

July 2026

Conley's United Methodist Church

THE CONNECTION



In essentials, unity

In non-essentials, liberty

In all things, charity



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Special Points of Interest

- Poetry, Prayers, and Words of Wisdom
- Notable Days in July



The Pastor's Pen

a word from Pastor Bill Davis

*Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness,
but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life;
offer every part of yourself to God as an instrument of righteousness.
For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace . . .
I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations.*
Romans 6:13-14, 19a

July in America always begins with a reminder of the blessings of liberty. We celebrate the birth of our country with its foundational belief that all people have a God-given right to live free and pursue happiness. The celebration is heightened this year as America marks her 250th birthday. Freedom is a prominent theme throughout Scripture. The passage above, from our June 28th Lectionary reading, is one of many places where the Bible tells us that Christ came to set us free from bondage to sin. The message of freedom in Christ is eternally relevant, but Paul's message to the Romans seems especially timely this year, coming as it does, on the Sunday preceding Independence Day. Paul used "an example from everyday life" to illustrate spiritual truth; similarly, the focus on American independence may be used as a contemporary example for us.

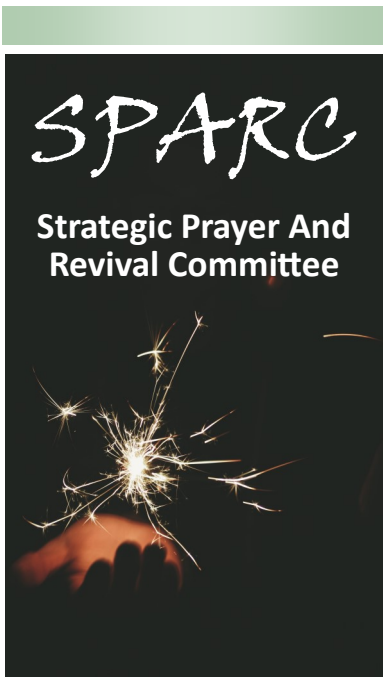
I remember our country's bicentennial celebration in 1976. I was young--in fifth grade at the time--but old enough to sense the strong spirit of national unity. I do not get that sense in 2026. Indeed, today's observances often seem to exacerbate our disagreements and magnify our divisions. As an American, I find this deeply troubling. As a Christian, I see an opportunity for the good news of Jesus to shine all the brighter. Many around us are allowing themselves to be used as instruments of wickedness--spreading anger, fear, and division. We who have been set free from such things have an opportunity to be used as instruments of righteousness--spreading grace, hope, and peace.

John Wesley saw a similar opportunity in the days leading up to the birth of America. I have been reading his letters from 1775 in order to see how he addressed a society at its boiling point. I found a consistent call to prayer, a reminder that a Christian's first allegiance is to their citizenship in heaven, and an insistence that our highest calling is to share with all the good news of God's grace offered in Jesus Christ. It is that gospel that shapes the way Christians approach the great issues of their day.

As a pastor, I found one of Wesley's letters particularly interesting. It was addressed to the "Methodist Preachers in America." He wrote: "It is your part to be peacemakers; to be loving and tender to all, but to addict yourselves to no party. In spite of all solicitations, of rough or smooth words, say not one word against one or the other side. Keep yourselves pure, do all you can to help and soften all." He instructed Methodist preachers to implore their congregations: "See that you act in full union with one another. This is of the utmost consequence. Not only let there be no bitterness or anger, but no shyness or coldness, between you." Friends, a people joined together by the Spirit of God should not let anyone or anything of this world separate them.

Wesley's instruction to Christians in America is consistent with Paul's instruction to Christians in Rome. And it remains applicable for Christians today. Followers of Christ do not shy away from engaging in the affairs of our communities or our nation, but we do so as a people united by our faith--as brothers and sisters in the family of God. Christians can (and do!) disagree about politics and policies. But we must do so in a way that zealously guards unity and righteousness, and gives no quarter to anger or coldness.

