

A PUBLICATION OF SAN RAMON VALLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH.

PURSUING A LIFE WITH GOD AND A LIFE WITH EACH OTHER BY FOLLOWING JESUS, THRIVING IN COMMUNITY, AND HEALING THE WORLD.



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**Among Ourselves** 

# NEW YEAR, NEW ADVENTURES AT SRVUMC!

Dear SRVUMC Family,

Happy New Year! Welcome to 2025, a fresh chapter filled with endless possibilities, new blessings, and maybe even a few surprises (hopefully the good kind!). I don't know about you, but I've already broken my first New Year's resolution to eat fewer cookies—but hey, God's mercies are new every morning, right? (and by the way, thanks to the many of you who dropped off Christmas treats for me over the past couple of weeks!)

As we step into this new year together, I can't help but feel excited about what God has in store for our church family.

Looking back on 2024, it's clear that God has been faithfully guiding us, even through challenges. And now, as we gear up for 2025, I believe this will be a year of growth, transformation, and maybe even a few holy plot twists along the way!

At the December Charge Conference, I shared some of my pastoral goals for the year ahead. (Think of these as the church version of resolutions—but ones we're actually going to stick to!)
Here's a quick rundown of what's
ahead:

# 1. Strengthening Our Vision & Discipleship Strategy

We rolled out our new church vision last fall, and 2025 is all about putting it into action. From launching new Life Groups to leadership development and community engagement, this goal is basically the church equivalent of "getting into shape." Only instead of burpees, we're focused on spiritual formation (thankfully).

## 2. Completing the Rebrand & Communication Strategy

We're finalizing our church rebrand with the help of Sarah Stribling and SLAM Media, and we're creating a plan to make SRVUMC the talk of the town. Think of it as a holy makeover, complete with a fresh look and a clearer way to connect with people in the community. (continued on next page)

This will be a year of growth and transformation.

#### NEW YEAR, NEW ADVENTURES AT SRVUMC

#### (continued from previous page)

# 3. Growing Our Membership (Especially Young Families)

Our goal is to make SRVUMC a place where families of all ages feel welcome and excited to grow in faith. If we do this right, we'll have more kids running around than those tempting cookies at a potluck—a sight I'm sure we're all hoping to see.

#### 4. Caring for Our Congregation

We're developing a plan to ensure every member feels seen and cared for, especially as our congregation ages. With the help of our Stephen Ministry Team, Christ Care Visitors Team, and our Prayer Ministry Team, we'll make sure no one is overlooked. And here is some really good news: I will be working with Pastor Dan Sturdivant to create more care groups for our church community! Stay tuned!



#### 5. Improving Financial Health

Let's talk stewardship, friends. I know it's not the most exciting topic but keeping the lights on and the coffee brewing matters! Of course, our stewardship and budget is so much more than that – our worship, NextGen ministry, our amazing staff, our beautiful campus – all these need funding to make ministry happen. This year, we'll work to foster a culture of generosity that sustains all the incredible and impactful ministries at SRVUMC.

As you can see, 2025 is shaping up to be a big year for us as a church! But none of this happens without YOU—your prayers, your presence, your participation, and yes, even your laughter. Together, we can grow closer to God, deepen our community, and have a lot of fun along the way.

Let's make 2025 a year to remember (and not just for breaking resolutions). I'm so grateful to be on this journey with you, and I can't wait to see what God will do through us this year.
The best is yet to come!

### P. Sam | syun@srvumc.org

P.S. This January I will be launching a new sermon series titled, "JIM CLASS: A Study Through the Book of James." It will help us achieve our faith fitness goals in 2025!

## THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF OUR HEARTS!



Dear Beloved Church Family,

Sun Hee and I want to thank you all for the beautiful Christmas cards and the loving gifts that you shared with us! We feel so loved and supported!

We pray that your Christmas was filled with Christ's hope, peace, joy, and love! May your New Year bring forth God's abundant blessings!

We love you all!

