

# The Missive, February 2022

## First Presbyterian Church

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### *“Diving Right In”*

*Lots of you know that Erin and I got to fulfil one of our dreams this January by spending a week in Hawaii. This was not just about going somewhere warm for a week, or paying off an old debt from Jeopardy (for those who know the story!), but it was about going to see the big waves on the North Shore of Oahu, which usually come in January. And we weren't disappointed. Several of the days that we spent on the North Shore were days with High Surf Warnings, at which the public was warned to stay out of the water because the breakers were reaching 25-35 feet and it could be dangerous to be in the water. Of course those are the kind of warnings that big wave surfers love to hear, and so they were out in force in spite of the warnings of lifeguards.*

*We spent one afternoon that we were there on Mokule'ia Beach, a North Shore beach that is away from the crowds because it's not a very good surfing area. We had a wonderful day on the beach watching the waves with only a few other people in sight. But as we were watching the waves that day, which were only about 8-10 feet where we were, we saw a couple of young men head into the water to swim. “They're braver than me,” I thought. I didn't want to get hit even by this medium size waves. That's when I noticed that the two guys had vastly different strategies for dealing with the waves as they came in. One man, on seeing a wave as tall as he was start to come in, would immediately turn his back to the wave and take a few steps toward the shore and then jump as the wave broke. Invariably, the wave would overwhelm him and knock him to the sand, and he would flounder for a moment before he could stand again, huffing and puffing. The other guy had a different approach. He would face the wave with his back to the beach, and as the wave started to break, he would dive into it. The wave would break beyond him and after a second underwater, he would stand up unharmed, ready to face the next one that came along.*

*It seemed to me that the first man's strategy was the more natural one, when we see something we fear, when we see a problem coming, we tend to turn our backs on it and try to get away. Often it overwhelms us anyway. But maybe a better strategy is to turn and face our fears, confront our problems and dive right in. That may take us under for a second, but we rise up on the other side.*

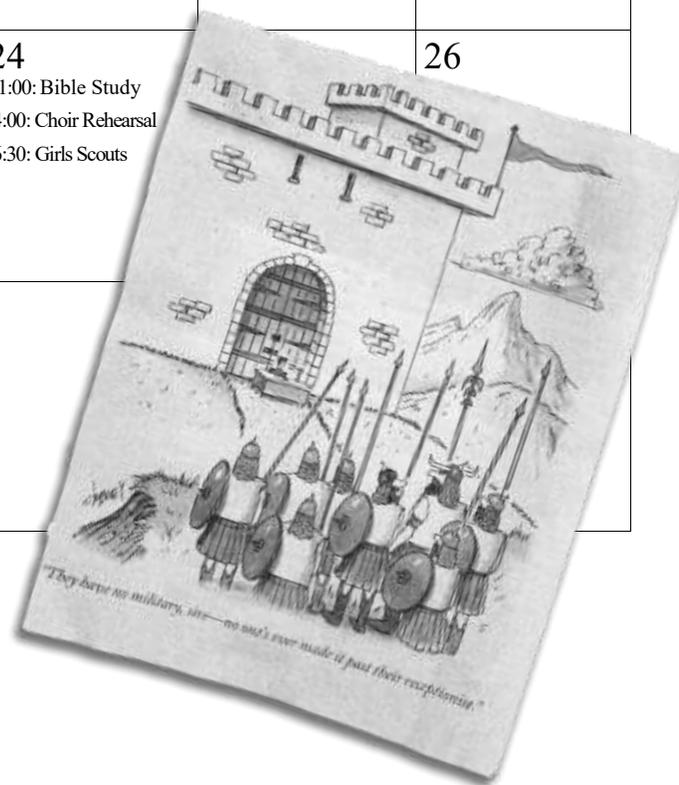
*I'm sure this applies in a lot of arenas of life, but I've been thinking about the challenges and fears that confront us as a church, especially as we come out of this pandemic. What will we do about the changes in worship? Will people start attending again? Will we be able to afford to do those things that we've always done? What does the future hold for the church in a world that is increasingly secular and fewer people say they need “organized religion?” Perhaps if we turn away from these issues, pretend they don't exist, look back toward the shore of how we have always done things in the past, what's coming may overwhelm us. So maybe we need to dive right in. Let's look at what is coming our way. Let's see how people feel about the church, and instead of being threatened by something different, let's listen to them and see how we might do something new.*