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free!" (Galatians 5:1). We are blessed to live in a country that promotes the freedom of its citizens. So, enjoy the fireworks and sing "God Bless America" with even more gusto on America's 250th birthday. Most of all, be thankful for your freedom in Christ and do not let yourselves be entangled in the fears and fractures of the world.



Why is Prayer Important?

United Methodists believe in the power of prayer. We feel connected to God in prayer and can bring all that's happening in our lives and in the world to God. Prayer helps us listen to God, to empty ourselves and allow God to transform us, so that our will is one with God's will. We **can** ask God for what we want. We do **not** believe God is a puppet who will do anything and everything we ask.

The Upper Room's Living Prayer Center article "On Prayer" (<https://www.upperroom.org/resources/on-prayer>) explains, "Prayer is communion with the Creator of the Universe, is a conversation in which we receive as much as we communicate. In real prayer, we are not expressing what is in us, but we are being transformed by the One to whom we speak."

"This God is not managed or controlled by our human limitations. While praying, if this is our God, we are not telling God to run our errands, but we are worshipping and hearing what He has to say. In a prayer like this, we need time to receive what God has to say, as well as willingness to be transformed in the process. This God has authority over us; we do not have the capacity to control Him."

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"Let your words be the genuine picture of your heart."

John Wesley



Greetings from the Missions Team



warmer. safer. drier.®

Did you know?

Conley's distributes 10% of all income from church offerings to local, national, and international missions programs.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the 2026 Appalachia Service Project Mission trip. As you may already know we were not able to attend as planned. My husband ended up in the hospital the Friday before we were scheduled to leave. Thank you for your many prayers he is much better now. We also experienced several problems with the church van and were unable to rent a replacement vehicle on short notice. After much prayer and since we could not go as a complete team it was the consensus of the team to postpone the trip.

If you contributed financially your gift went towards our registration fees and it will be used by ASP to finance their projects in Grundy VA. It will be put to good use. If you supported the team with snacks, fruit or water it went to Feed the Flock to help feed the homeless in our area, the church pantry, and Camp Hope.

*“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the **proper time** we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9*

Treasurer's Notes



In the Bible, a tithe is a specific command to give 10% of one's income or produce to God. An offering is any additional, voluntary gift given out of generosity or gratitude. While tithes are viewed as a baseline obligation, offerings are freewill contributions.

The word tithe literally means "a tenth". In the Old Testament, it was an obligatory requirement under the Law of Moses to support the Levites, the temple, and the poor. It is generally taught as a foundational way to honor God and fund the core operational needs of the church. (ex: heat, electric, insurance, salaries etc.)

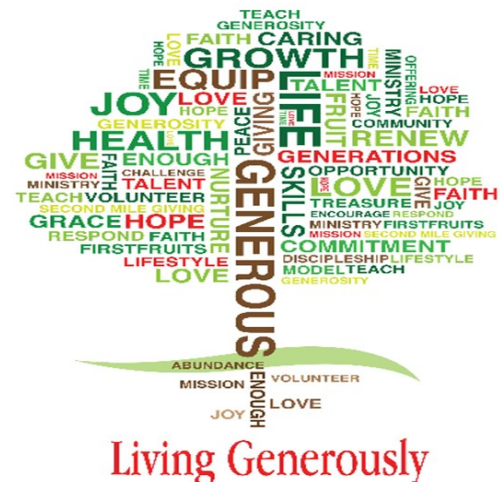
An offering is any amount freely given above and beyond the 10% tithe. Found throughout both the Old and New Testaments, offerings are guided by the New Testament principle that believers should give as they are able, cheerfully and from the heart (2 Corinthians 9:7). Offerings are typically designated for specific causes like missions, building funds, disaster relief, or helping individuals in need. (ex: Soup Kitchen, Feeding the Flock, Camp Hope etc.)

Remember this is not giving God His money since all we have is already His. This is a reminder of whose it is.

"The point of giving is more about generosity and stewardship than just a "tithe". Jesus is our example of being generous towards us and as we follow Him, we are to be generous towards others. The only cure for greed and selfishness (both of which are thinking what we have is ours) is to give it away and be reminded of whose it really is.

