

A FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

A Celebration of the Incarnation of Our Lord



December 17, 2023 | 4:00 pm
The former Cathedral of St. John's
The Village of St. John
Wilmington, Delaware

The service of Nine Lessons and Carols tells the story of the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus through nine short bible readings from Genesis, the prophetic books, and the Gospels, interspersed with carols and hymns sung by the choir and congregation.

The origins of the service date back to an 1880 Order drawn up by E.W. Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury, for use in Truro, United Kingdom. This Order called for a service to be held on Christmas Eve consisting of nine carols and nine short readings and tradition says that a key purpose of the service was to keep men out of pubs on Christmas Eve.

E.W. Benson's order would later serve as an inspiration for the first Nine Lessons and Carols service held at King's College, Cambridge, United Kingdom on Christmas Eve in 1918. The newly-appointed Dean of King's College, Eric Milner-White, was convinced that the Church of England needed more imaginative forms of worship and devised the service to fill this desire.

Having stayed largely unchanged since 1918, Nine Lessons and Carols is famous not just from the annual radio broadcast from King's College, but also from churches all around the world that now celebrate this service.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Officiant

The Rt. Rev. Kevin S. Brown
Bishop, the Episcopal Church in Delaware

OPENING VOLUNTARY

Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen

Johannes Brahms

(All stand as you are able)

PROCESSIONAL HYMN The First Nowell



Solo *The first Nowell the angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell
Born is the King of Israel.*

Choir *They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the East, beyond them far,
And to the earth, it gave great light,
And so it continued, both day and night.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell
Born is the King of Israel.*

All *And by the light of that same star
Three wise men came from country far,
To seek for a King was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell
Born is the King of Israel.*

All *This star drew nigh to the northwest;
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest.
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where Jesus lay.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell
Born is the King of Israel.*

All *Then entered in those wise men three,*

*Full reverently, upon bended knee,
And offered there, in His presence,
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell
Born is the King of Israel.*

All *Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heav'nly Lord,
That hath made heav'n and earth of naught,
And with his blood mankind hath bought.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell
Born is the King of Israel.*

English Traditional Carol
Arranged, *David Willcocks*

BIDDING PRAYER

Officiant Beloved in Christ: In this season of Advent, be it our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child, and let us look forward to the yearly remembrance of his birth with hymns and carols of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for the mission and unity of the Church for which he died, and especially in this country and the Episcopal Church in Delaware.

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us at this time remember in his name the poor and the helpless; the cold, the hungry and the oppressed; the sick in body and in mind and them that mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; all who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we forevermore are one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself has taught us:

All **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

Officiant The Almighty God bless us with his grace: Christ give us the joys of everlasting life: and into the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all.

Amen.

(Please be seated)

CAROL **Candlelight Carol**

*How do you capture the wind on the water?
How do you count all the stars in the sky?
How do you measure the love of a mother
Or how can you write down a baby's first cry?*

*Candlelight, angel light, firelight and star-glow
Shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn
Gloria, Gloria in excelsis Deo
Angels are singing; the Christ child is born*

*Shepherds and wise men will kneel and adore him
Seraphim round him their vigil will keep
Nations proclaim him their Lord and their Saviour,
But Mary will hold him and sing him to sleep*

Find him at Bethlehem laid in a manger

*Christ our Redeemer asleep in the hay
Godhead incarnate and hope of salvation
A child with his mother that first Christmas Day*

Words and Music, *John Rutter*

(Please remain seated)

FIRST LESSON

*God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise
and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head.*

Genesis 3:8-15,17-19

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." The Lord God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly, you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

And to the man he said,

"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil, you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

(Silence)

CAROL

African Noel

*Sing noel, sing noel, noel, noel
Sing noel, sing noel, noel, noel
Sing noel, sing noel, noel, noel
Sing noel, sing noel, noel, noel*

*Sing we all noel, sing we all noel
Sing we all Noel, sing we all noel*

*O Come, ye people, gather here,
To hear the news of good cheer
The King of Kings, the Lamb of God
Is born today in Bethlehem*

Sing Noel

Arranged, André J. Thomas

(Please remain seated)

SECOND LESSON

*God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed
shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*

Genesis 22:15-18

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, "By myself, I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice."