*Before the pandemic hit, I had decided to try to reinstitute the “huisbezoek,” the old Dutch term for the “home visit.” I'd like to get back to that, trying to visit each member and family in our church to find out how you are doing and what concerns you have. This spring, as the weather gets warmer, I'd like to “dive right in” with you and see what's coming our way. We can meet outside in the park, in a coffee shop, or at your home, any place that is comfortable for you. I hope this spring we are not just “getting back to normal,” but we are diving into some new things.*

*Grace and Peace  
Mark*

# February 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b> 10:00: Connected Threads 10:00: Food Pantry	<b>2</b> 10:00: Food Pantry 12:00: Seasoned Senior Luncheon 5:30: Girl Scouts 7:00: Mission Meeting	<b>3</b> 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 5:00: Jack & Jill in Gull Prairie Room	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> 9:45: Worship - Communion 4:00: 456 Group @ Kzoo 5:00: Youth Group @ Kzoo	<b>7</b> 1:00: Care Team 6:30: Boy Scouts	<b>8</b> 10:00: Connected Threads 10:00: Food Pantry 6:00: Girl Scouts	<b>9</b> 10:00: Food Pantry 12:00: Worship & Music 6:00: Session Meeting	<b>10</b> 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 6:00: Deacons Meeting 6:30: Girls Scouts	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b> 9:45: Worship No Youth Group	<b>14</b> 10:00: Christian Education 1:00: Personnel 6:30: Boy Scouts	<b>15</b> 10:00: Connected Threads 10:00: Food Pantry	<b>16</b> 10:00: Food Pantry 4:00: FPC Kzoo Meal & Hot Coco, prep & serve 5:30: Girl Scouts	<b>17</b> 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> 9:45: Worship 11:30: Youth Group @ Kzoo 4:00: 456 Group @ Kzoo	<b>21</b> 1:00: Care Team 6:30: Boy Scouts	<b>22</b> 8:00: Men's Breakfast 10:00: Connected Threads 10:00: Food Pantry 6:00: Mom's Group 6:00: Boy Scouts Blue & Gold	<b>23</b> 10:00: Food Pantry	<b>24</b> 11:00: Bible Study 4:00: Choir Rehearsal 6:30: Girls Scouts		<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> 9:45: Worship 2:00: Youth Group @ Comstock Auditorium	<b>28</b> 6:30: Boy Scouts					



# February Birthdays

Cheryl Wank.....	1	Brad Brundage.....	11	Chad Stopher.....	21
Don Egge.....	3	Wendy Field.....	11	Carol Coverly.....	22
Blakesley Walters.....	4	Tyler Carpenter.....	12	Brittany Irey.....	23
Paul Gobble.....	7	Jean Stafford.....	13	Alyson Muss.....	23
Kathy Ingraham.....	8	Allie Steele.....	13	Stella Carahaly.....	24
Terry Dawson.....	9	Lisa Miller Ballmer.....	15	Joyce Farho.....	24
Ryan Romyak.....	9	Pat Peters.....	16	Ann Meyer Fontaine.....	25
Jean Yoder.....	9	Ed Davis.....	17	Glenn Fontaine.....	26
Ed Calkins.....	10	Cindi Lebiecki.....	17	Amelia Howard.....	27
Christopher Reece.....	10	Becky Stubbs.....	18	Jamie Fiordalis Jozic.....	28
Jack Sizer.....	10	Jerry Wittwer.....	19	Brian Young.....	28
Shari Wynsma.....	10	Nancy Nott.....	20		

## & Anniversaries

9.....	Tom Stegink and Kathleen Griffin ~ 42	18.....	Ruth and Bill Mason ~ 6
11.....	Ann and Glenn Fontaine ~ 16	26.....	Pam and Rick Foster ~ 17



