

Living ~~WATER~~

DECEMBER 2025

The Gift GOD WITH US



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The Gift GOD WITH US

by Pastor Ty Orr

Christmas always seems to come sooner than we plan; at least it seems to sneak up on me. One moment, we're finishing Thanksgiving, and the next, we're knee-deep in wrapping paper, searching for that one roll of tape that always disappears in December that you find in March. You know the one. Maybe you've had your own holiday calamities: tangled lights that won't untangle, an angel on the tree that leans as if it's had too much "eggnog," or the dog that thinks the nativity shepherd is a chew toy, or the cat determined to undecorate your tree at midnight. Yet, amid all the hustle, noise, and even chaos of the season, we're reminded that Christmas isn't really about the gifts under the tree but about the greatest gift ever given, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Emmanuel, "God with us."

The story of God's great gift begins long before Bethlehem. Over seven hundred years before Mary laid her baby in a manger, the prophet Isaiah prophesied, **"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son,**

and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). I'm sure Isaiah's audience probably didn't fully grasp what that meant, just as I am afraid, too many today still do not understand the message of the first "Christmas" that took place so long ago.

However, Matthew makes it clear when he writes, **"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated as 'God with us'"** (Matthew 1:23). What we celebrate at Christmas is no accident. God wasn't scrambling to fix a broken world at the last minute. Our salvation is His plan, which was set in motion before the world was created and became flesh on the night in Bethlehem.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure

of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:3-6).

What makes this story so astonishing is how it all unfolded. The Son of God and King of kings entered the world not with trumpets, a crown, or royal robes, but wrapped in swaddling cloth and laid in a feeding trough.

Swaddling cloths in the Bible were simple strips of fabric used for caring for newborns, but in Jesus' birth story, they hold a deeper significance. They reflect

His humble entrance into the world, serve as a sign for the shepherds, and for some, hint at His death and resurrection.

Paul captures this beautifully when he writes, **"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh..."** (1 Timothy 3:16a). John 1:14 reads, **"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."** God didn't just send help, like tossing a rope to a drowning person; He jumped into the water Himself to personally bring us divine rescue. He stepped into our shoes, so to speak, to experience our struggles and sorrows. From the very beginning of



Jesus' life, the shadow of the cross is cast over the lowly manger. Jesus was born not only to be with us but also to die for us that we may receive the divine rescue by faith in Christ.

This truth matters because not every December feels like a holiday card. For some, Christmas is a season of family and friends, filled with joy and laughter. For others, it's a time of empty chairs, loss, and painful memories. For others, it's a reminder of financial struggles. That's why the name Emmanuel becomes so meaningful to us. The writer of Hebrews tells us, **"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin"** (Hebrews 4:15). He understands what it's like to be weary, misunderstood, even rejected. He doesn't watch our lives from a distance; He walks with us through them (Matthew 28:20). As Augustine once said, "He descended that we might ascend, and remaining what He was, He assumed what He was not." Emmanuel means God has entered into our humanity that He may redeem it.

Of course, theologians have spilled a lot of ink trying to explain the Incarnation, but even they have had moments of awe and humor. Martin Luther admitted that the humanity of Christ is "beyond all human understanding,"¹ but he also liked to picture himself as a shepherd on that first night, simply amazed. What do you think it would have been like if you were there? C.S. Lewis put it more simply: "The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God."² Therein lies the truth at the heart of Christmas: the gift of redemption for all of creation.

Paul wrote to the Galatians, **"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons"** (Galatians 4:4-5). That, my friends, is the gift of Christmas. It's not just that Jesus came to earth, but that through Him we are brought into God's family by faith in Christ. We could say that Christmas is the most fantastic adoption story ever told. For it's not just about looking back to Bethlehem; it's about looking around us now and looking toward our glorious future with God by faith, knowing that through faith alone in Christ alone we are forgiven, loved, and made new.

So, what do we do with the gift? Open it! Christmas reminds us that God's greatest gift wasn't wrapped in paper but in flesh. Long

before Bethlehem, God planned our redemption, and in Jesus—Emmanuel—He entered our world, our pain, and our story. He came not only to be with us but to save us, redeem us, and adopt us into His family. Like any gift, this one must be opened. So this Christmas, may we receive Christ with faith, walk with Him in hope, and rejoice that God is truly with us—now and forever.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you this Christmas and always. May you know His love and peace, rejoicing that God is with us, God is for us, and God will never leave us. Amen.

¹Martin Luther, *Table Talk*, trans. William Hazlitt (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1848), 22.

²C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 182.

A DATE-NIGHT COMEDY EXPERIENCE
IDaho falls, id
JANUARY 24 | WATERSPRINGS CHURCH

STRENGTHEN
YOUR MARRIAGE
WITH LAUGHTER!

FUNNY HOW
Marriage WORKS
MICHAEL

Ladies MINISTRY



Knit Together

by Melanie Verhoeven

November's Ladies' Night Out was incredible! We had so many ladies come to fellowship, eat yummy snacks, worship, put OCC shoe boxes together and take in the Word of God. We created 35 boxes for ministry outreach and donated enough funds to cover the cost of shipping them. It was such a blessing to me and the body of Christ here at Watersprings and the Church at large.

The theme of our message that the Lord spoke to the ladies was Colossians 2:2-3 which says, **"that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."**



We are called to be knit together. We, as the body of Christ, are to act as one in purpose and goals. I used the illustration of this amazing afghan that my Mother-In-Law created. It is quite magnificent. Being knit together in love, by the Spirit.

