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## PARISH MAGAZINE

### **December 2023**



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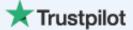
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The Revd Tim Clifford Hill Rector

Vacancy Youth Worker

A Caring Christian Community, here for everyone

St John's is open every day from 9.30am to 4pm. Please feel welcome to visit us. Warm Space in the Centre Foyer weekdays except Wednesdays, 11am to 2pm.

Sunday services are listed on Page 2.

Services during the week:

Morning Prayer Monday to Thursday at 9.00am in Church Holy Communion on Wednesdays at 10.30am in the Merrow Hall, St John's Centre.

Evening Prayer on Fridays at 5.00pm in Church.

All are welcome.

Please contact Helen Chambers, Rosanne Bond, Churchwardens Peter Tappin and Jane Farquharson or Deputy Churchwarden Cathy Thompson if we can help you with anything. Phone numbers are under Who's Who in this magazine.

#### **December 2023 Main Services (Year B)**

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December** 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent, Purple

1 Corinthians 1.3-9, Mark 13.24-end

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am All Age Worship

6pm Sing a New Song

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent, Purple 2 Peter 3.8-15a, Mark 1.1-8 8am BCP Holy Communion 10am CW Holy Communion

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December** 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent, Purple

1 Thessalonians 5.16-24, John 1.6-8, 19-28

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am CW Holy Communion

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December** 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent, Purple

\*\*Romans 16.25-end, Luke 1.26-38\*

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am Holy CW Communion

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December** Christmas Eve, Midnight Mass, White *Hebrews 1.1-4, Titus 3.4-7, Luke 2.1-7* 

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December Christmas Day, White

Isaiah 9.2-7, Luke 2.1-14(15-20)

8am BCP Holy Communion

10am All Age Christmas Worship

**Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> December** 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas, White *Galatians 4.4-7, Luke 2.15-21* 8am BCP Holy Communion 10am New Year Worship

# **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2024** Epiphany, White *Ephesians 3.1-12, Matthew 2.1-12*8am BCP Holy Communion 10am All Age Worship with Blessing of Chalk

Wednesday Holy Communion will be weekly at 10.30am in the Merrow Hall but there will be <u>NO</u> service on <u>Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> December</u>.

Thank you very much to Chantries & Pewleys for sponsoring our colour cover throughout 2023 and to Jane Stevenson for taking the photograph which will be our church Christmas card this year.



St. John's Christmas Cards

We have two beautiful designs for our Christmas cards this year, the east window showing the Christmas scene and the church in snow, for you to send to family and friends. These are on sale from the Parish Office and on Sundays and church events, cost £5.00 for a pack of ten.

#### **From The Rectory**

Welcome to the December edition of our parish magazine!

December is an exciting month for churches across the land. It begins with Advent, the start of a new church year and our time of preparation for Christmas. It ends in the Christmas season, when we will be celebrating and remembering the coming of our Lord and Saviour in the form of a tiny baby.

You may see some new additions to our church in December. These will be in the form of craft angels. I have invited each class at our church school to make a craft angel, which will live in our church throughout December and be collected at the beginning of the new school term. Do come and see them when you have a moment, especially if your child helped make one!

Please take a look at our services coming up this month. They will include a game of Advent Wreath roulette on Advent Sunday, a crib service for our children in the parish on Christmas Eve, and a sermon involving chocolate on Christmas Day (you'll have to come to find out more!).

For those who find this time of year hard, we have the Longest Night service. A service of reflection, prayer and comfort.

This can be a busy time of year for many of us. Let us remember that, at its heart, this time of year is not about presents and parties but about the coming of Jesus, who came to earth to set us free.

