THE COURIER

Christ Congregational Church, UCC
An Open and Affirming Congregation

Creating Beloved Community

Volume 46 No. 11 | Be The Church | November 2026

Worship and Programs:

Worship: Remotely and On-Site
Sundays, 10:00AM

Regular Events:

Adult Choir:
Wednesdays, 6:45PM

Adult Hand Bells:
Wednesdays, 6PM

Bible Study
Sundays, 9AM

Prayer Shawl Ministry:
Wednesdays, 10AM

Quilt Guild:
3rd Tuesday, 1PM



Team Meetings: ZOOM

Council: Nov. 19, 7PM

Deacons: Nov. 5, 7PM

Faith Formation: TBD

Missions: Nov. 15, 9AM-Library

Music: TBD

Property: Nov. 12, 7PM

Stewardship: Nov. 4, 6PM

PASTOR'S PAGE



My plans are not your plans, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, and my plans than your plans. Just as the rain and the snow come down from the sky and don't return there without watering the earth, making it conceive and yield plants and providing seed to the sower and food to the eater, so is my word that comes from my mouth; it does not return to me empty. Instead it does what I want, and accomplishes what I intend. Yes, you will go out with celebration, and you will be brought back in peace. Even the mountains and the hills will burst into song before you; all the trees of the field will clap their hands. In place of the thorn the cypress will grow; in place of the nettle the myrtle will grow. This will attest to the LORD's stature, an enduring reminder that won't be removed.

~Isaiah 55:8-13~

Six years ago I sat in my office and tried to figure out what in the world to write for my first Courier article. I had just arrived here as your new pastor, we were still in the middle of a global pandemic, and our church had adopted a new strategic vision and pathways to pursue it. There was a lot going on.

I'll always remember the season leading to my coming here, and the first few months of settling in, because – most of all – *I had plans!* Having been a seminarian, and then an associate pastor after that, all of the church work I'd ever done was as a "second in command" so to speak. I remember feeling like this would be my opportunity to really lead a congregation and *implement some plans* by introducing fresh ideas and new perspectives, and that everyone would be so excited for the new opportunities of this transition that we'd go in a wholly new direction than any of us had ever imagined.

But God is the one with the plans.

I've never been one to ascribe to a theological view where we have no agency against the will of God – the type of belief that says God will always make exactly Continue…

…Continued

the right thing happen in exactly the right time, always, and that we're just floating along in the current of time. But this passage from Isaiah has always captivated me all the same; because as I've grown in my life of faith I've seen how there are absolutely moments when there's clearly a path to follow and also moments where we're following a whisper through the dark woods. This passage isn't a promise that everything is all figured out, so we can just relax. It's a promise that God has a plan, that God will always actively lead us in pursuit of that plan, and the promise is sweetened by the hope found in a vision of where that plan leads. The passage tells God's people, "You will *go out*, and then you will be brought back."

Our associate at the time, Ann-Marie Illsley, told me then about a truism she'd heard from one of her seminary professors. It says, "most pastors over-estimate what they can achieve in five years of ministry; and under-estimate what they can achieve in ten years of ministry." I'm finding that to be true.

The plans I had, the big ideas I was so excited to implement and watch grow… most of them have been left on the cutting room floor for years at this point. *BUT* I'm constantly amazed at where we've been together in that time; and I'm even more excited than ever about where we can go together with God's help. God is always inviting us into a new thing, always leading us somewhere new. In about a month we'll kick off the Advent season which is the "New Year" in church life. It will lead us into Christmas, and then in turn we'll journey into Lent, followed by Easter. This month we'll also finalize our church budget which is the concrete expression of where we would seek to go together in the coming year. Each of us will have our own family and individual things happening as well. Through it all I encourage us to lean into God's words through the prophet here, "My plans are not your plans, nor are your ways my ways… *BUT* you will be sent out in praise, and you will be brought back in peace."

Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Jeff



FAITH FORMATION NEWS

Fall Greetings, Church!

November invites us to pause, give thanks, and remember what it means to be part of a community. At Christ Congregational Church, we are grateful for the many ways people of all ages bring life to our shared ministry—through learning, worship, service, fellowship, and caring for one another that help us feel connected.