Looking at the afghan, you could see it is huge, 8x6 foot. It was made by my mother-in-law for my husband who is over 6 feet tall. This



beautiful creation was made out of many colors and followed a different pattern for each square. They all make up the whole. We each have different colors/flavors, we are all in different patterns or prints or even florals, yet we all are knit together by the Holy Spirit to be the Church! Some may even have some flaws in it. Just like us! We as the church are to be like this afghan...knit together in love, working toward the same goal. That goal is serving Jesus, serving the body of Christ, sharing the gospel, and doing it now. Kind of like Watersprings vision LOVE- UP, IN, OUT, & NOW. Or the Ladies Ministry vision statement: helping ladies to know Jesus and one another. This beautiful creation has multiple purposes, beauty, warmth, and a creative outlet, plus more I'm sure. It requires all the squares to be together so that the goal is accomplished. When we are knit together by the Holy Spirit we have many differences, but we have the goal of unity in Christ to

encourage each other and to grow in our faith by studying God's Word, exhorting and edifying each other. Only He can put us together the ways we need to be. Only He can organize the squares and stitch them together; being knit in your mother's womb.

Psalm 139:13-14 says, **"For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well."**

We are also to be united in love, anchored in the understanding that Christ is the true source of all wisdom and understanding. There is a warning in verses 4 & 5 of Colossians 2, about people trying to persuade us away from God with worldly ideas. We are to guard our hearts and minds and hold every idea, thought or action to the obedience of Christ- HIS truth not the world's. In Psalm 1 we see wise counsel in how to live: **"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper."**

Paul encourages them and us that we will face confusion, cultural pressures or false ideas, but Christ is the wisdom not the world. I want to encourage you to read the Bible with expectant hearts to see what God has for you to learn, change, meditate on, and encourage others with.

May this Christmas season be pointed toward the Gift of Christ and His salvation! I want to invite you to join us for A Christmas Ladies' Night Out on December 12th. Roxy Boyle will be sharing about the true gift of Jesus!





Advent

A SEASON OF ANTICIPATION AND ILLUMINATION

by Pastor Dave Coleman

“THEREFORE THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL GIVE YOU A SIGN; BEHOLD, A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE, AND BEAR A SON, AND SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL.”
ISAIAH 7:14

ADVENT: ANTICIPATION AND ILLUMINATION

For many Evangelical Christians, the idea of celebrating *Advent* can seem either antiquated - or, if we're honest - somewhat foreign. Maybe it feels too “liturgical” or “high church.” And it's true: nowhere in the New Testament are we specifically instructed to commemorate the birthday of Christ.

Yet some in our Watersprings family grew up observing Advent and find themselves reminiscing about those meaningful traditions. So maybe it's worth taking another look. After all, the four weeks leading up to Christmas make up the Advent season, and we can learn much from our brothers and sisters in other traditions who cherish this time of anticipation.

WHAT IS ADVENT, REALLY?

The word *Advent* comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning “arrival.” It's the season when we celebrate the anticipation of our Lord's coming. But let's be honest - waiting doesn't come naturally to most of us. We live in

an age where anticipation has all but disappeared. We stand in front of the microwave saying, “Come on, come on!” because two minutes feels too long to wait for popcorn.

However, there *is* something in our culture that still captures anticipation: **movie trailers**. When you go to the theater, the movie never starts right on time, does it? Instead, we sit through twenty minutes of previews that tease upcoming films - stirring up excitement and longing for what's coming soon.

That's the heart of Advent: **anticipation**. Looking forward. Preparing our hearts for the greatest arrival of all.

**Advent this year begins on
Sunday, November 30th and runs through
Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24th.**

HOW ADVENT IS TRADITIONALLY OBSERVED

Traditionally, those who observe Advent keep things simple. Decorations are often minimal - sometimes just an Advent wreath with four candles: three purple and one pink. Each Sunday, one candle is lit, accompanied by Scripture readings and prayer. The evergreens represent life and hope, and each candle carries special meaning:

- **First candle (purple)** – Hope
- **Second candle (purple)** – Peace
- **Third candle (pink)** – Joy
- **Fourth candle (purple)** – Love



Then, on Christmas Eve, a **fifth candle** - the large white **Christ Candle** - is lit to celebrate His arrival and remind us to look forward to His second coming.

Advent is meant to be a season of **introspection and repentance**. Two figures often come into focus during this time:

1. **Mary**, the humble mother of Jesus;
2. **John the Baptist**, the fiery prophet calling out, "prepare the way of the Lord."

Sadly, in our current culture, Advent has often been replaced by endless parties, weeks of carols, and shopping until we drop. Maybe this year we could pause - light a candle, open God's Word, and remember what this season is truly about: **Emmanuel — God with us**.

ADVENT, HANUKKAH, AND LIGHT IN DARK TIMES

This year's calendar gives us a beautiful overlap: Hanukkah in 2025 begins at sundown on Sunday, December 14, 2025 and ends at nightfall on Monday, December 22, 2025. Hanukkah, too, is a season of **light, love, courage, and hope**. The Hebrew phrase on the dreidel, "Nes Gadol Haya Sham," means "A great miracle happened there," referring to the oil that kept the Temple menorah burning for eight days instead of one. As we celebrate, let's also pray for a modern miracle - **peace for Israel**.

But the miracle of Hanukkah isn't the only light we remember. The Christmas season celebrates another miraculous illumination: the **virgin birth of Christ**, the true Light of the World. From the beginning, the Spirit of God has been the bringer of light. In Genesis 1:2, we find Him hovering over the waters, and then comes that powerful declaration: **"Let there be light."** The Spirit's best work often happens against the darkest backdrop. Just as a jeweler displays diamonds on black velvet to reveal their brilliance, so the Spirit reveals God's glory even in our darkest times. These are certainly dark days - especially for Israel - but that only makes the coming light shine all the brighter and fills us with an **air of anticipation**.

