



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2025
NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
LAITY SUNDAY
TEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING



Artwork by Mary Fike

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GREENWICH

declares itself to be Open and Affirming (ONA); open to all for participation, membership, leadership and employment and affirming of all who wish to join us as children of God.

We continue to give thanks for God's guidance in our journey of faith.

We welcome you this day and are glad you made the choice to join us for this worship service.

May it be a blessing to you.

Welcome to Worship!

We welcome you this day and are glad you are here! May worship be a blessing to you.

First Church Welcomes *You.*

With Worship. A casual tone, stirring music, moving prayers, & a faith-invoking message. **Prayer Book requests** (in Narthex) are uplifted during the Prayers of the People.

With Inclusion. Open & Affirming (ONA). We make a point of meeting all and name tags are worn.

With Communion. The first Sunday of each month, all ages share in the sacred meal together. We use juice & gluten-free bread!

With Care. We pass the Peace of Christ to one another. We are a mask-friendly, come-as-you-are, leave-as-a-friend community.



First Church Welcomes *Children.*

The PrayGround. In the Chapel space, guiding kids in worship.

Cherub Choir, Celebration Singers, & Genesis Choir. Children of all ages are welcome to offer music in worship!

Children's Message. A moment for kids & the child in each of us.

Church School. Faith learnings for the day continue in the Undercroft classrooms after the Children's Message.

Children's Take Home Library. Located by the PrayGround. Check out what interests you & bring it back next week!



First Church Welcomes *All.*

Sensory Sanctuary & Rocking Chairs. Focusing resources located in the back of the Meetinghouse.

Visual Worship Aids & Live captioning. Found on the monitors.

Audio Hearing Aids. To use, ask Greeters or Ushers.

Spaces in Meetinghouse for Wheelchair Users

Exterior Ramp. In the back of the Meetinghouse, driveway side.

Liftavators. Located inside, from Narthex to Auditorium Level & Outside in the Memory Garden.



Enjoy a cup of coffee, food, & fellowship at *Community Hour* after the service!

ORDER OF WORSHIP

*First Church is a mask-friendly community of faith. Anyone who prefers to wear a mask should feel comfortable doing so.
Please know our worshipping community gathers in-person and online via livestream
with multiple camera angles of the Meetinghouse and congregation.*

PRELUDE

Largo
Christoph Graupner (1683-1760)
Paul Ghaffari, violin
Dr. Craig Scott Symons, piano

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

CALL TO COMMUNITY

Juliet Primo Lee, Senior Deacon

CALL TO ANNUAL GIVING

Charlie Stuckey

†CALL TO WORSHIP

Jenny Gartner

One: When the noise around us becomes too much,
All: **we look for peace. God is peace.**
One: When we overthink and worry about so many things,
All: **we become aware of what matters. God shows us what matters.**
One: When tragedy strikes,
All: **we look for hope. God is hope.**
One: When our overwhelm seems impassable,
All: **we believe in good. God is good.**
One: When we lose sight of God because we don't recognize his presence in our life,
All: **we remember that God provides for us as needed and not always as we expect to be provided for.**
God will always provide.

CHORAL INTROIT

Come, Live in the Light

*Come, live in the light! Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!
We are called to be light for the darkness to live in the freedom of the city of God.
We are called to act with justice; we are called to love tenderly,
We are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.*

†HYMN

Lord, I Want To Be A Christian
729 Glory To God Hymnal (purple)

†Please rise in body or in spirit

PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS (in unison)

Faith vs. Fear
Chad Thieman
Charles Stuckey

Fear is a thick cloud, hiding God's holy truth.
Faith is knowing full well, when you can't see the proof.

Fear holds you back, so you'll give up the dream.
Faith pushes you forward, beyond your mortal means.

Fear puts you in a box, keeping you from living life.
Faith breaks through the walls, cutting fear like a knife.

Fear is a dark shadow, trying hard to block the light.
Leading many to anger, Hatred, suffering and strife.

But faith is a beacon of hope, Love and everlasting life.
So let's walk by our faith, And not just our sight.

