



# The Spirit of All Souls

*Creating a diverse, spirit-growing, justice-seeking community*

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## We'll Build a Land

In worship and in covenant group meetings this month, we put the spotlight on the theme of vocation. What is your “calling” in the world?



The novelist Frederick Buechner famously defined vocation as “the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” It’s the place where your unique talents and passions can best be used to bless the world. While some are fortunate to find a nine-to-five job that fits this description, others nurture their calling in different parts of their lives. Either way, discovering our vocation is one of the most fulfilling journeys of the spiritual life.

Churches have vocations, too. One of All Souls’ callings is to rebuild what injustice, oppression, and violence have destroyed. When the Civil War tore this nation apart, All Souls served as a hospital for Union and Confederate soldiers alike. When Hiroshima was devastated by an atomic bomb, All Souls reached out with gifts of peace that built a remarkable relationship that lasts to this day. When Fourteenth Street burned in the wake of Dr. King’s assassination, All Souls was among the first to re-invest by building hundreds of units of affordable housing. When Katrina devastated New Orleans, we responded (and still do every year) by sending money and people to help rebuild. The list goes on.

Rebuilding what injustice, oppression, and violence have destroyed is our spiritual foundation, and it remains strong. But our physical foundation—the bricks and mortar of our church—is in need of repair. Now is the time for us to rebuild our own spiritual home, so that All Souls Church can continue its important ministry in the world.

We will publicly launch our long-awaited capital campaign, the Third Century Challenge, at a special Sunday service on February 5 at 10:30 am. Please join us for an inspiring service followed by food and entertainment for all ages. And when you are contacted by another member to discuss your gift to the campaign, please welcome them warmly into your home and consider a generous gift. A gift that will ensure that All Souls is able to fulfill its vocation of building peace and justice and love for yet another century.

Love, ROB

### All Souls Church, Unitarian

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Washington DC 20009

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**Sunday, February 5, Capital Campaign Kickoff**

**One service only, at 10:30 am**

## February Worship Services

- 5 **We'll Build a Land.** Rev. Hardies. Join us for a moving service as we launch our capital campaign, the Third Century Challenge. Stay after for food and entertainment for all ages! **ONE SERVICE ONLY AT 10:30 AM.**
- 12 **Children of a Lesser God.** Rev. Hardies. How can our faith—and a proper understanding of “vocation”—help us reclaim a fuller sense of our humanity in the face of an economic system that threatens to reduce us to the sum total of what we produce?
- 19 **The Gospel of Inclusion.** Bishop Carlton Pearson and Rev. Hardies. One of the nation’s leading African American television preachers shares the story of his conversion to Universalism, and his vision for how the Universalist gospel can change the world.
- 26 **The Intersections of Life.** Rev. Newman

### Bishop Carlton D. Pearson

Bishop Pearson began his career in the 1970s as a favorite on Oral Roberts’ weekly television shows, reaching audiences of up to 60 million. Equally talented at preaching and singing, he soon began his own ministry in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Higher Dimensions, Inc., which included a local church of thousands. Cultivating a global audience through appearances on television, radio, and in print media, both secular and religious, he became a household name in Christian circles.

No surprise, then, the controversy that ensued when, in 2006, he released his book, *The Gospel of Inclusion*, an argument that a loving God would not sentence billions to eternal hell for not becoming Christian. Some have labeled him a modern-day heretic, while others have called him “a voice of reason in a world of religious extremes.” Blazing a new trail of spiritual leadership around the globe, Pearson offers a fresh “liberal-conservative” perspective on topics in the hearts and minds of the people, from the Iraq War to gay marriage.



Pearson has met with heads of state, including three US presidents, as well as countless world leaders, political figures, and celebrities. A scholar and linguist, he connects with audiences through wit, humor, compassion, and intellect. He has sold over 750,000 CDs and videos, been nominated for the Christian recording industry Dove Award, and has taken home the Stellar award for vocal performance. Read more about Bishop Pearson in *UU World* ([www.uuworld.org/life/articles/145503.shtml](http://www.uuworld.org/life/articles/145503.shtml)) and listen to him on NPR’s *This American Life* ([www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/304/transcript](http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/304/transcript)).

