



SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH

5265 PLACIDA RD. GROVE CITY, FL 34224 | 941-697-4899 | OFFICE@SFOACHURCH.COM

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2024

2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



*"Every valley shall be filled
and every mountain and hill shall be made low.
The winding roads shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."*

- Lk 3:5-6

Saint Francis of Assisi Church

**5265 Placida Road
Grove City, FL 34224
941-697-4899**

Fax 941-697-0602

www.sfoachurch.com

email: office@sfoachurch.com

Father Cory Mayer, Pastor
Father Tony Chermeil, Parochial Vicar
Father Edwin Mathias, Part Time
Deacon Robert Godlewsky

PARISH STAFF

Robert Clark, Business Manager
Aina Olonade, Director for Music and Cantors
James Brantner, Director for Religious Education
Gerry Chesney, Director, Parish Women’s Guild
Matt Egan, Director, Parish Outreach
Martha Mingel, Coordinator, Homebound/Healthcare
Janette Ash, Administrative Assistant & Accountant
Kelly Kroll, Administrative Assistant (Part-Time)
Jim Parent, Maintenance & Facilities
Beth Hammond, Head Sacristan
Penny Fleming, Ministry Scheduler/Communications

MASS SCHEDULE

SUNDAY VIGIL (SATURDAY)

After Easter to December 28 ... 4:00pm
January 4 to April 12, 2025 ... 3:00pm & 4:30pm

SUNDAY

After Easter to December 29 - 8:00am & 10:00am
January 5 through Easter Sunday
7:30am, 9:00am, 10:30am

WEEKDAYS

Monday - Friday.....8:15 am
Holy Days.....8:15 am & 6:00 pm

CHURCH OPEN HOURS

Monday - Friday 7am-4pm
Saturday 2pm - 5pm
Sunday 7am -11am

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Winter - September 4 through May 31
Mon - Fri 9:00am -12:30pm, 1:00pm - 4:00pm

Summer - June 3 through Aug 31
Monday through Friday 9:00am - 2:30pm

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Thursday after Mass 9:00am - 9:15am
After Easter to Dec 29 - Saturdays 3:00pm - 3:30pm
Jan 4 to April 13 - Saturdays: 2:00pm - 2:30pm

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Call Parish Office at least six months in advance.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Contact Parish Office

Mass Intentions and Scripture Readings for the Week

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9

8:15am **HEATHER**

6:00pm †**OSWIN MATHIAS**
by Beth Hammond

The Immaculate Conception

Reading: Genesis 3:9-15, 20

Reading 2: Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10

8:15am †**DONALD BUCZYNSKI**

by Debbie Leath

Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

Gospel: Matthew 18:12-14

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11

8:15am †**PACHECO AND SABINO**

FAMILIES by Family

Reading: Isaiah 40:25-31

Gospel: Matthew 11:28-30

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12

8:15am †**MARIANNA CSIZMADIA**

by John and Gail Kovach

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Reading: Zechariah 2:14-17

Gospel: Revelations 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13

8:15am †**LUCY SCOTTI**

by James and Villa Scotti

Saint Lucy, Virgin and Martyr

Reading: Isaiah 48:17-19

Gospel: Matthew 11:16-19

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

SUNDAY VIGIL (SATURDAY)

4:00pm †**JOSEPH AND**

CHARLIE SPITERI by Zayra Calderon

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15

8:00am **FOR OUR PARISHIONERS**

10:00am †**TRISH BOYER AND**

†**SAMY ESKANDER** by Beth Hammond

Third Sunday of Advent

Reading 1: Zephaniah 3:14-18a

Reading 2: Philippians 4:4-7

Gospel: Luke 3:10-18

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

O Lord, stir up our hearts that we may prepare for Thy only begotten Son that through His coming we may be made worthy to serve Thee with pure minds through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Gospel Reflection Second Sunday of Advent

This first reading is one of the most beautiful and ecstatic passages in Scripture. *Put on the splendor of glory from God forever... Stand upon the heights, look to the east and see your children gathered from the east and from the west, rejoicing that they are remembered by God.* But we should remember that it's a vision that is being offered by the author of this reading so many years ago to people who think that this will never be possible. They have been exiled,

refugees, scattered around their world, held prisoner in countries that are not theirs, blocked on the road that leads to safety and to home. This vision tells them that God will come to them, that the road will be opened up, that they will see liberation. You have to wonder how many of them were able to live as if they believed it.

