EAGLE MESSENGER



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MAY 2025

AUTHENTIC WORSHIP TINTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS SACRIFICIAL SERVICE RADICAL GENEROSITY

He is Risen! So, what's next?

The Christian liturgical calendar provides structure for those desiring to read, study, and experience scripture from cover to cover over a three-year period. This approach to reading the Bible provided for me, especially in my younger years, the opportunity to relate to God's Word in a similar manner to my life as a distance runner. I found a pace that felt comfortable, and that helped me to keep on going. The added blessing of knowing I was reading the same passages each day as were millions around the world opened my heart to Jesus' commissioning to "go into all the world" instead of just my familiar neighborhood.

Jesus calls his disciples to align their relationships in response to their experience of God's inbreaking realm through Him. Those who hear the word of God and live it are called family - community. The story of God's work through us as individuals, the story of God at work in our community, the story of God's work through our congregation - all keep evolving. Every story, every new story, has consequences both good and bad. We benefit when we keep our eyes on God and join in that lifesaving, life-giving work. As we study, pray, and speak with each other, my prayer is that we will set a pace that results in everyone taking in the beauty all around us in God's creation, especially God's human creation.

In our fast-paced, technology-driven world one of the downsides is the seemingly relentless tendency to reduce everything into the simplest pieces rather than nurturing a desire to understand the complex whole - the mystery of God's love. Salvation is not simply an American Express concept where "membership has its privileges", or if you're a Christian you are saved. Salvation is the experience that enables believers to live in this world but not of this world.

"Salvation through Jesus thus is not a reduplication of Caesar's false "salvation" of oppression for a few, rather, a full restoration for all people with Jesus at the head. The Gospel message turns the very notions of power and privilege upside down with a dramatic double reversal in which not merely the poor, but those with absolutely no property, whom even the disciples are prone to forget, are named proprietors of the very realm of God (Luke 6:20; 18:16)." Sundays and Seasons (2025)

While reading your beautifully written testimonies so clearly articulated in our 2025 Lenten devotional, I found myself thanking God for you and for the new story our congregation seems to be writing.

I continue to thank God for all of you who have embraced a vision of seeing with new eyes what God is up to in the emergence of the next St. John's God is calling us to be.

Be blessed! Pastor Bob



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UPCOMING WORSHIP

Sunday, May 11 @ 9:30 am

Celebrating Mother's Day

We'll celebrate all the women in our lives this day as we welcome the Centre Park flute quartet for worship, receive a special gift take-away, and enjoy yummy treats at Coffee & Conversation in the Lower Level following worship.

Sunday, May 18

Last day for Children's Sunday Church School

Thursday, May 29 @ 7:00 pm Ascension of Our Lord Worship Celebration

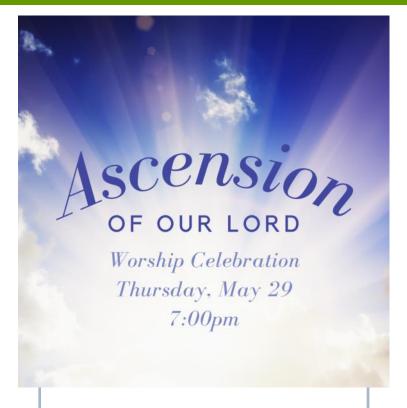
Forty is a significant number in the Bible, and the church has kept Ascension on the fortieth day of Easter. That Christ ascended to God the Father to reign over life and death is another way to say that Christ rose from the dead.

Thus the Ascension is another Easter Day.



On April 17, Kaylee Boyer and Grant Hersperger received the sacrament of Holy Communion for the first time.

Church Office Closed Monday, May 26



The Ascension was a great and indescribable cause for joy, for in it the nature of humankind ascended, above the dignity of all the heavenly creatures, rising above the angelic order, above the sublimity of the archangels, until, received into the company of the eternal Father, it was made a sharer of the throne of God's glory, to whose nature it was united in the Son. Therefore, the Ascension of Christ is our uplifting, for where the glory of Our Head shall go, there the hope of our body is called. Let us then rejoice exceedingly with fitting joy, and let us be glad with devout thanksgiving. For on this day, not alone are we made sure heirs of paradise, but in Christ we have already reached the heights of heaven, and we have obtained more abundant gifts through the ineffable favor of Christ than we lost through the envy of the devil.

