our building to be more welcoming and hospitable in the new year. We had participated in *RenewalWorks*, a program for spiritual renewal in the parish, and were poised to participate in *Invite-Connect-Welcome*, which prepares us with the abilities as a congregation to be better able to share our faith and our church through evangelism, hospitality, and connecting. We were also in the midst of reading *The Path*, an all-parish study of scripture and its major themes.

Then the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Our church went into lockdown the third week of March, along with the rest of the community, the state, and much of the country and the world. Our buildings were closed; we could not gather in-person for worship, for fellowship, for study, for committee meetings, for our community meal, and for the 12-step groups who gather each week. Even our offices were closed. Only one person could be there at a time, or two with great restrictions. We thought it would be for two weeks... which turned into months. We finally could gather outdoors with restrictions in mid-July, then returned to the sanctuary with many restrictions in mid-October. No more than 25 people could attend a service, wearing face coverings, no touching at the passing of the Peace, no singing, and only receiving the Bread. Then, that had to be stopped at the end of November, after the virus rose again when people across our community and the nation began gathering indoors again during cold weather. Through Thanksgiving, Christmas, and now into the new year, we are still only gathering online.

Knowing that our ministry to the wider Babylon area, our community meal *Nourish Babylon*, was an essential service, the church was able to continue the meal service, even though it was necessary to reimagine it as a take-out meal. Thanks be to God for the leadership and all the volunteers who were able to not only safely keep feeding those in our area who are hungry, but increase the ministry to two nights a week.

We give thanks to God for modern technology that allows us to video and livestream our services and gather for study and meetings over the internet using video-conferencing services. The church immediately went online streaming worship through Facebook Live, and posting the videos to our website, continuing our Thursday evening studies, and vestry and committee meetings. We have even continued our Coffee Hours at times through video-conferencing! Our contemporary music group made some recordings that could be shared, and we tried to continue our children's ministry through emails.

We were privileged to receive a grant during the year to purchase video production equipment, and know that livestreaming our services and video-conferencing for studies and meetings will be a part of our future. We are grateful to Dan Conner and Pete Palmieri for their expertise and labor in getting this new ministry going. I imagine that years from now, when someone goes back to read what was happening in Christ Church in 2020, they will marvel that we were so "backward," only meeting in-person face-to-face. As Christians, we are an incarnational people, and gathering in community in twos and threes and in larger groups is a hallmark of who we are. And, at the same time, this technology enables us to reach more of the community and not become isolated from one another.

Even in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, we were able to carry forward many of our capital campaign plans, so that the congregation returned in the fall to a freshly painted church, with a new community room ready to be welcoming when we can return to in-person gatherings.

We continued our all-parish study of *The Path* through the spring; had overview studies of the Psalms and Paul's Letters over the summer; in the fall as planned we began the next year-long study, *Walk in Love*, a study of our Episcopal and Anglican beliefs and practices; and during Advent read Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's book *Love is the Way*.

Our ministry together is comprised of different components: Worship; Christian Formation (for all ages) and Pastoral Care; Mission and Outreach; and Communication and Fellowship. Each part is integral to our life together in Christ, and integral to the practice of our faith. Each part was affected by the pandemic. And we have opportunities for new ways to change for the future and to engage in each of these areas of ministry.

I give thanks to God for all those who made it possible to continue the mission and ministry of Christ Church over this past, challenging year, especially Nancy Hemendinger who continued as our Minister of Music, delaying her retirement by a year, and John Foley and Diane Gaidon, our wardens. As you read through the reports which follow, I ask that you too pause and give thanks for all the love and labor that goes into our ministry together.

Each year, part of the task of the Rector's Report is to set our eyes forward to the coming year. With the pandemic still upon us, and with no clear knowledge of what we will be dealing with for the next six to nine months, that is a difficult and almost impossible task. However...