### *Carillon Hymns and Honoree for February*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Selection</i>	<i>Honoree</i>
2/1	<i>On Eagle's Wings</i>	<i>Morris E. Stimson</i>
2/7	<i>Amazing Grace</i>	<i>Brandon Dallace Young</i>
2/14	<i>What A Friend We Have in Jesus</i>	<i>Karen and Jon Koets</i>



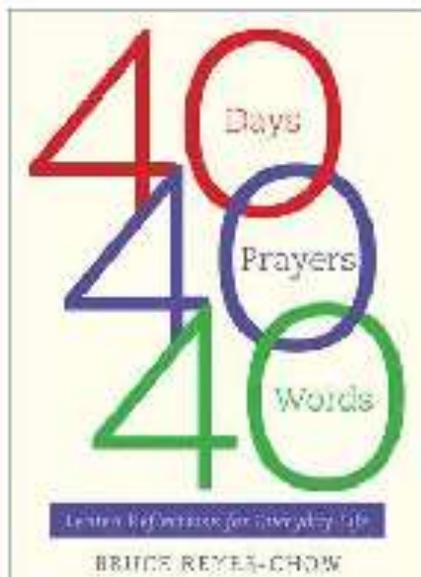
# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

## ADULT ED

*We hope you'll join the Christian Ed team in an all-church read as we begin the season of Lent.*

*The book for this year is:*

***40 Days, 40 Prayers, 40 Words by Bruce Reyes-Chow***



In *40 Days, 40 Prayers, 40 Words*, Reyes-Chow encourages readers to pause in the bustle of their daily lives to reflect, engage, and share during the Lenten season. Forty devotions are each framed around a word inspired by the daily lectionary readings and include a short scriptural passage, inspirational prayer, and reflection. Readers who feel too busy for daily engagement with God will appreciate Reyes-Chow's ability to speak to the blessings and burdens of everyday life in a concise, lively manner. Moreover, readers also have the ability to connect with others through interactive elements like QR codes that link to social media and provide access to additional reflections, graphics, and prayers. This unique resource expands the ways we can connect with God, and with each other, both during Lent and at any time along our journeys of faith. Follow along using the hashtag: #40wordprayer.

**We will be ordering books on FEBRUARY 15, so please let Meredith or the church office know if you'd like a copy.**

**We are asking for a \$5 donation toward the cost the book for those who are able.**

## FAITH IN ACTION

As a way to show our *faith in action*, we continue to partner with FPC Kalamazoo to help with the Wednesday meal they host for the downtown neighbors. Meals are served outdoors, with our church providing the soup and dessert once a month. If you'd like to lend a hand, either by cooking or serving, on March 16, April 20 or May 18, please contact Meredith.

This collaboration has been wonderful for all involved. Take a look at the shout-out we got in the FPC Kalamazoo newsletter this month:

*We are so grateful to all those who have stepped up to help make soup, serve meals, purchase fruit, water, paper products, and really lend a hand with whatever is needed. We've even been able to reach out in a collaborative spirit to First Presbyterian Church in Richland to invite them to be a part of our ministry with our neighbors. Members of FPC Richland have been providing soups and desserts once a month!*

# YOUTH GROUP

## YOUTH MISSION FUNDRAISER

THE YOUTH ARE HEADING BACK TO  
WEST VIRGINIA JUNE 25-JULY 2!

Look for our  
Butter Braid fundraiser in early March  
AND



**SAVE THE DATE!**  
GAME NIGHT & SILENT AUCTION  
MARCH 20



*Details to follow!*



**Have you heard about the  
NEW group for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>  
graders?**

This group will be very similar to our Youth  
Group, combining kids from the area  
Presbyterian churches.

February 6 - 4-5:00 pm @ FPC Kzoo

February 20 - 4-5:00 pm @ FPC Kzoo

March 6 - 4-5:00 pm @ FPC Kzoo

March 20 - 4-6:00 pm @ FPC Kzoo -  
Youth Mission Game Night Fundraiser.