This means we need to be regular givers and it needs to be proactively part of our plan, not just when we have some money left over."

Mike Mobley, Before the Cross



True Freedom

*...believing, ye rejoice with joy
unspeakable.* 1Peter 1:8



Christ is the answer to sadness and discouragement. This is a world of thwarted hopes, broken dreams, and frustrated desires. G.K. Chesterton says, "Everywhere there is speed, noise and confusion, but nowhere deep happiness and quiet hearts."

A Hollywood columnist wrote about a famous movie star, "The bright, carefree radiance has gone from her pretty face." Optimism and cheerfulness are products of knowing Christ. If the heart has been attuned to God through faith in Christ, then its overflow will be joyous optimism and good cheer.

You will never be free from discouragement and despondency until you have been tuned to God. Christ is the wellspring of happiness. He is the fountainhead of joy. Here is the Christian's secret of joy.

From: *Day by Day with Billy Graham*, © 1976 BGEA

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

By Your love I experience the delight of a quiet heart.
Deep down is the joy that cannot be taken away.
Lord, may I always keep my eyes on You,
my source of joy.

SOCIAL CONCERNS

A HELPING HAND FOR THOSE IN NEED



Solitary religion is not to be found . . . The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social religion; no holiness but social holiness. Faith working by love is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection.

(From John Wesley's intro to "Hymns and Sacred Poems.")

The Latest from Conley's
Social Concerns Team

CONLEY'S FOOD MINISTRIES FEEDING THE FLOCK

This ministry continues to evolve. We have a core group of volunteers from Conley's supplemented by volunteers from the Lewes Rehoboth Rotary and Schell Brother's Homes. I have tried to create a schedule so our Conley's volunteers are not working every week. For the most part, this has worked but some of the other volunteers lack the necessary commitment to make Mondays run smoothly. I did send a letter to the Rotarians on the 17th asking them to consider whether or not, as individuals, they feel they can continue in this ministry.

We are currently serving about 260 meals on Mondays. This includes the four regular sites in Millsboro and the Tharros tent village. If there is extra food, we take it to the Siesta Motel on Long Neck Road. Produce from the farm to community program and Conley's garden have been wonderful. We are now getting at least 6 dozen eggs a week.

At the Feeding the Flock Board meeting on June 18, we discussed the necessity of having an email address, and a credit card that can be linked to the SAMS club Plus Member card so we can have supplies delivered to the church. I also asked about ideas to restructure the lunches as food prices continue to escalate. We decided to cut out the cookie packs from the lunches at this time; a savings of about \$200/month. The process of streamlining will make it easier for people running the ministry in the future.

WAWA DONATIONS

We are still picking up donations from Wawa on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. Since Memorial Day, we have received less than we had been getting. We use this to supplement our lunches. Currently, Jerry P picks up on Monday, Rob W on Wednesday and Ella Mae W on Thursday.

We are actively seeking a person to take over the Wednesday pickup. It involves going to the Wawa on Rt. 24 in Long Neck, picking up donations and bringing them to the church kitchen where they are placed in bags and put in the freezer.

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The Latest from Conley's Social Concerns Team

SOCIAL CONCERNS



FOOD PANTRY

Our cupboards are almost bare. In April and May we had a mouse infestation and needed to discard some food. That has been resolved. There is a steady stream of people coming to the pantry from the community. We have also been assisting Sussex HELP with food resources from our pantry. There is a list of needs and a collection bin in the Narthex.