### All Souls Emergency Weather Policy

We take our lead from the DC and Federal governments. If either informs employees that the city is closed for a weather emergency, we will also close our offices.

If a weather emergency is declared on a Sunday, we will do everything possible to hold a single service at 11:15 am. Religious classes will always be cancelled during a weather emergency.



# Third Century Challenge

*Building on our heritage. Realizing our dreams.*



Breaking ground  
at 16th and  
Harvard Streets, 1921.

## Capital Campaign Kickoff

Party time! All Souls kicks off the Third Century Challenge on Sunday, February 5 with a combined 10:30 am service. The whole congregation will gather as one for inspiring messages, uplifting music, and encouraging fellowship to launch this campaign to renovate the All Souls campus. During the service, a congregational photo will be taken to commemorate this historic day (no, you won't have to pose in front of a steam shovel), and the youth will have a special RE program following the Story for All Ages.

Celebration and fellowship continues after the service with lunch, featuring Ben's chili (meat and veggie), sandwiches, mac & cheese, and cookies; all lunch waste is biodegradable. Then come activities for all ages: live music and mingling in Pierce Hall, opportunities to learn about the church's history from the Silver Souls, and a DJ who'll play dance music and lead fun activities for kids in the Gym.

Last October, the congregation unanimously voted to raise money to fund the renovation of our beloved church. Since this party marks the campaign's kickoff, it's important that everybody attend. As Rev. Rob Hardies has said, "It will be so exciting to have the whole community together to celebrate the beginning of this new chapter of All Souls' history."

All are welcome, all is free; no pledges will be solicited. Also, we need volunteers to help at the kickoff and people to bring cookies. Please contact Micah (micah [at] cheverlyday.com).

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## New Year's resolution to complete Third Century Challenge and advance final design proposals

At our January retreat, the All Souls' board members and officers agreed that their primary focus must be to support the on-going efforts to restore and upgrade our church home. In that regard, each member agreed to support the Third Century

**Letter  
from  
the  
BOT**

Challenge by making a generous financial commitment and by visiting congregants and friends to ask them to do the same. Later, if it is decided that additional funds are needed, we agreed to help the treasurer and Investment Committee explore various options.

At the same time, the Board agreed to help the Comprehensive Assets Planning Team work with the architects to develop a final proposal with the hope that, by fall, the Team can get feedback, make necessary revisions and, by the annual meeting, seek congregational approval. Recognizing the added responsibilities these tasks entailed, the Board added liaisons to the critical committees and agreed to redouble its efforts to provide oversight of the fundraising activities.

Additionally, the Board agreed to complete the development of a Conflict Resolution/Safe Congregation policy. Using ideas from the UUA and building on the experiences of other UU congregations, by spring, the Board intends to have an interim plan, appoint key personnel, set up training opportunities, and share those with the congregation. Assuming there is wide support, by the end of the year, the Board expects to put a final policy in place.

Despite the ambitious agenda and the need to continue to handle more routine matters, as a freshman board member, I can say this year's board members and officers are excited to participate in the efforts to move our church community into our third century and are willing to take on the extra tasks demanded of us.

We hope you agree and will join us on the journey.

Julia Sayles, Member, All Souls Board of Trustees

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# What is the Church Council?

## Who is on it?

Some highlights from the January 7 Council meeting can help answer these questions. The Council is the place where church leaders—in particular, committee chairs and members, trustees, and officers—and staff meet several times a year to learn, share information, and explore ways to collaborate in doing the work of the church. But how does a Council meeting help make that happen?

January's meeting had an atmosphere more like a retreat than a business meeting. Religious Educator Gabrielle Farrell and church staff had set up the Dining Room with flowers, candles,

### Church Council

and chocolate, and trustees and officers acted as welcoming hosts. Senior Minister Rob Hardies and Elizabeth Fox then led an opening worship that lifted up our interdependence and challenged us to achieve much more by working together. That theme continued at lunch time, when four youth and Intern Minister Lex Cade-White told the story of Stone Soup and then served delicious soup to all. At the end of the meeting, Rev. Susan Newman sent us off energized to do the church's work with new spirit, and to want to meet again soon.