Last year I wrote that my prayer for us in this parish would be that we commit more and more to The Way of Love, as our Presiding Bishop urges, following the seven traditional Anglican practices for a Jesus-Centered Life (Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, and Rest). Our parish was founded 151 years ago in prayer and devotion by those who had a hunger and a desire for a place to gather in worship and praise. Our Anglican Tradition is built on a daily four-fold offering of prayer by lay people - individuals and in families, as well as by the clergy. Let us continue to return to our spiritual roots. Let us each day rise and first give praise and thanks to God for all his gifts and let us pray this year for our parish and its ministries, for our people, and for our future in ministry here. Let our prayers guide our vision to continue the Cause of Christ, our ministry together in Babylon, in all the forms it takes over the coming year.

Blessings and Peace,
Mother Clare Nesmith+

Wardens Report

The pandemic presented the leadership at Christ Church with both difficulties and opportunities. We found ourselves having to train new volunteers in new roles, work under continuing financial strains, and grapple with our own health, financial, and personal issues. And yet, this year has been a time of much growth for Christ Church as we:

- learned new skills with livestreaming worship and using more sophisticated AV equipment,
- reached a wider audience through virtual worship,
- deepened relationships among parishioners through various ways of checking in,
- learned about, applied for, and received new Covid-related funding opportunities such as the IDA grant, PPP loan, and several grants related to our feeding ministry,
- responded to the increased food insecurity among our neighbors by continuing Nourish Babylon with take-away hot meals and doubling our efforts with an extra evening for 4 months,
- completed many of our 150+ Capital Campaign projects that were aimed at revitalizing the interior of the church,

and learned how to hold Zoom meetings, Bible study, coffee hour, and even the parish Christmas party!

Music Ministry Report

In January 2020, I announced that I would be retiring from my position as Christ Church's Music Ministry. The Search Committee for a new Music Minister was initiated, however all search activity stopped as a result of the COVID Pandemic. I have continued to assist Mother Claire with Sunday worship. The Search Committee recently re-initiated the search process for a new Music Minister. I provided a summary of challenges and the music ministry goals that I had been working towards.

During the fall, some repairs were completed on the organ, however additional work is needed on the pedals and on the lower keyboard.

The COVID-19 Pandemic curtailed the music ministry program in the following ways:

- Adult and children's choir practices were suspended.
- Music was provided for the 10:00am virtual and outdoors services between March-July.
- Music was provided for the 8:00am and 10:00am indoor services between August-October. Beth and Martha had started to sing during communion.
Music was provided for 10:00am virtual services between October-December.
- Christmas music which included Ashtyn Hemendinger playing trumpet was part of the Christmas Eve outdoor service.

Respectfully by,
Nancy Hemendinger, Minister of Music

Activities of the Altar Guild for 2020

- The well-deserved retirement of Helen Regina from her position as President of the Altar Guild. Her wisdom and dedication will have a lasting impact as the altar guild continues in that same dedicated manner, “glorifying God through preparing the church for all worship services.” (Helen’s words.)
- At the direction of Mother Clare, maintaining liturgical and Eucharistic decorum for all services whether in person or virtual.
- Becoming familiar with, adhering to, and implementing all Covid-19 guidelines set forth by the Diocese for the administration of Communion when we were able to have in-person worship.

- Making liturgical and seasonal changes of church hangings, frontals, vessels, the brass, silver, and pottery items on the altar and storage of these items, even when services were/are virtual. (A thank you is given to Lou-Ann Rinde for polishing many of the brass items.)
- Having church and sacristy keys made and distributed to altar guild members volunteering to support the Sunday service preparation.
- Giving thanks to June Shepard and Lynn Simmons who are picking up and arranging the altar flowers while our long-standing member, Jackie Marsden, is recuperating.
- Due to attrition and Covid-19 protocols, scheduling a single person for altar duty rather than the previous pairing of members.
- Providing set-up for special services such as Epiphany in January, Candlemas in February, Lenten cross coverings, outdoor worship when Communion distribution commenced in the summer, All Soul's Day Service of Light in November, Advent preparation and the setting up of the Advent Wreath in December, and Christmas preparation with poinsettias.
- Participating in one Zoom meeting hosted by Mother Clare to address early on concerns voiced by members.
- I personally thank all altar guild members for their continued dedication, selfless work, and support.

2020 CEC Building & Grounds Report

2020 was a year unlike any other in recent memories! The pandemic certainly made for some difficult times but it also showed a sense of unity.