Moment of silence for personal reflection

†ASSURANCE OF GRACE

†PASSING OF THE PEACE

God makes peace within us. Let us claim it. God makes peace between us. Let us share it.

One: May the peace of Christ be with all of you.

All: And also with you.

†RESPONSE (remain standing)

Halle, Hallelujah



ANTHEM

Precious Lord, Take My Hand
Arr. Jack Schrader
The Genesis Choir
Daniel Young, director

†Please rise in body or in spirit

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Bonnie Kelley-Young

RESPONSE

Jesus Loves Me

(During the response, the children will return to their seats or to church school.)

Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong. They are weak, but he is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

FIRST LESSON

Love Or Fear: The Choice That Shapes The Soul
Pat Mendelsohn

My friends, nearly every moment in life comes down to a choice between love and fear. Every thought, every word, every decision is rooted in one or the other. Fear tightens and divides; love opens and unites. Fear says, "What if?" Love says, "Even if."

The spiritual path is the slow work of unlearning fear so that love can flow through us freely. Scripture tells us, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." Not perfect theology or perfect behaviors—perfect love. Because love alone has the power to drive fear away.

When we live from fear, our world shrinks. We become defensive, suspicious, and anxious. Life starts to feel like something to protect ourselves from. But when we live from love, our vision widens. We begin to see God everywhere—in every person, every moment, every breath.

Jesus never led with fear. He didn't shame people into the Kingdom; he invited them. He touched the untouchable, welcomed the outsider, forgave the sinner. In doing so, he revealed a God who is not a punisher but a love—a presence always seeking connection rather than control.

The opposite of faith is not doubt. The opposite of faith is fear. Doubt can keep us humble and searching; fear keeps us frozen, unable to see the God who constantly whispers, "Do not be afraid."

When fear rises—and it will—we don't conquer it by force. We breathe, notice, and invite love in. A single act of kindness, a word of forgiveness, a prayer of trust—all these open the door for love to do its healing work. Each time we choose love over fear, the Kingdom of God breaks through a little more—in us, and among us.

FIRST MESSAGE

Faith Not Fear
Charlie Stuckey

SOLO

Throne Of Grace
Jon Hunt
Carol Woodman, soprano

SECOND LESSON

1 John 4:17-21
The Message
Bill De Haven

God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home and mature in us, so that we're free of worry on Judgment Day—our standing in the world is identical with Christ's. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love. We, though, are going to love—love and be loved. First we were loved, now we love. He loved us first.

If anyone boasts, “I love God,” and goes right on hating his brother or sister, thinking nothing of it, he is a liar. If he won’t love the person he can see, how can he love the God he can’t see? The command we have from Christ is blunt: Loving God includes loving people. You’ve got to love both.

SECOND MESSAGE

Love, Not Fear
Juliet Primo Lee

†HYMN

Guide My Feet
741 Glory To God Hymnal (purple)

MEDITATION

Excerpts from *The Divine Mirror*
The Universal Christ – Richard Rohr
Lynn Hawxhurst

THE LORD’S PRAYER (in unison)

Translation and Interpretation from the original Aramaic
Neil Douglas-Klotz
Jenny Gartner

One: Our Father, who art in Heaven,
All: **Creator of the Cosmos, Birther of all radiance and vibration.**
One: Hallowed be thy name.
All: **Focus your light within us.**
One: Thy Kingdom come,
All: **Create your reign of Unity now**
One: Thy will be done,
All: **Using our burning hearts and willing hands,**
One: On Earth as it is in Heaven.
All: **So that our acts may mirror yours.**
One: Give us this day our daily bread,
All: **Grants us our needs each day for bread and wisdom,**
One: And forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our debtors
All: **And loosen the cords of our mistakes that bind us, as we release the cords with which we have bound others.**
One: And lead us not into temptation,
All: **Don’t let us be unmindful,**
One: But deliver us from evil,
All: **But free us of immaturity.**
One: For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
All: **For you are the ground and the fruitful vision, the birth, power and fulfillment, as all is gathered and made whole again.**
One: Amen.
All: **In faith, I commit to this with my whole being.**

†Please rise in body or in spirit

CALL TO OFFERING

Karen Yancey

Using your smartphone messaging app, text FCCOG Donate to 73256
or scan this QR code to donate.



OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Let Your Faith Be Stronger Than Fear

Tom Trenney (b. 1977)

The Chancel Choir

Carolyn Paulus, soprano

*In the deserts of your life, I'll not desert you. I will make a way beside a flowing stream.
Through the valley, do not fear, for I am with you: My rod and staff to comfort and redeem.*

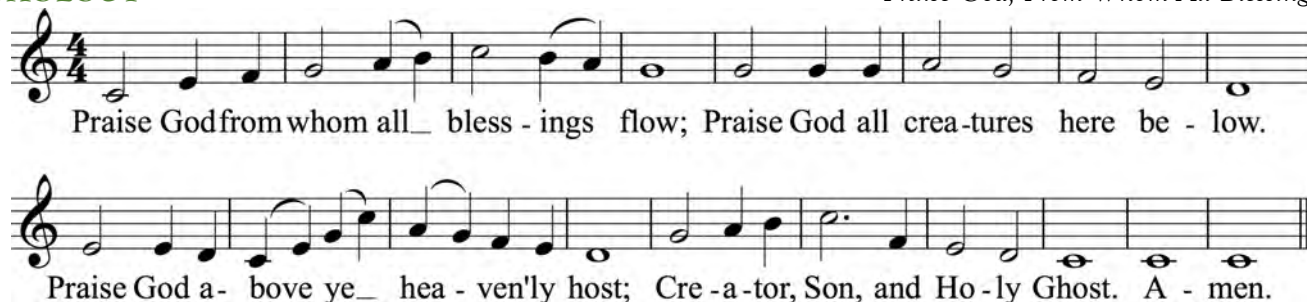
*In the darkness of your life, I will not leave you. In the shadow, I'm your light, your lamp, your sun.
Will be the star that shines above to guide you, A light unto your path to lead you on.*

*Do not be afraid, I go before you. Do not be afraid, I am by your side.
Be still and know that I am with you. Let your faith be stronger than your fear.
When you're weary, when you're faint I will be with you. I will raise you up to soar on eagle's wings.
I will be the joy that seeks you through your sorrow. Unending hope my resurrection brings.*

*When the storms of life assail, I will uphold you. I will strengthen you: I'll be the help you need.
Though the waters rage and foam, fear not I'm with you. I am the way, the truth, the life, indeed!*

†DOXOLOGY

Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow



†PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Karen Yancey

†HYMN

Every Time I Feel The Spirit
66 Glory To God Hymnal (purple)

†BENEDICTION

Steve Weigner

†CHORAL RESPONSE

Come, Live In The Light

*Sing, sing a new song! Sing of the great day when all will be one!
God will reign; and we'll walk with each other as sisters and brothers united in love.
We are called to act with justice; we are called to love tenderly;
We are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.*

†Please rise in body or in spirit

†POSTLUDE

Allegro
Christoph Graupner (1683-1760)
Paul Ghaffari, violin

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Join us for Community Hour in the Auditorium where you can greet one another, have a cup of coffee, and a light snack. Hosts for October are members of the Annual Giving Committee.

**COMMUNITY
HOUR**

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING



Your Parish Nurse, Sue Asselin, RN is available for blood pressure screenings and health consultations following today's worship service, in her office to the right of the Auditorium stage. During the week, she is available by appointment. Email susana@fccog.org or call 203-637-1791 extension 821.

FIRST CHURCH, YOUR CHURCH - EXTENDED THROUGH OCT 31!



In September, we sent out a brief member survey with opportunities to connect, serve, and grow—both in faith and in friendship. From music to caring ministries, teaching children to welcoming newcomers, community outreach and more, there's a place here for everyone to belong.