Peanut Butter

Jelly

SPAM and other canned meats

Kid friendly cereals

Shelf Stable Milk

Canned Chicken

Chili in a pouch or can

Please do not bring soup or any type of pasta

This past week, we were blessed abundantly with 107 cases of chicken. This will help greatly in our food distribution.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE/SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRIES

We have had minimal requests for financial aid. I am constantly reminded of the need to vet people who ask for assistance. After having been involved with this area of ministry for more than 10 years, I have developed a network of trusted resources, especially those at Love, INC. Recently, I had an experience with someone who needed help. I called her to find out what the issues were and for the next two weeks she called or texted me 4-10 times per day and actually became angered that we could not provide more assistance. These types of contacts often come in by way of our Feeding the Flock Volunteers and we do have a process for getting them help. In July, at the LOVE, INC Volunteer Appreciation dinner; I along with Conley's, will be recognized for our service to the community. Conley's has been an active participant in caring for the marginalized along with LOVE, INC since they became a presence in Sussex County.

As always, these ministries would not remain viable without your support, both financial and through the donation of your time.

Blessings,
Cheryl

Solitary religion is not to be found . . . The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social religion; no holiness but social holiness. Faith working by love is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection.

(From John Wesley's intro to "Hymns and Sacred Poems.")

NEWS from CONLEY'S THRIFT SHOP



Conley's Thrift Store will be closed Saturday, July 4th so that our staff and volunteers can spend the day with their families and friends. We are sorry for any inconvenience and invite you to shop with us regular hours on Tuesday, July 7th.

Christmas in July is just around the corner. Be sure to stop in and take advantage of the big sales that will take place for the whole month of July. Our Christmas Shed (#5) is full of great Christmas decorations and will be available at 50% off the tagged price.

All women's and men's summer clothing on hangers will be 50% of tagged sales price. Take a walk into the children's room and again children's clothing and shoes are 50% off the tagged price. We will continue to refresh the clothing racks daily. Lots and lots of great items to choose from.

We are continuing to meet new guests daily. They are so amazed at the amount of different items that we have for sale and the organization and how clean our shop is. We frequently hear people say that we are their favorite thrift store. That always brings a big smile to our faces.

Conley's Thrift heard of a young veteran that had been sleeping in his car for several weeks. He had finally found a mobile home near the shop to rent but had nothing but his clothing to move in with. We were able to fill his home with enough furniture and household items to make it comfortable for him and a roommate to live in. We are still looking for a few more items but should be able to find them in a couple weeks.

No news on the building permit yet. They had told us it would normally take approximately 45 days after we paid the 1st portion of the permit fee. Hopefully it won't take much longer. We are anxiously waiting for the "good news". We will keep you updated.

Thanks to the staff and volunteers for the great job that they continue to do.

Did you know?

Conley's Thrift Shop donates 10% of all income to local charities.



CHRISTMAS IN JULY



A Wonderful Start to the 2026 Season

June has gotten off to a great start and we are looking forward to many more weeks of fun. Obviously, our campers are having a lot of fun. It really makes you want to join in, doesn't it?! What is less obvious is the changes and growth happening within each child. This is entirely due to the impact of the Holy Spirit in our lives, helping us share an understanding of the Lord's love and care for each one of us with the campers. We know that they appreciate what the Lord has done in their young lives, and we do, too!

Many thanks to the volunteers who keep this camp running each year – your hard work truly makes all the difference!

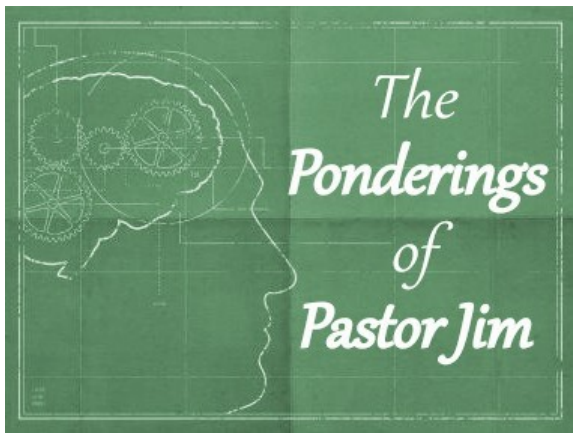
And, as always, thank you for your ongoing prayers and other forms of encouragement.



All praise and glory to God!

