



Word and Sacrament

Christian Education

Caring and Serving

stjohnsportage.com

The Cornerstone

**850 Armstrong St.
Portage, WI 53901**

Address Service Requested

January 2024

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Worship Times

Saturdays:

5:30 p.m.

Sundays:

8:00 a.m.

9:00 a.m.

10:30 a.m.

Wednesdays:

10:00 a.m.

Service of Word and Sacrament

**Service of Word and Sacrament
Coffee Hour and Fellowship,
Church Christian Life Center**

Service of Word and Sacrament

School Chapel, Church Sanctuary

Weekly Events

Sundays:

9:15 a.m.

Mondays:

9:00 a.m.

Wednesdays:

9:00 a.m.

12:00 p.m.

5:00 p.m.

6:30 p.m.

Thursdays:

9:00 a.m.

Fridays:

Praise Band Practice, Church Sanctuary

Strong Bodies, Church Narthex

Walkie Talkies, Levee Rd

Weekly Announcements Deadline

churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com

Handbell Choir, Church Balcony

Adult Choir, Church Balcony

Starting January 24

Strong Bodies, Church Narthex

Church Office Closed

November Memorials

Undesignated \$151.38 In memory of <i>George Koepp, and Alice Atkinson</i>	LWML \$65.00 In memory of <i>Marilyn Jahn</i>	Financial Aid \$250.00 In memory of <i>Marilyn Jahn</i>
Adult Choir \$150.00 In memory of <i>George Koepp, and Alice Atkinson</i>	Lutherans or Life \$75.00 In memory of <i>Marilyn Jahn</i>	School Kitchen \$50.00 In memory of <i>George Koepp</i>
Evangelism \$250.00 In memory of <i>Marilyn Jahn</i>	Care for Candace \$50.00 In memory of <i>Marilyn Jahn</i>	Organ \$35.00 In memory of <i>Alice Atkinson</i>

November Offerings

Unified Fund	\$48,205.99
Capital Improvements	\$1,325.00
Missions	\$210.00
Almoners	\$60.00
Orphanages	\$180.00
School Tuition Relief	\$1,550.00
Organ	\$0.00
Total Contributions	\$51,530.99

St. John's Weekly Education and Bible Studies

Sundays:

9:15 a.m.

Christian Ed Hour,
Church Christian Life Center

9:15 a.m.

Sunday School, School Cafeteria

11:30 a.m.

Late Sunday Morning Bible Study,
All Purpose Room

Tuesdays:

6:30 a.m.

Men's Bible Class, Portage Airport

9:15 a.m.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study,
Church Christian Life Center

Wednesdays:

4:30 p.m.

Jr. Youth Group, School Gym

6:30 p.m.

Sr. Youth Group, School Gym

6:30 p.m.

Confirmation Class,
Church Christian Life Center

Thursdays:

8:00 a.m.

Esther Bible Study,
Church Christian Life Center

10:15 a.m.

Rachel Bible Study,
Church Christian Life Center

Thank you!

Thank you, Parish Life, for organizing and decorating the church for Christmas and for representing St. John's in the Portage Holiday Lighted Parade.



December Greetings from St. John's Child Development Center

New Year's Greetings from St. John's Child Development Center! Our center staff wishes everyone blessings, joy, and peace on earth. Have you ever been asked to volunteer? What was your reply? Today, as I was walking into the store, I saw two Red Cross bell ringers volunteering their time. In our 4K classroom, someone was volunteering to help the teacher with a Christmas project.

With our busy lives, it can be hard to find time to volunteer. However, the benefits of volunteering can be enormous. Volunteering can help you make new friends, learn new things, and make you feel happier and healthier. And volunteering is a two-way street: it benefits you as much as the cause you choose to help. When it comes to volunteering, passion and positivity are the only requirements.

At the center, we have many volunteers, and I want to take some time to say thank you. The teachers enjoy the extra hands, and, most of all, the children enjoy the stories you read, the games you play, and the extra hugs they receive from you. God has blessed you with the gift of giving your time and talents.