[Leo, in The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers, II, 425-426.]



SOCIETY IN JESUS' TIME, part 3

By: Cathy Krause

This is the last installment about the society in Jesus' time. It deals with the religious hierarchy. Four groups will be discussed: Pharisees, Sadducees, priests, and scribes. It is the stringent beliefs that each religious group had that conflicted with the message Jesus was preaching.

The **Pharisees** were middle class businessmen and were leaders in the synagogues. They were a minority in the Sanhedrin (the religious and governing authority of the Jewish people. Its purpose was to act as a tribunal to make decisions regarding the law). The Pharisees were self-righteous and smug. They believed they were keeping God's law. They were a political group, a social movement, and a school of thought.

As a political group, they attempted to influence government leaders and to stir up the common people to carry out their political agenda. By doing this, they acted to preserve and protect Jewish religion.

As a social movement, they extended religious practices into life outside the Temple. They instilled greater piety in the common people. Their adherence to oral traditions was a way to evade the law. New Testament writers portray the Pharisees as legalistic and hypocritical.

Pharisees gave equal authority to the written word (Torah) and the oral tradition (Talmud). They taught the following doctrines:

- God controls all things; but an individual's decisions can affect life's course.
- There will be a resurrection of the dead.
- There is an afterlife with punishments and rewards based on each individual.
- The Messiah will set his kingdom on earth.
- The spiritual realm (angels and demons) is real.

Jesus taught the people to obey God's commands better than the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law obey them (Matthew 5:20). Jesus ministered to the poor, the ill, women, and other outcasts; the Pharisees objected to this behavior. And, Jesus ate with Pharisees in Luke 7: 36-50 and Luke 11: 37-52; but, again Jesus' behavior displeased the Pharisees.

Sadducees came from the aristocratic class; they were wealthy and held powerful positions, e.g. chief priest, high priest. They held the majority of seats in the Sanhedrin. They were characterized by their rude, arrogant, and power-hungry behavior. They were quick to dispute with those who disagreed with them. They were corrupt, were hated by the common people, and felt threatened by Jesus.

The Sadducees felt they were preserving the authority of the written word of God; but doctrinally they were not perfect:

They believed in self-sufficiency; denying God's involvement in everyday life.

- They denied the resurrection of the dead.
- They denied the afterlife.
- They denied the existence of the spiritual world (demons, angels).

They strictly interpreted the written law and rejected the oral traditions. They were responsible for maintaining the Temple rituals (\$\$). And, they collaborated with the Roman officials to maintain their status and influence. Thus, they were often at odds with the Pharisees.

Jesus warns the disciples against the teachings of both Pharisees and Sadducees in Matthew 16: 5-12.

There were three kinds of **Priests**: Chief Priest, High Priests, and ordinary priests. A **High Priest** had unique privileges and responsibilities:

- Only he was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies on the day of Atonement to atone for sins of people and/or the nation.
- He was the head of the Sanhedrin.

The high priest had to be a direct descendant of Aaron.

A **Chief Priest** was chosen from an exclusive group of high-born Jews of the tribe of Levi. He was a high-ranking member of the priesthood who served on the Sanhedrin. He was captain of the temple who supervised the whole body of priests and all the temple activities. He was in charge of daily and weekly temple services and the temple treasury. He maintained the sacred vessels.

There were approximately 7,200 **ordinary priests**. They lived outside of Jerusalem in the towns and villages. They were divided into 24 clans, each served one week at a time in the temple. Priests served on a rotating basis; therefore, all could have a turn to minister in the temple and to offer sacrifices. This would apply to Zacharias in Luke 1: 5-23. Their regular duties included:

- Lighting altar fires
- Attending to offerings of incense and of unleavened bread
- Killing sacrificial animals

Note: All priests were Levites but not all Levites were priests.

