## 7th September 2025 Pentecost 13 Shaped and Known

**Scriptures**

**Jeremiah 18:1–11**

Jeremiah watches a potter working clay. His prophetic words use this image of the potter creatively remodelling clay as a metaphor for God’s sovereignty.

**Psalm 139:1–6, 13–18**

The psalmist marvels at the wonder of God’s creative presence in the psalmist’s own body and life. Similarly to the passage in Jeremiah, God’s intimate and creative knowing is understood to reflect God’s sovereign presence.

**Philemon 1:1–21**

In this uncomfortable text, Paul writes to Philemon, an enslaver, asking him to receive back Onesimus, an enslaved person and fellow Christian. This text challenges contemporary readers to contemplate how early church communities wrestled with living justly in a society that was fundamentally unjust and to turn this question back on our own structures and communities.

**Luke 14:25–33 the cost of being a disciple prior to that , the banquet and the excuses?**

Jesus invites the crowd to think carefully about whether they will follow after him. He identifies this path as difficult and uses two examples of a builder and king to show that weighing up the cost of discipleship means being faithful to the completion of the task.

**I Cannot Come To The Banquet Don’t Bother Me Now** 1966 Sister Miriam Therese Winter ….

## WELCOME

## Theme Focus Shaped and Known

**Setting**

Part of preparing for worship is curating the space you gather in and thinking about the creative elements that can be included, such as **images, colours, shapes, scents, and textures.** These elements will further open the way into the scripture readings and the theme for the day.

The colour for the Season after Pentecost is green.

Gather items for the embodied practices, as listed on pages 15–16.

For further background, see ‘Embodied Practice’ on page 6.

**GATHERING**

## Acknowledgement of Country

As we come together today, we acknowledge that we are meeting on the lands of the Thauapeople of the Yuin nation We pay our respects to the elders, past and present and those emerging. We commit to walking together towards justice through truth, treaty and reconciliation. And of-course today is an opportunity to do just that after this morning’s service.

**Introduction to Theme**

This is the third of six weeks which focus on passages from the OT book of Jeremiah. Today, we encounter God imagined as a potter. The image occurs in a passage focused on the power of the potter to reshape what is not right.

The invitation is for us to be in awe of the creative God and to hear how serious God is about our living for good and not for ill. Reshaping what is not right, adjusting our priorities, applies to us as individuals and to the society and world in which we dwell.

## Call to Worship

We gather to worship God: the Spirit breathing our lives into being, God, as the Potter, molding all created things, God as the Teacher showing us the path of love and service.

Come, let us worship our God:

**We bring our prayers and praise!**

## Hymn 1 Refresh My Heart Lord TIS 744 F^ C

## **Opening Prayer**

Creator God,

you are the creator of all things and the lover of all that you have made, as you created You declared, *It Is Good*, Rest your Holy Spirit upon us this day, that we might be your people and recognise your Loving purpose for us and for the world.

And the people say**, Amen.**

**Michael……refer to Faith conversations – what point remains with you from Wednesday Faith conversations?**

**Psalm 139:1–6, 13–18 (NRSVUE) read together**

*Let us read this psalm responsively if you are able.*

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;

**you discern my thoughts from far away.**

3 You search out my path and my lying down

**and are acquainted with all my ways**.

4 Even before a word is on my tongue,

**O Lord, you know it completely.**

5 You hem me in, behind and before,

**and lay your hand upon me.**

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;

**it is so high that I cannot attain it.**

13 For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
 you knit me together in my mother’s womb.  
14 **I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.** Wonderful are your works;  
that I know very well.  
15 My frame was not hidden from you,  
 when I was being made in secret,  
 intricately woven in the depths of the earth.  
16 **Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.**  
 In your book were written  
 all the days that were formed for me,  
 when none of them as yet existed 17 How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!  
 **How vast is the sum of them**!  
18 I try to count them — **they are more than the sand**;  
 I come to the end — **I am still with you.**

The writer of Psalm 139 marvels at God’s intimate knowledge of our individual lives.

