
Congregational Information Form



To be completed by congregations seeking new pastoral leadership.

There is an electronic version of this form on the Ministerial Leadership website, www.mennoniteusa.org.

Purpose of this form

This form is to assist a congregation to present information concerning itself to prospective candidates for a pastoral leadership position. Completing the form will also assist the pastoral search committee in self-understanding as they assess the strengths and weaknesses which may exist at the time of pastoral transition.

I. Part One - Information

A. BASIC INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

1. Name of congregation Assembly Mennonite Church

Address 1201 S. 11th Street Goshen IN 46526

Church telephone 574-534-4190 **email** office@assemblymennonite.org

Website assemblymennonite.org (not up to date)

2. Chairperson of search committee Mary Yoder Holsopple

Address 61702 CR 15 Goshen IN 46526

Telephone 574-875-6831 **email** maryyoderholsopple@gmail.com

3. Area conference dual-affiliation Central District and Indiana-Michigan

Name of conference minister/overseer/bishop assisting your church's search committee.

Doug Kaufman, Indiana Michigan Mennonite Conference

Address 109 E. Clinton St., Suite 100; Goshen, IN. 46528

Telephone 574-534-4006

4. Year in which the congregation first began meeting or was organized 1974

B. MEMBERSHIP

1. Average Sunday worship attendance during the last 12 months: 193; Sept-Dec 2011 average 224; just over 300 on phone list

Highest attendance during that time 275

Lowest attendance during that time 140

2. Total current members 176

Non-resident members 65

Resident members 111

Children (not members) ~90 (infant through grade 12)

3. Age of REGULAR ATTENDERS and children. Give totals and percentage.

0-12 69 24% (+4 babies on the way)

31-45 81 28%

13-18 18 6%

46-64 70 24%

19-30 22 9% (+GC students-varies by semester from 12-40)

65+ 27 9%

4. Occupational profile: (ages 19 to 70). Give totals.

Business/manager/proprietor 10

Homemaker 6

Education/administration/teacher 60

Clerical/sales 5

Craftsman/laborer/operative 8

Student/VS ~18-30

Medical: doctor/nurse/administration 22

Farmer/rancher 0

Other professional 29

Other church institution/ administration/minister 10

5. Educational level of adults:

Up to and including high school ~5%

Some college or college graduate 55%

Graduate school 40%

Describe the racial or ethnic composition of the congregation.

Our congregation is predominately white and middle to upper-middle class with significant education. We have a number of adults who were born outside the U.S. and others with significant experience living outside the U.S. We have a beautifully diverse group of children, thanks in part to a number of

international adoptions. A more recent phenomenon is having a few three-generation families in the congregation.

C. COMMUNITY

1. **Character of community your church serves or in which it is located:** City (over 10,000)

2. **Which best describes this community?** Stable

3. **Describe racial or ethnic composition of the community served by your church.**

White and Hispanic, wide socioeconomic range; the church building is in a working class neighborhood with a mix of owner-occupied and rental homes. Goshen community continues to deal with tension about immigration, especially from Mexico and Central America, as well as LGBTQ issues. There is creative work happening in both areas, as well as discouraging viewpoints.

4. **List two or three primary business/industries in the community.**

Healthcare (IU Goshen Health, Greencroft, Oaklawn), education (Goshen College) and manufacturing (RV and manufactured housing)

5. **Identify other Mennonite/Anabaptist churches in the community, if any.** Many!

6. **Name of nearest college or university** Goshen College and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Also, a regional campus of Indiana University and various technical schools.

7. **In what way does your church relate to this academic community?** Through many connections through those who work and study at Goshen College and AMBS. It also regularly hosts interns (minister in the church, etc.)

8. **Identify significant issues confronting your community.** Immigration and racism, economy and struggling families, and declining school funding.

9. **Describe what you believe to be distinctive assets of your community.** A large number of people in the “creative class,” who are interested in sustainability (food, fair trade, green building, etc.) and volunteerism. The Goshen area also is home to many active churches and a significant number of “actively retired” people, as well as home to numerous high quality educators, a vibrant downtown and affordable housing.