As I have said in previous annual reports, many guests that have come through our doors take notice on how well maintained our property is...both inside and out. We take pride and joy in our surroundings! And in 2020 when we were not able to hold indoor services, our well maintained lawn provided us the opportunity to conduct services outdoors and allowed us to be a visible presence to our neighbors. The grounds at the Church are dutifully & beautifully maintained by Jack Scharf & Bob Cunningham. They kept it pristine and for that we are appreciative & grateful.

In addition to the lawn maintenance, the B&G team also ensure the sprinkler system is up and running in the summer and winterized in November. We also look to address issues that occur during the course of the year such as bug & rodent control, and general repairs.

Below is just a sample of some of the larger improvements and repairs undertaken in 2020.

- Installed central air conditioning on the main level at the Rectory.
 - We had donations to help us support this enhancement.

We on the Building & Grounds committee hope you have noticed and appreciate the efforts of all volunteers who assist with cleaning and maintaining our Church and Rectory in the absence of a paid janitorial staff.

In 2021, we are looking to address trash & rubbish storage along the driveway, and other matters.

Special thanks goes out to the following parishioners and volunteers who have helped over the year.

- ❖ Jack Scharf & Bob Cunningham (lawn maintenance)
- ❖ John and Denise Scharf (trash to the curb on Sunday nights)

With regards,

Building and Grounds Committee (John Foley – Chairperson)

Christian Formation Annual Report 2020

Regular Sunday School classes met during January and February with Teacher John Scharf, and Substitute Teachers Joelle Siemers and Pete Palmeri. Diane Reiners volunteered to be a Substitute Teacher. Pete Palmieri performed a cleaning and disinfecting of the Sunday School room.

During a meeting on February 6, 2020, Michael Vazzano, Mo Clare Nesmith, Diane Gaidon, and John Foley discussed the following:

- The need for additional committee members for the Christian Formation Committee to be responsible for infant and toddler Christian formation (baptisms), Pre-K - Grade 5 instruction (Sunday School), Grade 6 - Confirmation (Youth Group), and adult Christian formation.
- Christian Formation activities need to be reported to Michael Vazzano so that they can be included in monthly reports.
- Requiring Sunday School classes to have a teacher and assistant teacher present for all classes.
- Splitting the current class into a younger and older children's group.
- Future meeting times for classes.

Due to COVID-19 Social Distancing requirements, Sunday School did not meet after March. Michael Vazzano sent out weekly resources from Illustrated Ministry for families to do at home including projects for Palm Sunday and Easter. No Sunday school activities took place after September.

Submitted by Michael Vazzano
January 18, 2021

Mission & Outreach Report

As we all know, this was a very different year.

- Usually, we would have provided Easter baskets to the children of the families we assist. This did not happen this year as we were in lockdown.
- The first outreach efforts were for Back to School. We collected some supplies for children from the parish, but since we were not physically attending services in the church, it was difficult. We did receive gift cards from the Pilot Club which we distributed with the school supplies we collected to 4 families.
- The next outreach effort was for Thanksgiving. We were able to provide turkeys (thanks to Long Island Cares) and other food items collected from within the parish for 4 families.
- In December, we assisted 7 families with gifts for 20 children (most receiving 2 gifts). We also provided supermarket gift cards as well as turkeys to the families. In addition, we provided groceries and a full turkey dinner to a family referred to us by the Health Department. Vera Langstone and Lynn Simmons organized the shoe box drive to gift to local children in need. Thirty-seven shoeboxes were filled. Vera and Lynn took them and a few other gifts to the delivery site in West Islip.

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Szala, Chairperson

2020 Lower Level Task Force Report

- Our handyman/electrician Ben changed all of the light bulbs in the classroom wing to new LED bulbs and he left us some replacement bulbs. He will finish the job in a few weeks. The electrical project would have cost \$11,000 for time, labor and materials but Ben is donating his time and service. He is only charging us for the bulbs which is only \$250!