The chief priests questioned Jesus' authority in Luke 20: 1-8. It was to the chief priests that Judas Iscariot went as they were looking to seize Jesus by stealth and kill him (Matthew 26: 3-5; 14-16).

Scribes belonged to the party of the Pharisees, but were distinct from them. They studied, transcribed, and wrote commentary on the law. They were learned teachers and authoritative leaders, who came from priests, Levites, and common people. *(continued on page 4)*

(Society in Jesus' Time, continued from page 3)

They could be hired to produce a written document or for an interpretation of a legal point. Their original purpose was to know and preserve the Law and to encourage others to keep it. They were also entrusted with the administration of the Law as judges in the Sanhedrin.

They were bureaucrats who were experts on Jewish life and law, serving as government officials. They mostly lived in Jerusalem, associated with the priests, and were advisors to the chief priests. They were loyal to the chief priests and leaders. They were experts in judicial procedures and they helped in the enforcement of Jewish law and customs. They were more interested in appearing good to men than they were in pleasing God. Man-made traditions usurped God's word.

Jesus took the scribes to task in Matthew 23:13-36. He calls them show-offs, blind, and snakes. It's a long passage, but worth reading. Jesus really calls them out, saying they are clean on the outside, but not the inside.

And, thus we come to the events of Holy Week: how Judas Iscariot betrays Jesus to the mob from the chief priests and leaders (Pharisees and scribes). But, they are not allowed by law to kill Jesus. So, he is sent to the Romans who can kill him. (Refer to the first article in this series.) Pilate finds no crime in Jesus, washes his hands of the matter, and orders his soldiers to beat Jesus and nail him to a cross. Little did the chief priests and their associates know that this is the beginning of the story, not the end!

Resources Consulted:

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"Who Were the Sadducees?" 2002-2005. 20 March 2025. https://www.gotquestions.org/Sadducees.html

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TEACHING TIME

Are you new to Lutheranism?

You may or may not be familiar with some of the 'Lutheran Buzzwords' we use here. Let's get familiar!

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Seen in our worship liturgy throughout the weeks of Easter, in Lutheran tradition, Thanksgiving for Baptism is a liturgical expression of gratitude to God for the gift of new life through baptism, which is understood as a means of grace where God forgives sins and strengthens believers in faith.

It involves expressing gratitude for the water and Holy Spirit,

which God uses to wash away sin and empower believers.

EASTER SUNDAY

The church keeps Easter for eight Sundays. Early Christians referred to Sunday as the eighth day, as if the extraordinary day of the resurrection could not fit within the normal week of seven days. The resurrection begins a new recording of time. The fifty days culminates at Pentecost. Each Sunday, individually and communally, we meet the risen Christ in word and sacrament. (sundaysandseasons.com)















PRESCHOOL NEWS

By: Missy Endy

This is the last month of the school year. I'd like to tell you about the different activities that are planned, but first I'll recap April.

Saturday, April 5 kicked off our Book Fair/Art Show with an Easter Scavenger Hunt. Twenty Boyertown businesses participated by displaying a picture (that was provided by the Preschool) in their window. The children and their families with an address of businesses went in search for the special pictures. They marked them off the card similar to Bingo. After they were finished they returned to St. John's and received a snack and drink for their hard work. They also received a book given by the Joyful Sisters of Service. The title of the book

is "The Berenstain Bears and the Easter Story". It was also the first of 6 days to visit the Book Fair/Art Show in Fellowship Hall. Everything was a success! Thanks to all who checked us out and maybe bought a book or two. It was all greatly appreciated.



In preparation for Easter all the classes gathered together for a special lesson. Led by the teachers, each child placed a marshmallow on an unbaked crescent roll and wrapped it up. After the roll was baked, the children broke up the roll to find out the marshmallow was gone. The marshmallow reminds us of Jesus' body which was wrapped up and placed in the tomb. On Easter morning, Jesus' friends went to the tomb, but Jesus' body was gone, just like the marshmallow was gone. Jesus' body was gone because Jesus is alive and that's the good news of Easter.