This month, we look forward to celebrating **Thanksgiving Homecoming Sunday on November 22 with an intergenerational worship and lunch!** Our theme, *Come As You Are, You Belong Here*, reminds us that church is more than a building or a Sunday morning tradition. It is a community where we are invited to show up as our full selves, build relationships across generations, and discover how we can care for one another and our wider world. Whether you have been part of this congregation for decades, are returning after time away, or are just beginning to find your place here, there is room for you.

Faith in Action

Throughout November, we will focus on the theme of belonging.

Our children and youth will explore what it means to belong and how we can help others know they belong, too. Through Sunday School, youth activities, and opportunities to participate in the life of our congregation, we'll practice welcoming others, celebrating what makes each of us unique, and discovering how small acts of kindness can make a big difference.

Together, we'll consider an important question: **How can we help everyone know there is a place for them here?**

Youth Group (grades 6-12) (Friday, November 13 6-9pm)

Our youth will have opportunities to think more deeply about hunger and food insecurity, including the systems and circumstances that can make it difficult for people to access food.

We'll move beyond the question **"How can we help?"** toward the bigger question:

"How can we be part of a community where everyone has enough?"

Confirmation (Sunday, November 8 11:30-12:15)

Confirmation students will meet in the Faith Formation wing with the Deacons to discuss what it means to be a member of the church and conduct interviews.

Adult Faith Formation

9am Bible Study

Sundays @ 9am in the Faith Formation Wing

Join us to walk through the book of Mark over the next semester. All are welcome!

CCC Monthly Book Club

1st Friday of each month in the Library at 10am

November 6th: Discussing *The Great Believers* by Rebecca Makkai

December 4th: Discussing Small Things Like These by Claire Keegan

Community Life

A Thanksgiving Homecoming Sunday

Sunday November 22

9:30-10:00am Gathering with cider and donuts in the Narthex

10:00-11:15am Intergenerational Worship

11:15-11:45am Appetizers, Conversation, and Activities in Fellowship Hall

11:45am-Thanksgiving Sandwich Lunch

Gobbler Sandwich, chips, beverage, and your choice of Apple or Pumpkin Pie

RSVP for lunch by calling the church office (508)586-3022, filling out a RSVP card from the pew on a Sunday, or clicking THIS LINK.

As we enter the season of Thanksgiving, may our gratitude move beyond words and into action. May we notice who is missing from the table, make space for new friendships, share what we have, and work toward a world where everyone has what they need to thrive.

There is a place for you here. We look forward to learning, serving, celebrating, and growing together this November!

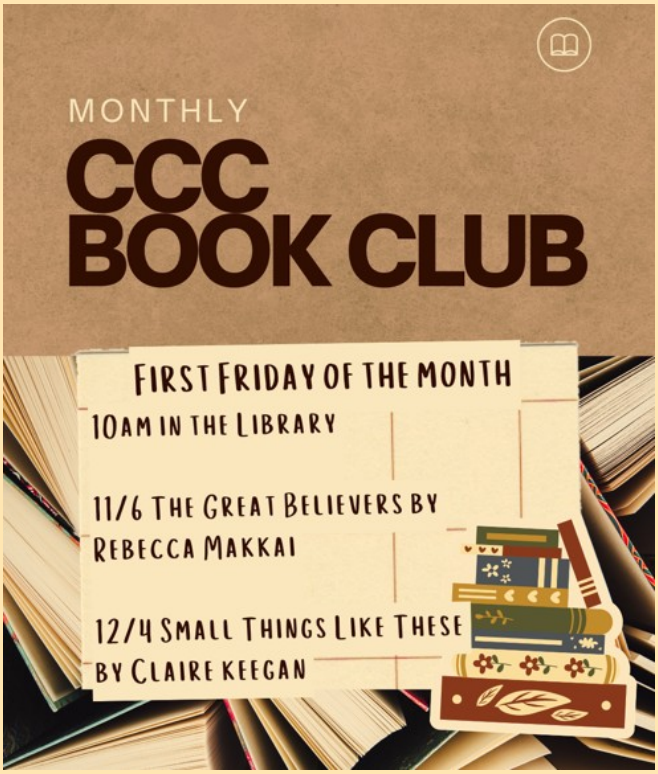
With a grateful heart,

Dani

"so, all of us, in union with Christ, form one body. And as members of that one body, we belong to each other."