Peace and love, Sam and Sun Hee



## JOIN THE GATHERING JANUARY 5

The Gathering is our monthly contemporary worship experience, grounded in a simple yet powerful purpose: to gather together as a community and seek God's blessings. Each service is creatively centered around a unique theme, featuring inspiring music, a heartfelt message, and the celebration of communion at Jesus' table. We also extend the fellowship to a shared meal that nourishes both body and soul.

The next Gathering will be **January 5th at 5PM** in Wesley Center.



Director of Music Ministry Jeff Howe sing praise songs during a recent worship service.

Scan the QR code below to donate to The Gathering fund!





## THANK YOU, ANGELS OF SRVUMC

Our Angel Trees were covered with tags asking our community to step up and make Christmas wishes come true. It is our church tradition to have an Angel Tree but when asked why...the answer is simple; helping others, healing the world, giving generously without any expectation of a personal thank you is what Christmas is all about. Giving unconditionally feels good. Giving unconditionally makes us happy!

This year a family who had a child in our preschool ten years ago took seven tags and dropped off the generous gifts. They said every year for the past ten years they come to our Angel Tree, take





tags and buy gifts. "We are in a good place and happy to find a way to help others, no thanks needed." They love our preschool and said, "The Angel Tree is a perfect way to give back."

Happily, we were able to fulfill **all** the requests and provided **245 gifts** making a brighter and happier Christmas for so many. Thank you one and all! A special thanks to Shannon Dever and all the Harvest Festival participants for your generous monetary donation.

The following agencies send their deepest gratitude to all the Angels of SRVUMC:

(continued on next page)

#### (continued from previous page)

- **Fred Finch-** we provided 2 gifts for each of the fifteen children housed at the facility
- **Trinity Center-** sleeping bags, backpacks, and gas cards for thirty individuals
- Hope Solutions- gifts and Christmas dinners for eight families
- **STAND!** -art sets for Youth Against Violence and clothing for fifty individuals seeking shelter from violence
- Monument Crisis Center twenty-five gifts for children

Many hours and many volunteers helped make this project successful. Your Angel Tree Coordinators are most grateful to you all for participating and supporting this mission project.

We wish you a healthy and happy 2025!

Beth McClelland, RI, Linda Green and Nancy Garnick

Beth McClelland poses with a carload of gifts donated by Angel Tree participants.



## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP FOR 2025

#### **Church Council**

Chair: Rebecca Ten Elshof (2025)

Vice Chair: Kim Maddux-Perry (2027)

Secretary: Terry Bailey (2027)

Lay Leader: Brad Stribling (2025)

Co-Leader: Peggy Crawford (2026)

At Large: Terry Sherman (2025), Nancy Amini (2026), Wendy Cooper (2027)

Administrative Committee Chairs: Jeff Stroin (Finance Chair), Bill Fulcher (SPRC Chair), Debra Carter (Nominations Chair), HollyAnn Melton (Missions Chair)

#### **Lay Members to Annual Conference**

**Brad Stribling** 

Terry Sherman

Alternate: Lindsay Hiratzka

#### **Endowment**

Harry Knapp (2026) Judy Baker (2025) Gerry Carothers (2025)

#### **Board of Trustees**

Gary Swanson (2025)

Brenda Domergue (2025)

Nancy Benvenuto (2025)

Anita Weir (2026)

Joe Voelker (2026)

Paul Kuelz (2026)

Tom Roy (2027)

Bob Baker (2027)

Marla Nakaso (2027)

Staff Liaison: Sam Hawk, Facility & Purchasing Manager

#### **Missions Committee**

Chair: HollyAnn Melton (2025)

Kal Peters (2025)

Steve Brown (2025)

Jane McGuire (2026)

Dick Lamm (2026)

Anne Kuelz (2026)

#### **Preschool Commission**

Co-Chair: Elizabeth McClelland

Co-Chair: Cindy Rudow

Norma Jean Bunker

Millie Sherman

Jenny Swanson

Trudy Pasquale

Linda Green (Finance)

Bill Fulcher (SPRC)

Nancy Benvenuto (Trustees)