Now on to the month of May! One of our last events will be Fun Day. This is held outside (hopefully) and is always a fun time. Finally, we will have graduation for the 4 and 5 year old children. How proud we are of them, along with their parents and families, for all they have accomplished this year!

You have just read how busy we have been with all the special events throughout the year but that is in addition to our every day schooling. Everyday things such as our daily prayer, devotions, Bible stories, ABC's, numbers, games, music, gym, crafts, coloring, painting, movement, and more are incorporated.

Just as a reminder, anyone who has not registered for next year may still do so on our website or by calling the preschool office at 610-367-0197.



One last thing I'd like to add on behalf of the preschool staff is a heartfelt thank you to Pastor Bob for his support, love, and guidance of this ministry. Also our many thanks to Becky and Shannon for their time, care, and administrative help they provide all year for us. We don't want to forget "Mr. Donnie" who helps us with just about anything we need. Thank you also goes to our Congregation Council for their unwavering support for this preschool ministry. Finally, we would like to thank the parents for entrusting their children to us.

God has a plan for each one of us! God bless you all!







Looking for events happening in and around Boyertown?

Check out the





Hosted by Building a Better Boyertown. Available on their website and ours!

PEACE BE WITH YOU

sundaysandseasons.org

Scripture shows that the disciples mess up—a lot. And in the hours leading to Jesus' crucifixion they alternatively betray him and deny him. Yet, Jesus' first words to the disciples after his death are not of anger or judgment. Instead, he declares: "Peace be with you." Even after a horrific death, Jesus primarily desires peace for them.

How do we embody this forgiveness?

How might we desire and offer peace to those who may have betrayed us or denied us?

What reconciliation and healing might occur if we follow Jesus' example here?

ATTENTION STUDENTS! HELP SERVE AT CHESTNUT KNOLL

St. John's chapel ministry at Chestnut Knoll is extending an invitation to students to assist with the chapel service at Chestnut Knoll.

Each Thursday, volunteers from St. John's lead a brief chapel service for our neighbors at Chestnut Knoll. The fourth Thursday of each month, communion is offered by Pastor Bob. There is an adult responsible for leading the worship service. The students helping can decide how they would like to participate in the service. For example: passing and collecting the hymnals and helping a resident find the correct page; offering one of the prayers or blessing; reading a Bible passage; offering a message on what God means to them; offering prayers for the Chestnut Knoll community; offering the blessing and dismissal with thanksgiving at the end of the service.

There were several students who participated in the service last summer and the residents at Chestnut Knoll were delighted to have their help.

If you would like to participate or have any questions please contact Virga Brown at 610-367-9112 or virgielea@aol.com.

> Thursdays throughout the summer 10:00 am Chestnut Knoll, 120 West Fifth Street, Boyertown

Thank you for your help in supporting this ministry!



UNITY IN COMMUNITY

By: Amy Muzopappa, March 14, 2025

During our time in Mexico, we were welcomed to step into the story, in homes, schools ,and communities. We were immersed into the unfamiliar, to help us see life through a completely different lens. The gifts were everywhere!

At first glance, we *saw* poverty and despair, but what we experienced was love, connection and unity. When we opened our hearts and trusted God's plan, we were able to understand that those who appear to have "less," in many ways have an abundance. We were introduced to a joy that doesn't come from "cosas" or things.

In this time of Purim, we are reminded that, like Esther (4:14)

we were born, "for such a time as this." Even in times of despair, God's plan for each of is as unique and wonderfully made as we are. The invitation to trust God's unseen hand, boldly live in our faith, and stand in unity together has been received.

The message we bring back to our tiny dot on the map is to help others, not just by giving or doing, but by BEING. Faith is so powerful. Let it shine forth so brightly that it reaches those who feel lonely or afraid. Let it give hope to people who feel overlooked or oppressed. If we could witness that hope in Mexico, certainly we can see it here in our own community.