Karen Lessey, Camp Hope Program Director





UPDATE

I am home after four days in Beebe Hospital Room 381B. EMT's and their ambulance brought me to Lewes after neighbors discovered me, delirious, on the floor in the bathroom. They immediately called 911. (Marie was at work and sent the neighbors because I was not answering the phone.) It was finally diagnosed that I had a blood infection which entered my bloodstream through cracks in the bottom of my feet. On serious medication now due to a skilled infectious disease doctor at Beebe. His diagnosis saved me days of people guessing what was wrong with me. I made a "mess" of the bedspread, sheets, throw rugs....Marie just took black garbage bags, stuffed everything in it and threw it in the garbage.

She redecorated, using Amazon.



(three unrhymed lines)- -"H A I K U"- - (traditional 5-7-5 syllable form)

I wondered what to address this month? And by chance, reread the "Dedication" to my book: **A Fall of Words**, (from which all of my poetry has come). I felt inspired, to give a challenge out to everyone, to also create their own "Dedication". At **this** point in your life, what would **your** Dedication to Life, thus far Be? Write one! This poem below **was a particular challenge** to myself, to create a "**Haiku**", as I never had before. (You can look up on your own its specific formal requirements.) It's always very cerebral, simple, but deep. Mine is based on a true event.

"Dedication"

"To my parents, who never turned a deaf ear, always supportive of a once prodigal son.

In memoriam, to my recent late father, who, in a Mark Twain paraphrase, grew exceedingly *wiser* the more I grew exceedingly *older*; dad was my best friend; in his final years, he and - *some book* - were nearly inseparable. And to my mother, who proudly recognized and encouraged a vein of 'creativity' throughout our family tree...*creating men of the cloth, men of canvas, men of wood, men of brick, music, 'Jacks' of the trades...also women of craft. (And to this now add, may I, myself, a man 'of the pen'.)*" ...and now, to the poem:

FIRST NINETY HOURS:

"SIX JAPANESE TSUNAMI SURVIVORS"

(A Medley of Six Haiku's)

First Survivor:

"Civilization -
just other side of T.V.
here – *even words* lost";

Second:

"White rage Godzilla,
say ten thousand dead; how count?
ravaged, we just toys";

Third:

"Man's 'best friend', hurt, wet
but aloft, wing ones still safe;
I pine, these, '**my** friends';

Fourth:

"Reporter crews come,
where **they** eat? **they** sleep? relieve?
mascara so neat";

Fifth:

"**Quake! Tsunami! Snow!**
Survival? Oh how much more?
"Jesus, be safe shore!"

Sixth Survivor:

"Much help: "*...on the way!*"
Rice, Body bags, lines, meltdowns,
no John Wayne, not **here**."

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*The waves of death swirled about me;
the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.*

2 Samuel 22:5

*“Because he loves me,” says the LORD, “I will rescue him;
I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.*

Psalm 91:14

(The above poem, with scripture verse at end, is by Ron Starich. The poem describes imagined inner thoughts from those caught up in the real disaster event:

**The Japanese Tsunami of March 11, 2011; 9.0 magnitude; greatest recorded there. The earthquake’s epicenter was just off northern Japan, near the towns of Sendai and Fukushima (one site of several nuclear power plants facing possible meltdown).*

Japanese Character: tsu (**port**); nami: tremendous sea (**wave**).



Free at Last!

Fallen from the grace of God.
Restored by Jesus Christ.
Encouraged by the word of God.
Excited in new life.
Devoted speaking, saving grace,
Of Jesus love to every race.
My freedom paid in full.

By: Sandie Wysocki

Accept God's Freedom

By Billy Graham

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."—James 4:8, NKJV

One day a little child was playing with a valuable vase. He put his hand into it and could not take it out. His father, too, tried his best to get the little boy's hand out, but all in vain. They were thinking of breaking the vase when the father said, "Now, my son, make one more try. Open your hand and hold your fingers out straight as you see me doing and then pull."

To the father's astonishment, the little fellow said, "Oh, no, Daddy. I couldn't put my fingers out like that because if I did I would drop my penny."