THE HELPER AND THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

On Christmas Eve, believers around the world will light the Christ Candle in the center of the Advent wreath. Just ten nights prior, millions of Jewish families will light the **shamash**, the "helper" candle of the menorah, which

in turn lights the other candles of Hanukkah. How fitting that both traditions center around **illumination** and a "Helper." Our prayer is that in this season the **Holy Spirit**, our Helper, would move in your heart, casting light upon the One who came not to be served, but to serve: Jesus the Christ — *Yeshua Ha'Mashiach*.



THE PRINCE OF PEACE

FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN,
UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN: AND THE
GOVERNMENT SHALL BE UPON HIS
SHOULDER: AND HIS NAME SHALL BE
CALLED WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR,
THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING
FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

ISAIAH 9:6

Isaiah's prophecy gives us that beautiful title: **Prince of Peace**. In Hebrew, shalom speaks of **wholeness, contentment, and covenant harmony**—especially in

connection with the Davidic covenant, God's promise that one of David's descendants would sit on the throne forever.

When the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, the genealogical records were lost. Yet one lineage remained - preserved in Scripture itself. The only one whose royal line can still be traced is **Jesus**, the Son of Mary, the Son of David. (Aren't you suddenly grateful for those so-called "boring" genealogies in Matthew 1 and Luke 3?)

THE PEACE THAT STIRS THINGS UP

Interestingly, Luke 23:5 describes Jesus this way: "**He stirs up the people,**" (NKJV). The NLT says, "**He causes riots!**" The Message paraphrase reads, "**He's stirring up unrest... a dangerous man.**"

How ironic! The **Prince of Peace** accused of disturbing the peace. But perhaps that's exactly the point - His peace is not passive. When Jesus enters the scene, sin, injustice, and hypocrisy are exposed. He does stir things up, and He often begins in our own hearts.

With His arrival - His **Advent** - injustice, self-righteousness, and selfishness are brought into the light in each of us. And as we respond in repentance and faith, we discover that the One who disturbs our false peace becomes the One who gives us **true peace**. We fall upon the Rock of our salvation and find that He really is our Prince of Peace.

A PRAYER FOR THIS SEASON

As we step into Advent this year—from Sunday, November 30th through Wednesday, December 24th—may we slow down enough to truly **anticipate** His coming.

May you:

- Experience the **illumination** of the Spirit;
- Hear the **call to repentance** and renewal;
- And find **true shalom** in the Prince of Peace.

May you find real peace in Jesus, our Prince of Peace, in this upcoming holiday season.

KIDMIN

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

Dec 7th | 4:30pm - 8:00pm

Register at watersprings.net for tickets & concessions.

\$5 TICKETS

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GIVING TUESDAY

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2ND IS GIVINGTUESDAY!

Solomon the King writes to his son in Proverbs 3:9-10, saying, “**Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase; So, your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.**” The most powerful king that ever walked the earth, with a greater only found in Jesus, tells his son out of his own experience, that the discipline to adopt into his life in order to begin experiencing the overflow of blessing is “giving.”

Here at Watersprings Church we believe as the Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9:7, “**So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.**”

Here are some ways you can give tithes and offerings and “Love Out” this GivingTuesday and all year long: We provide offering boxes by the Sound Booth, near the Fellowship Hall, and 2 wall boxes across from the Connect Center. You can give online, through the app, and we take a formal offering during service for you to give unto the Lord.

December 2nd



Watersprings App



Watersprings
Website

BRING YOUR
JOY AND SHARE
SOME GOODIES!

Carols & Cookies

DECEMBER 17TH
7:00PM
FELLOWSHIP HALL

*Worship in the round,
Oh, what a sound!*

BRING A DOZEN COOKIES FOR A COOKIE SWAP!

Sermon to Sermon.

Stream teachings anywhere.
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PASTORS LIVE



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The Philippines

Excerpt from Brad & Haley Dick's Newsletter

FAITH

In our modern language of English, we misuse all sorts of words. We love steak, and we love our children (thank God that we don't love them the same). We use the same word for a deep commitment and use it as a fleeting feeling towards something else. We've done this same thing with the word Faith. This word is often used as trusting in something blindly. I can have "faith" that the Cleveland Browns will win next year's Superbowl, however, the facts tell us otherwise. Is that true faith, or rather, blind foolishness? This kind of faith usually harms a person. If I wrap a blindfold over my eyes and walk toward a cliff with "faith", that doesn't make the bridge in my mind any more real; and ultimately may cause my demise. We can exercise this same kind of blind "faith" when we do things in the name of God. To believe that our actions will be blessed by God without Him first prompting us to do so, both in His Word and by the Holy Spirit, is foolishness on our part.

This kind of faith is not what the

writer of Hebrews was referring to when he wrote Hebrews 11. What he was referring to is closer to what we call trust. I would venture to say that faith in God is trusting that God's words are truth, and He always acts according to His attributes. If we read further into the chapter, we see that Noah gives us a real-world example of trusting what God says. **"By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith"** Hebrews 11:7. Basically, God speaks to Noah, Noah believes God, Noah ends up reacting because he believes that God will do what He says.

Isaiah has this to say about God's words: **"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it produce and sprout, and providing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so will My word be which goes out of My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without**

accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the purpose for which I sent it" Isaiah 55:10-11. Even Isaiah understands that God will do what He says that He will do, and that He has the power to do so.

