

st. matthew's UNITING CHURCH BAULKHAM HILLS growing together



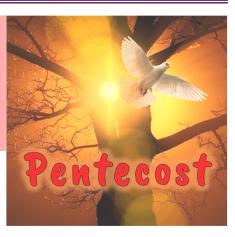
St. Matthew's Monthly Newsletter

Pentecost — Receiving the Holy Spirit

Fifty days after Easter we enter into the Season of Pentecost. For us in the Christian Church it is the celebration of our birth as the Church - that is the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Disciples and them receiving it. This is the start of the liturgical season where we get on with growing in faith and discipleship. However, it is something that many of us may not know the origins of. Πεντηκοστή (Pentekoste) literally means fiftieth. It is not surprising that it has Jewish origins. Pentecost in the time of Jesus, or more specifically in that time just after he had ascended to the heavens, was a Jewish celebration. It continues to be, but not so much with that name. Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks was one of the three great Jewish festivals, so called because it was celebrated on the fiftieth day, reckoning from the second day of the feast of unleavened bread, i.e., from the 16th day of Nisan. Nisan commemorates the Jewish people's miraculous redemption from slavery in Egypt, and the birth of the Jewish nation. Nisan in the Babylonian and Hebrew calendars is the month of the barley ripening and first month of spring.

This idea of things coming back to life fits well (particularly in a Northern Hemisphere) with the following on from Easter and its celebration of resurrection. The imagery is very much related and thus the full return of the disciples to faith and the discovery of new life in becoming the Church at Pentecost is really important.

Just as Passover, which is the Jewish celebration of liberation from slavery in Egypt, precedes Nisan, Easter precedes, which is the celebration of our liberation from Sin and death (Romans 8: 2) the Spirit continues this liberation and leads us to new life as the Church - the Body of Christ, just as the Exodus led the Israelites to the Promised Land. Paul begins Romans Chapter 8 with, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death." There is much we could unpack here, but for now we are just going to focus on receiving the Spirit of God – the Holy Spirit.



Right from the start it is important to get things straight. The Spirit is God. It is not God's spirit, in the sense of a part of God like God's hand or heart - not that God has either hand or heart because God is spirit and has no body (John 4:24). We use the language of God's Spirit, or the Holy Spirit, to differentiate the way that we relate to God's working in us and in the world. It is this aspect of God's nature that moves over the waters of Creation [Genesis 1: 2 - the Spirit the) יוְרִוּחַ (ruach) breath of God – hovered over the waters]. Theologically, we affirm that God is omnipresent present in all space, everywhere - and omnitemporal – present in all time, all the time. God literally transcends our being, our threedimensionality of our space and time. God is beyond being and existence of the universe which is (space-time).

Continued next page

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So, from the beginning, at the time of Pentecost and continuing into now and the future, God is always present in us, with us, in the world and in all of the universe, past, present and future.

Pentecost is not God coming back to the disciples as the Holy Spirit after leaving them as Jesus, the Christ. Remember that we have recently read the account in John 20: 22 when Jesus appeared to the disciples after his resurrection and breathed on them the Holy Spirit. God was with them at all times, just not physically in the person of Jesus – who Thomas declared as being Lord and God. Pentecost is not God coming to the disciples or returning to the disciples. God is always with all people in all places and at all times. We just, in the limits of our language and human beings as threedimensional space-time creatures, have to use the language of different persons to express and explain how we encounter God in different ways. These are theological metaphors, rather than a solid understanding of God's true nature, which is hard to get our heads and hearts around.

The Scriptures are very clear that God is the Creator and God created all things in the person of the Word, who was light and life and whom we name as Jesus the Christ. Jesus the Christ is the incarnation of God and is thus the human person and the way that we relate to God as people. God's Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, is the way and person of God who works with us and within us. The Spirit is God, and is our way of describing God's agency in the universe. The Scriptures are also very clear that people received this working of God, as Spirit, in different ways and at different times.

