TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
NOVEMBER 14-15, A.D. 2026
ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH, WEST POINT, NEBRASKA

AS WE GATHER

As we reach the end of the Church Year, there is a heightened sense of urgency in all the Readings, hymns, and other propers. These remind us that Christ will certainly come again, that this return draws closer with each passing day, and that we do not know when that day will be. Therefore, we are to be ready and prepared for Jesus to come again—and to meet Him at our own death. Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians in the Epistle, warns that "the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2). Paul warns against complacency, exhibited by those who say, "There is peace and security" (v. 3). In the Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the talents, warning again that we do not know when He, the master, will return; the precious gift of faith must be invested in His means of grace now (Matthew 25:14–30). In the Old Testament Reading, the prophet Zephaniah warns about complacency and misjudging God's character, so that he can point us to God's true nature: "a mighty one who will save" (Zephaniah 3:17).

HYM "Baptized Into Your Name Most Holy" LSB 590

1 Baptized into Your name most holy,
O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
I claim a place, though weak and lowly,
Among Your saints, Your chosen host.
Buried with Christ and dead to sin,
Your Spirit now shall live within.

2 My loving Father, here You take me
To be henceforth Your child and heir.
My faithful Savior, here You make me
The fruit of all Your sorrows share.
O Holy Spirit, comfort me
When threat'ning clouds around I see.

3 My faithful God, You fail me never;
Your promise surely will endure.
O cast me not away forever
If words and deeds become impure.
Have mercy when I come defiled;
Forgive, lift up, restore Your child.

4 All that I am and love most dearly—
Receive it all, O Lord, from me.
Let me confess my faith sincerely;
Help me Your faithful child to be!
Let nothing that I am or own
Serve any will but Yours alone.

Text: Johann Jacob Rambach, 1693–1735, abr.; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.
Tune: Cornelius Heinrich Dretzel, 1697-1775; setting: The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941
Text and music: Public domain

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM
Weston Ray Gibson and Jordan Lee Gibson (Saturday)

LORD'S PRAYER (Saturday)

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

APOSTLES' CREED (Saturday)

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life ✢ everlasting. Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Psalm 143:1*

P Hear my prayer, O LORD;
C **give ear to my pleas for mercy!**

Silent reflection on God's Word and for self-examination

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
C **Most merciful God, we confess that we have not lived as children of the light. We have fallen into complacency, forgetting who You are and who we are. We have grown comfortable in habits that do not honor You. We have buried what You have given us rather than loving our**

neighbor with those gifts. We have become complacent in our thoughts, our words, and our actions. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. God has not destined you for wrath but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

INTROIT ***(Entrance Psalm)*** *Psalm 143:2, 5–6, 10–11; antiphon: v. 1*

P Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my pleas for mercy!

C **In Your faithfulness answer me, in Your righteousness!**

P Enter not into judgment with Your servant,

C **for no one living is righteous before You.**

P I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that You have done;

C **I ponder the work of Your hands.**

P I stretch out my hands to You;

C **my soul thirsts for You like a parched land.**

P Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God!

C **Let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground!**

P For Your name's sake, O LORD, preserve my life!

C **In Your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble!**

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my pleas for mercy!

C **In Your faithfulness answer me, in Your righteousness!**

KYRIE *(Lord, have mercy ~ A prayer for peace with God and with one another)* *LSB 152*

P In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C **Amen.**

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.
Almighty and ever-living God, You have destined us to obtain salvation through Your Son, delivering us from the darkness of sin and claiming us as children of light. Ready our hearts for Your return, that we may be defended from complacency; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Zephaniah 1:7–16*