Shortly we will listen to the Words of the prophet Jeremiah reminding us of God’s heart for **Just living** in whole communities. As a congregation our vision is to be ***Just Like Jesus,*** yet, we know we often lose sight of Gods intimate knowledge and direction in our lives and our God- given purpose for close relationship with Him and with each other.

Let us bring our lives and our communities to God in a hymn

**Hymn 2 Search me O God, and know my heart today, PPT [[1]](#endnote-1) G^ D**

**Prayer of Confession**

*Silence*

Where can we go from your Spirit, O God? Where can we flee from your presence?

Your presence is **loyal love for us** and Your **unrelenting cry for justice** for the world.

Help us, dear Lord help us as we recognise our shortcomings and deliberate disobedience. Help us to establish Your mercy and be constant in our labours for mutual care and justice.

In the name of Christ we pray,

And the people say **Amen.  
  
Pam -** And let us hear Your words of Grace

This is the Good News: God’s presence for you is truly one of loyal love, and a force for justice for the world.

***We are called*** to join with God, in mercy and care***. We are not alone*** in our endeavours.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

**ENGAGING THE WORD**

**Scripture**

**Jeremiah 18:1–11 (CEB) - Ann**

Jeremiah received the Lord’s word: 2 Go down to the potter’s house, and I’ll give you instructions about what to do there. 3 So I went down to the potter’s house; he was working on the potter’s wheel. 4 But the piece he was making was flawed while still in his hands, so the potter started on another, as seemed best to him. 5 Then the Lord’s word came to me: 6 House of Israel, can’t I deal with you like this potter, declares the Lord? Like clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in mine, house of Israel! 7 At any time I may announce that I will dig up, pull down, and destroy a nation or kingdom; 8 but if that nation I warned turns from its evil, then I’ll relent and not carry out the harm I intended for it. 9 At the same time, I may announce that I will build and plant a nation or kingdom; 10 but if that nation displeases and disobeys me, then I’ll relent and not carry out the good I intended for it. 11 Now say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem: This is what the Lord says: I am a potter preparing a disaster for you; I’m working out a plan against you. So each one of you, turn from your evil ways; reform your ways and your actions.

**Intergenerational Conversation – Pam or Peter**

Today, we have heard about God as Creator—like a potter in the reading from Jeremiah to a knitter in the psalm. These are hands-on, imaginative, messy images.

What have you made with your own hands? Perhaps you have built something, drawn something, or cooked something?   
How did it feel to work with your own hands to see something take form?   
Let’s take some time to create. While you do, wonder about what kind of creator God might be.   
Is God careful? Playful? Surprising? All or some of these? Something else?

***The Play Dough Potter  
a children's sermon seed based on Jeremiah 18:1-11*** *by Jennifer from site https://desperatepreacher.com/sermonbuilder/Pentecost-C/c\_proper18-23/kids.htm*

*I am going to focus on the Jeremiah text. Each child will be given a piece of model magic clay (less mess) and invited to create during the service. I will talk with them about being centred, never leaving the creation and about reworking, not destroying it, when it is not right.*

*That's how God works with us--never abandoning us, but reworking us when we mess up.  Each piece can be imperfect and yet glorious in the eyes of the Potter.*

What did you make?

How do you feel about what you have made?

What was it like to create something?

Did anything go wrong in the process?