Staff Liaison: Christine Pezza, Director of the Preschool

## **Athletic Recreation Center Commission (ARC)**

Chair: Rob Rudow

Secretary: David Pierce Trustees: Anita Weir-Ball

At Large: Lucinda Huffaker, Debbie Koos, Terry Sherman, Greg Koos, Dave

Coombs, Rick McGuire

Staff Liaison: Sam Hawk, Director of Facilities

#### **Faith Development Committee**

Chair: Bill Rust
Dave Coombs
Terry Sherman
Lucinda Huffaker
Ex-officio - Brad Stribling, Lay Leader

Staff Liaison - Pastor Sam Yun

### **Children & Family Ministries Committee**

Chair: Sarah Rossini Andrea Bourgeois Jenny Swanson Liz George

Staff Liaison - Karen Hernandez, Director of NextGen Ministries

#### **Youth Council**

Chair: Kathy Kennedy Andrea Bourgeois Kim Maddux Perry

Staff Liaison: Justin Byers, Youth Ministry Intern

#### **Sunday Worship Support Team**

Welcome Coordinator: Ann Radick Kitchen Coordinator: Anita Weir-Ball

Altar Guild: Ginny Fereira, Karolyn Sopper, Jan Foulds

Communion Coordinator: Peggy Crawford

Liturgist Coordinator: Nancy Garnick

### **Worship Planning Team**

Pastor Sam Yun Jeffrey Howe, Director of Music Ministry Sam Hawk, Director of A/V

# COMING SOON: TRINITY CENTER EVENING MEALS

By Peggy Crawford

As we have done in the past two years, groups from our church will provide evening meals to Trinity Center, the respite center for unhoused people in Walnut Creek. We have quite a legacy with Trinity Center, with groups having served Friday lunches there for several years in the past.

Meals will be prepared in our kitchen and delivered to Trinity Center. After the meal the Trinity participants will be bused to their overnight location which has previously been the Walnut Creek Armory.

Team leaders can click here to register on behalf of their group, or visit https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/registrations. We hope for a great participation again this year.

Questions? Contact <u>Peggy</u> <u>Crawford, pcraw2164@gmail.com.</u>



Compassion in action! In February of this year, Stephen Ministers served meals at Trinity Center.



# **January 20th**

# MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

"The time is always right to do right."

~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

What can you do to honor King's legacy and help heal the world that God loves?





FIVE INSPIRATIONAL LIFE LESSONS FROM NELSON MANDELA TO START 2025 OFF RIGHT

By Sarah Stribling

Now that the new year is finally here, you may be reflecting upon last year and setting intentions for 2025. If you're looking for inspiration, look no further than one of history's iconic and inspirational figures, Nelson Mandela. He spent 27 years imprisoned in apartheid South

Africa. He was finally released in 1990, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 for his anti-apartheid activism, and the following year became South Africa's first Black president. Here are some key takeaways from his life that can help you live a happier (continued on next page)

(continued from the previous page) and healthier 2025.

Inspire others. Already a lawyer when sent to prison, Mandela made the best of his situation by embracing education. He studied law, history, religion, and other subjects. Then he taught his fellow prisoners what he had learned, inspiring them to envision a South Africa free from apartheid. He even encouraged the white prison guards to study!

#### See through the lens of

inclusivity. Mandela saw that the apartheid regime harmed everyone, including the white minority. This insight led him to envision and work towards a more just and democratic South Africa. Mandela once said, "I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities."

**Appreciate your shared humanity.** Mandela never forgot

# Mandela never forgot what his elders taught him.

what his elders taught him about the importance of compassion, forgiveness, and the importance of relationships. Ubuntu is a traditional African concept that emphasizes the interconnectedness of all humanity. Mandela used this concept as when he authorized the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that used restorative justice to promote dialogue and understanding between white and Black South Africans.

Set bitterness aside. When he was released from prison, Mandela refused to feel resentment towards the racist regime that oppressed him and other people of color. Instead, he forgave them and continued working towards his goal of a dismantling apartheid. In doing this, Mandela lived out Paul's advice in Ephesians 4:31 to "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger...along with every form of malice." (continued on next page)

Make an Impact. Mandela was overwhelmingly elected president of South Africa in 1994. Among his treasured possessions was a note from a girl whose great-grandfather was the architect of the apartheid system. The note from Wilma Verwoerd declared, "You've changed my life for the better. You've taught me to love people of all races and colors." Mandela's inspirational life's work led to the dismantling of the apartheid system and a more just society.