Update from the Member Survey Task Force

Thank you for returning the Member Survey that was sent out last month. We have received 46 responses and are extending the survey due date until October 31 with the hope of receiving additional responses. We especially hope to hear from new members to find out how they would like to be involved in church activities. Task Force members are reviewing the responses and will convey your volunteer interests to committee chairs who will then follow up with you. Click on the QR code to complete the survey.

Spine Time with Dr. Arthur Jenkins Neurosurgeon Speaks about Protecting Your Back



Sunday, November 2 11:15 am -12:15 pm in the Lounge



CPR Training November 15

Choose one session:
10:00 am to 12:30 pm
or 1:00 to 3:30pm



- American Heart CPR course offered at a reduced cost to individuals who frequently attend First Church programs.
- Class is appropriate for beginners or repeat attendees.
- Class meets in the Lounge at First Church.
- Participants are asked to contribute \$25 toward the cost of the class.
- To inquire or register, contact Sue Asselin, Parish Nurse.
Susana@fccog.org

ADULT FAITH FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

First Look Bible Study



Just Drop-In: A First Look at Sunday's Scripture
9:00-9:45 a.m. in The Lounge

Each Sunday morning, join Pastor Cydney on Sunday mornings for a drop-in time of conversation around the day's scripture. Together we'll explore the passage, gain context, and notice fresh insights before entering worship.

No need to prepare—just bring yourself. Come for the whole time, or even 15 minutes, and trust that God will give you something good to carry into worship and beyond.



NARRATIVE LECTONARY BIBLE STUDY

Each Thursday at 12 noon in the First Church Lounge, Pastor Patrick leads a group in a new adult education opportunity.

We'll dive into the Narrative Lectionary daily readings, opening space for honest conversation, fresh insights, and shared discovery.

For the past 2-3 years, First Church has been using the Narrative Lectionary as our primary scripture focus in Sunday worship.

Whether you are brand new to Bible study or a seasoned reader, you'll find a welcoming circle to explore how God's story connects with our own.

Come as you are, bring your questions, curiosity, an open heart, and your lunch (optional).



WE ARE HIRING!

ASSISTANT CHURCH SCHOOL DIRECTOR



- Sunday Lead Teacher for 10-15 kids
- Support volunteers
- Help children grow in faith

JOIN NOW

SUBMIT YOUR CV
to cydneyv@fccog.org

Scan here to
read the job
description:



ROYALTIES FOR SPIRITUALS



First Church is proud to launch Royalties for Spirituals, an initiative to honor the legacy of Black spirituals and invest in the future of Black musicians. Rooted in our commitment to racial justice and the power of sacred music, this effort will provide ongoing financial support to organizations that educate and empower Black students in music.



The initiative was unanimously approved by our Church Council and emerges from thoughtful conversations held earlier this year. As a congregation that regularly sings and celebrates music from the Black church tradition, we recognize that these songs—many born from the suffering and resilience of enslaved people—were never compensated. It's time to pay that debt forward.

To donate to Royalties for Spirituals, click on the QR code and donate online, or go to www.fccog.org and scroll to the bottom of the website and click the blue button.



We have secured an organization which matches our goals and dreams for partnering with our initiative. **The Adam J. Lewis Academy (AJLA)** in Bridgeport, CT is the perfect school that educates underserved children in the eastern end of Fairfield County.

Adam J. Lewis Academy was established in 2011 as Adam J. Lewis Preschool, a not-for-profit early childhood center in the West End of Bridgeport. The Preschool's founders, longtime educators Patty Lewis and Julie Mombello, recognized both the profound life impact of a high-quality preschool experience and the staggering disparities in access and opportunity across Fairfield County. They were determined to build a more hopeful, equitable future.

- Weekly Choral classes for all students in Elementary and Middle School
- Creation of the Select Girls Choir at AJLA in partnership with The United Girls' Choir of New Haven. This elite choir program rehearses right at AJLA and admission will be by invitation or audition only and is open to all girls attending Elementary and Middle School at AJLA as well as girls in the Bridgeport community.
- In the early childhood program (PreK-K), music occurs twice a week and builds musical literacy through nursery rhymes, fine and gross motor practice, and simple melodies.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Click on the QR code
to register your car to pass out candy



First Congregational Church of Greenwich

TRUNK OR TREAT

🕒 Saturday, Oct 25
6 - 7:30 p.m.