- Mother Clare, Vincent Verni and Diane Gaidon met with our attorney Paul Ades on two occasions to discuss with the town whether it is necessary for us to go before the zoning board of appeals.
- Chancellor Weller contacted Babylon Village and explained our intent prior to leasing out the space as a childcare center.
- Vincent Verni has called our attorneys office several times to follow up with Paul Ades and each time Mr. Ades is not available to talk. His office says they will call back with a status update, but they do not call back.
- After the death of the Mayor, Mr. Ades was going to speak to the planning board and the new Mayor. There has been no further communication.
- We cannot move forward and start showing the space until we are 100% sure the village will not shut down their business.
- The pandemic has slowed down the process to find a tenant for this space.
- The rooms have been 95% emptied.
- The Sunday School room has been relocated to the old Youth Room.
- We rented out Miller Hall to Lifeline Screening in August for \$500.

Submitted by Vince Verni

Nourish Babylon Report

- In response to the pandemic, Nourish Babylon shifted to a take-away hot meal model. We also added Tuesday evening dinners from April through October.
- Over 74 nights, we served/distributed 4711 meals, missing one evening due to a hurricane.
- The pandemic created changes in our funding also. In 2020, we spent less on our social worker but much more on food and supplies. We received significantly more donations and significantly less in-kind donations of food.
- Meal Ministry Funding
 - Income: \$27,400
 - Additional \$11,000 for in-kind gifts for food and supplies, which represents 18% of our income
 - 51% from Contributions
 - 31% from Grants
 - Expenses: \$29,300
 - 89% for Program expenses
 - 10.5% for General expenses
 - .5% for Fundraising
- Social Worker Funding
 - Funding for our Social Worker (balance forward + income in 2020): \$12,101
 - Expenses for our Social Worker: \$3880
 - Remaining balance for 2021: \$8221

Nourish Babylon Garden at the Rectory

Our Nourish Babylon Community Garden was created in alignment with the values of Christ Church and Nourish Babylon,, and in support of it's vision statements. By growing, harvesting, and sharing organic produce, the Nourish Babylon Garden supports our community meal with plentiful fresh food ingredients. The Garden provides access to healthy food not only to our community members through our weekly meals but to the wider community with surplus output getting distributed to local food pantries. This was especially critical during the pandemic due to the increased need for fresh produce, as we expanded from weekly to twice a week meals.

We have a dedicated volunteer team of Master Gardeners from Cornell Cooperative Extension and also volunteers from the parish who continue to assist with planting, weeding, cultivating, and harvesting the crops as well as being involved in the initial project builds and ongoing maintenance as needed. During the 2020 gardening season we were able to harvest over 275 pounds of fresh organic produce for Nourish Babylon. This included: tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, winter squash, summer squash, sweet potatoes, beans, cucumbers, basil, and lettuce.

We were also successful in obtaining a grant from Long Island Cares. This grant will allow us to expand our garden in capacity and variety and to optimize the growing cycle from seeds to harvest. To do so, funds will be used to expand the space available for planting through new beds, a new raised bed, fencing and a trellis to utilize vertical gardening space; to introduce fruits and herbs as new garden offerings, and to install drip irrigation and a greenhouse to improve the efficiency of our gardening to increase yields and diversity, and extend the growing season by several months.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Yearsley and the
Rectory Garden Team

Diocesan Convention Delegate Report November 18, 2020

- Election of Diocesan officers, committee members
- Reports from all Diocesan entities and commissions.
- Bishop's Address, which focused on COVID-19 and its impact on the Diocese and how we responded. A few points noted
 - How many congregations adapted to virtual services (we have!)
 - How congregations engaged in fostering greater community involvement during these difficult times with enhanced feeding programs (we expanded Nourish Babylon to support additional day for a few months)

Personal Observation:

As this was my fourth Diocesan convention, it was certainly different! The convention was held virtually on November 18 via a webcast due to the pandemic so the normal interactions between delegates was missing.

The convention went well and fast and it might be a new way going forward vs a 2 day convention. You can check out more details from the convention via the Diocesan website (dioceseli.org)

I continue to find it very enlightening to see how the Diocese comes together in a single place (even if via the computer) to conduct the legislative needs of the Diocese & Church.