10. **How does your church participate in community affairs and interchurch programs?** We view ourselves as one piece of a much larger whole that includes the community, Mennonite community, Christian community, faith community and those working for peace and justice. Our relationships are many, including but not limited to: local Ministerial Association and related programs, staff and volunteers at many local organizations including LaCasa and Ten Thousand Villages, several members involved in local government, several members instrumental in starting and running Just Help, and

participation in advocacy efforts at a variety of levels (immigration, health care, education, peace and justice, etc.).

D. CHURCH ADMINISTRATION AND PROGRAM

1. Identify the primary governing body (council, board, elders, deacons) which represents the congregation.

Leadership Group (elders, pastors and apprentice elders)	monthly meets weekly, monthly, quarterly	7-10 # of members	45 avg. age	mix M - F
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2. Identify five other significant leadership/programming bodies: e.g. trustees, deacons, elders, commissions, councils, boards, committees.

Small group representatives name	monthly meets weekly, monthly, quarterly	20(1 per group) # of members	45 Avg. age	mix M-F
Congregational meetings name	monthly meets weekly, monthly, quarterly	open # of members	50 Avg. age	mix M-F
Worship committee name	1-2/month meets weekly, monthly, quarterly	5-6 # of members	45 Avg. age	mix M-F
Finance committee name	seasonal meets weekly, monthly, quarterly	6 # of members	50 Avg. age	mix M-F
2% committee name	monthly meets weekly, monthly, quarterly	7 # of members members	55 Avg. age	mix M - F

3. Sunday School

Number of children's classes 6

Total Sunday school enrollment 75

Number of youth classes 1

Average total attendance 80-85%

Number of adult classes 0

What curriculum resources are used by these classes? Gather 'Round

4. Describe your youth fellowship

There are currently 11 vibrant and engaged young people who are regular attendees in the MYF group.

Weekly Sunday School topics have included: Bible study, sexuality, peace and justice, and Anabaptist history during the past year. In addition, they meet every other week on Sunday evenings for social activities that are planned by the youth. During the year they attend winter camp, have a week-long "live in", and do a week-long summer adventure.

The group has varied in their levels of willingness to be overtly spiritual; some years have been characterized by youth with strong interest in being counter-cultural and social-justice oriented. None of the youth have chosen to be baptized at this point. There is a strong sense of connection with Assembly as a congregation for the youth with varying connection to the larger Mennonite and Christian church.

Does your congregation support and send young people to Mennonite camps, conferences and

colleges?

yes

5. Does your congregation have an active small group organization? Describe. While not everyone participates in a small group, small groups are considered vital to the life of Assembly. They are the "first line of pastoral care" and also conduct a variety of church business and other tasks. Since we do not have adult Christian ed classes, they also fulfill some of those roles. Some focus on spiritual disciplines. Many of them eat together regularly. Groups generally meet weekly, and each group sends a representative to monthly small group rep meetings. We currently have an all-time high of 20 groups.

6. What men's/women's organizations are active? none

Other special groups or programs: (Venture Clubs, young adults over 18, etc.) There is an informal young adults group that gathers monthly and activity nights for kindergarten through 5th graders hosted by small groups approximately every other month. There is also a weekly prayer group.

7. What programs designed for evangelism/outreach to the community does your congregation support and participate in? Sunday afternoon ultimate Frisbee (though now is broader than Assembly folks), La Casa Help-A-House, Interfaith Hospitality Network, MCC Relief Sale, MCC Resource Center (The Depot), Ten Thousand Villages, Just Help. The church's dance group is active in national and regional Interplay activities, as well as dancing together regularly and occasionally dancing in Sunday morning worship. A number of Assemblyites have participated in Christian Peacemaker Team delegations and are active in writing letters to politicians and engaging in political protests.

8. In the next five years, do you anticipate a membership increase stability decrease

Why? We are experiencing growth currently, and working with the joys and challenges that this brings, including a facility that is functioning at or over capacity. This is a rich season in our congregational life, and we are grateful for the persons who are drawn to worshiping and walking with us. In five years we expect to be a different congregation, but just how that will look is very much an in-process question.

9. Music

Identify choirs

No formal choir, but music, especially congregational singing, is very important to the congregation.

Event: Annual Messiah sing-along during Advent

Identify musical instruments

A variety of musical instruments are used including, piano, international percussion, acoustic guitar, flute, violin, cello, recorder, mandolin, and occasionally brass instruments.