This is still an Advent picture for us to meditate on all these hundreds and hundreds of years later, because every year, Advent wants us to spend time on these dark winter nights remembering that the liberation God is bringing is still something we desire with all our hearts. It's a vision that should resonate with us for a few reasons.

The first reason, of course, is that we all in our way live in a form of captivity, held back from what we want in our hearts by things that have taken us over: fear and discouragement and resentment and a self-centeredness about the things we care about. We fight these things, and yet they fight back, and have power over us that we wish they didn't.

But this personal captivity, the way we tie ourselves up with anger and disappointment and fear that is not the only captivity that is on our minds this December. This has been a year when it is impossible for us to look at the world and not see real captives and real exiles and real refugees, people without a place to live or a country that will take them, people with a home that has fallen apart under their eyes, it's a painful thing to see, but it is not a new phenomenon in this world, and there simply is no doubt that it is one that God has a special interest in; God wants exiles and refugees to be liberated and welcomed. The world is not ready for Christ until this road has been cleared.

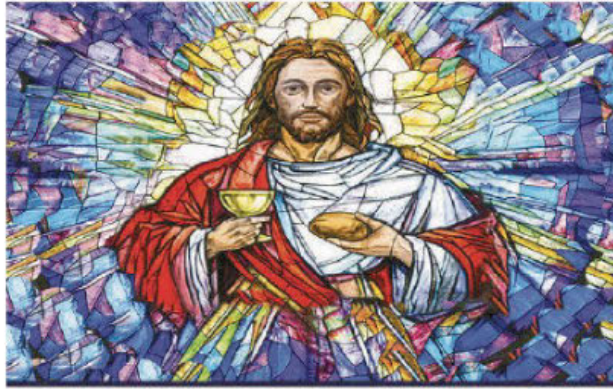
This road to liberation that John the Baptist wants to open up is one that will let God move and create a path for people who need one. God wants to come toward his people and set them free, but the problem is, there are roadblocks. And the word John uses about what will take those roadblocks away is repentance. Take away whatever is standing in the way of God coming close, whether it's our personal fears and sense of failure or our inner turmoil, our sense that we have been sinned against, or that we are sinners who can't start over. Or perhaps it is our sense that the injustice of this world is so great it can't be fixed. Whatever the reason, we are not expecting that vision that is offered to us of the world gathered from east to west, finally liberated. But John is telling us today that this world can be fixed, sin can be forgiven, not by us alone, but by us removing what stands in the way of God's work. Our repentance, our willingness to clear this blocked road we live on, is what makes a beginning.

The world will not be ready for Christ if we are fearful of others, if we think others are out to get us, if we feel as if we can't be redeemed, if we don't want barriers broken down, if we can't put aside fear and anger and prejudice, the road will remain difficult to pass, and we will stay where we are.

But if we can put all those sins aside, all of a sudden life is spacious, there is room for us, there is room for others, a rough road gets made straight, we can move, God can travel to us, the future can take shape. Slowly, we can see a world healed from what divides it.

It seems impossible that vision starts with us, and yet in the beginning of this gospel we heard today that the word of God bypassed all the great names in the world at that time, all the great cities and all the powerful, and instead it went to a man in the desert, whose words every year are directed to those of us who still want to follow him. His lesson is still a simple one: See what is standing in the way of freedom and welcome and joy and take it away.

Gospel Reflection by Deacon Thomas Baker at St. David the King Parish in Princeton Junction, NJ. Brought to you by Penny Fleming, SFOA Communications Coordinator.