During the meeting, Alicia Dixon taught us how committees can use the church's data base; Katie Loughary and Bill Bridges introduced us to church operations tools; Amy Mulry Wesolek presented membership data, showing how we've already grown our diversity by 1% percent (this for the first year of the five-year plan with a goal of 5%). Gary Penn unveiled upcoming changes in the church's publications and invited lay leaders to work with him on new communications pieces.

Carolyn Fowler Smith and Gabrielle Farrell shared ideas on improving volunteer recruitment and support, including having everyone write thank-you notes to lay and staff members. Chelsea Rudman, Tom Buck, and Michael Lennon, members of last fall's Harvest the Power class, talked about developing new church leaders and a future class on leadership issues. After breaking out into groups to discuss the four visioning goals, people returned declaring they never want to hear the goals referred to by number again, but rather by content and purpose; that is, Spiritual Development, Community Building, Social Justice, and our Third Century Challenge ministries.

We left with lots of suggestions for the future and lots of energy for moving forward on work together in 2012. We look forward to another great meeting on May 5.

Erika Landberg, Moderator and Council Chair

# Children's Religious Education



## Heed the Call: The Path of a Vegan

Nikevia  
Thomas

Children's  
Religious  
Educator

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I've been a vegetarian for almost a decade, but the inner voice hadn't called me to veganism until two years ago. One life lesson I've learned is to heed that still inner voice, for the Universe is a great mathematician, so veganism it was for me. I began my vegan discipline right before my second trip to Ghana and, though the inner voice is always right, it's not always well timed. It was very hard to find a meal in Ghana without meat or animal by-products, despite that country's bounty of fresh, organic fruits and vegetables. I wound up eating either the ready-to-eat Indian meals I'd brought with me or meals I'd prepared at a friend's house. Every meal needed to be planned ahead; I couldn't spontaneously try local dishes. Whenever I embarked on a journey, no matter how brief, I had to pack food. I couldn't, after all, pop into Whole Foods or MOM's for a pick-me-up. And that wasn't the worst of it. Though, I love Ghana deeply, when my Indian meals began to run out, oh how I missed the US.

One day, waxing nostalgic and seeking familiarity, I travelled to Osu, the DuPont Circle of Accra, with its coffee shops, internet cafés, and posh noshes. Nothing exudes comfort to a Westerner quite like a fresh-out-of-the-oven almond croissant, and so I wandered into a bakery and bought one. But what about my vegan vow? This pastry, filled with dairy and eggs, would make a veteran vegan cringe. But I was only a virgin vegan, far away from vegan menus, travel-hungry and homesick, and who's gonna know anyway? I left the store plotting how I'd eat the sliced almonds off the top, bite the right side clear off, break the left side into pieces, and then lick my fingers to get rid of the evidence. Just then—this is no exaggeration—as I opened my salivating mouth to bite into the soft, buttery, nutty croissant, a homeless brother approached and, with a rich Ghanaian accent, said, "Excuse me, madam. I don't want any money. I only ask for something to eat." Oh, ye gods! Curses! How could he have known? He was clearly an angel, sent from heaven to save new vegans from temptation. Our paths crossed to prevent me violating my newfound principle and to teach me a higher one—to help a fellow being on their journey. Clearly, that great mathematician known as the Universe fully supported my vegan endeavors. So, I acquiesced and graciously gave the hungry brother the croissant.

I walked away having realized that, though I'd been called to a path less traveled, nostalgia, efficiency, and comfort were no reasons to go off-road. We all encounter such dilemmas; we hear what's right and true for ourselves, but then talk ourselves out of it because it's not part of our conditioning. We need merely stay the course; the answers and support will come. The Universe wants nothing but our highest good and supports our calling for the good of the whole.

Om, Nikevia

## Important RE dates

Sun., Feb. 19. The annual **M.O.M.I.E's TLC Children's Gallery of Black History**, an interactive museum dedicated to "bringing history to life," offers child-friendly, hands-on exhibits about great leaders of color from the past and present. Children's RE classes will tour the gallery during both services. For more information, visit [www.momiestlc.com](http://www.momiestlc.com).