Faith is proven real when we act according to our belief in God's Word. This is what James was explaining in his epistle to the 12 tribes when he said: **"What use is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?"** and later **"For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead"** James 2:14 & 2:26. True faith will always reveal itself through action. By faith in God and His promises we continue to live lives that prepare us for the imminent return of the coming King, Jesus. We seek to ready ourselves to live in His kingdom, as His citizens, and help others to realize this same reality.

What exactly should we have faith in? Simply this: God and man have been separated by rebellion and disobedience (Sin); so, God came to Earth, as the God-Man, Jesus of Nazareth, to remove this separation between us and God. He did this by taking the penalty that we have earned (death through eternal wrath and separation from God's immediate presence) and paying for it on the cross. He was then buried in a tomb, laid there for 3

actual days, then came back to life. Furthermore, he then came out of the grave, showed Himself to more than 500 people, and told us that he would return to rule and reign over us (in love) forever. Our faith is belief in this fact. Our obedient actions are just us preparing for His return.

WHAT FAITH LOOKS LIKE

This kind of faith is what we have seen in some of the people that we have worked with here in the Philippines. Take for example Pastor Angelo. He knows that God has called him to pastor the church on the mountain that he lives on, and make disciples. But, Angelo has not had his own means of transportation. He was borrowing a motorcycle, and a helmet, from another villager to drive to the many houses that he does Bible Studies at. He also needs to drive into a neighboring city for supplies often. This has proven to be difficult and expensive, due to the condition of the motorcycle. Knowing that God will make a way for Angelo to obey Him, Angelo prayed for a stable form of transportation. We are pleased to say that God has answered his prayer. Through the donations that many of you gave, God gave Angelo a new motorcycle

and a new helmet (that actually fits his head)! He can now continue in what God has called him to do. This same thing happened to another pastor two months ago.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Please pray for Jeremy's salvation.
- Please pray for Brad's older sibling's salvation.
- Please pray that we will be able to grasp everything that we are learning and bury it in our hearts.
- Please pray that the Gospel would go forth and that the hearts that hear it would receive it.
- Please pray for Jim and Keitha's health to continue to get better. Please pray also for their families, that they would grow in Christ.
- Please pray for our marriage, this is where we are attacked the most.
- Please pray for decent health, both Haley and Bradley are sick now at least every two weeks.
- Please pray for our trip to Zamboanga for DM2 training at the church. Specifically, that it (and we) would not be hindered.



"Now faith is the certainty of things hoped for, a proof of things not seen."
Hebrews 11:1





Watersprings

MISSIONS & OUTREACH



OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY

by Jennell Faulkner, Nest Executive Director

OUR JOURNEY AND MISSION

Nest Pregnancy Care Center first opened its doors on March 15, 2024, guided by a simple yet profound mission: to be a safe, Christ-centered refuge for women facing unplanned pregnancies. In our initial nine months, we welcomed 50 appointments and served 17 clients, administered 10 pregnancy tests, and offered 34 educational classes. At that early stage, before becoming a medical facility, we had not yet offered ultrasounds. Each woman who entered Nest reinforced the importance of our work, as many arrived feeling afraid, ashamed, and isolated. At Nest, they instead encountered compassion, truth, and the unconditional love of Christ.

This past year, we have witnessed growth beyond what we could have imagined. As of 2025, we have already facilitated 627 appointments and supported over 240 clients, including fathers. Our services have expanded to include 84 pregnancy tests, 302 personalized classes, and 75 ultrasounds, moments where many mothers saw their baby's heartbeat for the first time and chose life as a result.

OUR THREE-FOLD MISSION

Reach Women Seeking Abortion: Our goal is not to pressure, convince, or share personal opinions. We focus on listening to each woman's story and providing medically accurate information as well as ultrasounds. Time and again, when a mother sees her baby's heartbeat, she chooses life.

Walk Alongside Parents: We support parents by offering individualized classes on pregnancy, labor and delivery, parenting, healing from trauma, and more. Clients can earn points through participation and use



them to "shop" for new essentials such as car seats, diapers, wipes, clothing, and additional necessities—offering dignity and tangible support.

Provide Ongoing Emotional & Spiritual Support:

Our care continues beyond pregnancy with post-abortion support, licensed counseling, and group support sessions. With a client's permission, we also share the gospel, as we believe Christ came to offer life in abundance (John 10:10). We want every family to experience this abundant life.

A YEAR OF GROWTH & GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

At our recent fundraising banquet, three courageous clients shared their stories of choosing life and finding hope through the support of Nest. The event was a testament to God's provision, resulting in a net income of \$69,000. These funds will allow us to employ two staff members who are essential to addressing the growing needs of families in our community.

Looking ahead, we sense God's call to further expand our ministry, particularly in serving fathers. Our prayer is to hire a retired man of God to mentor and walk alongside the dads who come to Nest. We believe that godly men can change families, and that changed families have the power to impact generations.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Our ministry is a collective effort belonging to the body of Christ. There are several ways you can join us in protecting life and offering hope:

- Volunteer your time
- Donate baby items such as diapers, wipes, new car seats, and clothing
- Contribute financially
- Pray faithfully for our ministry

To learn more about getting involved, please contact Jennell at 208-521-5488.

PLEASE PRAY

Women facing unplanned pregnancies often carry the burdens of fear, shame, and isolation. Nest Pregnancy Care Center exists to replace these burdens with hope, dignity, and love, offered without judgment or pressure. Thank you for your prayers, your service, and your commitment to standing for life with us. To God be the glory, great things He has done and continues to do.

thrive

REVIVE

by Ryan Fugh



Psalm 105:5 tells us to **"Remember His wonders which He has done, His marvels and the judgments uttered by His mouth."**

Looking back over 2025 I am encouraged beyond measure at all the mighty things God has done in youth ministry and in the lives of the students.