Catholic Faith Appeal
2024

We are pleased to share that our parish, Saint Francis of Assisi Church, has raised approximately \$187,000 toward our 2024 Catholic Appeal goal of \$219,000. Thank you to all who have helped make our campaign a success so far. **If you have yet to give, we need your help! Please donate to help us reach our goal by the**

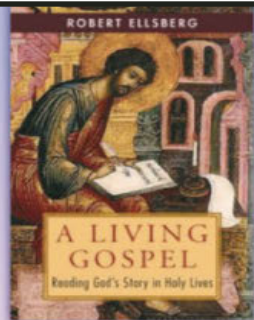
end of the year. You can donate by completing a pledge form or using the blue envelopes in the pews. Please return pledge cards or blue envelopes at the December 7 and 8 Masses.

Campaign Status as of Saturday, November 9, 2024

CFA Goal	\$ 219,000.00
Total Pledges/Donations	\$ 187,660.00
Total Due	\$ 31,340.00

How do we Compare to Other Parishes in our area as of Saturday, November 9, 2024?

Local Parishes	Received	Percent of Goal
Our Lady of Lourdes, Venice	\$ 296K	63%
Sacred Heart Parish, Punta Gorda	\$ 355K	94%
Saint Borromeo, Port Charlotte	\$ 82K	38%
Saint Francis of Assisi, Grove City	\$ 188K	86%
Saint Raphael, Englewood	\$ 133K	92%
San Pedro Parish, North Port	\$ 148K	64%



Saint Francis of Assisi Parish Book Club

**Thursday, December 5 and
Thursday December 19, 2024**

6:00pm-8:00pm In the Parish Conference Room

We are reading ***A Living Gospel* by Robert Ellsberg**

In a number of award-winning books, Robert Ellsberg has reflected on the lives of saints, prophets, and spiritual masters, drawing particular attention to models of holiness that speak to the needs of our time. The message of such figures, as he shows in this new book, is found not only in their writings but in the “text” they wrote with their lives. Among the particular figures he examines are Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen, and Flannery O’Connor. He especially holds up the example of holy women, who charted their own path, and those who exemplify a “holiness of the everyday.” In learning how to read the “living gospel” in their stories, he shows how we may learn to read our own lives in the same light. <https://orbisbooks.com/products/a-living-gospel>

All are Welcome to Join! Call Martha Mingel with any questions 941-697-4899

Offertory Baskets



**Beginning December 7/8 at all Masses:
During weekend Masses and Holy Days of
Obligation, the Offertory baskets will be passed
from person to person in the pews. We have been
using the baskets on poles since 2020 and we're
happy to announce we will return to our prior practice.**

**PARISH OUTREACH FOOD PANTRY
ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS GIVING OPPORTUNITIES
NOVEMBER 20 THRU DECEMBER 22, 2024**

On November 23 and 24, our Food Pantry volunteers and baskets will be at the church entrance with **“Praying Hands” envelopes representing** a gift card request. You can provide a needy family or one of our own Saint Francis homebound, assistance during this Christmas season by donating a \$25.00 Publix, Winn-Dixie, Dollar Store, or Walmart gift card or a gasoline gift card from a local gasoline station. Please return your gift or gas card in the provided envelope by dropping them in the offertory basket or at the Parish Office during regular business hours on or before December 13th. You can pick up your envelopes from the Outreach volunteers at the two main doors after Mass.



Please donate a \$25.00 gift card from Publix, Winn-Dixie, Dollar Store, or Walmart or a \$25.00 gas card from a local gas station. Many thanks, and God bless you.

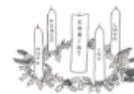
OUTREACH PRAYING HANDS

Return your envelope in the offertory basket or drop it off at the Parish Office during regular business hours on or before December 13, 2024.

Also, **donations to their annual Advent Food Drive.** Each week during Advent, a list of needed food items will be posted in the bulletin and on our church website. You can drop off food items weekly at the Parish Office or before and after Masses. You can use the Advent Food Drive calendar to understand what they can use. The holidays can be a difficult time for many of our families. Check out the food list and provide the most needed times during the holiday season.