#### **Sources**

McDivitt, L. (2021). A Plan for the People: Nelson Mandela's Hope For His Nation. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers.

Welch, W. M. (2013, December 9), *Lack of Bitterness Set Mandela Apart*. USA Today. <a href="https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/12/09/mandela-reconciliation-legacy/3918059/">https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/12/09/mandela-reconciliation-legacy/3918059/</a>

The current flag of South Africa was adopted in the 1994 general election which also saw Mandela elected president. It replaced the previous flag of apartheid.

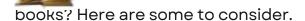


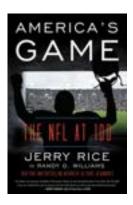




Happy New Year! January is a month for resolving to improve yourself in a

certain area in your life. How about a resolution to read a certain number of





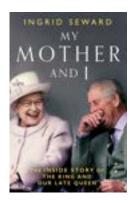
Rice, Jerry & Williams, Randy. America's Game: The NFL at 100. Reviewed by Caroline Walsh. January brings the approaching excitement of the Super Bowl. Playoffs are completed and the competing teams will be known. In the book America's Game: The NFL at 100 by Jerry Rice and Randy Williams, highlights from past Super Bowls are included, along with profiles of exceptional coaches and record-breaking players. Those of you who followed the career of Tom Brady might want to know more by reading page 126. If you choose to focus on the 49ers, then start with Eddie Debarlo, the owner for many years on pages 454-455. Bill Walsh and Joe Montana, whose combined years became known as the dynasty, are shown on page 281. Montana had a calmness about him that led him to be known as "Joe Cool" to teammates and sport figures.

The section usually titled Epilogue has been replaced with the heading Overtime. The comment by Roger Staubach found on page 486 sums it up for football fans. Other comments are worth reading and absorbing. This book is worth all the perusing time (continued on next page)

This book includes profiles of recording-breaking players.



**(continued from previous page)** the reader wants to take. Thanks to Nancy Benvenuto for your generous donation.



Seward, Ingrid. My Mother and I. Reviewed by Sharon Ross. A candid inside story of the somewhat strained relationship between King Charles III and his mother, the late Queen Elizabeth. The queen's father was second in line to be king so she lived a privileged childhood until her uncle abdicated the throne and thrust her father into the position of king. From that moment on, their lives changed dramatically. The Queen was naturally shy and uncomfortable with people, so she struggled.

Charles, on the other hand, knew he would be king someday, and grew into the job naturally. He was groomed from an early age learning the protocols that came with the royal family.

The Queen had direction and support from her mother most of her life. Charles found his mother gone much of the time, left with nannies and teachers to fill that void. She was a hands-on mother until she became Queen when Charles was four years old. Because of the demands of her position, Charles found comfort and support from his nanny. As Charles matured and took on more family responsibilities, he began to understand and appreciate his mum. It was fun to learn about their secret lives, too. This was an enjoyable account of British royal life.

An enjoyable account

of British royal life.

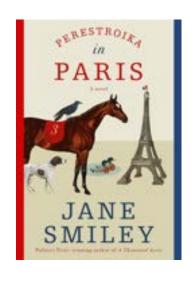
## AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP

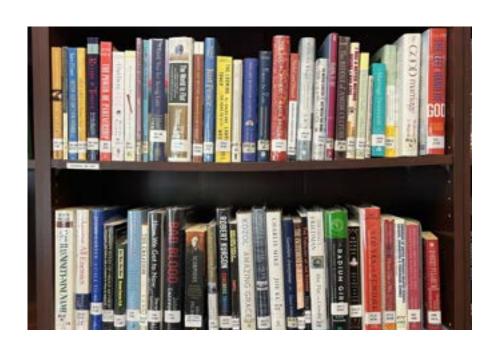
Third Monday of the Month at 1PM in the church library.