-Romans 12:5 (The Inclusive Bible)







Christ Congregational Church, UCC
Kid's Faith Formation

Feet for Food

Feet for Food 2026

306 total laps





Feet for Food 2026

Over $1,000 raised

Half will go to Father Bill's Mainspring and half will go to CCC's Food Pantry

Thank you to those who walked, supported financially, and counted laps! It was a huge success and we can't wait for next year.

A special thank you to Marcia Olson and the Mission Team for collaborating with FFCL and to Matt and Jan Howard, Henok Kaptimer, Anita and Beth Keenan, Lauren Selman-Kaptimer, and Betsey Serjak for being feet on the ground volunteers!

TRUNK OR TREAT







Belonging Begins With Us

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer's poem *Belong* invites us to reflect on what it means to belong and how we connect with others to foster belonging in a community.

The Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion, and Equity (DBIE) Team has been in a season of reflection and how to move forward into 2027. We are feeling the need to put belonging into action: to listen to voices that are often unheard, welcome varying perspectives, recognize barriers to participation, examine our own blindspots, and create spaces where everyone can show up as their authentic selves.

You will be invited to several initiatives in 2027: beginner level anti-racism classes, times of conversation and story telling during listening sessions, and relationship building during an all church community retreat.

Belonging is something we build together, through the choices we make and the ways we treat one another.

In solidarity,
Dani
(DBIE Team: Pastor Jeff, Doug Anderson, Betsey Clifford, Matt Howard, Henok Kaptimer, Anita Keenan, Betsey Serjak)



Belonging
by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

And if it's true we are alone,
we are alone together,
the way blades of grass
are alone, but exist as a field.
Sometimes I feel it,
the green fuse that ignites us,
the wild thrum that unites us,
an inner hum that reminds us
of our shared humanity.
Just as thirty-five trillion
red blood cells join in one body
to become one blood.
Just as one hundred thirty-six thousand
notes make up one symphony.
Alone as we are, our small voices
weave into the one big conversation.
Our actions are essential
to the one infinite story of what it is
to be alive. When we feel alone,
we belong to the grand communion
of those who sometimes feel alone—
we are the dust, the dust that hopes,
a rising of dust, a thrill of dust,
the dust that dances in the light
with all other dust, the dust
that makes the world.

All Soul's List (November 1, 2025 – October 31, 2026)

Larry Jones (passed November 18, 2025) Member

Marilyn Fairbanks (passed November 14, 2025) Member

Pastor Jill Wiley (wife of Philip Jones)(passed December 2025)

Denise Marie Fleming (friend of Denise Cahill)(passed January 3, 2026)

Laurie E. McLaughlin (friend of Mary Poole)(passed January 1, 2026)

Weston Moss (friend of Sue Koza)(passed January 13, 2026)

Karen Lincoln (friend of Nancy McGunnigal)(passed February 7, 2026)

Suzhane (friend of Janice & Marty Urban)(passed February 2026)

Sandra Lynch (sister of Mary Poole)(passed March 9, 2026)

Harriet E. Dunklee (friend of Paula Stevens)(passed May 29, 2026) Member

Margaret Nash (aunt of Patricia Illsley)(passed July 13, 2026)

Linda J. (Hayes) Karter (sister of Rev. Fred Hayes)(passed September 9, 2026) Member

John Mercon (friend of Deana Colby)(passed October 13, 2026)