He has been faithful to reveal His truths in scripture as we've gone over books in the Old Testament like 1st Samuel and Ruth, Galatians and Colossians in the New Testament, and topics like being a C.L.E.A.R. disciple, and the 10 Commandments.

God has shown Himself through His Word to many of the students as we studied redemption in Ruth. One student said "I always thought Ruth was about finding a godly husband and coming through hard things. I've never looked at the book as being about Christ. It's a picture of Christ's relationship with the church and it's really cool learning how the book connects with other books of the Bible to bring the whole picture."



God has done mighty works this year. He has brought the group together, and we've had a lot of fun. One of our high schoolers said it's cool how "everyone knows and hangs out with each other kinda like a big family." And when asked for one thing that stood out over the year a student said "unity" and one of our graduated seniors said "you can hear laughter as soon as you walk through the doors." And that kind of unity only comes from the power of the Holy Spirit working in the lives of the saints.

From "Mall manhunt", to our Lake day, Nacho night, and of course the first annual MOVE! Youth Conference, there hasn't been a month without an opportunity for fellowship among our Thrive and Revive family.

I wouldn't want to do this without the many servants that have showed up week in and week out to love on and serve the youth that walk through the doors, both for middle school and high school. Their individual anointings, giftings, and callings have brought a unique dynamic that God has used bountifully. Youth group wouldn't be the same without them.

It's been amazing to see what God has done and I can't wait to see what He does next year.





Considering Christian Education? Now Is the Time.

By Katheryn King, Head of School

Over the last twenty years, I have watched countless families make tremendous sacrifices so their children could receive a Christ-centered education here at Watersprings School – an education where rigorous academics and the truth of God’s Word are woven into every part of the day – an educational setting where Jesus is central in the classroom, on the playground, in the hallways, and even on the court.

I have watched families pinch pennies, forego newer cars, take extra jobs, and even donate plasma simply to keep their children in an environment where they know Christ is at the center. Families across Idaho have spoken loudly and clearly, we have advocated for **school choice** – pushing, praying, and persevering for years, and now, **we have it**. Now, school choice is available and accessible for all!

The door has finally opened for all Idaho families to access the kind of education you have always desired for your children and grandchildren—one aligned with your faith, your values, and your hopes for their future.

A MINISTRY OF WATERSPRINGS CHURCH

As a ministry of Watersprings Church, **Watersprings School** provides a Christ-centered education that equips students with academic, social, and spiritual readiness for a lifetime of serving the Lord. We partner with parents to build an education grounded in love, truth, and biblical discipline—training students spiritually, academically, physically, and socially.

IDAHO PARENTAL CHOICE TAX CREDIT

Idaho’s new **Parental Choice Tax Credit** provides nearly \$50 million in state funds to support nonpublic school expenses.

- Idaho K-12 students ages 5-18 are eligible to receive **up to \$5,000 per child, per school year, with no income restrictions**.
- Families who utilize the tax credit in 2026 will also receive priority in 2027.

WHAT THE TAX CREDIT CAN COVER:

- Tuition
- Curriculum and educational materials
- Technology
- Transportation to and from school

DO YOU QUALIFY FOR AN ADVANCE PAYMENT?

If your family's income qualifies, you can also request an advance payment for 2026. This means you can apply to receive the tax credit money ahead of time so you can use it to help pay your child's school expenses in 2026. Details can be found at: <https://myschoolchoice.idaho.gov/about-the-program/>

WHAT FAMILIES NEED TO APPLY:

- File a 2024 Idaho tax return
- By December 1, 2025, create a TAP (Taxpayer Access Point) account: tax.idaho.gov/NewTAP
- Applications open January 2026 and are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis

You can learn more here: myschoolchoice.idaho.gov/about-the-program/

It is not too late to apply for enrollment at Watersprings School for the 2025-2026 school year. We would be honored to answer your questions, provide a tour, and help you explore whether Christ-centered education is right for your family. Check out our website for more information (waterspringsschool.net) or call us at (208) 542-6250.



Wonder



Dear Families,

The weeks leading up to Christmas Day can be a time of vibrant anticipation, of knowing that something worth waiting for is coming, and yet having to wait it out. But perhaps just as compelling as the day itself is the long-expected nature of Messiah's birth. God had promised a King. The prophets foretold His story. In this series, kids will celebrate Advent in a new way as they discover the prophecies about the coming Savior from Isaiah in the Old Testament and the fulfillment of those prophecies in the birth of Jesus and the promise of His return.

SERIES OVERVIEW

Bible Story	Bible Passage	Wonder Truth
Hope	Isaiah 7; Matthew 1	Jesus Is Our Hope
Peace	Isaiah 9; John 14	Jesus Is Our Peace
Joy	Isaiah 35; Luke 2	Jesus Is Our Joy
Love	Isaiah 11; John 1	God Loved Us by Sending Jesus
The Second Advent	John 14; 1 Thessalonians 4	Jesus Will Return

WORD OF WONDER

*Faith is being sure of what we hope for.
It is being sure of what we do not see.*

—from Hebrews 11:1



Age 2 - 12th Grade

Awana Clubs

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MAKING AN ADVENT WREATH

SUPPLIES: green or white foam circle, purple candles (3), and pink candle (1), white jarred candle, green paint (optional), evergreen branches (optional), glue (optional)

Traditionally, the wreath is made from real or fake evergreen branches. There are five candles: three purple, one pink, and one white. The purple candles represent hope, peace, and love, being lit on the first, second, and fourth Sundays of Advent. The pink candle represents joy and is lit on the third Sunday. The white candle, known as the Christ candle, sits in the center of wreath, lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

To make an Advent wreath, start with a foam circle. If the circle is white, you can paint it green. Allow the paint to dry. If using evergreen branches, wrap them around the circle. You can secure the branches with glue. Put three purple candles and one pink candle in the wreath. Place the white jarred candle in the middle.