Sat., Feb. 25, 4:00-7:00 pm. **All Souls Hymn Sing and Potluck**. Bring instruments and a dish to share. We'll sing old favorites and learn a few new songs. Sign up at [www.all-souls.org](http://www.all-souls.org) (under Adult Spiritual Development). All ages welcome. Only \$5. Contact Susan Milner ([susanreynolds@hotmail.com](mailto:susanreynolds@hotmail.com)) or Libbie Buchele ([libster@umich.edu](mailto:libster@umich.edu)).

Sun., Feb. 26, 10:30-11:30 am, Dining Room. **Monthly Family Souls Coffee Hour**. Join the RE Committee every last Sunday to RE-connect, RE-lax, and RE-fresh. Light refreshments served.

**Annual Children's Clothing Exchange** coming this spring! Start purging the children's closets of gently used clothing and shoes. The event will be held during the Family Souls Coffee Hour. Leftover clothes will be donated to the Salvation Army.



Amy  
Mulry  
Wesolek

Director of  
Membership  
and  
Welcoming

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# Membership and Welcoming

Deciding to join All Souls is a commitment—one that we hope will enrich your life. All Souls encourages all its members to

- ♥ worship regularly at Sunday services;
- ♥ serve the church;
- ♥ connect with other congregants; and
- ♥ support All Souls with personally generous financial contributions.

**Step 1: Welcome to All Souls.** Learn and ask questions about Unitarian Universalism and All Souls Church. This session takes place after service (both 9:30 and 11:15 am), is informal, and lasts about an hour. No registration necessary.

- ◆ Mar. 4, Apr. 15, Jul. 15

**Step 2: New Member Orientation.** Prospective members learn more about Unitarian Universalism, All Souls Church, and what being a member means. Those who choose to can sign the Membership Book (no obligation), make their financial pledge, and have their picture taken for the member directory. To register, go to [all-souls.org](http://all-souls.org) and click on the Adult Spiritual Development button.

- ◆ Tue., Mar. 13, 6:30-9:00 pm (snacks provided)
- ◆ Sat., Apr. 28, 9:30 am-12:30 pm (snacks and childcare provided)
- ◆ Tue., Jul. 31, 6:30-9:00 pm (snacks provided)

**Step 3: New Member Sunday.** New members are introduced and formally welcomed to the community at an ingathering ceremony during a Sunday service.

- ◆ Mar. 25, Jun. 17

All are welcome to attend these sessions. Attendance does not constitute a commitment to join All Souls Church. Questions? Contact Amy.

# Intern Minister



Lex Cade-  
White

Intern  
Minister

lcade-white  
[@] allsouls.ws

## Calling All Souls

In one of my seminary courses, we were asked to collect people’s stories about their sense of calling. I was excited to do this because I love learning about what pulls people, what they feel empowered to do in their lives. I firmly believe we each have a calling. Some say it comes from a higher power. Others see it as arising within the context of community. There are many ways to explain people’s sense of calling. I think it’s in the wind and air, all around us, always there. It’s only a matter of time before we notice and follow it. Responding to our calling is a privilege, and we need to be in the right place at the right time to receive it.

In February, people reflect on many things, including black history and love. Black History Month intentionally creates space to learn about one of the many groups traditionally ignored when learning American history. It calls us to self knowledge and knowledge of those different from ourselves. Valentine’s Day churns our economy by commercializing love. Taken more seriously, it asks us to consider what we love. What is more self-aware and loving than responding to what you are meant to do? As my neighbor and close family friend used to say in Yiddish, “Have you found your *bashert* yet?” *Bashert* is that which is meant to be. This February, consider your calling and how you’ll respond. It’s a big task, but know all the way that, as the great Doris Day sang, “Que sera, sera. Whatever will be...will be.”

Blessed Be, Lex

## Silver Souls Quilt



On Sunday, February 12, after the second service, the Silver Souls will dedicate its latest quilt. Done over many, many Saturday afternoons, the quilt is a true labor of love. Come, see it up close, take in some refreshments, and thank the many talented, patient folk who collectively put it together.