Be silent before the Sovereign Lord , for the day of the Lord is near. The Lord has prepared a sacrifice; he has consecrated those he has invited. On the day of the Lord 's sacrifice I will punish the princes and the king's sons and all those clad in foreign clothes. On that day I will punish all who avoid stepping on the threshold, who fill the temple of their gods with violence and deceit. "On that day," declares the Lord , "a cry will go up from the Fish Gate, wailing from the New Quarter, and a loud crash from the hills. Wail, you who live in the market district ; all your merchants will be wiped out, all who trade with silver will be ruined. At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, who think, 'The Lord will do nothing, either good or bad.' Their wealth will be plundered, their houses demolished. They will build houses but not live in them; they will plant vineyards but not drink the wine. "The great day of the Lord is near- near and coming quickly. Listen! The cry on the day of the Lord will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there. That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness,a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the corner towers. (NIV)

L This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE *1 Thessalonians 5:1–11*

Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. (NIV)

L This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 25:14–30*

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter.
C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to

work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. " 'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' (NIV)

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.
C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

CREED (Sunday) *Nicene Creed*

I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,

I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life ☩ of the world to come. Amen.

HYMN "The Gifts Christ Freely Gives" LSB 602

1 The gifts Christ freely gives
He gives to you and me
To be His Church, His bride,
His chosen, saved and free!
Saints blest with these rich gifts
Are children who proclaim
That they were won by Christ
And cling to His strong name.

2 The gifts flow from the font
Where He calls us His own;
New life He gives that makes
Us His and His alone.
Here He forgives our sins
With water and His Word;
The triune God Himself
Gives pow'r to call Him Lord.

3 The gifts of grace and peace
From absolution flow;
The pastor's words are Christ's
For us to trust and know.
Forgiveness that we need
Is granted to us there;
The Lord of mercy sends
Us forth in His blest care.

4 The gifts are there each day
The holy Word is read;
God's children listen, hear,
Receive, and they are fed.
Christ fills them with Himself,
Blest words that give them life,
Restoring and refreshing
Them for this world's strife.

5 The gifts are in the feast,
Gifts far more than we see;
Beneath the bread and wine
Is food from Calvary.
The body and the blood
Remove our ev'ry sin;
We leave His presence in
His peace, renewed again.

6 All glory to the One
Who lavishes such love;

The triune God in love
Assures our life above.
His means of grace for us
Are gifts He loves to give;
All thanks and praise for His
Great love by which we live!

Text: Richard C. Resch, 1947
Music: Charles J. Dale, alt.
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Music: Public domain

SERMON "*A Return On God's Investment in You!*" **Text: Matthew 25:14-30**

TITHES & OFFERINGS

HYMN "I Am Jesus' Little Lamb" LSB 740

1 I am Jesus' little lamb,
Ever glad at heart I am;
For my Shepherd gently guides me,
Knows my need and well provides me,
Loves me ev'ry day the same,
Even calls me by my name.

2 Day by day, at home, away,
Jesus is my staff and stay.
When I hunger, Jesus feeds me,
Into pleasant pastures leads me;
When I thirst, He bids me go
Where the quiet waters flow.

3 Who so happy as I am,
Even now the Shepherd's lamb?
And when my short life is ended,
By His angel host attended,
He shall fold me to His breast,
There within His arms to rest.

Text: Henrietta L. von Hayn, 1724–82; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941
Tune: Choral-Buch…Bruder-Gemeinen, Leipzig, 1784; setting: Ewald Weiss, 1906-98
Text and music: Public domain
Setting: © Bavarian Lutheran Church

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P As children of light, we cry out to the Lord who sees and hears us and deals bountifully with us in our time of need.

O Lord, our God, our dwelling place from generation to generation, You gather us around Your gifts of Word and Sacrament as we await the return of Christ. Thank You for entrusting us with these gifts, and help us to remain faithful in our waiting as we proclaim the Gospel to the world. Hear our prayer, O Lord,

C **give ear to our pleas for mercy.**

P Loving Father, You claimed us as children in Holy Baptism, bringing us out of darkness and into Your marvelous light. Help us to walk as children of light, encouraging and building one another up, that Your works may be displayed in us while it is still day. Hear our prayer, O Lord,
C **give ear to our pleas for mercy.**