KIDMIN

At-Home Bible Story Video

Wonder @Home SERIES

Spotify playlist

FAMILY SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Advent Candle Wreath: *Advent* means the coming or arrival of an important person—Jesus. It's a time to remember Jesus' first coming and anticipate His return. Make an advent wreath with greens in the shape of a wreath and five candles. Place one candle (Christ candle) in the center and the others on the perimeter. Light a candle each Sunday of Advent and read the passages. Pray and thank God for sending Jesus.

- **Week 1—Hope:** Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:2
- **Week 2—Peace:** Isaiah 9:6–7, Luke 1:5
- **Week 3—Joy:** Isaiah 65:18, John 1:1–5
- **Week 4—Love:** Matthew 1:22–23, 1 John 4:9–16
- **Christmas Eve—Christ's Arrival:** Luke 2:1–20

FAMILY WONDER QUESTIONS

1. Share about a time when you had to wait a long time for something.
2. What makes you feel at peace? How can you have peace today?
3. What are you excited about this Advent season?

Train up the next generation!

WATERSPRINGS CHURCH CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

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Is Justice Delayed, Justice Denied?

by Pastor Tim Rupp

On March 20, 2005, in the small rural town of Van Buren, Missouri, with a rifle and a shotgun close at hand, Lance Shockey lay in wait for Sergeant Carl Graham to return home from his patrol shift. Four months earlier, Shockey had fled the scene of a fatal crash and the investigation by the Missouri State Police implicated Shockey. Sergeant Graham was the primary investigator and Shockey wanted to stop the investigation. So, the 28-year-old suspect waited patiently for hours for the sergeant to arrive. When he finally did, Shockey took aim as Graham exited his patrol car. The assailant opened fire with the rifle, Sergeant Graham was hit and fell to the ground. Shockey closed in and shot the wounded officer in the head with the shotgun, killing him instantly. It didn't take long for officers to put the pieces together. Six days later, Shockey was arrested and charged with capital murder. The courts took longer, much longer. It took four years for Shockey to be convicted of the murder and sentenced to death by lethal injection. But it wasn't until October 14th of this year—more than two decades after the murder—that Shockey was put to death.

At the time of his murder, Sergeant Graham was 37 years old and had served with the Missouri State Police for 12 years. He was survived by his 4-year-old son. Sergeant Graham's murderer lived to be 48 before justice was served.^{1&2} In another capital murder case, Samuel Lee Smithers who was charged with the murder of two women in 1996, convicted and sentenced to die in 1999, was also executed on October 14th.



There's an old adage that justice delayed is justice denied. Is that true? The Sixth Amendment to the Bill of Rights ensures a speedy trial for a person charged with a crime. Rarely is this right ever contested by people charged with a crime, especially a serious crime. Generally, the defense is happy to delay a trial as long as possible. The more time between the commission of the crime and the trial, the better for the defendant. Witnesses' memories deteriorate, evidence may be misplaced or even lost, and public outrage fades. Any

fair-minded person agrees that trials, especially capital murder trials, should not be rushed. When a person's life hangs in the balance, the prosecution should ensure that they get it right. But once the verdict is rendered, it shouldn't take years for the sentence to be carried out and we cry, "Foul!" and demand justice.

Justice is a common objection to the existence of a God who is loving and fair. The objection usually goes something like, "If God is love and just, why does He allow evil to go unchecked?" The fact is He doesn't. Everyone's sins will be judged, and each person will have to give an account before a just God. Justice is receiving what we deserve—that's fair. Love is forgiving. Love is why God the Son came to earth. He came to die to pay the debt for the sins of those who believe in him. He took the punishment, so we don't have to. Those who reject him will face the final judgment as spoken of in Revelation 20:11-15. Hence, God is both loving and fair. Why the delay? Because God is love. And he doesn't want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9). Justice delayed is not justice denied.

BRINGING HOPE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT—END OF YEAR GIVING!

Please consider partnering with us! The Strong Blue Line Foundation—at no cost to officers or their agencies—brings hope to LEOs with training seminars that help them navigate a myriad of issues they deal with. In the "Moral Injury in Policing" seminar and book, officers learn how to deal with guilt and shame brought on by moral injury. Please partner with us to make strong officers with strong relationships by giving them real hope for complete victory! To help, go to TheStrongBlueLine.org and click on the "Donate" button.

ON THE ROAD

Last month I was in Washington State training chaplains. Next month, Sherry and I hit the road again. We'll be heading south and then east for seminars scheduled in Arkansas and North Carolina. In between seminars, writing takes priority as we seek to update and add to seminars and books.

May you and your loved ones have a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!

Pray for your police.

¹(police1.com/arrests-sentencing/mo-executes-man-who-fatally-ambushed-trooper-outside-his-home-in-2005)

²(odmp.org/officer/17684-sergeant-carl-dewayne-graham-jr)



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Hermeneutic for Reading Revelation

by Pastor Ty Orr

What is a hermeneutical principle? To start with, hermeneutics, in the larger sense, is the field of theological study that deals with the meaning and interpretations of Scripture.¹ In its simple form, it is seeking to discover the correct meaning of a text. Therefore, allowing correct application in our current context through appropriate exegetical and interpretive methods. This field of study encompasses both the principles of biblical interpretation and the process through which interpretation is conveyed.² The hermeneutical principle is the interpretive lens through which we seek to understand a biblical text.³ For our lens or grid through which we look can affect our understanding and contextual application of any given text. Tate uses the example of