'Come thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free. From our sins and fears release us. Let us find our rest in thee.' (Charles Wesley)

Alexandra, Henry and I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

With good wishes, Tim





Come and join the choir for our Christmas Carol service on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December at 6pm. All ages and abilities are welcome and it is good opportunity to test your vocal skills and sing carols both old and new. Practices will be at 6pm in the Church Centre on the following dates:

24<sup>th</sup> November 1<sup>st</sup> December 8<sup>th</sup> December

15<sup>th</sup> December 17<sup>th</sup> December in Church before the service

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

# Can you recognise the carols from which these lines come? (taken from Hymns Ancient and Modern)

- all meanly wrapped in swathing bands
- 2 though an infant now we view him
- 3 now to the Lord sing praises
- 4 he rules the world with truth and grace
- 5 then let us all with one accord
- 6 mild he lays his glory by
- 7 then gentle Mary bowed her head
- 8 close by me for ever, and love me, I pray
- 9 fain we embrace thee with love and awe
- 10 the world in solemn stillness lay

Answers in the January magazine

#### View from the Pews



We are part of the Church of England. The Christian church is a global force worshipping the God who created all the galaxies yet loves us personally and suffered judicial murder in Jesus to give us forgiveness for our sins. England is a country struggling somewhat with its multiethnic identity. St. John's seen from my pew seems to display much that is good in traditional English character. When Ukraine was in trouble the flood of items donated overwhelmed the church centre. The ordinary friendliness of our post service gatherings is heartening to behold. Many in our congregation toil mightily to spread very practical Christian love into our community. Our new blue poster declares the ways in which we offer to serve all in our parish.

We face many challenges as English Christians and members of the established church. It is difficult not to be dismayed by our declining numbers. We struggle to maintain buildings suitable for much larger congregations. We are not persecuted, just ignored by many which is infinitely worse. We have faith in a loving saviour, hope that the kingdom will come, and love for those around us. If five loaves and two fishes can feed five thousand, let's have thoroughly English optimism that that will be enough.

The English have been really great,

Though not quite so clever of late.

We just have to strive

Faith and hope both alive

And the flood of our love in full spate.

As this magazine is published we are just at the start of Advent so as an Advent offering I give you the following poem by David A. Redding, from *If I Could Pray Again* (1965)

#### **Adult Advent Announcement**

O Lord, Let Advent begin again In us, Not merely in commercials; For that first Christmas was not Simply for children, But for the Wise and the strong. It was Crowded around that cradle, With kings kneeling. Speak to us Who seek an adult seat this year. Help us to realize, As we fill stockings, Christmas is mainly For the old folks — Bent backs And tired eyes Need relief and light A little more. No wonder It was grown-ups Who were the first To notice Such a star.





#### **Decorating the Church for Christmas**

The team of Church flower arrangers will be meeting in Church on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December from 9am to 12 noon to decorate the Church for Christmas. We would like to extend an invitation to anyone who would like to come along and "have a go" and previous experience is not essential! Styles of flower arranging change over the years, and now as we try to limit our use of floral foam (not so good for the environment) there is opportunity and scope to craft more naturalistic arrangements, and for Christmas dried and artificial materials are definitely allowed. This year we will be working on a silver and white theme and there will be materials available for people to use.

Refreshments will be on offer during the morning so even if decorating the Church is not in your skill set you will be most welcome to join us for coffee!

Helen Chambers 01483 846574

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Botanigrams**

Unscramble the letters below to find the Latin or common names of 8 plants, often available in colder months. The first letter of each will give, in order, the name of a colourful, tuberous, winter perennial:

1 LACE MAIL 2 SAUCY OIL CARGO

3 OCCURS 4 VOLLEYBALLS FURY HIT ME

5 INTO ACE 6 OH MANIA

7 I CARE 8 SINUS CARS

Answers will be in the January magazine

#### From Merrow C of E Infant School



#### Dear Friends,

It is certainly looking very busy around the Infant School as November progresses. It is a fine line we tread in having decorations up and ready for important events like the Christmas Fair as well as beginning to prepare for Nativity Plays whilst at the same time trying to maintain the high standards of work expected from the children and not increase the excitement levels too soon! For many children the changes in routine can be difficult to cope with and their emotions can bubble over.