We encourage families to join us from  
4-6:00 pm for this fun event!

## YOUTH GROUP

**Youth Group is meeting in-person for all 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students!**

*All meeting dates are subject to change as we keep safety and health of all at the forefront of our  
planning. The most up-to-date information will be sent to parents directly via email.*

February 6 - 5-7:00 pm @ FPC Kzoo

February 13 - NO Youth Group

February 20 - During Chili Cook-off  
@ FPC Kzoo, 11:30-1:30

February 27 - 2:00 pm @ Center Stage Theater to see Chrissy in *Sister Act*

March 6 - 5-7:00 pm @ FPC Kzoo

March 13 - 5-7:00 pm @ Richland

March 20 - Game Night Fundraiser,  
4-6:00 pm

March 27-April 3 - NO Youth Group

## YOUNG ADULT GROUP

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Saturday, March 5**

*Details to follow*

This group is for all young adults who have recently graduated from high school up to age 25.

If you know someone who would like to be a part of this group, even if they haven't  
participated in our youth programs, please extend an invite!

All are welcome!

## **MOM GROUP**

**Tuesday, February 22**

**6:30-8:00 pm**

**The Deacon Brown House (8023 Church St.)**

This group is for moms of school age kids to share in faith and fellowship while navigating all the joys and perils of parenting in a pandemic.

How can we be *the church* to one another when life gets hectic?

How can we find a space for ourselves while also meeting the ever-changing needs of our children?

*If you'd like to be added to the email list for this group,*

*contact Meredith: [meredithalsoach4@gmail.com](mailto:meredithalsoach4@gmail.com)*

**All are welcome!**



# Presbyterian Women

*No meeting in February! If you have questions, please call Terry Vantine, 629-5381  
EVERY WOMAN is welcome.*

*Please keep long-time Presbyterian Women inspiration Wanda Clawson in our prayers  
while she recovers.*

**PW PURPOSE:** Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible Study, to support the mission of the church worldwide, to work for justice and peace and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (USA) and witnesses to the promise of God's Kingdom.

## **Update and Thank You from BSA Troop 294:**

The scouts would like to thank you for supporting them in their program and allowing them to meet at the church! Recently, Troop 294 (Richland Pres) and Troop 239 (previously at the United Methodist church) merged to become one stronger troop. With this merger, we now have a troop of girls too, which is super exciting!

We are always looking for new scouts. If you know of any boys (5+) or girls (11+) interested in learning more about scouting or becoming involved, please reach out!

Types of activities we've had over the last year include many campouts, Kalamazoo Climb overnight, winter sports (Muskegon Luge), hiking, service projects, and much more! It is a great program giving scouts an opportunity to develop leadership skills and learn important life values such as kindness, trustworthiness, helpfulness, being courteous and brave, service to others, reverence and just general positive social development (things we all need a little bit more of these days)!

Amber Beals, Committee Chair  
[amberbeals@gmail.com](mailto:amberbeals@gmail.com)

# Richland Food Pantry

The Richland Food Pantry is excited to return to in-person, customer choice shopping with extended hours. The "Curb-Side" and "Pick-Up" pantry methods worked well for their time. But now it is time to invite our customers back into the pantry shopping aisle, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 am till Noon, to choose their groceries.

To comply with the First Presbyterian Church's COVID policies, customers will wear a face mask while inside the church building during their shopping trip. We also limit the pantry shopping aisle to shoppers from a single household at a time.

We are a food pantry of Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes, which supplies our food and schedules shopping trips for our clients. Clients should call them at 269.343.3663 to plan their shopping trip.

We are happy to welcome our clients back inside The Richland Food Pantry with extended hours.

## **Local food drives support the pantry.**

Two recent local food drives, both run by school students, have helped keep our pantry's shelves well-stocked. Loaves & Fishes does a remarkable job stocking the pantry shelves with staples like bread, eggs, milk, frozen meat, and many other essential food items. But unfortunately, some of the name-brand niceties and varieties are sometimes missing. Then the school kids stepped up and added some color and variety to our pantry as they do to most things.