In all this, the important thing is that we receive God as Spirit in our lives. God is always with us as Spirit. We are never not in the presence of God. God never leaves us or forsakes us. When we receive God as Spirit, or receive God's spirit, this isn't about God handing us something new. It is about us accepting a powerful reality which already exists for us and within us. It is a moment of realisation - that is real-ise-ation, which is coming to accept reality in that it becomes real to us. Just like a wedding is a real-ising - making real in ritual and legal terms - a relationship and commitment which already

exists, and a Citizenship ceremony makes real – ritually and legally – a recognition of people who are already citizens/ residents of a country, Pentecost is our realising and accepting of God at work in us and our committing to join God in that work of redemption and transformation of both ourselves and the world.

Pentecost is the celebration of God starting something new in us as we come to new understanding, acceptance and commitment in faith and discipleship. That is probably why in the liturgical year/calendar that the season of After Pentecost is the longest season of the Church year and is designated as a season for growth and development. The challenge for us is to receive God as Spirit anew, and seek to grow in faith and discipleship.

We have the marks or 'fruit' of the Spirit to both work on and as indicators of how well we are receiving God's work in us and in our lives. Pentecost gives us a lot to think about and work on.

Blessings.

Jon



Thursday 2 May - 10am to 12pm

Guest Speaker

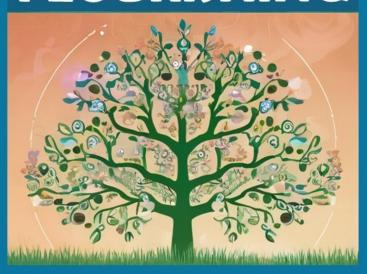
Rev Jon Humphries

The Science of Flourishing

Thursday 2 May 10 am -12noon

(Rev) Jon Humphries Talks about his journey over 10 years into understanding the science of flourishing and wellbeing, and its connection with faith.

S CIENCE OF FLOURISHING





11TH BUILDING HARMONY IFTAR DINNER

On Wednesday 3 April, the Synod hosted the 11th Building Harmony Iftar dinner in collaboration with Affinity Intercultural Foundation dedicated to fostering intercultural relationships under the theme of "Peace: Transforming Communities."

We celebrated our diverse cultures with prayers and readings from leaders of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities. It was a night marked by mutual respect and unity.

From Insights Magazine 5 April 2024



There is a time to end so that something/someone new can emerge





Just on 7 years ago, when I let Dirk Van Doorene know that I was withdrawing from my Lifeline telephone counselling work, he fed me the idea of taking up the Seniors Pastoral Caring role at St. Matthew's that had become vacant. My name and CV was given to the selection committee to consider and, as the saying goes, the rest is history.

I count it a great privilege to have been in that role since October 2017. As I see it, though, all good things have to come to an end and for me that was on the 30th April just passed.

The role, essentially, has been tied up in visits, either by phone or in person. Phone connections became particularly important during the Covid years and some people are still comfortable with phone contact.

My visits have been to people in their homes, in hospital, in cafes and on park benches. Many people have invited me into the events of their lives. Sometimes there have been lively conversations where the experiences along life's journey have been exchanged. At other times, just being present with a person turns out to be the appropriate action.

Having been a members of this congregation for almost 28 years I know a lot of people by name and a little of what they do. The pastoral carer's role has allowed me to get to know many of the older members of our congregation (I'm one myself) a lot better by sitting with them rather than just doing things with them.

It takes a while for trust between me and those I visit to build to a point where the personal conversations open up. I am very grateful to those people who have afforded me the privilege of getting to know them better. In the process I have discovered things about myself that I would not otherwise learn without the observations of others.

At St. Matthew's at the moment there are a number of activities going on where people gather and share.

Coffee and Discovery, Women's Fellowship and Men's Morning Tea are prime examples. These are great times when conversations abound. Sometimes we take these occasions for aranted and it is only when they have gone that we appreciate what we had. Similar events for time poor people at the time of family/working peak period in life should be entertained. The benefits reward those who take advantage of times to gather and get to know others better.