Much has been written and said in the media about the increase in children presenting with differing levels of need in schools around the country; I thought it would be helpful for our community to read how your local school supports all the children and how we are an inclusive school, proud of all our children and their progress. Our Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCO), Kerry Bircher, works across both schools in the Federation to support staff in delivering a highquality curriculum for all children with adaptations made where necessary so that they can all access learning across the different subjects. Another role that serves both schools is our Home School Link Worker, Jo Tutty: she not only runs small nurture groups for the children to support them with managing their emotions and feelings but also supports parents by signposting organisations and services that can help with a huge variety of issues. The third role in school to highlight this month is our ELSA, Edit Bonus; she is an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant and her role overlaps somewhat with Jo's in that she provides emotion coaching to groups of children and individuals as well as supporting them with friendship issues, social skills and self-esteem as well as supporting bereaved children or those dealing with difficulties at home. These roles may be new or different from those you are familiar with from your own school days however they are part of the excellent team of staff that work at Merrow Infant School.

As we draw to the end of another busy term, we thank you for all your support and prayers and wish you all a Merry Christmas and peaceful New Year.

Warm regards,

Emma Hooper



#### St John's Children's Corner

Since Hannah's move to Theological College work with children, youth and families has continued. St. John's Baby and Toddler group continues to flourish; the children's corner on Sundays continues with a good pool of helpers to ensure that there are activities ready for the children to engage with – it is so good when they show us the fruits of their labour; Youth Café on Wednesdays is thriving, and the team of helpers continue to make excellent toasties! The Life Group is now studying Paul's letter to the Romans and is an eclectic mix of bible study and fellowship through faith and the Spokes group has started to meet again. Altogether an amazing legacy that Hannah has left us and for a new youth worker to nurture and grow. And as always grateful thanks to all those who continue to volunteer to keep this part of Church life going.

#### **Wednesday Coffee Club**



Here it is Christmas at last, unless you have been shopping or watching adverts on TV when it has been Christmas since August, and to be fair Christmas cake and puddings have to be made by now if you want to get the full flavour. But I think with the start of Advent it is ok to think Christmas is really on the way and get to think about getting out the Christmas decorations and what Christmas means, it is a time when a lot of older people feel really isolated, so popping around to neighbours and checking they are ok and saying hello is always a good idea.

It is also a time to count our blessings and we thank all the dedicated drivers and helpers that without their unstinting hard work and dedication throughout the year the coffee morning just would not function. They are all unsung heroes – thank you so much.

We have our Christmas Party in the centre on the 20<sup>th</sup> December, with good cheer, a raffle a few Carols and of course Mince pies etc and hoping that as many members as possible can come, as well as any new members.

We will return on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024

So all it leaves me to say is we wish you all a very Happy Christmas and hope you have a healthy and prosperous New Year.

From all the team at the Merrow Morning Coffee club

Should you have any queries, please contact me on my e-mail <a href="mailto:merrowcoffeemorning@hotmail.com">merrowcoffeemorning@hotmail.com</a> or ring me on 07545256114 Gerald Hunt



#### **Virgin**

As if until that moment nothing real had happened since Creation

As if outside the world were empty so that she and he were all

so that she and he were all there was — he mover, she moved upon

As if her submission were the most dynamic of all works: as if no one had ever said Yes like that

As if one day the sun had no place in all the universe to pour its gold but her small room

From *Accompanied By Angels: Poems of the Incarnation* by Luci Shaw, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company (June 19, 2006).

#### Outreach from St. John's

Throughout 2023 St. John's has continued to support our three nominated charities: our preferred local charity is **Foodwise**; at a national level we support **Christians Against Poverty (CAP)**; and internationally **Compassion**. All three charities continue to provide much needed support to those who find life challenging at this time. We will continue to hold these charities, those who work and volunteer for them and those that they help in our prayers.

In addition to our chosen charities, we give support, on a regular basis to a number of other charities.

We have had another very successful year supporting **Baby Basics** and although currently closed for regular donations there is still a need for size 1 nappies, baby wipes and mum and baby toiletries. Watch our weekly newsletter for updates.