(Silence)

CAROL

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

*Good Christian friends rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ was born today.
Ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.*

Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

*Good Christian friends rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!*

*Good Christian friends rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now ye need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all to gain his everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!*

*Good Christian friends rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ was born today.
Ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!*

Words, XIV Century
Translated, John Neale after Robert Pring-Mill
Music, In Dulci Jubilo, Descant, Arreon Harley

THIRD LESSON

The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Great will be his authority, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

(Silence)

ANTHEM **Veni, Veni, Veni Immanuel**

*Veni, Veni Emmanuel!
Captivum solve Israel!
Qui gemit in exilio,
Privatus Dei Filio.*

*Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel
Nascetur pro te, Israel.
Veni, veni, Rex Gentium,
veni, Redemptor omnium,
ut salvas tuos famulos
peccati sibi conscios*

*Veni, veni O Oriens,
solare nos adveniens,
noctis depelle nebulas,
dirasque mortis tenebras.*

*O come, o come, the "I am" that is with us
Break the bond of the captive people!
Who mourn in exile
Deprived of the incarnation of the father.*

*Rejoice! Rejoice! The great "I am"
Will be born for you.*

*O come, gatherer of all nations,
Come to make all whole,
To save your servants
From their separateness,*

*O come thou light of life (MorningStar)
To shine on us by your coming,
Dispel the clouds of night,
Drive away the shadows of death.*

18th Century Latin Hymn
Music, Michael John Trotta

(All stand as you are able)

HYMN **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**



Hark! The herald angels sing glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled:
Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies,
With the angelic host proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem.

Hark! The herald angels sing glory to the new-born King.

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come, offspring of a Virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.

Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the new-born King.

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of
Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings;
Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.

Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the new-born King.

Words, Charles Wesley & George Whitefield
Music, Felix Mendelssohn
Descant, David Willcocks

(Please be seated)

FOURTH LESSON

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

Isaiah 11:1-4a,6-9

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear, but with righteousness, he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

(Silence)

(Please remain seated)

CAROL **The Lamb**

*Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?*

*Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee;
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb,
He is meek, and he is mild,
He became a little child.
I, a child, and thou a Lamb,*

*We are called by his name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!*

Words, *William Blake*
Music, *John Tavener*

FIFTH LESSON

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom, there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

(Silence)

(Please remain seated)

CAROL

Gabriel's Message

The angle Gabriel from heaven came,

*His wings as drifted snow, his eyes a flame
"All hail!" said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favour'd lady." Gloria!*

*"For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honor thee,
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold.
Most highly favour'd lady." Gloria!*

*Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
"To me be as it pleaseth God", she said,
"My soul shall laud and magnify His Holy name."
Most highly favour'd lady. Gloria!*

*Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ was born,
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say
Most highly favour'd lady. Gloria!*

*Blessed Mother, gentle Mary,
Gloria!*

*Basque Carol
Arranged, Stephen Paulus*

SIXTH LESSON

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger because there was no place in the guest room.

(Silence)

(Please remain seated)

ANTHEM Still, Still, Still

*Still, still, still
One can hear the falling snow
For all is hushed
The world is sleeping
Holy star, its vigil keeping
Still, still, still
One can hear the falling snow*

*Sleep, sleep, sleep
'Tis the eve of our Saviour's birth
The night is peaceful all around You
Close Your eyes
Let sleep surround You
Sleep, sleep, sleep
'Tis the eve of our Saviour's birth*

*Dream, dream, dream
Of the joyous day to come
While guardian angels without number
Watch You as You sweetly slumber
Dream, dream, dream
Of the joyous day to come*

*Austrian Carol
Words, Marilyn Keith and Alan Bergman
Arranged, Norman Luboff*

SEVENTH LESSON

The Shepherds go to the manger

Luke 2:8-16

Now in that same region, there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not

be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger.