**What did you learn in the process?**

**Is there an image of God as Creator that resonates for you from today’s readings**

*Jeremiah 18 and**Psalm 139**share in common the image of God’s creative activity.*

*The psalm focuses on* ***an individual*** *marveling at their uniqueness, and existence and God’s presence and care for that existence. Perhaps you have also looked at your own human body or at an element of the natural world and experienced a kind of mind explosion, a ‘wow’ at the beauty, strangeness, and brilliance of what exists. In naming God as Creator, we see God’s fingerprints at work in the tiniest fingernail and the biggest star that is lightyears away.*

*Jeremiah uses the image of the potter molding and remolding clay to focus on the idea that God’s creation has* ***an intended purpose and form.*** *That is, living according to the instructions of the Torah: living well with God, with others, and with the whole creation. Such living is for good (not for ill). Such living is for justice (not for greed).*

***The words of this vision in Jeremiah say that God cares very much about the kinds of communities and structures enacted by the human creatures woven together in intimate care.***

**Hymn**: simple and applicable to us all no matter our calling and position in society **…**

**Jesus hands were kind hands *TIS* 236 G^ G x2**

## Luke 14:25-3 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition **The Cost of Discipleship** Ann.

**Word for the Day – the hand of God at work…. – Pam message**

**Offering**

With our gifts and our offerings, may our hands work with you, O God, for the good of all creation. Amen.

**Notices**

Today 11am at the Aboriginal church in Moorhead St service and followed by combined church lunch, bring a plate to share.

Tuesday Women’s Fellowship 3pm at Anglican Hall

Wednesday Faith conversations 5pm in the church

Saturday Men’s breakfast next 8am

Monday 15th GoECP committee meeting.

Tuesday 16th first Aid course register before Friday 10th

Saturday 20th Market and Pantry

Sunday 21st AGM and Congregational Meeting

**Prayers for Others -and the above msg and events**

Gracious Creator, who births the world into being, and nurtures all things with love and care, we pray that Your created world might be honoured and cared for.

Gracious Creator, may we tend to the work of your hands with our own.

May we plant kindness and grow justice.

May we follow in the way of love set before us by the Christ we follow.

Gracious Creator, send your Creative Spirit into the world

that it might be transformed into a place of flourishing for all. Amen.

## The Lord’s Payer

## Colours of Day

## Go down in the city, into the street, And let's give the message to the people we meet.

## **SENDING OUT**

**Blessing/Benediction**

You are awesomely and wonderfully made

Go out to use your hands for justice and mercy.

May you know the blessing of God,

lover, beloved and love itself,

this day and every day. **Amen.**

Please join us in the hall for refreshments and further fellowship.

***Pentecost 13: 7 September Luke 14:25-33 Bill Loader inspired***

What are some of the values, persons, and/ or priorities that you hold most dear?

Persevering your marriage, caring for your children, gaining financial security, living a long and healthy life? Creating a beautiful garden, building aa admirable house……… add or speak your own thoughts.

Think of four or five of them, try and list them in your mind.

Recently Peter and I caught by chance a TV show, *The Casketeers*. The series is about a Maori couple who are funeral directors in N.Z. In this episode, which appeared documentary like, they visit Japan and are engaged in a culturally different therapeutic exercise. They allow themselves to experience a short session with a therapist which proports to help people prepare for death. The process heightens the values each individual holds dear and their priorities in life. Think of you own the list you made in your head of those things you hold most dear, your priorities if you like.

Each person was given a number of pieces of paper, like post it notes, on which they write the names of loved ones, or possessions or experiences. Maybe **their** list was a bit like **yours.** Sitting quietly back to back, the practitioner talks them through an imaginary illness whereby they edge closer to death, along the way their world shrinks, in terms of possible activities or engagement with loved ones. Little by little and painfully they select and relinquish the notes one at a time, putting them progressively into an envelope until only the most precious one remains. Can you imagine your own remaining piece of paper - the person , thing or belief you are left with at the end?

In this instance, for the wife, the last card named her beloved baby who might carry on the family name; for the husband what is left is faith in God. The therapeutic point of the exercise is to consciously work through values and priorities and then to reflect on the process. The couple quietly emerge and normal life resumes. In Faith Conversations this week we were invited to think about those things about which **we are conscious and those things about which we might have a conscience**. The Casketeers, in their profession continue to show love and respect to those that are no longer living, and deal compassionately with grieving families. All of which is admirable and wholesome. However, as in our reading from Luke, they too are obliged to look hard, if uncomfortably, at their priorities in life and death. To consider the costs associated with chosen lifestyle, especially as they too edge closer to end of life. Perhaps for them as for us this can be an uncomfortable subject, one we might wish to avoid.