June A. Bearse (mother of Wayne Hulbert)(passed October 19, 2026) Member





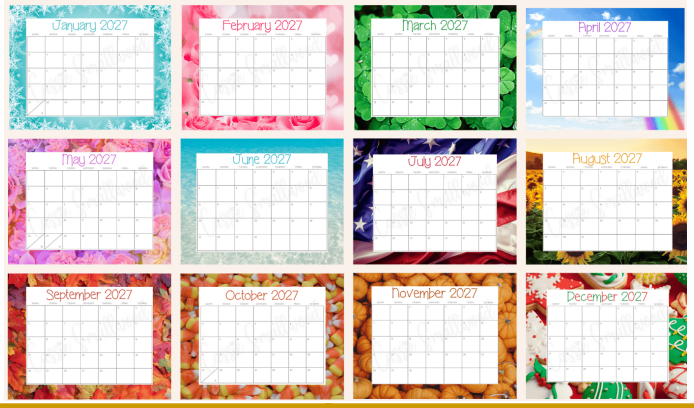
Wishing all the best on your Birthdays

Sofia Shelley-Wyss, Phoenix Pelote, Gabriel Swisher Rosa, Doug Anderson, Michelle Purssell, Pasha Ozelius, Steve Prince, Tricia Gross, Cindy Myers, Shawn Weatherbee, Ruth Ladd, Jean Madden, Jay Sparling, Sarah Sparling, Jack Blanchard, Jayce Exell, Rev. Patricia

(listed in order of day of month from 1 to 30)

MISSION COMMITTEE

Missions is collecting **2027** calendars for the Brockton Veterans Hospital. Please bring them to the Church Office. All kinds and sizes are needed.



Thank you so much for the beautiful Mums. They are like a burst of sunshine. I love them. And the note was really special.

Linda Alvilhiera





Oct. 5, 2026

Dear Christ Church Members,

Thank you for a lovely dark red Mums plant. It is quite beautiful.

Anna Thomas

I want to thank you for the lovely plant that the church, by the way of the Deacons and Deaconess', sent to me.

Maurine Upton





10/19/26

To my CCU Family,

Thank you so much for the beautiful Chrysanthemum plant and the cheering cards. It's a blessing to be so remembered.

Sincerely,

Ricky Soncrant

Dear friends,

The Deacon Committee is a group of remarkable people. I'm sitting beside a beautiful plant delivered last week by a lovely lady from our church family. The warm visit and this plant meant so very much. It wasn't the best of days… then it did become the best of days!! Thank you!

Love,

Bonnie Bittner







NOTES FROM ALEX

How do you get into the zone?

What's the zone? A place where you feel most at ease and natural in what you're doing—where time doesn't matter. A place where it's difficult to think of a negative thought because you are so involved and uplifted by what is going on in the now. Maybe it happens when creating art, music, or even engaging with your occupation.

I got a new water filter pitcher the other day. I struggled to get the hose attachment to connect to my faucet--as in water-flying-everywhere, could-not-for-the-life-of-me-get-the-thing-to-work struggled. All told, I spent over an hour with calls and emails to customer service to little effect.

Finally I thought, "Alex, maybe this is easier than you're making it." I went back to the drawing board and tried to pull the hose attachment further up onto the faucet, which took a little doing. It worked! The pitcher filled like a dream.

Sometimes getting to that zone is as easy as stopping momentarily and looking within. Often looking inside ourselves is not easy, however. How easy can we make entering the zone? Does it have to be difficult? "Easy" has a way of being difficult before it becomes easy.

We get in our own way most of the time. One thing I've learned is that making art naturally and easily sounds better. Making or doing anything is much easier when we enjoy what we do and enter that zone of natural flowing movement and action.

How do you enter the "zones" of your life? What does it take to ease into the *flow* of life that Jesus seemed to have a handle on when he said quite simply, "I am that I am"? Aside from the divine overtones of the term "I AM," which was shorthand for "Jehovah," I believe Jesus can also be interpreted as saying here that he is living genuinely and truthfully, completely honest with himself.

It's often as hard as we make it.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30, NIV)



Thanks!
Alex Green
Music Director

BOARD OF MISSIONS

What's Happening This Month



Love Feeds Everyone

Last month, our mission focus was food insecurity. We explored ways our church community could put Jesus' words in Matthew 14:16 into practice: *"Jesus replied, 'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.'"* Through these efforts, we showed that Love Feeds Everyone.