**PREPARE THE WAY FOR JESUS
OUTREACH FOOD DRIVE
ADVENT CALENDAR**

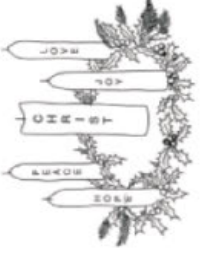










SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 24	FIRST CANNED VEGETABLES	WEEK PORK 'N BEANS	OF CANNED SOUPS	ADVENT CANNED TUNA	DELIVER	NOVEMBER 30
DECEMBER 1 	SECOND PASTA SAUCE	WEEK PASTA	OF CANNED FRUIT	ADVENT MAC 'N CHEESE	DELIVER	DECEMBER 7
DECEMBER 8 	THIRD PEANUT BUTTER	WEEK JELLY	OF CEREAL	ADVENT RICE	DELIVER	DECEMBER 14
DECEMBER 15 	FOURTH PAPER GOODS	WEEK LAUNDRY DETERGENT	OF TOOTHPASTE AND TOOTHBRUSHES	ADVENT TOILETRIES	DELIVER	DECEMBER 21
DECEMBER 22 	PLEASE DELIVER ITEMS TO THE CHURCH NARTHEX, BEFORE OR AFTER MASSES OR TO THE PARISH OFFICE DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS.					



*Saint Francis of Assisi
Catholic Church*

PREPARE THE WAY FOR JESUS OUTREACH FOOD DRIVE ADVENT CALENDAR



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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Parish Bereavement Ministry

Grief is the process by which healing takes place, but it can be hard work! Our Catholic faith can be a tremendous source of strength in helping us.

Our Parish Bereavement Ministry meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month in the Parish Conference Room.

Join us at our next meeting December 17 at 10am in the Parish Conference Room.

Call the Parish Office with any questions: 941-697-4899 and Press 0

Knights of Columbus Council 7672

Pancake Breakfast



Sunday

December 8, 2024

8:30am - Noon

in the Parish Center

All are Welcome!

\$10 includes

pancakes, eggs,

sausage, biscuits and

gravy, juice and

coffee. Kids eat free!

The St. Andrew Christmas Novena

St. Andrew Christmas Novena

Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold.

In that hour, vouchsafe, O my God! to hear my prayer and grant my desires,

(mention your intentions here)

through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ, and of His Blessed Mother. Amen.

ChristmasNovena.com

The Saint Andrew Christmas Novena prayer, also known simply as the Christmas Novena, gets its name from the prayer beginning on the feast of Saint Andrew (November 30) and concluding on Christmas. It is believed to be over 100 years old, and is traditionally prayed 15 times every day, though not necessarily all at once. It may be broken up to be prayed throughout the day, such as five prayers in the morning, afternoon, and evening.

It is a simple and beautiful Advent prayer of preparation and petition by opening our hearts to both seek and to receive the Christ Child, and the salvation He brings on that cold, silent night, while asking God, with humble confidence, to grant our deepest longings.

The prayer itself is directed toward God and zeros in on that sacred moment when Christ, through His Blessed Mother, entered human history, and we were forever changed. The Word became Flesh and dwelt among us! During the ever increasing noise and distractions of the Advent season, let this prayer help keep our minds and hearts fixed on Jesus, so as to be more ready to receive Him on Christmas Day, and when He comes again.

Join us for

Lessons and Carols

Friday, December 13

7:00pm in Church

Sing along with the Saint Francis of Assisi Parish Choir and Dr. Aina as they sing all the beautiful Catholic songs of Advent.

Christmas cookies will be served in the hall by the Parish Women's Guild, at 5:30pm.





Next Session Begins Thursday, January 16 Every Thursday Morning 7:00am in the Parish Center

Are you a Catholic man looking to learn more about your faith, grow your spirituality and meet other like-minded men in the parish?