We collect weekly for the **North Guildford Food Bank** and the weekly newsletter gives details of what has been requested each work.

There are boxes in the porch for collecting used stamps for the **RNIB**, who ask that you leave 1cm border around the stamps and that foreign (including the Republic of Ireland) and Channel Island stamps are kept separate.

We actively support **Christian Aid** week in May each year and **Help for Heroes** on Remembrance Sunday. Support is given to **Besom** at Harvest and Christmas. At Christingle and with home collection boxes we support **The Children's Society**.

We also have collecting boxes in the Church Centre for the **Hygiene Bank** and **Tools for Africa**.

It is an impressive list and a testament to those in the congregation who give their time to support the outreach work of St. John's and if any have been missed from the list the editor gives humble apologies!

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Christmas Wordsearch**

W	S	J	Е	S	U	S	Χ
I	Т	0	S	Т	D	Z	Ν
N	Α	S	L	Α	0	R	Е
Т	R	Е	Е	В	N	Е	М
Е	Υ	Р	G	L	K	G	Е
R	Q	Ι	Ν	Е	Е	N	S
В	R	Ν	Α	L	Υ	Α	I
С	I	K	F	М	N	М	W
S	Н	Е	Р	Н	Е	R	D
Υ	R	Α	М	W	G	N	0

Can you find the following words:

AMEN	ANGELS	DONKEY	INN
JESUS	JOSEPH	MANGER	MARY
SHEPHERD	STABLE	STAR	TREE
WINTER	WISEMEN		

Why has Santa been banned from sooty chimneys?

Carbon footprints

How can you keep your home warm this Christmas?

Tinsulation

Why are Christmas trees so bad at knitting?

Because they always drop their needles

What athlete is warmest in winter?

A long jumper

What did Adam say the day before Christmas?

It's Christmas Eve

Who hides in the bakery at Christmas?

A mince spy



#### **GARDENING HINTS**

I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a successful year in your garden in 2024

#### **Gardening hints for December.**

Tulip bulbs should be planted by the end of the month.

October sown Sweet Peas should pinched out after the second or third pair of leaves have formed.

There is still time to cut perennials which have finished flowering but be careful to leave Hardy Fuchsias, Peonies and Hydrangeas as they will benefit from the stems being left to protect the plant through the winter.

Bare root Roses can still be planted if the soil is not waterlogged, collect the fallen leaves of Roses which have been attacked by Black Spot and dispose of them to prevent the disease from spreading.

Lightly trim Heathers which have finished flowering to encourage bushy growth.

If you are growing bulbs indoors the pots should be turned frequently to ensure even growth.

Poinsettias, which are popular at this time of the year are now available in many different colours, they prefer a warm, light position away from draughts. Like all houseplants they are easily killed by over watering

Regularly water indoor Azaleas with rainwater to prevent the dense root ball from drying out. Reduce the watering of houseplants, as winter light levels begin to fall they should be placed in a bright place, do not leave them overnight in the cold between closed curtains and the window, particularly on frosty nights.

Clear the vegetable plot of plant debris left over from summer produce, then lightly dig the ground over to open it up so that any bugs and diseases are killed by the winter frost.

Most deciduous trees and shrubs can now be cut back but leave all types of flowering Cherry until they are in full leaf again, Magnolias should not be pruned until the summer.

Continue to remove fallen leaves from the lawn and on mild dry days the grass can be mown with the mower blades set on a high cut. Keep off the grass when it is frosty or very wet.

#### John Boon.

What do you get if you eat Christmas decoration?

**Tinsilitiis** 

Why did nobody bid for Rudolph and Blitzen on eBay?

They were two deer

What do snowmen eat for breakfast?

**Snowflakes** 

Why is Parliament like ancient Bethlehem?