## All Souls-New Orleans Connection

March 31–April 7. Six years after Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans is still in great need. All Souls continues its commitment to the city with our annual multigenerational **All Souls–New Orleans Connection Service/Learning Mission Trip**. The trip, primarily construction work but with alternative programming, is open to all over 12 years old. Register online. For information, contact Gabrielle Farrell (gfarrell [at] allsouls.ws).

Friday, February 17, 7:00 pm, Sanctuary. **Jazz clarinetist Evan Christopher** returns to All Souls Church to perform a concert of New Orleans styled jazz. This will be Evan's third visit to All Souls. He received standing ovations and rave reviews for each of the spectacular performances he rendered on his two previous engagements here. Evan's visit here is in conjunction with the Multicultural Multiracial UUA Conference being hosted at All Souls Church this year. The event will also be a promotion for All Souls' upcoming service projects in New Orleans. Prior to the concert, Evan will lead conferees in an informal discussion about his approach to music and cultural aspects of New Orleans. The concert will be a ticketed event open to the public. Tickets will be available at the door.

# NSO Instrument Petting Zoo



Photos by Lauren Kentworthy and Nikevia Thomas

# Covenant Groups Study Guide for February

## Vocation and Calling



### Chalice lighting

#### Opening words:

Discovering vocation does not mean scrambling toward some prize just beyond my reach but accepting the treasure of true self I already possess. Vocation does not come from a voice “out there” calling me to become something I am not. It comes from a voice “in here” calling me to be the person I was born to be, to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God.

Parker J. Palmer

**Check-in:** Briefly share with us how you’ve been. This is a time of sharing joys and sorrows. Others listen without comment, holding each in caring silence.

**Silence:** Often beginning and ending with a chime.

**Focus reading:** Excerpt from *Soul to Soul*, by Christine Robinson and Alicia Hawkins, Pastor and Lay Leader at First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque NM.

In one of the world’s classic “calling” stories, God tells his prophet Jonah to leave Palestine, go to the next country over, and tell the people there to mend their ways. Jonah hears the message loud and clear and knows that he should obey but he doesn’t want to go. So he sets sail in the opposite direction. God turns him around with a big storm, which is how he ends up in the belly of a whale. The whale spits him out on shore, and this time, he does as he is told.

Taken metaphorically, this story reminds us that when we become aware that there is something we are supposed to do, it is downright dangerous to resist. Lots of psychologists would agree. They see clients who are stuck in a dark place—a metaphorical belly of a whale—because they can’t bring themselves to follow their dream or their calling. Interestingly, researchers in unexplained remissions of usually fatal diseases often hear this story: “I was told I had a year to live, so I decided that I’d ditch my job and learn to (paint, fly, fish), which I’ve been wanting to do all my life. And I’m still alive.” The sense that we are doing what we are supposed to be doing in life is one of the most satisfying feelings we can have, even when the work is hard or the conditions rough.

The prophet Isaiah tells another classic calling story. He has a vision of the world in misery and hears God asking, “Whom shall I send? His first reaction is that he is utterly unworthy, but when this passes, his head clears, and he finds himself saying, “Here am I. Send me.” His subsequent life is not easy, but it shines with purpose and meaning.

Those words, “Here am I. Send me,” resonate in the hearts of many people who have sensed a call to a difficult task and have decided to undertake it. Whether it is parenting a child, ending slavery in the United States, starting a new faith, or saving a neighborhood awash in industrial waste, when you ask people why they are doing these tasks, they say things like, “It needed doing,” and “I just had to,” and “There was no one else.” Calling, and its related word, *vocation* (which comes from the Latin *Vocare*, to call), have pretentious overtones to many. People are reluctant to use these words because they imply a divine sanction that doesn’t seem appropriate—or people think they will be teased for using that terminology. Some of this reluctance is appropriate. There is hardly anything more dangerous than an inflated ego combined with the sense that one is especially chosen to do God’s will! (Most prophets begin their careers protesting their unworthiness.) In spite of abuses of this word *called*, which range from the tedious to the horrific, it’s just too useful to do without. Most people at times sense that they are supposed to be doing something in their lives beyond what is easy or comfortable, and find