Conversations often lead to sharing what impact one's faith has on how one gets through the highs and lows of life. This may also consider what it is that motivates people to live life to the best that health and circumstances will allow. Shared prayers often are part of the time I have with people.

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of the mission of Jesus Christ as undertaken by St. Matthew's. I look forward to observing what emerges as the next phase in meeting the needs of all people in the St. Matthew's community and how this grows into outreaching the Baulkham Hills community as a whole.

Michael (Mike) Strong



You can also make a donation by clicking on the link below or

Australia's Biggest Morning Tea

Scan to Donate



Unique ID: 4825163

You are invited to join with us for

'Australia's Biggest Morning Tea'

being held at the home of

Dulcie & Peter Duncum at 53 Sarah Crescent Baulkham Hills

Friday 31st May.

Everyone is welcome, so please come and join with us

from 10am

in support of the work and fundraising of the Cancer Council and of our many friends who have journeyed with cancer.

Bring your friends also.

We look forward to your company.

We're hosting a Biggest Morning Tea

Please help us support people impacted by cancer!

Barry Gregory 0425 815 340

Dulcie Duncum 0417 070 848

https://www.biggestmorningtea.com.au/fundraisers/DulcieDuncum/biggest-morning-tea-nsw

Community Presentation Uniting Church Wentworthville 23rd May 2024

23rd May 2024
Wentworthville Uniting Church are hosting (on behalf of Presbytery) a Face Dementia presentation led by Dr Meredith Gresham, a Research fellow in the school of Health and Society in the University of Wollongong.

Worried about dementia and brain health?

- Learn about dementia and how to recognise the early signs and changes.
- Learn how to reduce your risk of dementia.
- Get tips to improve your brain health.
- This is your chance to have all your questions answered.

TIME: 10:00am

VENUE: Uniting Church 115 Station Street, Wentworthville



Meredith writes:

"We are 7 Australian Universities working on the 'Face Dementia' project, which aims to reduce stigma of dementia and communicate with the public to help them recognise the signs, ask a GP and get the right treatments and support. Currently it is estimated around 50% of all people with dementia never get a diagnosis. We are focusing on Western Sydney in this campaign where population statistics indicate there should be between 9-12,000 people with dementia, whereas only a little over 3,300 people have diagnosis are registered with their GP.

I am delighted that Dirk is keen to utilise our services to help your congregations better recognise people with dementia to get the right support. We are targeting older people (over 65) and adult children who may be concerned about a parent or older relative.

Our team are happy to provide talks (tailored to audience), run information tables at events, write article and blogs for newsletters, speak to welfare staff/lay staff or other ways to get positive messages out that there are benefits to diagnosis... not least getting help and support to live well. We can use our Dementia Australia Advocates to speak from lived experience of dementia as well".

You are warmly invited to attend this event.

OP Shop News

Dear friends,

The St. Matthew's Uniting Church Op Shop team have had a wonderful start to the year.

We continually praise our gracious Lord for the many blessings shown to us with donations, sales and support from the community. We have been blessed with some fabulous wedding and vintage dresses lately, so watch out for news of special sales coming up.

Many of our customers are 'regulars', men and women who come into the shop for a bargain and a chat. It has always been apparent that we have a significant number of people who come in for some social contact. Because of this, we recently held a meeting to discuss ways the Op Shop could instigate some community

connection events. Plans in the pipeline so far are morning teas,

multi-cultural craft meetings, come and learn different traditions skills.

a spring fashion parade, and inviting Pre-school parents into an 'early opener' Op Shop session.





Setting up

for Garage Sale



Our Garage Sales on the first Saturday of each month are going well and great fun. All the volunteers have a tradition now of visiting the Arthur St. IGA for coffee and cake when we have closed the church. Setting up, running the sale, and packing it away on the Monday are huge tasks. If you feel this is something you could help with, you would be made most welcome.

We also need regular people each Monday morning to help with sorting 'garage sale' donations and packing

them in the dungeon.
The Op Shop is also
looking for volunteers
– male or female.
Please leave your name
and contact details
with the church office
staff and we will
contact you.