(Silence)

(Please remain seated)

ANTHEM Glory to God in the Highest

*Glory to God in the highest
Glory to God in the highest
Glory to God in the highest
Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God*

*In the highest
Glory to God in the highest
Glory to God in the highest
Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God
And on earth peace good will to all men.*

*Glory be to God, Glory be to God
Glory be to God in the highest
For unto you is born this day
In the city of David a Savior
Christ the Lord*

*And this shall be a sign
The promised Messiah you will find.
Wrapped in swaddling clothes,
In a manger lies our King.
Our King, our King, our King, Our Lord, Lord.*

*Glory be to God, Glory be to God
Glory be to God in the highest
For unto you is born this day
In the city of David a Savior
Christ the Lord*

*He shall be great,
The Song of the Highest
And He shall rule from David's throne
And He shall reign forever
And He shall reign forever
And He shall reign forever
Ever and ever and ever and ever
And of His kingdom, there shall be no end,
Amen!*

*Words and Music, Thomas L. Adams
Arranged, Jeffery L. Ames & David Moser McKay*

EIGHTH LESSON

The Glory of the Lord shall be revealed.

Isaiah 40:4-5

Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

(Silence)

(Please remain seated)

ANTHEM And the Glory of the Lord

*And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it
Together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

Music, George Frederic Handel

(All stand as you are able)

NINTH LESSON

St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him, not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

(Silence)

(Please be seated)

ANTHEM O Magnum Mysterium

*O magnum mysterium,
Et admirabile sacramentum,
Ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,
Jacentem in praeseptio!
Beata Virgo, cujus viscera
Meruerunt portare
Dominum Christum.
Alleluia*

*O great mystery,
And wonderful sacrament,
That animals should see the newborn Lord,
Lying in a manger!
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb
Was worthy to bear
Christ the Lord.
Alleluia*

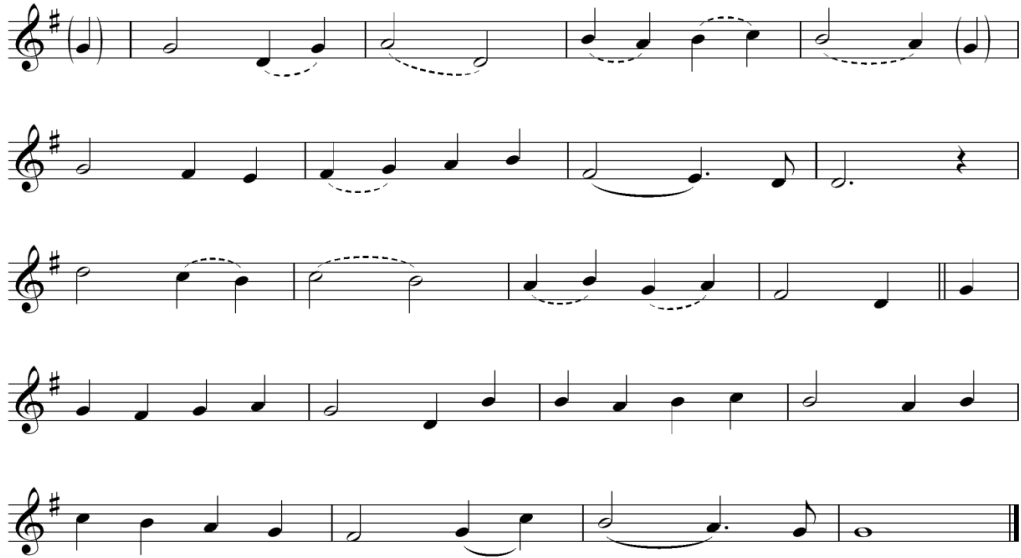
*Words, Matins of Christmas
Music, Morten Lauridsen*

WELCOME

The Rt. Rev. Kevin S. Brown

(All stand as you are able)

HYMN O Come, All Ye Faithful



O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, Born the King of Angels.

*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

God of God, Light of Light,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God, Begotten, not created.

*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
'Glory to God In the highest.'

*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n. Son of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing;

*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Words, *Adeste Fideles*, Frederick Oakley
Melody, John Francis Wade
Arrange, David Willcocks

COLLECT AND BLESSING

Officiant The Lord be with you.

All **And also with you.**

Officiant Let us pray.

O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

All **Amen.**

Officiant Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one, things earthly and heavenly, grant you the fullness of inward peace and goodwill, and make you partakers of the divine nature; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

HYMN Joy to the World

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let Earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.*

*Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains*

*repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*

*No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of His righteousness
and wonders of His love,
and wonders of His love,
and wonders, wonders of His love.*

*Words, Issac Watts
Music, George Frederic Handel
Adapted, Lowell Mason*

ORGAN VOLUNTARY
Noël X

Louis-Claude Daquin



The Episcopal Church in Delaware

www.delaware.church

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