Saint Francis of Assisi Parish initiated a program in 2021 called **That Man is You**. We meet Thursday mornings at 7:00am for about an hour which begins with a hot breakfast and then a video and small group discussion. Each session lasts 13 weeks with sessions in the fall and winter. There is no cost for the program.

We have received lots of positive feedback from our participants! All men of the parish are invited including seasonal parishioners. If you have previously registered, there is no need to register again.

Call the parish office (941-697-4899) for more info or send an email to office@sfoachurch.com to register.

Also, registration and information will be available at all Masses on September 7-8.



YOU'RE INVITED
TO OUR



Christmas Dinner Dance

SATURDAY 5:00-9:00 PM **14** DECEMBER 2024

Rotonda American Legion Post 113
3436 Indiana Road
Rotonda West
\$30 PER TICKET

ENJOY A WONDERFUL CATERED DINNER
OF POT ROAST, FISH, OR CHICKEN,
MASHED POTATOES, VEGETABLES,
SALAD, ROLLS, COFFEE, TEA AND
DESSERT
\$\$ CASH BAR. \$\$

HOLIDAY DANCE MUSIC
PROVIDED BY DJ, LEE HALE

CELEBRATE THE CHRISTMAS SEASON
WITH FELLOW PARISHIONERS AND
NEIGHBORS

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS BY CONTACTING BROTHER KNIGHT PHIL
JELENIEWSKI AT 708.542.7722 OR USE THE ONLINE RESERVATION FORM
AT WWW.SFOACHURCH.COM/PARISH FORMS



CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

**Monday, December 9 - Immaculate Conception
(Holy Day of Obligation)
8:15 AM | 6:00 PM**

**Thursday, December 12 - Our Lady of Guadalupe
8:15 AM**

**Tuesday, December 24
Tuesday of the Fourth Sunday of Advent
8:15 AM**

**Tuesday, December 24 - Christmas Eve
4:00 PM | 8:00 PM (Christmas Eve)
Wednesday, December 25 - Christmas Day
(Holy Day of Obligation)
8:00 AM | 10:00 AM**

**Sunday, December 29 - The Holy Family
4:00 PM (Sat. Vigil) | 8:00 AM | 10:00 AM**

Ministry Week for Saint Francis of Assisi Church

	Start	End	Event - Location
Mon Dec 9			Immaculate Conception - Parish Office Closed
	7:50am	9:00am	Rosary/Mass/Anointing/Chaplet - Church
	9:15am	11:30am	Parish Outreach Ministry - Parish Center
	9:15am	11:30am	Parish Rosary Makers - Room 6
	11:45am	12:30pm	Lectio Divina Gospel Prayer - Church
	6:00pm	8:00pm	Knights of Columbus Business Meeting - Parish Center
Tues Dec 10	7:50am	8:45am	Rosary/Mass - Church
	8:50am	9:50am	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Adoration - Church
	9:00am	10:00am	Parish Stewardship Ministry - Church
	9:30am	11:00am	PWG Director/Coordinators Meeting - Parish Conference Room
	9:50am	10:00am	Benediction - Church
	1:00pm	3:00pm	Women's Bible Study - Parish Conference Room
	5:30pm	6:45pm	Religious Education (K-8) - Parish Center
Wed Dec 11	7:50am	8:45am	Rosary/Mass - Church
	9:00am	11:00am	Parish Women's Guild Membership Meeting - Parish Center
	9:15am	11:30am	Parish Outreach Ministry - Parish Center
	6:00pm	8:00pm	Choir Practice - Church
	7:00pm	8:00pm	AA - Parish Hall
Thurs Dec 12	7:00am	8:00am	That Man is You! - Parish Center
	7:50am	8:45am	Rosary/Mass - Church
	9:00am	9:15am	Sacrament of Reconciliation - Church
	1:00pm	3:00pm	Hooks and Needles - Parish Conference Rooms
	5:30pm	6:30pm	OCIA - Parish Conference Room
Fri Dec 13	7:50am	8:45am	Rosary/Mass - Church
	9:15am	11:30am	Parish Outreach Ministry - Parish Center
	9:15am	10:15am	OCIA - Parish Conference Room
	5:30pm	8:00pm	Cookies in the Hall 5:30pm - Lessons and Carols - 7pm in Church
Sat Dec 14			Blessing of the Marriage Anniversary
	3:00pm	3:30pm	Sacrament of Reconciliation - Church
	4:00pm	5:00pm	Holy Sacrifice of the Mass - Church
Sun Dec 15	8:00am	9:00am	Holy Sacrifice of the Mass - Church
	10:00am	11:00am	Holy Sacrifice of the Mass - Church
	6:00pm	8:00pm	Youth Group - Parish Center