Eagle Messenger Article Deadlines

Monday, May 12 for June issue

Monday, June 9 for July issue

Monday, July 14 for August issue





With gratitude for you and glory to God, on behalf of the witness and learning teams, I thank you for your commitment to growing and sharing your faith through St. John's Lenten devotional and mid-week services. To those who read or listened to the words of your brothers and sisters in Christ, thank you for your dedication to having an open heart to receive what God is up to in the lives of our fellow congregants. To those who provided devotions or midweek messages, thank you for the courage to express your faith in ways that stir up in others what the Spirit is stirring up in you. Your continued witness is a vital part of the growing learning community that is St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Boyertown, PA. And should you be interested in participating in future devotionals or perhaps even the weekly video messages, please contact me and let me know: jrschlegel@comcast.net

Happy Easter Season! Jennifer Schlegel

WORSHIP MINISTRY

Date	Day	Time	Liturgical Day (Special Service)	Acolyte	Altar Assistant	Altar Guild	Assisting Minister	Lector	Media	Prayers	Sound	Ushers	Video
5/4/2025	Sunday	9:30 AM	Third Sunday of Easter	Philip Derr	Tom Engle, Mel Roth	Nancy Edwards, Heather Murray	Mel Roth	Jean Machamer	Justin Jones	Michele Eidle	Ashley Gheer	Martha Bentley, Becky & Barry Erb, Josee Ruckenbrod	Abbe Grofe
5/11/2025	Sunday	9:30 AM	Fourth Sunday of Easter Mother's Day	Delaney Hersperger	Melissa Eidle, George Hill	Melissa Eidle	Amy Moyer	Tom Engle	Sarah Eidle	Friz Family	Brianna Rohrbach	Barbara Houp, Bunny & Ron Riffle, Ed Schaeffer	Scott Scheiry
5/18/2025	Sunday	9:30 AM	Fifth Sunday of Easter	Tatum Friz	Jen & Jason Friz	Dorothy Breitkreutz	Jason Friz	Missy Endy	Shannon Omlor	Bonnie Moatz	Shannon Omlor	Jodi Dykie, Jerry Krause, Scott Scheiry, Jennifer Schlegel	Justin Jones
5/25/2025	Sunday	9:30 AM	Sixth Sunday of Easter	Abby Torres	Michele & Dave Eidle	Mary Dierolf, Nancy Edwards	Amanda Ehst	Sarah Eidle	Jason Friz	Lauren Jones	Myles Omlor	Mike Gilbert, Darrin Moyer, Kevin Moyer, Ed Schaeffer	Camryn Friz
5/29/2025	Thursday	7:00 PM	Ascension of Our Lord	Camryn Friz	Ashley Gheer, John Gheer	Sue Hill	Jennifer Schlegel	Amy Moyer	Justin Jones	Ros Moatz	Ashley Gheer	Mary Kay & Donnie Heimbach	Jason Eidle
6/1/2025	Sunday	9:30 AM	Seventh Sunday of Easter	Camryn Friz	Melissa Eidle, Mel Roth	Shirley Hartman, Sue Hill	Mel Roth	Jennifer Schlegel	Sarah Eidle	Tom Engle	Brianna Rohrbach	Ashley Gheer, John Gheer, Sandy & Terry Wade	Abbe Grofe
6/8/2025	Sunday	9:30 AM	Pentecost Graduate Recognition	Philip Derr	Tom Engle, Lauren Jones	Melissa Eidle	Lauren Jones	Mel Roth	Jason Friz	Martha Bentley	Myles Omlor	Bev & Joe Blake, Susan & Andy Varzally	Scott Scheiry
6/15/2025	Sunday	9:30 AM	The Holy Trinity Father's Day	Tatum Friz	Amanda Ehst, Jennifer Schlegel	Mary Kay Heimbach, Heather Murray	Melissa Geary	Sue Hill	Shannon Omlor	Mel Roth	Brianna Rohrbach	Carol & Larry Angstadt, Ros & Brian Moatz	Justin Jones
6/22/2025	Sunday	9:30 AM	2nd Sunday after Pentecost	Abby Torres	George Hill, Bonnie Moatz	Bonnie Moatz, Amy Moyer	Madison Robb	Dave Long	Justin Jones	Sarah Eidle	Myles Omlor	Mary Kay & Donnie Heimbach, Sue & George Hill	Camryn Friz
6/29/2025	Sunday	9:30 AM	3rd Sunday after Pentecost	Grant Hersperger	Bev & Joe Blake	Dorothy Breitkreutz	Bev Blake	Phyllis Kershner	Sarah Eidle	Susan & Andy Varzally	Ashley Gheer	Lauren Jones, Ros Moatz, Bill Rohrbach, Scott Scheiry	Jason Eidle