Respectfully submitted,
John Foley

Hospitality 2021

2020 was an abbreviated year for in-person hospitality. Just as we were getting started with lots of plans for celebrations concluding our 150th Anniversary, continued communing for coffee hours, concert receptions, baptisms/communions/confirmations and other special events, it all came to a screeching halt in mid-March. The only special event we were able to host in 2020 was the Annual Meeting in late January.

We hope and plan to be able once again to join together in celebration later this year. When that happens, we will have a great celebration of love, joy and appreciation for all the gifts and good God bestows upon us.

Thank you to the people who assist this committee with our events throughout the year and every year.

May God bless us all and keep us in good health!

Respectfully submitted,
Jackie Barnes, Hospitality Chair

2020 Stewardship

The report of the 2020 annual financial stewardship will be presented at a later date.

FUNdraising Annual Report 2020

FUNdraising at Christ Episcopal Church became quite different due to COVID-19 shutting down the world. While we had big plans to continue the celebration of our 150th anniversary, all was cut short this year. We did however, manage to have some fundraising this year. Here are the following fundraisers held in 2020 and the profits made for each:

Tupperware- \$150
Pottery Sale- \$95
T-Shirts- \$500
Zumba- \$165

Thank you to all who had a part in making these fundraisers a success!

In 2021 we are planning for one major online fundraiser in late winter and will be looking into holding our annual plant sale in May. Looking forward to fun and am absolutely hopeful for fellowship in the coming year! God Bless you all!

2nd Corinthians 9:7 "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Hannan

150+ Capital Campaign *Honoring our past. Building our future.*

Our vision is becoming reality! Thank you for your continued and faithful support of our 150+ Capital Campaign.

- Work was completed at the rectory: siding, insulation, back and front door porticos, back deck, and upgraded electrical panel
- The lockdown helped us complete many of the projects aimed at revitalizing the interior of the church:
 - The ductless air conditioning units were installed.
 - The new community room (formerly known as the annex) was completed.
 - The ceilings, walls and trim were painted in the main church, narthex, and community room.
 - The carpet was removed, and the wood floors were refinished.
 - The organ speakers screen was redesigned, built, and painted.

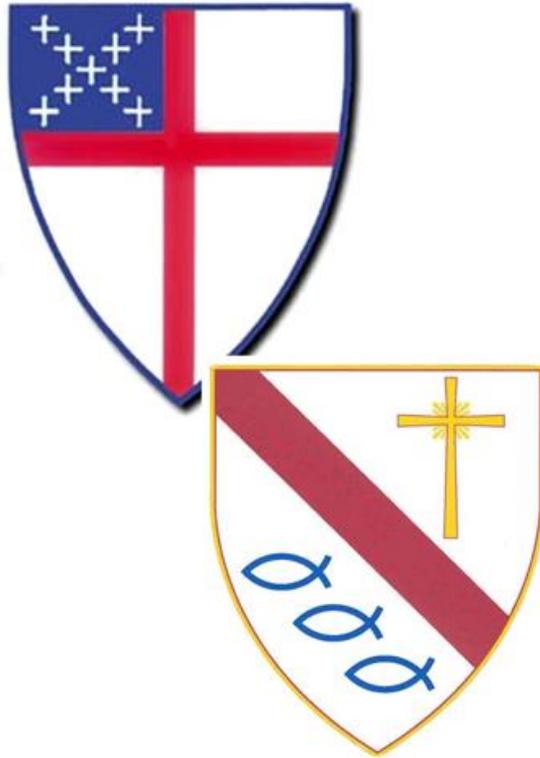
- The choir pews and panels were outfitted with new hardware so that they can easily be unbolted and moved, allowing us to have concerts and recitals there.
- All of the cracked windows were repaired.

- All the campaign administrative costs have been repaid to the church.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Gaidon

2020 Treasurer's Reports & 2021 Ministry Plan from the Finance Committee

These reports, along with the Stewardship Report will be presented on March 14, at the conclusion of our Annual Meeting.



Clergy and Staff

The Rt. Rev. Lawrence C. Provenzano, Bishop of Long Island
The Rev. E. Clare Nesmith, Rector
Nancy Hemendinger, Organist/Choir Director
Helen Fricke, Parish Secretary

Parish Office Hours:

Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 12 noon
and by appointment

Christ Episcopal Church

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