Smile if you will—but thousands of us are like that little boy, so busy holding on to the world's worthless trifles that we cannot accept God's freedom.

What "trifle" is keeping you from God? A sin you won't let go of? An unworthy goal you are determined to reach? A dishonorable relationship you won't give up? I beg you to drop that trifle in your heart. Surrender! Let go and let God have His way in your life.

Hope for Today:

Have you found yourself clinging to something that you know isn't good? For many, bondage is more familiar than freedom. Let go of anything that is holding you back and embrace the freedom of Christ.

Words of Wit & Wisdom

"Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery." —Galatians 2:4

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin."

—John 8:34

Freed from the Penalty

Before we were saved, we were slaves of sin (Romans 6:15-21), but when Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law, we were set free from the penalty and misery of sin, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1). Once freed, we should not desire to "submit again to a yoke of slavery." It was not fun as I remember, but the freedom we were given through Christ sets us free from living a life of sin and gives us joy like no other.

—Billy Graham

Worship With Us This Month

Worship with us on Sundays at 10am. You may join us either in-person or online. Our worship service is livestreamed on Vimeo and YouTube; links are provided on our website.

When joining us online, please check-in using the “Connect Card” located under the worship tab at the upper left corner of our homepage — we want to know you’re worshipping with us!

The “Connect Card” may also be used to submit prayer requests and/or praise reports during our worship service or any time.

You may give your tithes and offerings to the Lord through the church via the “donate” button at the lower right corner of our homepage.

Thank you for your faithfulness in giving — we believe God is doing great things through the ministry of his church!

What’s Happening

On-Going Weekly Events

Sunday

Adult Bible Study taught by Rev. Jim Vanderwall in the Multi-purpose room, 8:30-9:30am.

Monday

Choir practice in the Choir Room, 6-7:15 pm.

Bell Ringers practice in the Fellowship Hall, 5:15-5:45 pm.

No Bell rehearsal in July.

Tuesday

Over 50 Yoga in the Fellowship Hall, 10:30—11:45am. Bring your own mat and bottled water. Cost is \$10 per session, cash only.

Wednesday

Soup for the Soul provides free lunch and fellowship in the Fellowship Hall, 11am-1pm. Contributions are welcome; sign-up sheets are in the narthex.

AM Adult Bible Study-Resumes in the Fall, 10-11:30m.

PM Adult Bible Study –Resumes in the Fall, 6:30pm.

Thursday

Praise Team practice in the Sanctuary, 5:30-6:30pm.

Happening This Month

Trustees meet Tuesday, July 7th, 6:30pm, in the Multi-Purpose room.

Church Council will meet Thursday, July 16th, 6:30pm in the Multi-Purpose room

SPRC Meeting-Tuesday, July 28th, 6:30pm in the Library.

Opportunities to Be a Blessing

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Join Conley's Sight and Sound Team!

We are in need of people on Sunday mornings to operate the soundboard, screen projection computer, and livestream computer. Are you computer literate; are you willing to learn? Our friendly Sight and Sound Team will train you so that you can take a turn in this ministry that supports Sunday worship.

Thanks to all who have stepped up to run the screen projection computer.



ON-GOING OPPORTUNITIES

Greeters

A friendly welcome at the door makes a great first impression—both for new comers and regular attenders. Help get people ready for worship with a warm welcome to all and helpful directions to visitors.

Ushers

You can help worshipers by directing them to open seats and bringing a microphone for prayers and praises, and providing helpful directions as needed.

Contact the church office if you would like to serve your Conley's Church family in any of these capacities; 302-945-1881

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.

If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith;

if it is serving, then serve;

if it is teaching, then teach;

if it is to encourage, then give encouragement;

if it is giving, then give generously;

if it is to lead, do it diligently;

if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

ROMANS 12:4-8

**Conley's United
Methodist Church**

began as a Methodist society in 1800 and was incorporated as a Methodist church in 1838.

Our Mission:
To make disciples
of Jesus Christ.

Notable Days in July _____

4th Independence Day

Conley's United Methodist Church

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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