📍 First Church Parking Lot
108 Sound Beach Avenue

\$20 PER FAMILY

All proceeds go to local charities

CANDY MUSIC FOOD TRUCKS FUN

A cartoon illustration of four children in Halloween costumes: a mummy, a pumpkin head, a pirate, and a dinosaur. They are all smiling and holding signs that say 'CANDY', 'MUSIC', 'FOOD TRUCKS', and 'FUN'.

SERVICE LEARNING TRIP

(mini mission-trip-like weekend!)

DECEMBER 12-14, 2025

\$200 WITH MANY SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!

WHERE ARE WE GOING & WHAT ARE WE DOING?
Youth are invited to **48 hours** in **Providence, RI** learning about our local unhoused neighbors & putting our faith in action by serving others!

6TH - 12TH GR.

FRI 12TH **LEAVE FOR RHODE ISLAND & ARRIVAL**
Seekonk Congregational Church in Seekonk, MA

SAT 13TH **SERVICE WORK & FUN IN PROVIDENCE**
Working with the Incredible Days organization!

SUN 14TH **CLOSING CIRCLE & HEAD HOME**
Pick-up and Drop-off at 2CC Greenwich

REGIONAL YOUTH MINISTRY

MORE INFO: KHALEIGHL@FCCOG.ORG



UPCOMING EVENTS

SUN
NOV 2

ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY

Remembering our faithful departed in the past year

SUN
NOV 9

ROYALTIES FOR SPIRITUALS SUNDAY

Patty Lewis from Adam J. Lewis Academy in Bridgeport will receive their first donation from our initiative

SAT & SUN
NOV 22 & 23

H.O.M.E. CRAFT FAIR

Auditorium - Sat 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. & Sunday following worship

SUN
NOV 23

HARVEST SUNDAY WORSHIP

Our annual celebration of filling the Meetinghouse with food donations for H.O.M.E. & Neighbor to Neighbor

SAT
NOV 29

CHRISTMAS TREE SALE

Hundreds of trees and wreaths go on sale around 9 a.m.
Sale is Sat & Sun 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. through December 7



The Divine Mirror, Richard Rohr

A mirror receives and reflects back what it sees.
It does not judge, adjust, or write commentary.
We are the ones who do that.
A mirror simply reveals.
And invites responsibility.

A mirror, the sun, and God are all the same.
They are there, fully shining forth.
Their very nature is light, love and infinite giving.
You can't offend them or make them stop shining.
You can only choose to stop receiving and enjoying.
As soon as you look, you will see they are there!
And fully radiating.
And always have been.
And their message is constant, good and life giving.
There are only the lookers and the non-lookers.
Those who receive and those who don't receive.

When we learn to love anyone or anything,
It is because they have somehow, if just for a moment,
Mirrored us truthfully yet compassionately to ourselves.
And we grab on to it! Why wouldn't we?
In this resonance, we literally "come to life".
But have no doubt, it is an allowing on our side.
And such pure, unfiltered Presence,
Is accessed only by presence in return.
Nothing more is needed.
Presence comes to us from Christ's side,
And then presence from our side knows what it needs to know.

If that mirror is withdrawn for any reason,
It causes sadness, emptiness, and even anger.
We are normally disoriented, even heartbroken for a while.
We die in some way. But why?
Because we only know ourselves in another's eyes.
We receive our identity – all of it, good and bad –
From another.

The other both creates us and saves us.
"No man is an island, entire of itself," says the poet, John Donne.
This is what we call the gift of holiness!
Or, if you prefer, wholeness.
We are always a giving, a resonance, never a possession of our own.