10. Are there community programs or groups who also utilize your church facilities? Who are they and how often? Our facilities are well-used a minimum of six days a week. Walnut Hill Daycare - 5 days/week; Faith Mennonite Church - weekly on Sunday evenings and some Wednesday evenings; Connecting Families - every few months; various boards and other groups – occasionally.

E. CHURCH BUILDING AND PROPERTY

1. **Seating capacity of sanctuary or worship area** Flexible because of folding chairs. We've packed in up to 275, but 200-225 is what can be comfortably seated – in part by gaining some space by opening one section of a folding divider between the worship space and fellowship area.
2. **Date of construction of church building** Purchased in late 1970s, was a factory building.
3. **Date of last renovation** major - 1992 **Describe what was done** full renovation -- major remodel of existing spaces, addition of worship space and foyer plus three classrooms for daycare and congregation to both use; minor renovation in 2008 to install a sound-absorbing divider between worship space and fellowship space that also allows creating two small "classrooms" in fellowship space.

What if any building/renovation program is needed or projected? This question is currently on the congregational agenda. We are working on a short-term plan to create more Sunday school space, are attempting to buy a house across the street from the meetinghouse, and are considering other long-term plans.

4. **Describe the educational facilities** Three large classrooms set up for early childhood education, three smaller classrooms used only by congregation for children's Sunday school. MYF currently meets close by in a member's home.
5. **Describe the fellowship and/or recreational facilities.** Small multipurpose space adjacent to kitchen, and a fenced playground between building and road. These are not available during the week because of daycare set up.
6. **Describe the church office location and equipment: printing/copy machine, typewriters, computers, dictation equipment.** One office used by both administrative assistant and one member of pastoral team, one computer, copy machine in adjacent room. Laptop available to new pastoral team member. There is also a counseling room that gets a good deal of use. The other pastoral team members have chosen to work from home, with very occasional office use.
7. **Are building and equipment adequate for an effective program? Describe any special assets or liabilities of the building.** Every inch of our building is used, much of it 6 days/week. We see this as both an asset (maximizing use of our space and making it economically feasible for the daycare and evening congregation to have space) and a liability (significant time in coordination of building use and wear and tear on building).
8. **Name the insurance company and describe the coverage for church liability, property, pastor's liability, etc., for the church.** Mutual Aid Exchange. Building and personal property coverage (includes playground, bodily damage and injury coverage), church liability coverage, church pastoral and professional counseling coverage.

F. CHURCH FINANCES

1. **Based upon your last report, identify the previous year's giving of your congregation.**

We calculate our budget by slightly different categories. Spending Plan detail can be sent to candidates as requested. 2011 totals: Assembly life and mission \$137,538.31; Mission Beyond Assembly \$73,460.48; 2% fund disbursements (see explanation below): \$36,497.91. Budget surplus: \$9,400.

Local Church

Expenses

Local relief and mission

Buildings and facilities

TOTAL LOCAL CHURCH CONTRIBUTIONS

Non Local Contributions

Area conference

Denominational total

Mennonite institutions and agencies

Mennonite Central Committee

Other Mennonite causes

Non-Mennonite causes

TOTAL NON LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS

2. Church budget

Who makes recommendation regarding pastoral and staff salaries? Elders and Finance Committee following Mennonite Church USA guidelines plus 12% to substitute benefits; health insurance has not so far been a question because current team members all have coverage through spouses.

Who determines church budget or makes recommendation to congregation? Finance Committee in collaboration with Leadership Group, based on percentage of pledges received, discussed and approved by congregation, with 1/3 of giving going to "mission outside Assembly" (was 50% at an earlier phase in congregation's history) plus a 2% above-budget fund distributed to local and global needs as symbolic restitution for economic injustice.

What plan is used to challenge the congregation to Christian stewardship and to raise the budget? Emphasis on keeping balance of no more than two thirds of budget internal needs, as well as 2% fund.

Current total budget \$ 267,500 proposed for 2012.

3. Is there church indebtedness? no **Amount** \$ 0

G. STAFF

1. Identify the present staff position for which you are seeking a candidate. Co-Pastor to share leadership in a three-person team (2.0 FTE shared approximately equally among the three), with likely responsibilities in the areas of pastor to children and administration.