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

YOUTH GROUP

FOR ALL TEENS 14 -17!

SPECIAL NOTE:

YOUTH GROUP WILL BEGIN AT

5 PM

FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR.

Sunday, December 1st

Dinner
Gospel Reflection
Discussions

&

Sunday, December 13

Dinner
Ugly Sweatshirt Contest
Cookie Decorating

* Celebrating Jesus' Birthday*



Join the Knights of Columbus Council 7672 at kofc.org/join and use code: **BLESSEDMCGIVNEY** and get the first year FREE.

"I CAN WALK BAREFOOT ON THE BEACH AGAIN"

Local acupuncture clinic is treating the untreatable, peripheral neuropathy with incredible results!

Pain comes in many shapes and sizes. One of the most debilitating being the burning and tingling that comes with peripheral neuropathy. A disease that comes with years of shooting, stabbing pain that gradually ends in numbness, balance problems, and on occasion, amputations. A disease that was once classified as irreparable.

David R. of Venice, FL was facing such a fate.

"I stopped golfing. I wasn't taking walks on the beach with my wife. I was living on gabapentin and antidepressants and everywhere I went; my doctor, the specialists, the pain institute, told me there was no cure. How are you supposed to live your life knowing that everyday brings pain and suffering?"

Peripheral neuropathy is a result of damage to the nerves, commonly caused by a lack of blood flow to the nerves in the hands and feet.

This causes the nerves to begin to degenerate due to lack of nutrient flow.

Most peripheral neuropathy sufferers experience a heightened sensitivity to touch making it almost impossible for those diagnosed to even wear shoes, much less enjoy life.

"It was like walking on sharp river rocks. I barely left my recliner," shares David, whose experience is not uncommon for those diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy.

That is until he found Lauren Milligan of Sage Point Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine. Dr. Milligan and her staff have pioneered a cutting edge, medical solution to treat neuropathy, eliminate or greatly reduce its symptoms and give people their lives back. Best of all, they're doing it without the use of prescription medications and invasive surgeries.

"Acupuncture is incredible at restoring blood flow and stimulating damaged

nerves, preventing them from dying off," tells Dr. Milligan.

"We take our treatments a step further by integrating ATP Resonance BioTherapy which targets specific nerves in the body using microcurrent. ATP therapy is like watering a plant. This treatment will stimulate the blood vessels to grow back around the peripheral nerves and provide them with the proper nutrients to heal and repair."

Three months later David is thrilled with his progress, "I can walk barefoot on the beach again!"

Success stories like David's are not atypical for the staff at Sage Point AIM. "We have a 87% success rate in treating neuropathy," shares Dr. Milligan.

The number of treatments needed to allow the nerves to fully recover will vary from person to person and can only be determined after a detailed

neurological and vascular evaluation. So long as you have not sustained more than 90% nerve damage Sage Point AIM offers hope where there once was none.

While David's peripheral neuropathy was idiopathic, meaning the cause is unknown, Dr. Milligan's treatments can also help people whose neuropathy is caused by diabetes or chemotherapy.

"We have seen tremendous success in treating neuropathy of all types through very personalized treatments, specifically tailored to treat each individual case."

To schedule a consultation and complete evaluation call (941) 451-8154 but do so quickly because Sage Point AIM is taking a limited number of new neuropathy patients.

For more information and to take advantage of their new patient offer visit SagePointAcu.com.



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