The Op Shop Team

UNITING IN PRAYER 2024

19 May - 22 June





Through Uniting in Prayer different parts of the Uniting Church will be connected to each other through a national prayer chain.

The prayer chain has been sent by email and is now available in full on the Act2 website. If your community didn't receive it or you're not on the list, please email the Act2 team.

Prayer Chain Now Available:

act2uca.com/unitinginprayer2024

St. Matthew's Uniting Church Baulkham Hills praying for

Capel Faith Community

Western Australia

https://unitingchurchwa.org.au/congregation/ capel-uniting-church/ **Aireys Inlet (St Aidans)**

Victoria

 $\underline{https://victas.uca.org.au/church/aireys-inlet/}$

Please find out more about these churches from their websites links above





5 Ways To Connect











Resources Now Available:

act2uca.com/unitinginprayer2024

SALLY YABSLEY-BELL INDUCTED AS KINROSS WOLAROI SCHOOL CHAPLAIN

Rev. Sally Yabsley-Bell was recently inducted into her role as Chaplain to Kinross Wolaroi School.

"As a school Chaplain our roles differ from school to school," she said.

"We shape our role around the school's needs and our gifts and skills. In my interview for Kinross-Wolaroi school, we spoke about my passion for service learning and outreach, as well as my love for connecting with the students through camps and activity-based settings. My role has been shaped with all of that in mind, allowing me time to teach RE and lead chapel services as well as go on school camps and organise service learning opportunities for students and the local community."

"It is such a special privilege to work in School chaplaincy. I feel very deeply honoured that I get to spend my time with so many young people. I get to speak about love and community and help shape their idea of what the future can be. I have been welcomed into the school and the community, so I am most looking forward to what we can build together in this new space."

"The local Uniting Church has a great connection with the school and holds services twice a term with the boarding community at Kinross, as well as house chapel services with the Junior school, and works with students volunteering for different service activities. I am inspired to build on this relationship and develop more community engagement opportunities for the students."



"The students at Kinross Wolaroi school and the staff have been really excited to work with me as their Chaplain. There seems to be a real desire to engage with faith and to see how that can support the school's life within the wellbeing structure of the school."

Rev. Yabsley-Bell told *Insights* she was initially nervous about the move out from Sydney, where she and her family had lived.

"This is the first time for both my husband and I to live outside of Sydney, but so far we are loving it. Our kids have settled into the school, and we are finding that shift from city life to country life to be filled with blessings," she said.

By Jonathon Foye for Insights Magazine 5 April 2024





INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

YOU ARE INVITED TO A SIX WEEK COURSE

ST MATTHEW'S UNITING CHURCH BAULKHAM HILLS Corner of Charles St & Edgar St, Baulkham Hills

CONTACT: Katherine Pedersen 0437 772 011

This course provides an opportunity for those interested in finding out about Christian Meditation to experience the practice in a small group, to learn about its origins and to discover its relevance as a form of prayer for the contemporary world.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

11.00am-12 noon (Weekly for 6 weeks) From 7 April – 12 May

TUESDAY MORNINGS

9.30am-10.30am (Weekly for 6 weeks) From 9 April - 14 may

New giving method -**Smart Debit**

St. Matthew's invites all regular financial givers to consider this new method of direct debit giving from your own online banking. As always we wish to thank all the regular givers.

Special thanks to those who have commenced regular giving to the roof fund - which is now paying off the principal of the loans granted to St. Matthew's to complete our major roof rebuild completed in 2023. A total of \$22347 has been given to date (end Dec23)

As well we invite our newcomers who maybe considering starting a program of regular giving to St. Matthew's to peruse all the regular giving methods that are available.

- Envelopes can be ordered from the office which are stamped for a weekly cash gift which is then put in the offering plate
- Pushpay enables one off and recurring gifts from credit card (Visa/ Mastercard)
- Standard direct debit a fixed arrangement lodged at your bank branch
- NEW Smart Debit setup your own direct debit online

What is Smart Debit?