2. Two previous persons in the above position:

Name Heidi Siemens-Rhodes

Dates of service 2008 to June 2012

Name Lois Kaufmann

Dates of service 1996 to 2008

Comment on the transitions experienced by the above staff persons. What were the reasons for termination? Heidi learned that she had metastatic melanoma in September 2011, and after a courageous nine-month battle with cancer, she died in mid-June 2012. Lois left her position earlier because she received a calling to be conference minister for Central District Conference.

By whom and how were decisions made? Heidi remained a pastor at Assembly until her death. Lois made the earlier decision in collaboration with her family, the pastoral team, small group, and the Leadership Group.

3. Financial support of previous person in the above position: Year 2012

This section contains notes from the Assembly Treasurer.

Cash salary

\$ 20,138.00 (for .4 FTE)

We follow the "Guidelines for pastors' and conference ministers' salaries, benefits, and expenses," issued annually by MCUSA. The guidelines use experience, education, responsibility, and location (State and County) to determine salaries. These are issued in March or April of a year; we use those guidelines for salaries for the year beginning the next January 1. (Our fiscal year is the calendar year.) The annual salary amounts suggested in these guidelines are pro-rated for our part-time pastors, according to the FTE at which they are employed. After determining the base salary, we add 12% of this amount to the salary, to assist with retirement and health insurance costs, since these items have not been included in compensation. Heidi Siemens-Rhodes, the previous person for this position, was employed .4 FTE. Her experience, education, responsibility and location, plus the 12% added, determined her salary to be \$20,138.00, as of June 15, 2012. At this point we are looking for a person to work .5 or .65 in this position, so salary and benefits would be commensurate with increase in time.

Housing allowance and utilities or parsonage

No additional amounts for the above are added, but the pastor may declare any portion of the salary as housing allowance, at their discretion. No taxes are withheld on this portion.

Social security cash assistance

The "Company Social Security and Medicare" amounts for the portion declared as housing allowance is added to the salary amount.

Family medical health plan (deduct amount)

We participate in *The Corinthian Plan* of MCUSA. But, due to too-low FTE or the pastor waiving insurance, health insurance has not been provided up to this point.

Retirement/pension plan

See first item above.

Continuing education

The amount of \$500 has been provided annually for pastors employed at .4 or .5 FTE, to use at their discretion. (The MCUSA guidelines suggest \$600 - \$1,000 for a full-time pastor.)

Other benefits

Auto expense per mile/kilometer allowance

Pastors are reimbursed for meal and mileage bills incurred as part of their pastoral duties. We pay mileage according to the current rate declared by the IRS.

Conference expense

Registration, travel, food and lodging expenses are paid for pastors to attend church conferences.

Other professional expenses

Projected changes for new pastor:

The congregation follows *The Corinthian Plan* guidelines to provide health benefits. Other benefits (e.g. Continuing Education allotment) is based on the position percentage of FTE.

4. Identify other staff: (assistant/associate minister, lay ministers, office secretary, custodian, musicians, other)

Title	% of full time	Specific responsibilities	Years served
Karl Shelly, Co-pastor	currently 0.4*	small groups, mission	13 yrs.

*in transition to new structure of 3 team pastors sharing 2.0 FTE total

Interim pastors:

Gwen Gustafson-Zook (10 hrs. /wk., pastoral care, June-mid-August, 2012)

Jennifer Gingerich, (32.5 hrs. /wk., interim pastor for pastoral care and worship, mid-August 2012-June 2013)

Bethany Swope (15 hrs. /wk., worship and administration)

Donna Shenk Sensenig, administrative assistant 15-20 hrs. per week

Lora Carter Nafziger, Youth Coordinator 5 hrs. /week youth and mentor program 2yrs

Open, Youth Coordinator 5 hrs. /week youth and mentor program 2yrs

Mary Martinez, Custodian approx. .25 congregation's use of building (daycare has own custodian) 16 years

5. Describe housing options for the above position: Is there a parsonage or a housing allowance? Is the person free to choose between these options?

No parsonage. Each pastor may choose to have any portion (up to entirety) of his or her salary designated as housing allowance.