- On World Communion Sunday, we reflected on hunger worldwide. Later in the month, guest speaker Lauren Zaremba from **Father Bill's & MainSpring** reminded us that hunger is tied to housing and economic challenges in Brockton and beyond—and lasting solutions require systemic change. *Beyond donating food, how can we raise our collective voice through advocacy, policy, support, and voting to address hunger's root causes?*
- Our Sunday school kids, led by the Faith Formation and Community Life team, walked laps and raised **$1096** for our church food pantry and Father Bill's & MainSpring. They showed us that even our youngest members can lead the way! *How can we support and celebrate our children as partners in our church's justice work all year?*
- At coffee hour on October 18, the Missions team shared treats from "How Do I Cook This?" Created by a local Gold Star Girl Scout and translated into three languages, this cookbook uses common food pantry staples. Find its link and QR code elsewhere in this issue. *Which non-perishable item could we stock more intentionally in our church pantry to support diverse households?*
- We also enjoyed the same casseroles we share every other month with our neighbors at **Father Bill's & MainSpring.** In October, we provided 18 casseroles —enough to feed 180 people. *New to our casserole ministry? What small step could you take to join the rotation this year?*
- **MainSpring Casserole Ministry:** "Cooking is love made visible." Our next chance to share a warm, satisfying meal with neighbors in need is **December.** To make a casserole or donate toward the cost, please contact Marcia Olson at (baglole.olson@verizon.net).

Opportunities to give!

- **November Diaper & Wipe Drive**

  Throughout the month of November, we will once again be collecting diapers (for both children and the elderly) along with adult and baby wipes. Please look for the designated donation boxes in the downstairs lobby to drop off your contributions.

  These items are essential for daily health and dignity, yet they cannot be purchased using SNAP benefits (food stamps). By donating, you directly help local families stretch their food dollars and ease their monthly financial burdens. Thank you for your continued generosity and support for our neighbors!



- **Fill the Pantry: Thanksgiving Homecoming Food In-Gathering**
  On **Sunday, November 22,** we invite you to join us for our Thanksgiving Homecoming service and a special holiday Food In-Gathering!
  As we gather to give thanks for our own blessings, let's come together to support our neighbors facing food insecurity during the holiday season.
  We are collecting shelf-stable, high-demand pantry items to keep our community well-fed and cared for. As you do your holiday shopping, please consider donating these items that are always in high demand:
  - ◊ Protein Power: Canned chicken, tuna, SPAM, and Vienna sausages.
  - ◊ Warm & Hearty: Hearty soups, stews, chili, and instant oatmeal.
  - ◊ Comfort foods: Hunt's Pasta sauce, pasta, rice, beans.
  - ◊ Shelf-stable milk.
- Drop-off Times: Sun: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Mon -Thu: 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM
- *Please double-check those expiration dates before you bring them in so we can share the very best with our community. Thank you for your generosity!*



https://sites.google.com/view/how-do-i-cook-this/home

Keala Harris, a 13-year Girl Scout from Stoughton, Massachusetts, created *How Do I Cook This?* for her Gold Award. The cookbook helps local food pantry users prepare meals with unfamiliar pantry staples and is available in English, Haitian Creole, and Portuguese. Keala hopes the cookbook will encourage patrons to use more pantry items and reduce food waste. Digital copies are available on this website.



God's Work Our Hands



Community Food Pantry at CCC

Shelf-stable, non-perishable donations to our church food pantry are always appreciated as we seek to help those in our community facing food insecurity. Please be sure to check the expiration date! Monetary donations are also welcome. Donations can be dropped off at the church any time while the pantry is open.

Hours: Mon-Thu 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM and Sun 9:00 AM – 12:00 NN

Fall has arrived bringing cooler weather and it's important to stock both **essential and nutritious staples, seasonal ingredients** and **hygiene essentials** that can be used for comfort, meals, baking and long-term storage.