Last November, middle school robotics teams from the Gull Lake Area Robotics club ran a very successful canned food drive at the Richland Hardings, collecting hundreds of canned food items like vegetables and soups. Just last week, the local preschool Home Again delivered five carts overflowing with shelf-stable food collected as part of their MLK Day of Service. As a result of these two food drives run by local youths enhancing the already solid supply from Loaves & Fishes, the Richland Food Pantry can offer our clients a little more.

## **Food Pantry Shopping List**

If you feel moved to help the food pantry with food donations, canned soups, vegetables, or chicken are always welcome. Pasta noodles like spaghetti or linguini are also helpful. Monetary gifts can also be directed to the food pantry by specifying it as the intended recipient on your donation envelopes.



*Gull Lake Area Robotics team member Emma sorts canned food donations*



# Bell Tower and Sanctuary Capital Campaign Update

By Rick Foster

Our 2022 restoration goals are:

Complete the restoration of the bell tower,

Replace the steeple,

Build an appropriate memorial for the 150-year-old plus bell,

Address the sanctuary asbestos flooring issues,

Make the sanctuary wheelchair friendly,

Repair and paint the 1861 pews,

Replace the kitchen and pantry floor, and

Install new carpet in the Gull Prairie Room

– all in calendar year 2022!

## No small task, but we can do it!!

We need a total of approximately \$270,000 and we have accumulated contributions and pledges of around \$185,000. We are still about \$85,000 short but have about two months left to raise the balance.



A big thank you for those who have stepped up thus far! And if you haven't quite gotten around to it, please consider making your pledge and/or contribution at your earliest convenience.

Bell Tower and sanctuary restoration status:

Here is where we are:

Hazelhoff Builders of Kalamazoo is our contractor and is set to begin demolition and reconstruction coinciding with the delivery of the new steeple.

A new, 33' steeple has been ordered with delivery scheduled for May 11<sup>th</sup>, delayed because of labor and material shortages. We have paid a \$8100 deposit (half).

Tower-Pinkster provided our architectural and engineering expertise that led to building application approval by the Village. They stand ready to support future work if needed.

We are still designing the memorial for the Bell – taking that weight out of the tower is essential; displaying the bell celebrates our history and legacy.

The Richland police department has approved the establishment of a construction safety zone in front of the church when needed.

We are prioritizing the restoration of the Bell Tower before anything else is addressed.

The second priority is the focus on restoring the sanctuary with new floor coverings, making wheelchair seating opportunities available, and repair/painting of the pews. The pews are the original 1861 pews.

We are researching floor coverings as they relate to acoustics – tile vs carpeting.

We are getting estimates for the sanctuary restoration and the kitchen/pantry floor covering work.

As we finish this array of projects this year, much of the nagging issues of the church will have been addressed and will be ok for many years to come.

Thanks

# The Father of American Church Music

By Larry Myland

Several years ago, and for several years' running, I wrote a monthly column about church music here in the *Missive*.

This article appeared in the March 2005 issue.

Recently one of the high school choirs I work with began learning a round by Lowell Mason titled *O Music*. A round, you remember, is a musical composition like *Three Blind Mice*, though the one by Mason is more challenging. A biographical note in the published music said that Mason was responsible for instituting music in the public schools, a feat he achieved in Boston in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This set me to thinking: What if there were no singing classes in public schools, let alone band or orchestra?

Though it is well known that the church once trained its own singers, I wondered what churches of moderate size would look like, or sound like if it hadn't been for Lowell Mason. Mason's pioneering work to achieve something we take for granted today, the public school chorus and amateur church choir.

And look at our hymnal! Lowell Mason either harmonized, arranged, or actually composed a number of hymns and carols that have become embedded in Christian worship not only in the U.S. But in other parts of the world as well. Carols like *Joy to the World*, and *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks*, and hymns like *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, *My Faith Looks Up to Thee*, *Blest Be the Tie That Binds*, and *O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*. It was also a Mason hymn that passengers on the Titanic sang aboard the sinking vessel, *Nearer My God to Thee*.