Serving God's Children, Debbie.





Crusader News

Connected to Christ

Another New Year's Day has passed, and with each new year, people across the world take this time to start new beginnings. They make all types of resolutions for themselves and others, hoping to make effective and meaningful changes. Some of these might be to lose weight, spend more time with family, or even make changes in lifestyle. As we are already into the new year, many of these goals and promises have been set aside.

Living in the north, it is sometimes exceedingly difficult to see the dark, cold, and bleakness of January as a time of new life. If it's not snow on the ground, it's cold, and the shortness of the day returns us to the realities of life after the holidays. By this time, the Christmas lights are down or about to come down, the trees discarded, and some of the presents received are either broken or returned.

In our spiritual life, we can also feel this need to recharge. The festival services of Christmas are over, and the joy of the season seems to fade. We forget that our Lord doesn't disappear like Santa, only to return next year. He is with us.

On the first Sunday of January, many churches throughout the world will celebrate the baptism of Jesus. St. John's Lutheran School will also remember the blessing that we have through baptism throughout the coming month as we live on our continuing theme "Connected to Christ Through His New Life in Baptism." Through Baptism, we are born anew. St. Paul writes of this when he says, "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

This death is not something to feel depressed about, but it signifies that we are baptized so that we too might walk in the newness of life. Through Baptism, we are connected to our Loving Savior and His grace and forgiveness. Baptism is not just ceremonial water. We read, "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21). Through Baptism, we are made children of God and heirs of His kingdom. As children of God, we are given a glorious gift that we can celebrate every day of our life. There is no need to bemoan our sadness, but we can say with St. Paul, "But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). Please join our students in celebrating your new life that is yours through Baptism.

-Jim Krupski, Principal



St. John's Lutheran School Choir Sings
Sunday, January 21st
10:30 a.m. Worship Service
 for National Lutheran Schools Week!



National Lutheran Schools Week

January 21 to 27, 2024

National Lutheran Schools Week provides more than 1,800 preschools, elementary schools, and high schools with the public opportunity to proclaim and celebrate God's work among us in schools of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. We thank God for the opportunity to provide excellent academic preparation for the children we serve. We are most grateful for the chance to share Jesus' amazing love with children and their families. National Lutheran Schools Week gives us an opportunity to proclaim these great blessings within the communities we serve. Our schools are amazing incubators for faithful witness of God's love for us through Christ by teachers and students alike.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

January—6

1	Jean Gavinski Cory Thompson	13	Hallie Cardinal George Snyder	26	Amanda Kohn Neil Krueger
2	Catharine Daily Sadie Nummerdor	16	Kyle Bernander Teagan Olson Hunter Witt	27	Elizabeth Mootz
3	Maralyn Coffman Wyatt Conway Steven Dittman Carol Gisiner Brooklynn Krebs Dolores Milton Theresa Smith	17	Gracelynn Chvojicek	28	Gary Zastrow
		18	Jennifer Chvojicek	29	David J. Fritz Alex Swanson Mark Witt
		19	Sassha Coullard James Reick Sabryna Schumann	30	Robert Griepentrog Shanon Smith
5	Henry Schroeder			31	Connor Hunkel
		20	Nicole Brockway		
6	Hazel Gudgeon Linda Koch	21	Ryan Schroeder		
		22	Donna Johnson		
7	William Haase Deanna Isakson Wyatt Tomaszewski	23	Roy Halvorsen Gary Herwig Kenneth Hutler Susan Schesny		
8	Emberlyn Krueger				
9	Linda Loomans Jodi Steele	24	Geraldine Kerl		
11	Thomas Paiser	25	Annabelle Snyder		

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

January 1

♥ John & Sue Hamel

January 8

♥ Timothy & Linda Loomans

January 9

♥ James & Judy Mountford

January 10

♥ Bryan & Mary Schumann

January 14

♥ Kevin & Lauren Jonas

January 18

♥ Gregory & Phyllis Zimmerman

January 29

♥ Eugene & Heidi Thompson

Love one another with genuine affection, and take
delight in *Honoring* one another.
Romans 12:10