P Sovereign Lord, as You have called us to keep watch and to not grow weary, You have also given us leaders to watch over us. Strengthen all who are in authority over us, that they may see and care for the needs of Your people and Your creation. Hear our prayer, O Lord,
C **give ear to our pleas for mercy.**

P Merciful Lord, a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past. Be with those who are in long or difficult seasons of life, those who are sick, those who are grieving, and those who are in distress and anguish, [*especially . . .*]. Give them peace in their waiting that they be comforted in knowing that their strength is in You. Hear our prayer, O Lord,
C **give ear to our pleas for mercy.**

P Ever-present Lord, You have prepared the Table and consecrated Your guests. Bring us to receive the gift of Christ's body and blood with repentant and thankful hearts that we be strengthened in our waiting for Your return. Hear our prayer, O Lord,
C **give ear to our pleas for mercy.**

P Believing that You have not destined us for wrath but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, we trust that You hear and answer us according to Your good and gracious will. We pray this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (Sunday)

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

PREFACE

P The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.
C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

PROPER PREFACE

P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who alone reigns as the Mighty One in our midst as the good and faithful Servant and who promises to rejoice over us with gladness, having defeated death and the grave. Just as He did not delay in rising from the dead, He will not delay in returning to us as the day of the Lord draws near. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS *LSB 161*

C **Holy, holy, holy Lord God of pow'r and might:**
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.
Hosanna. Hosanna.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING *Psalm 84:5*

P Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son to bear our sin and be our Savior.
C **For You are a God who will always do what is good.**

P Gathered in the name and remembrance of Jesus, we cry to You, O Lord, to forgive us, renew us, and lead us with Your Word and Spirit.
C **Blessed are those whose strength is in You.**

P Gather us together from the ends of the earth, especially with all the faithful who will awaken and arise on the Last Day,
C **that we, too, may enter into the joy of our Master that has no end.**

P To You, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all the glory and honor, now and forever.
C **Amen.**

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✢ body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new covenant in My ✢ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

P As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.
C **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

PAX DOMINI

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C **Amen.**

AGNUS DEI *LSB 163*

C **Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

HYMN "I Come, O Savior, To Thy Table" LSB 618

1 I come, O Savior, to Thy table,
For weak and weary is my soul;
Thou, Bread of Life, alone art able
To satisfy and make me whole: Refrain

ref Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood
Be for my soul the highest good!

2 Thy heart is filled with fervent yearning
That sinners may salvation see
Who, Lord, to Thee in faith are turning;
So I, a sinner, come to Thee. Refrain

3 Unworthy though I am, O Savior,
Because I have a sinful heart,
Yet Thou Thy lamb wilt banish never,
For Thou my faithful shepherd art: Refrain

4 Weary am I and heavy laden;
With sin my soul is sore oppressed;
Receive me graciously and gladden
My heart, for I am now Thy guest. Refrain

5 What higher gift can we inherit?
It is faith's bond and solid base;
It is the strength of heart and spirit,
The covenant of hope and grace. Refrain

Text: Friedrich Christian Heyder, 1677–1754; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, abr.
Tune: Emskirchner Choral-Buch, Leipzig, 1756;
setting: The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941
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Music: Public domain

HYMN "What Is The World to Me" LSB 730

1 What is the world to me
With all its vaunted pleasure
When You, and You alone,
Lord Jesus, are my treasure!
You only, dearest Lord,
My soul's delight shall be;
You are my peace, my rest.
What is the world to me!

2 The world seeks to be praised
And honored by the mighty
Yet never once reflects
That they are frail and flighty.
But what I truly prize
Above all things is He,
My Jesus, He alone.
What is the world to me!

3 The world seeks after wealth
And all that mammon offers
Yet never is content
Though gold should fill its coffers.
I have a higher good,
Content with it I'll be:
My Jesus is my wealth.
What is the world to me!

4 What is the world to me!
My Jesus is my treasure,
My life, my health, my wealth,
My friend, my love, my pleasure,
My joy, my crown, my all,
My bliss eternally.
Once more, then, I declare:
What is the world to me!