Most-Needed Pantry Items

- Canned tuna, chicken, Vienna sausages, and Spam
- Peanut butter or other nut butters
- Canned beans and lentils (black, kidney, chickpeas)
- Shelf-stable milk or protein shakes
- Shelf-stable meals – hearty soups, stews, chili, ravioli
- Low-sodium canned vegetables
- Canned fruit in light syrup

Meal Stretcher Pantry Staples

- Rice, pasta, quinoa and oatmeal – whole grain options preferred
- Mac n' cheese
- Hunts Pasta Sauce
- Cooking oils
- Spices & salt/pepper
- Sugar & flour
- Shelf-stable tofu

Kid-Friendly Fall Items

- Applesauce or fruit cups
- Granola, cereal or protein bars
- Individually wrapped school snacks
- Whole grain, low sugar cereals
- Instant oatmeal
- Juice boxes – 100% juice

Most Needed Pantry Extras

- Individually wrapped rolls of toilet paper, paper towels, dish soap
- Menstrual products
- Shampoo, deodorant, bars of soap
- Tooth paste & toothbrushes
- Can openers
- Baby supplies – formula, diapers, wipes

Missions



Find our online sales using the Facebook Marketplace Link below:
https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/profile/1094073446/



COMMON THREADS QUILT GUILD

We had a wonderful October meeting.

Deana demonstrated a disappearing hour glass quilt block. That means she made an hourglass quilt block then made two equal horizontal and vertical cuts to the block she turned around four edge pieces and magically the block was became a beautiful star. Amazing!!

Janet brought us multiple NICU quilts and some placemats for Brockton Meals on wheels.

Carol and Janet are quilting two of an our Quilt Bank quilt tops that the guild made. Thank you for your time and talent.

Keith, Keith, Keith, what can we say about Keith other than well done. He brought us another beautiful quilt he made. The pattern is called Woven Quilt Block. This photo just doesn't do it justice. It is stunning in person.

We are looking forward to our November meeting where we be planning to make some baby quilts for the Homes for our Troops, Wounded Veteran's gift baskets.



Placemats for Meals On Wheels made by Janet Eckstrom.



October Block Of The Month demonstrated by Deana Colby.



Woven Quilt Block quilt made by Keith Allen.



NICU quilts made by Janet Eckstrom.



A NOTE FROM THE DEACONS

Where have all the Flowers Gone?

If you were out and about running errands on the first Saturday in October, you might have seen our Deacons on the roads delivering flowers to our home centered faithful. This unique form of ministry came out of the COVID pandemic when it was especially hard for older folks to access community. Thankfully that crisis led to innovation as the Deacons began a regular flower blitz. This year 27 plants were delivered by 10 deacons in a matter of hours!

There are many things that we are all eager to leave behind from COVID. However, the Deacons are happy to carry this new tradition into the future. The flowers, while beautiful, are really a vehicle to connection, community, and togetherness. If you would like to learn more about this ministry, ask a Deacon!







A SURVEY FOR THE DEACONS

The **Deacon Team** is looking for your input regarding an additional service on Christmas Eve. We appreciate your taking the time to respond to this important survey.

Survey Link

BUILDING PARTNERS

SAVE THE DATE FOR BIC'S END OF YEAR FUNDRAISER CELEBRATING

YOUTH SOL'S 5TH ANNIVERSARY



GROWING LEADERS. BUILDING POWER. CHANGING SYSTEMS.

MAKE A GIFT TO THE CAMPAIGN AND THEN REGISTER FOR FREE!

DECEMBER 5

6 PM - 8 PM

1350 PLEASANT ST
BROCKTON, MA 02301

Thank you, Christ Congregational Church!

Thank you so much for your $1,000 dues contribution to BIC last month. In so many ways, your partnership has been invaluable, both to BIC and to the greater Brockton community at large. I just wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude to you and say how much I look forward to deepening our relationship and building a better Brockton together.

Sincerely,
Rev. Bernadette
BIC Executive Director

Brockton Interfaith Community



Please bring your bottle/can returns to church in fellowship hall. The money goes to the Christian Education Committee. Please turn in the TABS on the cans, it goes to children with Cancer. See the office for further information.



CONTACT US

CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC
1350 Pleasant Street
Brockton, MA 02301-2840

Tel: 508-586-3022
Web: brocktonucc.org
Email: office@brocktonucc.org

Office Hours:
Monday thru Thursday:
9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Sunday Worship Time: 10:00 a.m.

PLEASE HAVE BOTTLES/CANS RINSED BEFORE DROPPING THEM OFF TO THE CHURCH. THANK YOU!



"Wanted, yarn for inmates to learn and donate booties and caps for new babies at area hospitals. ANY amount small or large. Please drop off at the Church office" **George Manoogian**



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