It is simply the setting up of a schedule of making a payment from your own bank account using the facility in the online banking portals and apps, but not a one-off like you would use to pay a bill, but a regular scheduled event.

All banks do offer this facility, managed through the online banking systems.

How to setup?

Access your online banking Look for the feature to 'Pay

anyone' or 'create scheduled payment' or similar

- Select the specific account if you have more than one
- Create St Matthew's as a payee see the BSB details below
- Set the start date, frequency (weekly/ monthly or other), set the amount for the gift.
- Set the appropriate reference a shown below
- Some banks send an SMS code when creating a new payee.
- Save and done!

Flexibility to change anvtime

You can make alterations at any time to the schedule or set an expiry date.

Smart debit regular giving

Do your own direct debit direct to St Matthew's

 Login to your online banking
 Create a schedule to 'Pay Anyone' from your acct
 Create St Matthew's as a payee
 BSB 634-634
 Acc 1000 25924
 Use reference:
 Offering 8.00 or 9.30 or 6.45
 Set the amount and 5. Set the amount and frequency as you wish weekly/monthly

- Similar to Pushpay but uses your savings accounts not credit card More flexible than a direct debit form lodged at a branch Start/vary/stop as you choose No fees Regular recurring gifts allows St Matthew's to budget more accurately

How does this benefit St. Matthew's

All types of regular giving are very beneficial to St. Matthew's because of the regularity of the income, this allows the church leaders to plan to cover the ongoing expenses with confidence.

BSB details

Here are the bank details BSB: 634-634 Acct: 1000 25924 Please use these references – (same as Pushpay)

Offering 8.00 Offering 9.30 Offering 6.45

Roof fund

David Neideck

On behalf of St Matthew's church council -Feb 2024



Register now: pulse.uca.org.au/uyc





Calendar of Events for May 2024

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

monday	ruesday	weanesaay	inursaay	rriday	Saturday	Sunday
st. matthew's UNITING CH BAULKHAM grow	URCH HILLS Ing together	9am-2pm Op Shop 10am-12pm In Stitches upstairs hall 7pm Finance Committee Meeting upstairs hall	9am-2pm Op Shop 10am-12pm Coffee and Discovery Guest Speaker Rev Jon Humphries "The Science of Flourishing" Coffee Discovery	No scheduled events	9am-12pm Op Shop 9am-12pm Garage Sale lower hall Garage SALE	9am Combined Worship Mission Planning Closure of Ministry for Mike Strong Thanksgiving to Warren Arthur as Willows Worship Leader Followed by Moming Tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 11am-12pm Christian Meditation Introductory Course in church Week 5
9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall	9am-2pm Op Shop 9.30–11am Christian Meditation Community Room Includes Introductory Course week 5 11.30am Care & Prayer Community Room	9am-2pm Op Shop 10am-12noon Women's Fellowship in the upstairs hall & church 7.30pm Church Council Executive Meeting in the church	9 9am-2pm Op Shop	5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group upstairs hall	No scheduled events	8am—Worship includes Communion 9am—Worship @ the Willows 9.30am—Worship includes Communion Followed by Morning Tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 11am-12pm Christian Meditation Introductory Course Week 6 6.45pm—Worship includes Communion
9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall	9am-2pm Op Shop 9.30–11am Christian Meditation Community Room Includes Introductory Course week 6 Final 7.30pm Thrive Bible Study lower hall	9am-2pm Op Shop 10am-12pm In Stitches Upstairs hall 10am-12noon Men's Moming Tea McKels Café Bella Vista 7.30pm Elders Meeting in the church	9am-2pm Op Shop 6pm Rehearsal Church in use	Setup for wedding	Wedding of Nicole Vandenberg and Daniel Gibb	8am—Worship 9.30am—Worship Followed by Moming Tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 6.45pm—Worship
9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall 7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church NEW GROUP All Welcome	9am-2pm Op Shop 9.30–11am Christian Meditation Community Room	9am-2pm Op Shop 7.30pm Church Council Meeting upstairs hall	23 9am-2pm Op Shop	5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group upstairs hall	No scheduled events	8am—Worship Followed by Morning Tea 9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 Followed by Morning Tea 5pm—Shine 6.45pm—Worship
9am Sorting for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall 7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church NEW GROUP	9am-2pm Op Shop 9.30–11am Christian Meditation Community Room 7.30pm Thrive Bible Study lower hall	9am-2pm Op Shop 10am-12pm In Stitches Upstairs hall	30 9am-2pm Op Shop	No scheduled events		