# ALL SOULS POTLUCK SEDER

Saturday, March 31, 5:00pm, Pierce Hall

Celebrate freedom from oppression in this inclusive, warm ceremony. Stories told during the Passover *seder* draw parallels between the enslavement of Jews in Egypt and the enslavement of Africans in the United States; between the exodus through the Sinai desert and modern struggles to escape oppressions based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and physical attributes; between Moses' challenges and our own self-doubts. What a wonder, that a story so ancient still speaks to us today!

At this spring's All Souls Potluck Seder, you'll meet friendly All Souls folks and eat good food. You'll enjoy camaraderie, conversation, and plenty of singing. Children are especially welcome; Rob will lead them across the Red Sea!

We can always use volunteers to help us with this green event. Setting up and cleaning up are just as fun as the main event. If you'd like to volunteer, or if you have a talent for planning, or if you've just got questions, get in touch with Sharon and Steven Newburg-Rinn (202-543-6629; stevennr@verizon.net) or Delabian Rice-Thurston (202-726-1518; delabian@aol.com).



that, when they do it, their sense of fulfillment is its own reward.  
That's a vocation, a calling.

The world's religious and secular literature is replete with descriptions of calling and vocation, both dramatic (Jonah's whale) and subtle. Sometimes a call develops slowly and organically in a person's life with no particular drama. As something they feel drawn to increases in importance, they gain skills and get good feedback from others; their call is validated by those around them and by their own sense of the rightness of what they are about. Sometimes a call seems to come quite suddenly or involves a real turnaround, surprising the person feeling the call even more than it surprises onlookers. There are times when a call seems to come from outside; a person actually hears a voice or feels directed from without in a very vivid way. More often, a calling comes from inside, and the person feels that this is their deep wisdom surfacing.

How do we know we've found our real calling and are not just indulging in wishful thinking? That difficult question has been answered in different ways over the years. Fredrick Buchner's famous words remind us that our calling can be found at the place "where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." Our Calling is much bigger than our individual reference. Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman, African-American author, minister and college chaplain had a more mystical sense of calling. "Don't ask yourself what the world needs," he wrote, "ask yourself what makes you come alive, and then go and do that because that's what the world needs, people who have come alive."

## Discussion questions

- ④ What are your greatest joys, gifts, memories?  
When did you feel the satisfaction of responding to a calling in the past?
- ④ What do you want to do in the future? Could you earn a living at it?
- ④ What needs of the world leap out at you? What issues are dearest to your heart?
- ④ How did your parents respect their calling, or not?
- ④ In what way do you practice your calling at work, in volunteer activities, or in your relationship with family and friends?
- ④ What calls in your life have you run away from or been unable to follow?

## Closing reading:

Tell me, what is it you plan to do with  
your one wild and precious life?

Mary Oliver

## Extinguish chalice

**Closing check-out:** Ask each person for a word or phrase that says something about how he or she feels as the meeting ends.

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## All Souls Church Unitarian's Vision Statements

To build the Beloved Community, All  
Souls Church cultivates and celebrates . . .

. . .spiritual growth and transformation  
as we question, learn from others, and  
seek lives of meaning and reverence.

. . .a welcoming, diverse, and vibrant  
community where we love, respect,  
and care for one another.

. . .service and prophetic action to  
move the world toward justice, healing,  
and sustainability.



*The Spirit of All Souls*  
All Souls Church, Unitarian  
1500 Harvard Street NW  
Washington DC 20009

Return service requested

The deadline for *The Spirit of All Souls* is the third or fourth Friday of the month. Submit notices, articles, and letters to [@](mailto:spirit[<a href=)]allsouls.ws">spirit[[@](mailto:)]allsouls.ws.

#### Upcoming deadlines:

March issue: February 17

April issue: March 16

Editor: Gary Penn  
([@](mailto:gpenn[<a href=)]allsouls.ws">gpenn [ [@](mailto:) ]allsouls.ws)

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