St. John's Ministries Monthly and Special Event Calendar

January

- M 01 Happy New Year!**
All ministries offices closed
- Tu 02 All ministries offices closed**
Tuesday Morning Bible Study
9:15 a.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Th 04 Heritage House Monthly Worship**
11:00 a.m., Heritage House
- M 08 Tivoli Monthly Worship**
10:00 a.m., Tivoli
Altar Guild
1:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
Evangelism
3:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Tu 09 Executive Committee**
6:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- F 12 Cornerstone Submission Deadline**
12:00 p.m., churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com
Submission Guidelines can be found on our website,
stjohnsportage.com/resources/the cornerstone submission guidelines
- Su 14 Blood Pressure Screening**
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m., Church Nursery
- Tu 16 Board for Christian Ed**
6:30 p.m., School Cafeteria
LWML
6:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Th 18 Columbia County Health Care Monthly Worship**
11:00 a.m., Columbia County Health Care
- M 22 Board of Finance**
4:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Tu 23 Board of Stewards**
6:00 p.m., Church Narthex
Board of Elders
6:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
Prayer Shawls
6:00 p.m., Church All Purpose Room

February (proposed)

- Th 01 Heritage House Monthly Worship**
11:00 a.m., Heritage House
- F 08 Cornerstone Submission Deadline**
12:00 p.m., churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com
Submission Guidelines can be found on our website,
stjohnsportage.com/resources/the cornerstone submission guidelines
- Su 11 Blood Pressure Screening**
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m., Church Nursery
- M 12 Tivoli Monthly Worship**
10:00 a.m., Tivoli
Evangelism
3:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
New Member Class
6:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Tu 13 Executive Committee**
6:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- W 14 Imposition of Ashes**
9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Church Sanctuary
Ash Wednesday Service
10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., Church Sanctuary
Ash Wednesday Dinner
5:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Th 15 Columbia County Health Care Monthly Worship**
11:00 a.m., Columbia County Health Care
- M 19 New Member Class**
6:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- M 16 Board for Christian Ed**
6:30 p.m., School Cafeteria
- W 21 Lent Worship Service**
10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., Church Sanctuary
Lent Dinner
5:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Su 24 School Dance**
6:30 p.m., School Gym
- M 26 Board of Finance**
4:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
New Member Class
6:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
- Tu 23 Board of Elders**
6:00 p.m., Church Christian Life Center
Prayer Shawls
6:00 p.m., Church All Purpose Room
- W 28 Lent Worship Service**
10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., Church Sanctuary
Lent Dinner
5:30 p.m., Church Christian Life Center

Altar Guild January Schedule

1. Judy Kerr
635-4062, djkerrlakewi@yahoo.com
2. Rita Haase
697-9773, rosebudrita@hotmail.com
3. Betty Mootz
573-2074

Calendar events are subject to change. For the most up-to-date calendar information, please visit our website, <http://www.stjohnsportage.com/st-johns-calendar>. To schedule your group activity, please contact the church office at 608-742-9000 opt. 4.

Basic Bible Teachings – An Introduction to the Lutheran Faith New Member and Refresher Gathering for Saint John's

Six Monday evenings: 2/12, 2/19, 2/26, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18
6:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Led by Pastor Hovland

Have you ever wondered —
What is grace? What do we know about heaven? How can I
trust in God more than anything? How can I think about
others more than myself? What is the law? What's the
gospel? Why should I go to church? Are Baptism and
Communion really that important?

Whether you're interested in becoming a member at St.
John's or just need a refresher on Lutheran theology, this is
for you!

Please consider joining us for six classes starting Monday,
February 12. In this short time together, you'll understand
what Lutherans believe about our heavenly Father's love; our
Savior's presence with us in the past, present, and future; and
the Holy Spirit's power for daily living.