II. Part Two - Interpretation

The answers to the questions in this section are more difficult but probably more important in determining the qualifications needed by pastoral leadership. Use a small group to test for consensus on the answers given in this section.

A. Describe the commitment of your congregation to Anabaptist/Mennonite faith. What issues in that faith heritage are important to you?

Assembly is, by almost any account, deeply Anabaptist/Mennonite. Members and attenders come from many different denominational traditions, but are attracted to Assembly partly because of its rootedness in Anabaptism. That commitment to Anabaptist/Mennonite faith understandings includes 1) taking the Bible seriously, as a guide for faith and life, when properly understood through critical scholarly readings of the text; 2) seeing discipleship, following after Jesus, as essential for Christian believers; 3) understanding that discipleship as

fundamentally based in peacemaking in our community and the world; 4) believing in shared leadership, with pastors having a perhaps less elevated role than in some Mennonite congregations; 5) acknowledging the importance of community, as evidenced by our name, Assembly, which is short for “the Assembly of small groups; 6) seeing worship as participatory and interactive, with opportunities for responses to preaching that are critical/nuanced as well as affirming; and 7) being international in our focus rather than narrowly nationalistic.

Does your congregation cooperate with and participate in:

Mennonite Church USA/ Canada Yes **Area conference:** Yes, the congregation has been dually affiliated with Indiana-Michigan Conference and Central District conference for many years, though we recently decided that our primary allegiances (pastoral time, contributions, etc.) will be toward Central District. Many members have long roots in Indiana-Michigan Conference and continue to find that relationship life-giving as well.

B. What is the mission of your congregation? Describe any particular focus or special emphasis which characterizes the church's ministry such as overseas missions, evangelism, peace and justice issues, special ministry to aging, students, families, etc. Has the congregation worked recently at goal setting and with what results?

Our mission statement, adopted in June 1997, says, “Assembly Mennonite Church seeks to be a dynamic Christian community by together meeting God who draws us beyond ourselves into nurturing, sharing, and living the good news of God's love as known in Jesus Christ.” The congregation’s Welcoming Statement, adopted two years later, says, “As a reconciling faith community, Assembly Mennonite Church seeks to follow Jesus' example by welcoming all who come our way, regardless of age, economic or social circumstances, ethnic background, gender, marital status, physical ability, race, or sexual orientation. “

Assembly has a strong focus on worship, planning services that speak to spiritual, emotional, aesthetic and experiential needs in the congregation. We experience God in the gathered assembly through robust singing, reflective prayers, and insightful preaching by pastors as well as many members of the congregation and others from the broader community.

Our worship services regularly attract a significant number of Goshen College and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary students, who sojourn with us during their time in Goshen, and we see these relationships as a significant ministry. We also have 90 children between 0 and 18 in the congregation, and children are honored in worship and Christian education. The congregation has not actively sought to grow but has nonetheless grown dramatically in the last five years. We’ve only begun to recognize now that we are really a mid-size congregation, though we hope to continue embodying the strengths of our former, smaller congregation.

Most members of the congregation are theologically open and progressive, with a wide range of spiritualities, though most would be toward the left end of a theological spectrum. Most members are grounded in some form of Christian faith, though they are open to learning from other religions and some augment their Christian convictions with alternative spiritual study and practices. The congregation also tends to be left-leaning politically. The congregation seeks to keep abreast of local, national, and international politics and the ways in which a call to share in God’s reconciling work in the world speaks to what is happening in the polis. Many members of the church have lived, worked, or served internationally, and a number of the

children of the church have been adopted from outside the U.S. One of our pastors is assigned to work specifically with peace and justice ministries in the community and in the broader church. The congregation is at peace with its welcome of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer people, a number of whom attend or are members at the church.

The congregation regularly sets goals and foci, and Leadership Group and other congregational leaders help keep these goals before the congregation.

C. What is your view of the pastor's role in the congregation? Are there special gifts in ministry which you hope will be fulfilled? How do you expect the pastor to be a representative of the congregation?

Assembly's pastors work collaboratively, not hierarchically, with each other and with the congregation. It is essential that our pastors function fully as a team, without any one pastor being designated as "lead pastor." Pastors at Assembly are called to be facilitators, calling forth the gifts of others. It is assumed that time will be spent each week in pastoral team meetings working, listening, praying together for each other and for the congregation.