I must confess when I looed at the Luke reading for today I felt ohhh do I have to? Isn’t there an easier passage for me to share?

The passage we heard today from the gospel of Luke, at first offends against the values which most people treasure. Worse than that, it appears to offend against The Love Commandment of Jesus himself. Do you think so? Is there something abit contradictory or uncomfortable about this passage . Why the word ‘hate’? The parallel gospel of Matthew softens the saying by converting the word ‘hate’ to ‘love less’. What was Jesus saying? Is this hyperbole, deliberate exaggeration for effect, to hammer home an important lesson? Maybe.

What consequences is Jesus highlighting here? How does this passage match the Jesus we hear elsewhere, a gentle Jesus meek and mild, the Jesus we sing about especially to our children? *Jesus Hands Are Kind Hands* O.K. but before we ‘tame’ or play down the words, we may do well to actually feel the shock, to wonder and not ignore what Jesus is saying so emphatically. It appears he intended to be shocking.

Is Jesus challenging our assumption that those things that **we** hold most dear should be beyond question or examination, and fail to be exposed to the light of **God’s priorities and deepest desires for each one of us.**

### Last week Michael talked about Humility and Hospitality, about being cautious as to how we estimate our social standing or status in the full view of society! There are cracks or faults, hidden from our awareness that can leave us embarrassed or surprised. Humility and hospitality and honesty are all related. Better in Michaels passage last week, to be elevated or lifted up, than to be moved down by your host. Remember his example of wedding protocols and various cultural practices. God’s love is so great it goes beyond ‘our concepts of reciprocity, of transactional relationships wherein ‘fair is fair. By contrast God’s extraordinary Grace, His underserved favour is beyond compare! So maybe we are getting closer to the meaning of this shocking passage. Is it more like the Maori couple’s experience of being confronted in the final analysis of what we are left with when we pass from this life, come to meet our maker?

Sandwiched between last week’s Biblical text and today’s is the parable of the banquet.

### The Parable of the Great Dinner

You may be familiar with this reading…. In summary ….

15One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, “Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” 16Then Jesus said to him, “Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. 17At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is ready now.’ 18But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.’ 19Another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.’ 20Another said, ‘I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.’ 21So the slave returned and reported this to his master.

Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’ 22And the slave said, ‘Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.’ 23Then the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. 24For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.’

Again, what does this passage demonstrate? Why does it lead into the theme of today - being known and shaped by God for his purpose and glory? Perhaps the lesson is that we must be cautious about offering socially acceptable reasons for absence or refusal to join God’s banquet, ‘to eat bread in the kingdom of God’, the banquet we taste of each time we celebrate communion together – Peace, Forgiveness, Redemption and wholeness that only Jesus can offer us. Are we remarkable good at rationalising our fondly held perspectives on what is most important or offering excuses?

Is Jesus is calling us to be deeply honest in our self-reflection? Honest with ourselves because, as we have discovered in Psalm 139 today, God knows us better than we know ourselves, we cannot hide our true motivations from Him and neither should we diminish the honour of being invited to God’s banquet, life eternal by Grace alone, His free and generous gift of salvation. When all is said and done , when we come to the end of our lives, what can matter more than eternal life with the One who knows us, who shapes us according to his pleasure into His likeness, Then and only then shall we ‘Know as we are Known.’

1 Corinthians 13:12 [New Living Translation](https://biblehub.com/nlt/1_corinthians/13.htm)  
Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely

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Such knowledge, this perfect understanding of each unique individual, forgiven and precious to God, is the God’s view of us wrought by Jesus costly sacrifice. Redeemed from the consequences of our sins both conscious and unconscious, of commission and omission. We can never fully know ourselves, or even less so, others as perfectly as God knows us. So, in terms of our priorities, nothing or nobody in our lives, no matter how important can compete in any way with knowing our creator God. So, this passage is not calling us to hate family but simply to place the importance of our relationship with God above all else.