We ask that you register before classes begin. To register
online, please use the following link:
<https://forms.office.com/r/m37j7L3k64> or the QR code
below. To register by phone, call (608) 742-9000 and press 4.
Please register before February 7.



The Forgiveness of Sins



King David was a prime example of someone who needed forgiveness. In one episode, he managed to shirk his duty as a commander, lust after his neighbor's wife, use his power to commit adultery with her, lie to her husband, send him on a suicide mission to murder him then marry Bathsheba to cover it up. He sinned against everyone it seems. Yet it is to God he goes for forgiveness. In the end, all sins are rebellion against God. (2 Samuel 11:1- 12:25 and Psalm 51)

Forgiveness is hard to come by in this world. When we are hurt, we want to return that hurt in kind. Eastern religions like Hinduism and Buddhism have no forgiveness — you pay back the bad Karma you give with suffering in this life or nearly endless reincarnations. Mormon must cease sinning to pay for forgiveness and progress towards godhood. Pagan religions require a suitable sacrifice to an appropriate spirit.

Christianity is different. We have a loving and merciful God, who in Jesus died to pay for our forgiveness and through the Holy Spirit gives faith, the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. The Spirit chooses to use his Church to bring this forgiveness to all. In the Church, the Gospel is preached, God adopts his children through baptism, Jesus gives his body and blood for the forgiveness of sins, and he hears our confessions and absolves us of our sins by pastors he sends to do so.

So, then, the Church is not a country club, a place where only good people need apply. It is a hospital, where we who are sick can get well, taking the only medicine that can make us well. We are, after all, beggars telling other beggars where they can find bread.

Luther's Large Catechism

In this edition of the Cornerstone, we continue to publish portions of Luther's Large Catechism for your continued growth in God's Word. The text for this series is taken from the Triglotta, a public domain version of The Book of Concord. For a more up-to-date reading, consider purchasing Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions at cph.org.



The Lord's Prayer

The Third Petition

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Thus far we have prayed that God's name be honored by us, and that His kingdom prevail among us; in which two points is comprehended all that pertains to the honor of God and to our salvation, that we receive as our own God and all His riches. But now a need just as great arises, namely, that we firmly keep them, and do not suffer ourselves to be torn therefrom. For as in a good government it is not only necessary that there be those who build and govern well, but also those who make defense, afford protection and maintain it firmly, so here likewise, although we have prayed for the greatest need, for the Gospel, faith, and the Holy Ghost, that He may govern us and redeem us from the power of the devil, we must also pray that His will be done. For there will be happenings quite strange if we are to abide therein, as we shall have to suffer many thrusts and blows on that account from everything that ventures to oppose and prevent the fulfilment of the two petitions that precede.

For no one believes how the devil opposes and resists them, and cannot suffer that any one teach or believe aright. And it hurts him beyond measure to suffer his lies and abominations, that have been honored under the most specious pretexts of the divine name, to be exposed, and to be disgraced himself, and, besides, be driven out of the heart,

and suffer such a breach to be made in his kingdom. Therefore he chafes and rages as a fierce enemy with all his power and might, and marshals all his subjects, and, in addition, enlists the world and our own flesh as his allies. For our flesh is in itself indolent and inclined to evil, even though we have accepted and believe the Word of God. The world, however, is perverse and wicked; this he incites against us, fans and stirs the fire, that he may hinder and drive us back, cause us to fall, and again bring us under his power. Such is all his will, mind, and thought, for which he strives day and night, and never rests a moment, employing all arts, wiles, ways, and means whichever he can invent.

If we would be Christians, therefore, we must surely expect and reckon upon having the devil with all his angels and the world as our enemies who will bring every possible misfortune and grief upon us. For where the Word of God is preached, accepted, or believed, and produces fruit, there the holy cross cannot be wanting. And let no one think that he shall have peace; but he must risk whatever he has upon earth—possessions, honor, house and estate, wife and children, body and life. Now, this hurts our flesh and the old Adam; for the test is to be steadfast and to suffer with patience in whatever way we are assailed, and to let go whatever is taken from us.