It takes a miracle to find three wise men



#### About **our** Cathedral......

I needed a clear, bright, sunny day. One with lots of light and shade; strong sunlight and deep shadow. The interior of our Cathedral is perfect for taking photographs on such a day. I'd been planning this for some time so yesterday I loaded the car with my camera and set off for Stag Hill. And when I say "camera" I'm referring to the proper thing. Not a "camera phone" – however good they are. My camera is entirely manually operated. I have to focus on my subject, set my shutter speed and aperture and release the shutter - which makes an awfully loud "clang" when released. Not what you want in a setting like a Cathedral! Then I manually wind-on the film ready for the next shot. How quaint. How satisfying. (Remember how photography used to be?) The beauty of the interior of our Cathedral is that it lends itself to architectural photographs. Actually, it lends itself to quirky right-angle shots, straightedged perspectives, soaring pillars, vaulted ceilings, squared off archways and geometric floor tile patterns. There's hardly a curved line in the place. It's incredible what you see when you really "look". With a camera in my hand I seek out the interesting and the unusual to photograph. Years ago I'd be out with my camera and a subject would "present" itself to me. I don't know if I'll ever get that mysterious perception back again - I can only try. Our Cathedral has many aspects worthy of a photograph - especially in black & white. So yesterday I snapped away happily with my shutter release echoing throughout the building. The camera felt unfamiliar in my hand and awkward too. The shots I took were experimental and I shall ponder my morning's work and return to our Cathedral for more. Of course, it'll be easier when I see the actual photographs I took. But I can't - not until I "get them back from Boots"!

ED: We will be interested to know how your pictures turn out Nick!

#### Christmas Miscellany - A Quiz

- 1 Alphabetically, which of Santa's reindeer comes first?
- 2 Traditionally what do you stud onions with in a bread sauce?
- 3 In the novel A Christmas Carol, which is the first ghost to visit Scrooge?
- 4 Which famous scientist who developed the three laws of motion, was born on Christmas day 1642?
- 5 Which wordless children's picture book by Raymond Briggs was first published in 1978?
- 6 In which Pacific Ocean island nation is Father Christmas known as Santa-San (Mr Santa)?
- 7 Which UK monarch delivered the first Christmas Broadcast to the BBC in 1932?
- 8 On Christmas Day 1950, what did four Scottish students steal from Westminster Abbey?
- 9 What was Mr. Bean searching for when he got his head stuck in the turkey?
- 10 Which seasonal job was first filled by James Edgar in 1890?
- 11 In which fictional land is it always winter but never Christmas?
- 12 The plant "Viscum Album" is better known as which Christmas decoration?

#### **Nativity**

Immensity cloistered in thy dear womb,
Now leaves His well-belov'd imprisonment,
There He hath made Himself to His intent
Weak enough, now into the world to come;
But O, for thee, for Him, hath the inn no room?
Yet lay Him in this stall, and from the Orient,
Stars and wise men will travel to prevent
The effect of Herod's jealous general doom.
Seest thou, my soul, with thy faith's eyes, how He
Which fills all place, yet none holds Him, doth lie?
Was not His pity towards thee wondrous high,
That would have need to be pitied by thee?
Kiss Him, and with Him into Egypt go,
With His kind mother, who partakes thy woe.

John Donne (1572-1631)



#### **Future Dates for the Diary**

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December** St. John's Men's Fellowship pre-Christmas lunch – talk to Richard Burtonwood or Robert Avis

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January** All Age Worship for Epiphany with Blessing of Chalk

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January** Coffee Club recommences

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January Messy Church 3.30 – 5pm

**25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> January** – Merrow Dramatic Society Pantomime "Jack and the Beanstalk" – see their website for details

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February** All Age Worship for Candlemas – bring a candle to be blessed

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February** St. John's Barn Dance – get your dancing shoes ready and practice your dosi-does •

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March at 6pm** Choral Evensong at St. John's with Guildford Cathedral Choir

#### What is Sauce for the Goose is Sauce for the Gander

This old phrase seems to promote sexual equality long before it was fashionable. It seems to suggest that the same rules apply in both cases – what is fitting for the husband should also be fitting for the wife – though it is more likely that the phrase was used more generally to mean what is good enough for one person is good enough for another.