Luther's lens for Romans, focusing on "justification by faith," whereas Robert Jewett emphasized the "equity between Jews and Gentiles in grace."⁴

The reality is that many approach the scriptures with unhealthy assumptions and agendas, and in the worst cases, with both. Tate makes it clear when he writes, "In other words, there is no interpretation that begins without a hermeneutical principle."⁵ The challenge is to get the principle correct because if the root is bad, the fruit is bad. These types of errors often create unnecessary confusion regarding the original author's intent in any given passage, thereby confusing the student. For example, if a pastor over sexualizes the Song of Solomon

in a sermon series on marriage. That is coming to the text with an agenda. Again, Tate states, "In contemporary hermeneutical theory, scholars generally agree that all interpretation is situated in and therefore conditioned or guided by agendas and previous assumptions."⁶

The book of Revelation can quickly become one of the most notorious battlegrounds for modern hermeneutical and homiletical fallacies. We would all do well to remember James' warning: **"My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect person, able also to bridle the whole body"**

(James 3:1-2). Additionally, Paul's exhortation seems to fit well into this conversation: **"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness"** (2 Timothy 2:15-16).

¹⁻² Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 384.

³⁻⁵ W. Randolph Tate, *Handbook for Biblical Interpretation: An Essential Guide to Methods, Terms, and Concepts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 194.

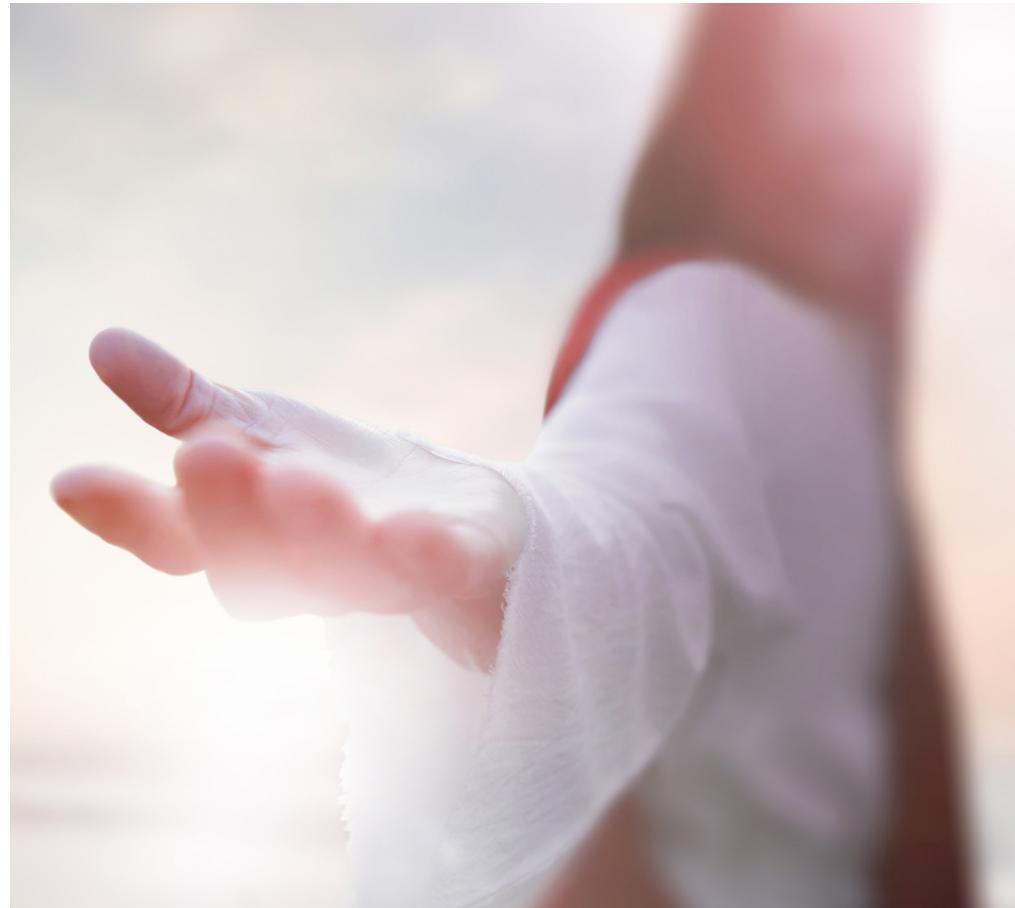
The following hermeneutic principles for Revelation aim to clarify much of the noise we encounter in our modern world concerning the prophetic significance of this letter to the church during John's time, regarding the Revelation of Jesus Christ, our Lord. (vs.1) There are many that we could explore; therefore, note that this is not a complete list and they are in no particular order of importance.

HERMETICAL PRINCIPLE 1: READ REVELATION IN ITS CHRIST-CENTERED CONTEXT

Revelation is Christocentric. Duvall notes that Revelation is more than a book about "Antichrist, Armageddon, or other end-time details" in some far, or not too far, off time. He says, "Revelation is a book about Jesus,"⁶ a point we must never forget in our study of Revelation. The opening verse reads "**The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place**" (Revelation 1:1). This "revelation of/from Jesus Christ" (ἀποκάλυψις Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ) is "the central unveiling in the book."⁷ If we miss Jesus and our call to be faithful to His "now" and "not yet" kingdom, we miss the point of Revelation altogether.

What is found within the profound and complex genre of Revelation (more on that below) all points to Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (cf. Revelation 17:14; Revelation 19:16; 1 Timothy 6:15). The Lamb slain is the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises of judgment and redemption (Revelation 4-5; 19-22). In our modern era, it seems that we often attempt to connect our news cycle of contemporary geopolitical issues to Revelation. Again, when we do, we miss the point. We would do well to remember what Jesus said to the teachers of His day, "**You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life**" (John 5:39-40).