The voice of Jesus articulates human need - one’s own and that of others a need to belong and yet He calls people to discipleship. Discipleship means a relationship of learning and growth with Jesus as Saviour, Teacher and the One to be followed. This is our God- given purpose and calling. As important as family and home and security is, nothing is more important than acknowledging that God created us to glorify Him.

Another perspective on this incongruous passage might be that hiding in plain sight, that there are some sins that need to be called out, not ignored or deemed acceptable, or normalised. We can all, no doubt think of many instances of abuse within families that can never be condoned or deemed culturally appropriate. Family power and control which is expressed like possession is not healthy. It may be exhibited in an extremely negative way as in a form of slavery, or, more subtlety, and commonly as family in a seemingly comfortable and secure place. Normalised, because despite obvious unfulfilled potential, lack of opportunity, embedded cultural constrictions are never challenged.

Family relationships can be toxic, can constrict growth, become oppressive, and lead away from the full life God intends for us. Sometimes, toxic in the sense that closed minds, eyes trained not to see, ears not to hear, or lives self-preoccupied with often a kind of private goodness but with no heart for compassion, for justice in the wider world. Sometimes family can script us to live in a particular way that does not permit the kind of rebellion that can liberate the individual to choose a different way, a better way, indeed The Way .

Radical change is directional. It has a sure direction, a goal, That God is a God of a Way, a journey and that goal can possibly mean the way of suffering. ‘Taking up the cross’ might allude to the dedication shown by those prepared to die for their cause. To be Just Like Jesus, finds the ultimate expression in both the life and death of Jesus. It is not a call to fanaticism with narrowed vision riding roughshod over people for a cause, but a radical inclusiveness prepared to speak out,stand up and be counted and face the consequences.

Luke brings together two stories which we might call ‘strategic planning’. The call of the gospel invites people to **think hard about what they are doing**, using as much common sense as a builder or as a king preparing for battle. Notice the shame culture at work: people will say he began but could not complete his tower. The motivation given in the illustration, again, is not the main point. The point is that in such situations people need to **know what** they are doing. Luke draws it together with Jesus’ words: ‘So then any of you who does not take leave of all your possessions cannot be my disciple.’

It is as much about letting go of possessions as letting go of being possessed by them. Jesus regularly associated family power with possession power, because both belonged together. One of the reasons for family power was protection of possessions. Letting go of being possessed does often mean letting go of possessing others. Releasing spouses from toxic relationships. This is a difficult area of family bonding which has become bondage, and sometimes liberation is required. Expertise and professional help maybe required to bring about an appropriate freedom and protection.

The call to discipleship is not an ancient form of ‘doing your own thing’ or finding true happiness in spontaneous self- fulfilment adrift of all others’ claims and free of care. On the contrary it is a call to be on the journey, which in Luke’s gospel leads to Jerusalem to Jesus death. Discipleship cannot compete with the ‘feel good’ philosophies of modern or ancient times. It is an invitation to engagement in radically inclusive love, living from the life of the God of love, and living in solidarity with all who share that love. So, it’s not just about me; it’s about us and it’s about them. Ultimately it is also about family, but from a radically different perspective which can turn much of what goes for family connection upside down and can redefines family as persons relating together in care and service, as brothers and sisters in Christ.