On **January 20**, we will be discussing <u>Perestroika in Paris</u> by Jane Smiley. A young racehorse finds her stall unlocked and wanders to a park in Paris. It is told from the animal's point of view. Sharon will lead the discussion.

Click <u>here</u> to buy the book or go to <u>https://www.amazon.com/Perestroika-Paris-novel-Jane-Smiley/dp/052552035X.</u>

Contact <u>Jenny Swanson</u> (<u>jenny.swanson646@gmail.com</u>) for more information.





## **TEA TIME**

by Debbie Byers

On Saturday, December 14th, over ninety women spanning three generations, from the age of four to ninety-seven years old, gathered in the Wesley Center for our annual SRVUMC Women's Christmas Tea.

The atmosphere was electric, the food was amazing, and holiday cheer was everywhere! We were blessed to have two three-generational tables. This year the ladies from the church office joined us. There were several new members, some familiar faces, and so many



Claudia Artiga and new church members pose for a selfie.



This creche is from Africa. The Christmas Tea had creches from five different continents.

Christmas Tea veterans. We had four tables of Learning, Living, Loving in Faith Together (LIFT) Ladies. The creche exhibit featured nativity scenes from five continents. In true Women's Tea tradition, Bonnie Roberts read us a Christmas story, "If You're Missing Baby Jesus" And as if that wasn't enough, we were able to raise just over one thousand dollars for December's Special Missions Offering, benefiting the

(continued on next page)



This table was one of four LIFT Tables at the Christmas Tea.

Monument Crisis Center. Well done, Ladies!

I would like to send a huge shout out to our fabulous table hostesses who got the word out, set and decorated tables. looked after their guests, and even helped clean up afterwards. We couldn't have done it without you! Thank you to Nancy Benvenuto for answering the call and not allowing this amazing timehonored tradition, the Women's Christmas Tea, to hit the Covid cutting room floor. There is already a buzz of excitement surrounding next year's event. So, whether you come on your

own, invite a guest or two, or decide to host a table, please join us next year. There is always room at our tables, and everyone (female) is welcome at the Women's Christmas Tea.

Happy New Year!



The Christmas Tea drew people from ages four to ninety-seven.

## UMeUs YOU/ME/US

# Potluck & Presentation. Tuesday, January 7th, noon, Wesley Center

Teena Decay is re-scheduled for her talk on surviving Hurricane Katrina, moving her family to NorCal, and taking advantage of a program that allowed her to earn her Master's Degree from UC Berkeley in Social Work and Emergency Relief Support – and she's done just that!! Amazing story! Please bring a dish to share – we always have plenty of food – it's your company we want. More people, more food! All are welcome.



Last month's Christmas Tea was a festive intergenerational event.



Nancy Banisch serves some soup at a recent Lunch with Friends.

## Lunch with Friends. Tuesday, January 21st, noon, Wesley Center

Our first winter meal featuring prosciutto-stuffed chicken breasts, steamed broccoli, green beans, rice pilaf, and something yummy for dessert! We cook for 60, if we run out of food (we never have!), it was a success. Simple fellowship and time together as a community. All are welcome!





YEAR OF THE SNAKE

THIS LUNAR NEW YEAR IS ALL ABOUT TRANSFORMATION.
AS A SNAKE SHEDS ITS SKIN. IT'S A TIME OF SHEDDING WHAT
YOU NO LONGER NEED AND MOVING FORWARD WITH PURPOSE.

# Out Into the World

## SAN RAMON VALLEY CHORALE CONCERTS BRING GOOD CHEER, CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

The professional-caliber San Ramon Valley Chorale under the direction of Bruce Koliha and accompanied by Nadia Koliha, sang two Christmas concerts last month. The sanctuary was filled to capacity with nearly 300 people both evenings. There was even a special appearance by our own Carillon Bell Choir! The chorale's spring concert is eagerly anticipated. Until then, here are some photos from the concerts.

Many thanks to Jerry Ricker for taking the time to take these photos!