Hence there is just as great need, as in all the others, that we pray without ceasing: "Dear Father, Thy will be done, not the will of the devil and of our enemies, nor of anything that would persecute and suppress Thy holy Word or hinder Thy kingdom; and grant that we may bear with patience and overcome whatever is to be endured on that account, lest our poor flesh yield or fall away from weakness or sluggishness."

Behold, thus we have in these three petitions, in the simplest manner, the need which relates to God Himself, yet all for our sakes. For whatever we pray concerns only us, namely, as we have said, that what must be done anyway without us, may also be done in us. For as His name must be hallowed and His kingdom come without our prayer, so also His will must be done and succeed, although the devil with all his adherents raise a great tumult, are angry and rage against it, and undertake to exterminate the Gospel utterly. But for our own sakes we must pray that even against their fury His will be done without hindrance also among us, that they may not be able to accomplish anything and we remain firm against all violence and persecution, and submit to such will of God.

Such prayer, then, is to be our protection and defense now, is to repel and put down all that the devil, Pope, bishops, tyrants, and heretics can do against our Gospel. Let them all rage and attempt their utmost, and deliberate and resolve how they may suppress and exterminate us, that their will and counsel may prevail: over and against this one or two Christians with this petition alone shall be our wall against which they shall run and dash themselves to pieces. This consolation and confidence we have, that the will and purpose of the devil and of all our enemies shall and must fail and come to naught, however proud, secure, and powerful they know themselves to be. For if their will were not broken and hindered, the kingdom of God could not abide on earth nor His name be hallowed.

Are You Listening?

January—10

November 30, 2023 / [Articles](#), [Ministry Features](#) /
By [Nathan Meador](#)



Steward leader, are you listening?

I am not asking if you are listening to what we have been sharing with you in these ministry features in our newsletter over the last decade. We have talked a great deal about what stewardship truly is in light of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. We have had much to say about how the individual person has been created in the image of God to reflect the will of God within creation. We have confessed that every steward in the deathly shadow of Genesis 3 has failed by attempting to idolatrously claim ownership of creation.

But I am not asking if you are listening to us. Instead, I am asking if you are listening to the people that the Lord has called you to lead as stewards of the Gospel in the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Steward leader, are you listening?

Listening is a critical tool in any teaching, including the teaching of stewardship. You are called to a listening that seeks to determine where your people are coming from.

Communication expert Julian Treasure asks the question, “What is the listening that I am speaking into?” Whether you are a pastor standing before a congregation with whom you have a long, trusted relationship, or a district executive leading a Stewardship Commitment process in front of people with whom you have a limited connection, what matters most is that your hearers receive the *truth* of the

Word of God.

This does not mean tailoring the message to scratch itching ears. Far from it. But listening to the people being led, taking into consideration their experience, is crucial to effective teaching. A steward leader that is listening to the people learns whether they have been well catechized in all matters of stewardship or whether they are hearing about stewardship in a non-institutional, non-manipulative way for the first time in a long time, if ever.

The steward leader that is listening to the people knows that effective teaching is not just an information dump. The steward leader is indeed the subject matter expert. But it is the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, who moves those created and redeemed stewards from where they find themselves at this moment to where they are called to be as redeemed stewards of the Gospel.

Listening to your hearers helps you understand if they have been beaten and battered by a false theology of stewardship. Have they been told that all they need to do is give up one coffee or one night of pizza with the family to help balance the budget? This will impact how they hear the truth of God’s Word in stewardship. Have they been allowed to think that “every time there is a need in the congregation, we must be faithful stewards”? This will stop their ears to the truth of stewardship. Have they been conditioned to think that stewardship only applies to the work of the local congregation? This will hinder their understanding and practice of stewardship of the Gospel in mission.