There is a need for Jesus at the center of our hermeneutics and homiletics. For example, in Revelation 5:5-7, we find an apocalyptic picture and prophetic passage in which the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:9) is revealed as the Lamb that has been slain, who shares the Throne with God and receives worship as the Redeemer of those from every tribe, people, nation, and tongue (5:9). This demonstrates victory through sacrifice and suffering rather than violence, something the churches in Asia needed to remember. Michael Gorman writes, "This is the central paradox of Revelation: the Lamb conquers by being slain."⁸



HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLE 2: READ REVELATION IN ITS FIRST-CENTURY HISTORICAL CONTEXT.

Seeking to have a clear understanding of the real-life and times of those to whom the Revelation is given is crucial for our interpretation and application of the text to our modern setting. DeSilva notes that we need to locate the text in its historical and social context. He writes, "...it seems equally clear that he [John] is interpreting realities in the lived landscape he shares with

⁶ J. Scott Duvall, *A Theology of Revelation: God's Grand Plan to Defeat Evil, Rescue His People, and Transform His Creation*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Biblical Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2025), 293.

⁷ Loren L. Johns, "Jesus in the Book of Revelation," *OHBR* 228.

⁸ Michael J. Gorman, *Reading Revelation Responsibly: Uncivil Worship and Witness: Following the Lamb into the New Creation*. (Cascade Books, 2011) 103.

his audience.”⁹ In other words, they would know how to apply the truth of the letter to their lives. The book is not a concealing of future truth but a revealing of applicable truth for those who read and keep the word therein (Revelation 1:3; 22:7; 22:10). Fee and Stuart note, “Every text is written in a context and needs to be interpreted within that context to grasp its intended meaning.”¹⁰ Context is essential, but if we overlay our supposition upon the text, we may miss the world behind and within the text.

Therefore, remembering that John is a real historical person who writes from his personal experiences, receiving visions from and about Jesus Christ, and crafts a literary masterpiece for his contemporary readers, one with a complex literary genre. This makes Revelation stand out as unique in apocalyptic literature. Revelation, as a letter, most likely intended to be read in one sitting and circulated among the churches, is addressed to seven real churches in Asia Minor. In Revelation 2-3, the churches are receiving prophetic foreshadowing of blessing and judgment. These churches, some of which are under some local persecution, are all living under the shadow

of one prominent cult in Asia Minor—the cult of the Roman emperors and the goddess Roma.¹¹

This epistolary format anchors the text in real-life communities with real struggles. With this in mind, let’s consider the “Mark of the Beast” from Revelation 13:16-18 as part of an apocalyptic letter, something the church has been trying to understand by looking under every prophetic rock for decades. However, in a historical and cultural context, it most likely refers to the economic and religious pressure to participate in emperor worship, not a future technological implant of some sort. Calling the churches once again to choose who they will be loyal to, the kingdom of God or the kingdom of Rome/Babylon. Collins notes, “John’s readers would have understood this symbol in terms of their own context of imperial cult enforcement.”¹²

Join us next month as we conclude with Principles 3 & 4.

^{9,11} David A. deSilva, *Discovering Revelation: Content, Interpretation, Reception*. Eerdmans, n.d. (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2021), 44.

¹⁰ Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 21-35.

¹² Adela Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse*. (Westminster John Knox Press, 1984). 93

COFFEE WITH THE PASTOR

Sunday, Dec 14. 1:00pm.

Meet Pastor Ty in the Homestead

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LivingWATER

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Every January, Watersprings Church is pleased to host the Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University, a nine-week course to assist you with tried and proven strategies for attacking your debt, getting out of debt, and staying out of debt. Facilitator Dean Markiss has been blessed over the years to see many couples, families, and singles successfully navigate the threatening waters of out-of-control spending, and find themselves in a position of wise spending, understanding wealth accumulation with the goal of becoming outrageously generous.

Dean's gentle spirit and calm presentation neither invokes panic nor shame. Rather, he knows that in order to assist people walk this journey, they must have more than a plan, they need the tools to work the plan... every single day. Taking this course with Dean, you will learn to visualize, track, and celebrate your progress toward your goals of paying off debt, and increasing your savings, as well as your ability to be generous.

If you have not yet registered for this course, please do so immediately as it begins on Sunday, January 4, and meets from 2PM to 4PM in the Fireside Room here on campus.

To register, go to <https://watersprings.churchcenter.com/registrations>



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UPCOMING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- DEC 6 **Brothers Breakfast** - 8:00am / Fellowship Hall
- DEC 7 **Family Movie Night** - 4:30pm / Register Online
- DEC 12 **Christmas Ladies Night Out** - 7:00pm / Sanctuary
- DEC 14 **Coffee with the Pastor** - 1:00pm / Homestead
- DEC 17 **Christmas Carols & Cookies** - 7:00pm / Fellowship Hall
- DEC 24 **Christmas Eve Services** - 1:00pm, 3:00pm, & 5:00pm
- DEC 25-26 **OFFICE CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF CHRISTMAS**
- DEC 28 **Life Class Begins** - 11:00am / Register Online
- DEC 31 **Online Year-End Wrap Up Video Special**
- DEC 31 - JAN 2 **OFFICE CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF NEW YEAR'S**
- JAN 9 **Ladies Night Out** - 7:00pm / Fellowship Hall
- JAN 10 **Brothers Breakfast** - 8:00am / Fellowship Hall
- JAN 17 & 18 **Baptism Weekend** - Baptisms at each service
- JAN 24 **Michael Jr. Funny How Marriage Works**


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