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES and REGULAR GROUPS



Wednesday 8th May @ 10am "Mothers Day High Tea"

Enquires: Dulcie Duncum & Margaret Gray





3rd Wednesday of the month 10am to 12noon

Mckel's Café, Shop 14, Circa Boulevarde Bella Vista

Every third Wednesday of the month Enquiries Alan Wright



Meeting Dates May 1, 15, 29

1st,3rd & 5th Wednesdays of the month in the upstairs church hall. 10.00am to 12.00pm

Bring your craft along to do.
Share fun and fellowship with other crafty ladies.
Morning Tea supplied. Enquiries: Jane Cole



Care and Prayer

All Welcome
11.30am on the first TUESDAY
of each month at St. Matthew's
February to November

Next Date: 7th May





NEW GROUP MONDAY Evenings 7.30pm—8.30pm

Starting 20th May

Tuesdays at the Church 9.30am-10.30am
For more information or to express your
interest in attending please contact

Katherine Pedersen Facilitator kathped56@gmail.com

ALL WELCOME

OP SHOP

Open Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 9am-2pm and 1st Saturday of the month 9-12pm

Pre-loved clothes & accessories, Books, Haberdashery, Bric-a-brac, Pot Plants.



Saturday 4th May 9am-12pm Pre-loved Household Items, Electrical, Toys & Books (Fiction, Non-fiction & Childrens Books)

St. Matthew's lower hall Edgar St



SHINE is a special needs social group for all ages after High school. *Meets Sundays Monthly for dinner & fun. Cost* \$5

Still collecting for their shoebox appeal supporting a school in the Philippines. Donations of small educational items, soaps & combs are greatly appreciated. Please place donations in the box provided at the top of the stairs in the church foyer.

Giving From time to time, we receive questions on how someone can make donations to St. Matthew's Uniting Church Baulkham Hills, to further support God's work through the Ministry team and congregation, in the wider Community. To assist with this, we have set up the following account with Uniting Financial Services:

Account Name: Baulkham Hills Uniting Church

– Giving Direct BSB: 634634 Account Number: 100025924

If required a Direct Debit Request Form is available in the foyer or speak with Barry Gregory.

For your support of God's work here at St. Matthew's, a big thank you!

To include your activity in the JUNE

In Focus

St. Matthew's
Monthly Newsletter

please send details to Robyn and Lynn in
the Church Office by 15 MAY

Thank you

Maintaining contact with you and your family is very important to us.
We would be grateful if you change your address, phone/mobile or email details that you let us know by phoning and leaving a message on 9686 3003

YOUNG FAMILIES

@ **9.30am service during term** for Preschool, Years K-2,and Years 3-8

YOUTH and YOUNG ADULTS

Fusion Youth Group...

Years 3 to 8. Meet Friday evenings at the church during term time. 5pm—7pm
Contact Daniel Gibb
daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

THRIVE BIBLE STUDY......

For young adults

Fortnightly on Tuesday evenings Contact Daniel Gibb daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

Thank you to all who have contributed to this publication.

MINISTER

REV JON HUMPHRIES

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS MINISTRY WORKER

DANIEL GIBB Part Time Email: daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

SENIORS PASTORAL CARER

MICHAEL STRONG Part Time Email: mike@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARIES:

ROBYN MORRALL AND LYNN SAMUEL

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS 9AM-3PM MON-FRI

OFFICE:

9686 3003

LOCATION:

CNR CHARLES & EDGAR STREETS BAULKHAM HILLS

POSTAL ADDRESS:

BAULKHAM HILLS UNITING CHURCH PO BOX 773 BAULKHAM HILLS 1755

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