If the teacher fails to listen, the truthful message of stewardship can be lost on deafened ears. But knowing the people to whom the steward leader is speaking can open new vistas of faithfulness in this critical area. Our ultimate stewardship is of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When the steward leader is aware of “what listening they are speaking into,” the opportunity for repentance and joyful growth in stewardship is not only possible, but certain.

The listening steward leader is then able to connect what the steward is called to do directly to who they have been created and redeemed to be. Moving the stewards under our care in this way is the ultimate goal of the steward leader. It won’t be instant. It will happen over time. But when the steward leader is listening, it can and will happen.

Steward leader, are you listening?

LCMS Stewardship ministry features may be reprinted with acknowledgment given to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

The Chief Stewards of Humanity: Mom and Dad

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
LCMS Stewardship Ministry
Newsletter Article – January 2024



St. Paul tells the Ephesians that the first commandment with a specific promise attached to it is, “Honor your father and mother so that it may go well with you, and you may live long in the land” (Eph. 6:2). This promise is one indication of the importance of this commandment. The other thing that highlights the special nature of this commandment is its placement within the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments are clearly organized in two big categories. The first three commandments deal with our relationship with God. This category is called the First Table of the Law. The last seven commandments, the Second Table of the Law, tell us how we should relate to other people. These two tables correspond to what Jesus calls the two greatest commandments: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,” and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37–39).

The order of the Second Table of the Law is also important. Murder is a greater sin than adultery, which is a greater sin than stealing, or lying, or coveting. But why is the Fourth Commandment first in the Second Table, ahead of “you shall not murder”? Is disobeying your parents really worse than murder? Or maybe we should give up on thinking these commandments are ordered?

The overall effect of this order is to get us to see our parents as a connection point between our neighbors and our God. Throughout our upbringing our father and mother stand between us and God and deliver His gifts to us: God clothes us, feeds us, protects us and teaches His Word to us through our parents.

So, parents have a very high calling from God. They are called to be stewards of the greatest gift: the gift of life.

Parenting thus gives us a keen insight into all our stewardship. Parents know that they have been given a great treasure in their children, a treasure that does not belong to them, yet for which they feel a great deal of responsibility. Truth be told, every gift we have been given is like this, because everything we have — whether our own personal skills and powers or our wealth and time — is all from God. He entrusts it all to us so that we can use it all and take care of it all for His great purposes.



St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church

850 Armstrong Street
Portage, Wisconsin 53901
phone (608) 742-9000
fax 742-7154

Rev. Greg Hovland,
Senior Pastor
(c) 608-571-3360
ghovland@stjohnsportage.com

Rev. Rod Armon,
Pastoral Care
raron@stjohnsportage.com

Catharine Daily,
Ministries Coordinator—Church
cdaily@stjohnsportage.com

Office Hours:

M—Th | 8:00a–3:30p

St. John's Lutheran School *A Nationally Accredited School*

430 West Emmett
Portage, Wisconsin 53901
phone (608)742-9000

Jim Krupski,
Principal
jkrupski@stjohnsportage.com

Amanda Kohn,
Ministries Coordinator—School
akohn@stjohnsportage.com

Office Hours:

M—F | 7:00a–3:15p

St. John's Child Development Center

A Five-Star Rated Center
426 West Emmett
Portage, Wisconsin 53901
phone (608)742-9000

Debra Drew,
Director
ddrew@stjohnsportage.com
cdcoffice@stjohnsportage.com

Office Hours:

M—F | 7:00a–5:00p

St. John's Elder Directory

The elders listed below are available to talk and pray with you. Feel free to contact us wherever you are, with whatever you may be going through.

We CARE and are here for you:

Bob Fairfield 296-4012, Chairman

Roger Baerwolf 617-6088

Ken Chvojicek 697-2102

Bill Hageman 279-0272

David Hall 493-2125

Ron Mueller 369-1845

Pete Smith 697-3807

Gene Thompson 697-4786

Mark Witt 697-0224

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John Miller
Jesse Spankowski
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