MAY 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 10:00a Operation 143 Delivery 6:00p East Berks Mission District Spring Assembly 8:00p Worship Broadcast	Women's Worship Team Retreat 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	Women's Worship Team Retreat 4:30p Come to the Table
Teacher Appreciation Week Begins Women's Worship Team Retreat 9:30a Worship Celebration 9:30a Sunday School 3:00p Building a Better Boyertown	5 6:30p Girl Scouts	6	7 Oley Cluster 10:00a Preschool Chapel Time 6:30p Worship Team	8 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 6:30p Wellspring Karitas Connection 8:00p Worship Broadcast	9 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	10 4:30p Come to the Table
9:30a Worship Celebration 9:30a Sunday School 10:45a Coffee & Conversation	5:00p Newsletter Submission 6:30p Girl Scouts 7:30p Optimist Club of Boyertown	13 6:30p Jr Optimist Club	14 8:15a Preschool Staff Meeting	9:30a Community Leaders 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 10:00a Operation 143 Delivery 8:00p Worship Broadcast	16 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	17 4:30p Come to the Table
9:30a Worship Celebration 9:30a Sunday School 11:00a Ministry Action Plan	19 Preschool Fun Day 6:30p Girl Scouts	20 6:30p Finance Team	21 Preschool Graduation 9:30a Pottstown Soup Kitchen	22 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 8:00p Worship Broadcast	23 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	24 4:30p Come to the Table
25 9:30a Worship Celebration	26 Memorial Day Office Closed	27 1:00p Joyful Sisters of Service 6:00p Building a Better Boyertown	28 6:30p Congregation Council	29 Ascension of Our Lord 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 10:00a Operation 143 Delivery 7:00p Worship Celebration 8:00p Worship Broadcast	30 Synod Assembly 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	31 Synod Assembly 4:30p Come to the Table

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Amy Vogt	2 Barbara Spohn	3
4 Walter Burkepile	5 Andy Varzally	6 Jenna Clark Johnathan Daub	7	8	9 Chase Sennott	10
11 Ed White	12	13 Abigail Fretz Josh Torres	14 Terry Wadsworth	15 Beth Ann Engle	16 Karen Haas	17 Phyllis Kershner
18	19	20 Will Gonzalez	21 Thomas Daub	22	23	24 Tatum Friz
25	26 Meda Stauffer	27	28 Pam White	29	30	31 Justin Jones



EAGLE MESSENGER

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | 45 North Reading Avenue | Boyertown, PA 19512 610-369-1024 | 610-369-1463 Fax | www.stjohnsboyertown.org

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As children of God and disciples of Christ seeking peace and justice in the world, we welcome, affirm, and include all people into the fullness of God's love. We celebrate and lift up people of all races, cultures, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, physical or mental abilities, economic statuses, political affiliation, appearances, family status, and citizenship as equally loved and valued in the eyes of God and in this place. All are invited to join this community as we worship God, grow in faith, and strive to love and serve one another.

All, without exception, are welcome in this place.

Return Service Request - Dated Material Mailed April 25, 2025

WORSHIP

SUNDAY 9:30 AM
IN-PERSON & LIVESTREAM ON YOUTUBE

Office Hours Monday-Thursday 8:30 am - 3:30 pm Friday 8:30 am - 12:00 pm

Pastor Bob Machamer
Kay Christman, Finance Team
Sue Grofe, Finance Team
Donnie Heimbach, Property
Bonnie Moatz, Finance Team
Shannon Omlor, Communications Coordinator
Linda Rohrbach, Treasurer
Becky Scheiry, Parish Administrator

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