In this pastoral search, we are seeking someone with a heart for children and families, serving primarily as a pastor to children and as an administrator for the congregation. The person also would preach as much as eight to 9 times per year. Other areas of responsibility would include coordinating Christian education, supervising the congregation's administrative assistant and youth coordinators, and possibly other ministries since we may be reconfiguring some assignments among the pastoral team. We value adaptability and flexibility as we simultaneously seek pastors for two positions (this position and another position focused on worship and pastoral care). Commitment to Anabaptist theology is important, and candidates should have a completed Ministerial Leadership Information form and (preferably) an M.Div. degree.

D. Recognizing our differing theological orientations as persons and as congregations, make a brief statement about your congregation and the overarching theological commitments important to you.

Assembly Mennonite Church is committed to the Anabaptist vision of the Christian faith, which manifests itself in the pursuit of peace and justice for all of God's creation. A Christian congregation, Assembly respects other faith traditions, and rejects the notion that one set of believers has "all the answers." Theology at Assembly is less about tradition and dogma, and more about acts of God's love toward others. Many Assembly participants are locally involved in education, healthcare, and organizations that work on behalf of the poor, homeless, and disenfranchised. Many Assembly members also view their theology in the context of the world at large, and see themselves as world citizens. This manifests itself in creation care, respect of and the desire to know about other cultures, and showing love and respect toward those who society at large often deems as "different." To sum up, Assembly believes that God's love is a gift for all, not a privileged few, and it is the job of Christians to show the love of God to others through actions.

E. Church morale: Assess the spiritual and emotional health of the congregation. Are relationships among members wholesome and harmonious? Is there openness to new ideas and ways of doing things? Would everyone agree with your answers?

Assembly is exceedingly healthy, as is evidenced by our survival and even thriving during the extraordinarily difficult past year. 2011 began with long-term co-pastor Mary Lehman Yoder announcing her resignation from ministry so that she could spend more time with her spouse, who had just been diagnosed with significant health issues. In the early fall an Assembly member's father, a professor at Goshen College, was brutally murdered. Several other pastoral care issues throughout the summer and fall were significant. In September Heidi Siemens-Rhodes was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Though battered, bruised, and sorrowful, the congregation has weathered these storms admirably.

With recent growth in the congregation, there is likely more diversity than there once was, though most members of the church are on the left end of political and theological continua. That makes for a certain level of harmony in the church, though it is certainly not a simplistic harmony. Members are free to challenge each other, and do so with integrity, agreeing and disagreeing respectfully in sermon response time as well as in congregational meetings.

For the most part, there is openness to new ideas and new ways of doing things, though there would be resistance if leadership patterns were altered drastically to be less collaborative and less facilitative. One of the strengths of Assembly is that many members of the congregation preach; the pulpit is not reserved only for the pastors or for those who are seminary-trained. That allows for a rich mix of perspectives and voices in the congregation.

F. What changes or trends do you envision for the congregation over the next five years? Do you have any other comments significant in the process for looking for new pastoral leadership?

Assembly is a growing congregation and is discussing how to meet the needs that have arisen. Being creative with expanding the space has been a high priority for the last year and a half. This will continue to be an issue in our congregation as our numbers are expected to grow over the coming years. Our commitment to, and importance of, Christian education for our children is a significant part of the space challenge. Our worship space is full and our Sunday School space is inadequate. Requests for greater environmental awareness have also come to the forefront through a recent congregational survey. What that looks like specifically is not clear at this point but will certainly be an important part in the coming years. We also strive to have intentional participation in the surrounding community as well as the broader Mennonite church.

As stated earlier, there have been several big changes that Assembly has dealt with recently. Holding those situations with care will be important.

G. Compile your church's response to the insert "Twenty Pastoral Areas" and include summary of the results.

H. Return this original form to the conference minister for your area conference. You may also use copies to send to prospective candidates whom you may wish to interview.

Pastoral Search Committee, Bethany Swope, interim

pastor, and Ruth Anne Gardner, Treasurer
Name of group or persons responsible for completion of this form:

June 30, 2012
Date of completion

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Office of Ministerial Leadership of Mennonite Church USA
DZB:dlr

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