Text: Georg Michael Pfefferkorn, 1645–1732; tr. August Crull, 1845–1923, alt.
Tune: Ahasverus Fritsch, 1629-1701; setting: The Lutheran Service Book, 2006
Text and music: Public domain

HYMN "Lord Jesus Christ, You Have Prepared" LSB 622

1 Lord Jesus Christ, You have prepared
This feast for our salvation;
It is Your body and Your blood,
And at Your invitation
As weary souls, with sin oppressed,
We come to You for needed rest,
For comfort, and for pardon.

2 Although You did to heav'n ascend,
Where angel hosts are dwelling,
And in Your presence they behold
Your glory, all excelling,
And though Your people shall not see
Your glory and Your majesty
Till dawns the judgment morning,

3 Yet, Savior, You are not confined
To any habitation;
But You are present even now
Here with Your congregation.
Firm as a rock this truth shall stand,

Unmoved by any daring hand
Or subtle craft and cunning.

4 We eat this bread and drink this cup,
Your precious Word believing
That Your true body and Your blood
Our lips are here receiving.
This Word remains forever true;
All things are possible with You,
For You are Lord Almighty.

5 Though reason cannot understand,
Yet faith this truth embraces:
Your body, Lord, is even now
At once in many places.
I leave to You how this can be;
Your Word alone suffices me;
I trust its truth unfailing.

6 Lord, I believe what You have said;
Help me when doubts assail me.
Remember that I am but dust,
And let my faith not fail me.
Your supper in this vale of tears
Refreshes me and stills my fears
And is my priceless treasure.

7 Grant that we worthily receive
Your supper, Lord, our Savior,
And, truly grieving for our sins,
May prove by our behavior
That we are thankful for Your grace
And day by day may run our race,
In holiness increasing.

8 For Your consoling supper, Lord,
Be praised throughout all ages!
Preserve it, for in ev'ry place
The world against it rages.
Grant that this sacrament may be
A blessèd comfort unto me
When living and when dying.

Text: Samuel Kinner, 1603–68; tr. Emanuel Cronenwett, 1841–1931, alt.
Tune: Peter Sohren, c. 1630-92, alt.; setting: The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941
Text and music: Public domain

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

P Let us pray.
We give thanks to You, almighty God, for giving us a taste of the life that is to come. Help us to walk as children of the day, strengthening our faith toward You and enlivening our love for one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✢ give you peace.

C **Amen.**

HYMN "Preserve Your Word, O Savior" LSB 658

1 Preserve Your Word, O Savior,
To us this latter day,
And let Your kingdom flourish;
Enlarge Your Church, we pray.
O keep our faith from failing;
Keep hope's bright star aglow.
Let nothing from truth turn us
While living here below.

2 Preserve, O Lord, Your honor,
The bold blasphemer smite;
Convince, convert, enlighten
The souls in error's night.
Reveal Your will, dear Savior,
To all who dwell below,
Great light of all the living,
That all Your name may know.

3 Preserve, O Lord, Your Zion,
Bought dearly with Your blood;
Protect what You have chosen
Against the hellish flood.
Be always our defender
When dangers gather round;
When all the earth is crumbling,
Safe may Your Church be found.

4 Preserve Your Word and preaching,
The truth that makes us whole,
The mirror of Your glory,
The pow'r that saves the soul.
Oh, may this living water,
This dew of heav'nly grace,
Sustain us while here living
Until we see Your face.

5 Preserve in wave and tempest
Your storm-tossed little flock;
Assailed by wind and weather,
May it endure each shock.
Stand at the helm, our pilot,
And set the course aright;

Then we will reach the harbor
In Your eternal light.

Text: Andreas Gryphius, 1616–64; tr. William J. Schaefer, 1891–1976, alt.
Tune: Neu-vermehrtes…Gesangbuch, 3rd ed. Meiningen, 1693: setting: Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-47
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