1. **Hymn 1 Refresh My Heart Lord TIS 744 F^ C**

   **Hymn 2 Search me O God, and know my heart today, G^ D music score shared,**

   **prior to prayer of confession**

   **Hymn 3 Jesus hands were kind hands *TIS* 236 G^ G x2**

   **after kids talk**

   **Hymn 4 Colours of Day SOF 64 D^D x3**

   ### The Cost of Discipleship

   25Now large crowds were traveling with him, and he turned and said to them, 26“Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. 27Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? 29Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, 30saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32If he cannot, then while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. 33So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

   **Embodied Practice**

   The embodied practice is an opportunity to engage more fully with the reading through sensory experiences and stimuli. Embodied practice acknowledges the diversity with which we experience the world and take in new information. Embodied practice is for all to enter into the text in a new way with an openness to what new understanding might be received regardless of age. What is offered below are suggestions to inspire.

   Choose from the following options or use an embodied practice of your own to explore this week’s reading.

   **Option 1: Creations**

   To reflect on God’s creativity and human creativity.

   Choose an option to fit your time frame—quick mode or extended mode

   **Materials**

   Quick mode (5 – 10 minutes)

   * Air-dry clay or chenille sticks
   * Interlocking building bricks

   Extended mode (for before or after worship or in parallel)

   * Various art supplies gathered from the standard supply box (see page 6.)

   **Instructions**

   1. Invite participants to create something with their hands—a shape, creature, or pattern.
   2. After creating, reflect together on the following:
      * What is it like to create something?
      * How does it feel to be in control of what it becomes?
      * Have you ever started again with something you were making?
      * I wonder how God feels when working with us in this way—moulding, reshaping, delighting, trying again.
      * Today, we heard Jeremiah and a psalmist imagine God as like a potter and a knitter. I wonder if you have another image for God as Creator—perhaps a patient sculpture or an excited inventor or…?
      * Why might God want to reshape something?

   This activity invites participants to reflect on God’s creative role and the feelings evoked for them in the creative process. It is suitable for use during the intergenerational conversation or as an activity alongside the service.

   **Option 2: Lectio Divina**

   To invite sustained meditation on one of the passages of scripture.

   **Materials**

   * Instructions for the stages of the *Lectio Divina*.
   * Access to one or both readings.
   * Materials for journaling or colouring: paper, pens, markers.

   **Instructions**

   1. **Prepare:** Take a deep breath. Pray for God to be present.
   2. **Reading 1:** Read slowly. Notice if a word or phrase catches your attention.
   3. **Reading 2:** Read the passage again. Does the same word or phrase catch you?
   4. **Respond** to your reading through writing or drawing. Focus on the word or phrase that caught your attention.
   5. **Contemplation:** Take a deep breath. Give thanks to God for what you have noticed.

   This activity invites focused attention on the passage through the practice of Lectio Divina. This both engages the participants in thoughtful contemplation and models a spiritual discipline that can be used in other circumstances.

   **Option 3: Wonder walk**

   To invite wonder at God’s creative presence.

   **Materials**

   * No materials are required

   **Instructions**

   1. As an individual or with a small group take a walk around your community space (inside and out) or around your neighbourhood. Walk with the intention to notice creation. Spend time to reflect on what you have seen and what it evokes in you. Give thanks to God.

   This activity seeks to connect with God as creator and evoke awe.

   **Jeremiah 18:1–11**

   ### God the potter

   Jeremiah received the Lord’s word: Go down to the potter’s house, and I’ll give you instructions about what to do there. So I went down to the potter’s house; he was working on the potter’s wheel. But the piece he was making was flawed while still in his hands, so the potter started on another, as seemed best to him. Then the Lord’s word came to me: House of Israel, can’t I deal with you like this potter, declares the Lord? Like clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in mine, house of Israel! At any time I may announce that I will dig up, pull down, and destroy a nation or kingdom; but if that nation I warned turns from its evil, then I’ll relent and not carry out the harm I intended for it. At the same time, I may announce that I will build and plant a nation or kingdom; but if that nation displeases and disobeys me, then I’ll relent and not carry out the good I intended for it. Now say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem: This is what the Lord says: I am a potter preparing a disaster for you; I’m working out a plan against you. So each one of you, turn from your evil ways; reform your ways and your actions.

   # Luke 14:25-3 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

   ### The Cost of Discipleship

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