The universe is relational at every level, even between levels.
Relationship is the core and foundational shape of Reality,
 Mirroring our Trinitarian God (Genesis 1:26-27).
Every object serves as a mirror, another kind of presence.
You can find such mirrors in all of nature, in animals,
In your parents, lovers, children, books, pictures, movies,
 And even in what some call "God."
Remember "God" is just a word for Reality – with a Face!
And occasional Interface (which some call "prayer" or "love").
 God is a mirror big enough to receive everything,
 And every single part of you,
Just as it is, rejecting nothing, adjusting nothing –
 Often,
 For the sake of an even deeper love.
We will experience a kind of Universal Forgiveness.
 A Divine Sympathy for all Reality.
 Or what some have called the "Divine Pity."
 And it will even fall on us.
Whatever is fully received in this mirror, is by that very fact, "redeemed."
 And all is received whether we believe it or not.
You do not have to see the sun to know that it is still shining.

If your Divine mirror cannot fully receive you in this way,
 Then it is certainly not God.
 Remember regret profits nobody.
 Shame is useless.
 Blame is surely a waste of time.
 All hatred is a diversionary tactic, a dead end.
 God always sees God in you.
 It seems like God has no choice.
This is God's eternal and unilateral contract with the soul.
If you cannot allow yourself to be fully mirrored in this way,
You will never fully know who you are, much less enjoy who you are.
 Nor will you know the heart of God.

Any loving gaze that we can dare to receive can start the Flow:
 Creation itself, animals, humans, all are the divine gaze
 If we allow them to be.
 "The knowledge that I once had was imperfect,
But then I shall know as fully as I am known" (1 Corinthians 13:12b).

One day, the mirror will reflect in both directions,
And we will receive over there what was allowed in here.
 This is full access seeing – and being seen:
 Most have named it "heaven"
 And it begins now.
Let this Divine Mirror fully receive you. All of you.

NEW TREE SALE OPPORTUNITIES ~ JOIN THE TREE SALE TEAM!

This year, we have divided the primary responsibilities for the sale into 12 small, separate jobs. These are jobs that take care of the details and organization and high-level running of the sale. They are in addition to the very valuable “day of” sales and cashier jobs.

Six of these jobs are remote. They can be done in 2 – 6 hours total from your home or anywhere at any hour convenient for you. Six of these jobs are on site for a portion of the sale but are not physical – you will not have to move a tree! Many of the jobs you can do with a partner.

All the jobs will have the support of Kate, Pam or Lauren. You will not be reinventing the wheel!

REMOTE OPPORTUNITIES

Internal Communication

- Eblasts and bulletins

External Communication

- Advertising and PR

Agency Communication

- With our charity partners

Print Communication

- Work with our designer for printing needs

Volunteer Organization

- Support volunteer signups

Inventory and Ordering

- Order trees, wreaths, stands

ON SITE OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer Coordinator

- Direct volunteers for half day

Loading Manager

- Direct trees from sales to loading for half day

Set Up

- Prep on Friday

Wreath Decorating

Wreath Tagging

- Tag with prices

Photographer

- Take pics and video

Come see us at Community Hour and get more details. If you cannot stay, please write your name and contact details below and we will reach out to you to give you any information you may need. Place this sheet in the offering plate.

NAME

PREFERRED CONTACT

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GREENWICH

108 Sound Beach Avenue Old Greenwich CT 06870

203-637-1791 • www.fccog.org

Ministers - All Members Of The First Congregational Church Of Greenwich

Senior Pastor
Associate Pastor
Minister of Music
Director of Church School/ Regional Youth Ministry
Parish Nurse
Director of Operations
Director of Finance & Administration
Livestream Director
Audio Technician
Database Administrative Assistant
Facility Manager
Sexton
Sexton
First Church Preschool Director
First Church Preschool Assistant Director
Pastor Emerita

Reverend Patrick Collins
Reverend Cydney Van Dyke
Dr. Craig Scott Symons
Khaleigh Laicher
Susan Asselin, RN
Wendy Spezzano
Greg Girolamo
Daniel Lepoutre
Bob Small
Sue Wilder
Julio Yika
Joe Vartuli
Curtis Gay
Beth Genovese
Melanie Garnett
Reverend Sally Colegrove



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
a just world for all

See more about the stories of our
Stained Glass Windows



See the Tour of our Main Cemetery -
People of Note