Lowell Mason, 1792~1872, showed a strong interest in music from childhood. Probably fearing the vagaries of a musical career, he turned to the relative security of banking. For a time he worked as a bank clerk in Savannah and pursued music on the side. With private lessons he improved his skill enough that he eventually began to compose original scores. Publishers repeatedly rejected his early work. Finally, in 1822, a publisher in Mason's home state of Massachusetts accepted some of his music for publication.

"I was then a bank officer in Savannah, and did not wish to be known as a musical man, as I had no the least thought of ever making music a profession," he said.

His previously rejected collection of music would eventually go through 17 different editions and sell some 50,000 copies, a sizable amount at the time. Church choirs used it and so did public school singing classes.

Mason returned to Boston and became a church organist in 1827, though for safety's sake he held on to his job as

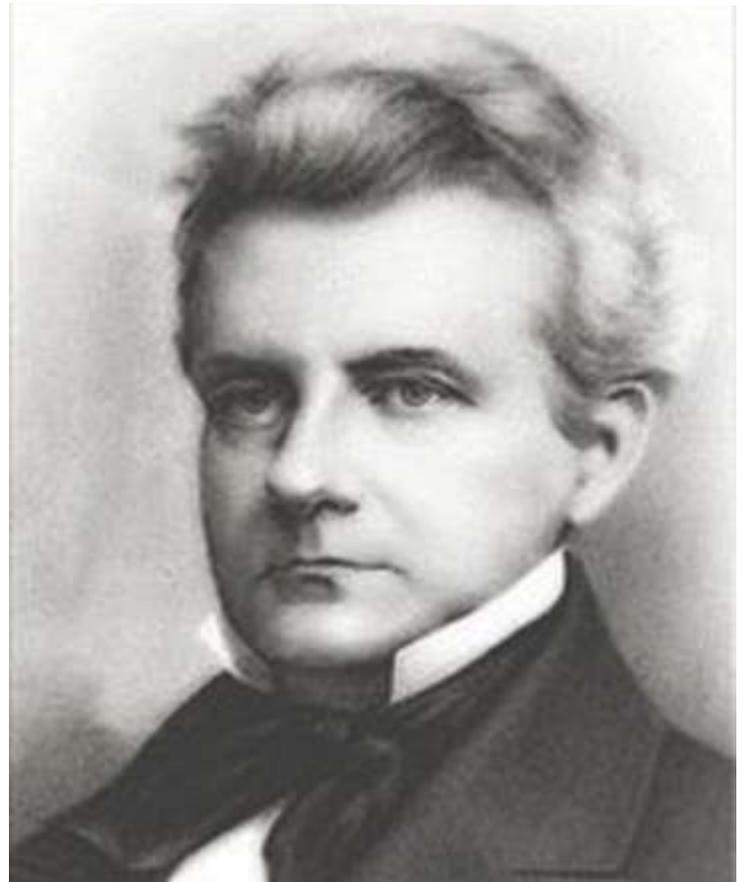
teller at the American Bank. But, music continued to pull at him.

It was in Boston that Mason became the first music teacher in an American public school. In 1833 he co-founded the Boston Academy of Music, and in 1838 he became music superintendent for the Boston school system. He cut a wide enough swath that New York University presented him with an honorary musical doctorate in 1855, one of the first instances of the conferring of that degree in the U.S.

Lowell Mason eventually became wealthy through the sale of his many collections of music. The Masons sent their promising son William to Europe to study with the great Franz Liszt. The younger Mason became a prominent American pedagogue. His editions of the Bach *Inventions* and *Sinfonias* are still in publication.

After Lowell Mason died, his family donated his valuable music library that contained over 800 manuscripts and 700 volumes of hymnody to Yale College.

With over 1600 religious compositions to his credit, Lowell Mason has been called the father of American church music.



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**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF**

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Chris Gobble, *Financial Secretary*  
Larry Myland, *Director of Music*  
Owen Rushford, *Director of Choirs*  
Meredith Alspach, *Director of Faith Formation*  
Connie Slater, *Sexton*  
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