# Preschool

# YOUNG HEARTS, BIG IMPACT: PRESCHOOLERS CRAFT GIFTS FOR HOMEBOUND MEMBERS

BY CHRISTINE PEZZA

Our preschoolers were so excited to make special gifts for our SRVUMC ChristCare volunteers to deliver to church members who are homebound.

We are so grateful to be able to assist our church members in their mission to reach those who are homebound. A special thank you to Ms. Stacey, who worked with the children to complete this special project, Nancy Benvenuto, a member of our Preschool Commission, who suggested the special gift, and Suzanne Ricker, who leads the ChristCare group.

Our preschoolers worked very hard to make these special "gifts" and our hope is that together we will brighten the days and hearts of those in need.



We are so grateful to be able to help reach those who are homebound.



## **CELEBRATIONS**

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Marilyn Clarke
- 3 Ethan Helms Brian Roberts
- 4 Rebecca Ten Elshof
- 6 Nancy Amini
- 9 Terry Bailey Conner Merchant
- 10 Chris Hoff
- 11 Frances Stephenson
- 12 Amanda Thomas
- 13 Bill Nelson (92)
- 14 Nancy Tiedemann
- 14 Mark Warwick
- 15 Julian Bybel Liz George Shadaab Kanwal Dory Schramm
- 16 Peggy Pierce

- 17 Gerry Carothers
- 18 Mike Kelly
  - Gail Smith
- 19 Cosima Sepull
- 20 Nancy Garnick
- 23 Jan Foulds
- 24 Barb McWilliams
- 25 Grace Benzler Roger Ehlers
- 27 Doug Barton
- 28 Bill Dever Nancy Harrison Karen Stepper
- 29 Dave Bridges
- 30 Alicia Rossini

Deirdree Walsh- Krumrei

31 Lisa Chapman

# CELEBRATIONS

## JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

5 Judy & Bob Baker7 Jo Ann & Vin Hirsch (64)11 Nadia & Bruce Koliha29 Danni & Dan Sherman



# Among Ourselves

## Health Concerns

Kay Jones, Barb McWilliams, Jeff Lang, Mary Nelson, Jo Ann Hirsch, Melanie and Boyd Hasik, Adam Kennedy, Lonnie Bristow, Judy Slinger, Carol Fhlug, Isabel D'Elia, Andrea Bourgeois, Teri Hawk, Bob Tharalsen, Suzanne Ricker, Julie Klug's nephew, Taylor.





## Continued Prayers for

All those who live with long-term illness, those recovering from COVID-19, unemployment, life decisions, and sickness in their families, Shana Carroll, Joan Arscott, and Laura Sanchez's family.

## Our Sympathy

To Laurie Sanchez and her family on the passing of her mother, Laura.



You can always submit a prayer request online by clicking <a href="https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/498595">https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/498595</a>.
Our awesome prayer team and Pastor Sam would love to pray for you

# Meet the Team

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@sanramonvalleyumc
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Follow Us on YouTube!

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Patsy Kyles, Office Administrator: <a href="mailto:pkyles@srvumc.org">pkyles@srvumc.org</a> (925) 837-5243 x100

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Susan Madden, Accounts Payable Clerk: <a href="mailto:smadden@srvumc.org">smadden@srvumc.org</a> (925) 837-5243 x114

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Sam Hawk, Director of AV, Facilities: <a href="mailto:shawk@srvumc.org">shawk@srvumc.org</a> (925) 837-5243 x121

Jeffrey Howe, Director of Music Ministry: <a href="mailto:jhowe@srvumc.org">jhowe@srvumc.org</a>

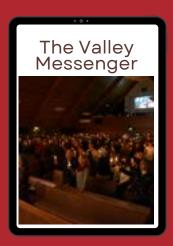
Justin Byers, Youth Ministry Intern: <a href="mailto:jbyers@srvumc.org">jbyers@srvumc.org</a>

Katie Hawk, Music Ministry Intern: <a href="mailto:khawk@srvumc.org">khawk@srvumc.org</a>

Sarah Stribling, Director of Communications: <a href="mailto:sstribling@srvumc.org">sstribling@srvumc.org</a>



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