Originally, "sauce" from the Latin *salus* meant salted food used as a relish with meat, such as pickled roots and herbs. "Sauce" these days also means "cheek" or "impertinence", perhaps in relation to the piquancy of such relishes.

#### The Friends of St John the Evangelist (FOSTJ)





Thank you, Friends of St. John's for a great Quiz Evening on 17 November. Ten highly intellectual teams battled out the evening to raise funds for the refurbishment of the Church Friends of St. John's Nave pendant lights. Over £1,400 was raised, that's about

half the cost of the project, in one hugely enjoyable evening. Watch out for more events to come. THANK YOU!

If you would like to help in our endeavours in any way and keep up with our news, please visit www.fostj.org. We would love you to become a member.

### Forthcoming magazine information 2024 Parish Magazine

The subscription for next year will remain unchanged at £7 for the year or 60 pence for an individual copy. However, there will need to be an increase for those who receive their magazines in the post to reflect the rise in postal charges.

Details regarding payment will appear in the January issue so please wait for this information before paying your subscription! Thank you

Issue	Copy date	Editor	Editor's email address
January	17 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Barbara Lawrence	lawrebarbara@gmail.com
February	14 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Chris Starr	chrisstarr10@btinternet.com
March	11 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Helen Chambers	hmchambers@virginmedia.com

<sup>\*\*</sup> Please note Barbara's new email address above \*\*

(If you draft your copy in Tahoma, 16 point, on an A4 page, you'll get a good idea of how much space it will take up.)

#### Who's Who

Rector Youth Worker	The Revd Tim Clif Vacancy	Clifford Hill (Day off Friday)		951649
Churchwardens	Mr Peter Tappin			76 183701
Deputy Churchwarden Verger	Mrs Jane Farquha Mrs Cathy Thomp Mrs Helen Chamb	son		65 620017 18 202920 846574
St Johns Centre Office - Centre Manager - Parish Admin Assistant	9.30 - 4 Mon -Thu Mr Barry Dickinso Mr Harry Talboys	n centremanage	r@saintjo	83 454621 hns.org.uk hns.org.uk
Web site: www.saintjohn	s.org.uk	Email: office@	saintjohn	s.org.uk
PCC Secretary PCC Treasurer Gift Aid, Legacies and Pa Joint Directors of Music a Babies and Toddlers Ground Baby Basics Bell Ringers Bible Reading Fellowship Cathedral Link Children's Society representation Christian Aid Organiser Electoral Roll	and Choir a	Mrs Micky Clare & Mrs M Mrs Jane Farquharson babybasics@saintjohns.c Mrs Jane Farquharson Mrs Jenny Welbourn Nick Bond Mrs Judith Sampson Mrs Sara England Chris Starr	avis Mart 07765 org.uk 07765	620017 458128 620017 825541 579462 571847 504205 870028
Flower coordinator Head Server Magazine Advertisements	5	Mrs Helen Chambers Mrs Kate Verschoyle Mrs Sara England marrowadverts@gmail.com	am.	846574 533449
Merrow C of E Infant Sch	nool	merrowadverts@gmail.co Mrs Louisa Dormer (Exec Teacher)		ad
Church Governors		Emma Hooper (Deputy F Joe Bullock Michael Eagle	lead)	561501
Safeguarding Officer St John's Merrow, Pre-Sc Diocesan Lay Pastoral As		Rosanne Bond Ms Amanda Bazley (Man Mrs Helen Chambers	ager)	579462 454625 846574
Readings and Intercessic Sunday Newssheet TiC and Lay Parish repre- Wednesday Coffee Morni Transport Website contact	sentative	Joe Bullock Harry Talboys office@ Mrs Isla Stables Gerald Hunt Mrs Rosanne Bond Parish Office (as above)	saintjohn	960480 s.org.uk 567599 256114 579462

For any changes to Who's Who, please email Sara on merrowadverts@gmail.com

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