

CHURCH OF SAINT MONICA

Remain Faithful

© JPPC

February 22, 2026

Masses

Mon. to Thurs. 9 am
Saturday 4 pm
Sunday 9 am & 11 am

679 W. Veterans Highway



Our Parish is Served by:

Reverend Alex Enriquez, Pastor
Deacon Christian Knoebel
Deacon John L. White

We invite you to celebrate with us

website: www.saintmonica.com
Parish Office: 732-928-0279
Email: parishoffice@saintmonica.com
Fax: (732) 928-1853
Religious Education: 732-928-4038

The Church of St. Monica is a warm, accepting, and caring parish that worships God, teaches and lives the message of Christ, seeks to support and strengthen family life, and serves those in need through parish ministries and organizations.

Confessions

Saturdays
3:15 pm
to 3:45 pm

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/ParishofStMonica/



1ST SUNDAY OF LENT - FEBRUARY 22, 2026

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, February 21

4:00 pm Sylvester Cascio & Joseph Anzalone
(The Anzalone Family)

Sunday, February 22

9:00 am Marie Gould
(The Bereavement Ministry)

11:00 am Marie Gould
(Bill & Joy Riordan)

Monday, February 23

9:00 am The Gulinello Family
(Chris & John Pascucci)

Tuesday, February 24

9:00 am Marie Gould
(The LaTorre Family)

Wednesday, February 25

9:00 am Jessica Scognamiglio
(Nina & Al Pileggi)

Thursday, February 26

9:00 am Cheryl Vega
(Linda Siwec)

Saturday, February 28

4:00 pm Albinas Mozuraitis & Family
(Raminta)

Sunday, March 1

9:00 am Jim Morell
(Janet Noordzy)

11:00 am Columba LoCicero
(The Bereavement Ministry)

IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Micki Smith, Joyce Picon, Carol Atherton, Beth Kujawski, Toni Hetteroth, Dianne Smith, Andy Sabine, Elaine Giblock, Doris Garbarino, Melissa Staiger, Bonnie Holton, Arlene Toth, Judy Bocchicchio, Leo Diaz, Glory D'Acunto, Catherine Dalfonso, Christopher Dalfonso,, Josephine Brennan, Frank Trimboli, Gabrielle D'Acunto, Anthony Pelle, Jr, Phillip Wenz, Mary Miniscalchi, Lane Morell, Frank Falesto, Jean Stein, Ann Rosetto, Tom Martin, Dorothy Palumbo, Jacob Rivera, Jaxson Rivera, Paul Hetteroth, Carol Spezzano, Br. Michael Seiler, Shannon Hubert, Grace Nuzzola, Ray Kijowski, Nicholas Biddle, Matthew Biddle, Dennis Shwiner, Laura Stoyer, Mike Scott, Andrew G Sabine, A.J. Sabine, Stephen Alexander, Angela Belmont, Danny Merwin, Diane Hromiko, Kathy Reynolds, Margie Smith, Kevin Finnerty, Mark Hoffman, Lisa Sassone, Mark Legato, Tom and Carol Ringwood, Bob Toth, Ashley & Cameron Dlugosz, Bernadette VanDerberg, Elizabeth Maras, Charles Thompson

Contact the Parish Office to let us know of anyone to be remembered in prayer, so we may include them or, if they can be removed.

Readings for the Week - February 22, 2026

Monday Lv 19:1-2, 11-18 Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15 Mt 25:31-46

Tuesday Is 55:10-11 Ps 34:4-5, 6-7, 16-17, 18-19 Mt 6:7-15

Wednesday Jon 3:1-10 Ps 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19 Lk 11:29-32

Thursday Est C:12, 14-16, 23-25 Ps 138:1-2ab, 2cde-3, 7c-8 Mt 7:7-12

Friday Ez 18:21-28 Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-7a, 7bc-8 Mt 5:20-26

Saturday Dt 26:16-19 Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8 Mt 5:43-48

Sunday Gen 12:1-4a Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22 2 Tm 1:8b-10 Mt 17:1-9

TEARDROP MINISTRY PRAYER

Blessed Monica, mother of St. Augustine, we give thanks to our Father in Heaven who looked with mercy upon your tears over your wayward son. His conversion and heroic sanctification were the fruit of your prayers.

Dear St. Monica we now ask you to pray with us for all those sons and daughters that have wandered away from God, and to add your prayers to those of all mothers who are worried over their children. Pray also for us that, following your example, we may, in the company of our children, one day enjoy the eternal vision of our Father in Heaven. Amen. St. Monica pray for us.

February 22, 2026 is the First Sunday of Lent and we also celebrate our OCIA Candidates who have been working very hard studying scripture and prayers. A Catholic Liturgical Act titled the Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion will be celebrated at the 11 am Mass. It marks the beginning of their final Lenten preparation, acknowledging their commitment to continued growth in faith, repentance, and conversion. Fr. Alex will recognize our nine candidates with their godparents and pray over these candidates after the homily.


FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP COLLECTIONS
JAN 12–18, 2026

Weekly Offerings \$ 2,343.00

Utilities Fund \$ 407.00

Online Giving \$ 1,453.00

Total \$ 4,203.00

Thank you for your contributions as we support the ministries, programs and facilities of our parish.

COR

Men's Prayer Group

3rd Wednesday of Each Month

7:00pm in Little Church



PRAYER
FELLOWSHIP
FRATERNITY

Come Join Us - All Men Are Welcomed



Thank You!



The Women of St. Monica want to thank all our cooks, volunteers & parishioners. The soup & chili sales totaled \$1,030. We appreciate every ones hard work to make this a successful annual event!

1ST SUNDAY OF LENT - FEBRUARY 22, 2026

The Eucharist - St Monica

Masses & Reconciliation

Monday - Thursday 9:00 am--3:30 pm
Saturday 4:00 pm
Sunday 9:00 & 11:00 am
Holy Days As Noted
Reconciliation: Saturday 3:15 - 3:45 pm

Exposition of the Holy Sacrament & Benediction

1st Wednesday of each month 9:30 am

Parish Office Hours

Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Baptisms

Celebrated outside of Mass. Parents and godparents are required to attend our Baptism preparation class or take the convenient online presentation. Please call the Parish Office to register for the class held on the first Thursday of every month at 7:00pm. Or stop by the Parish Office to pick up a DVD copy of the class.

Knights of Columbus Council #11529

The Knights of Columbus were founded in 1882 by Blessed Father Michael McGivney. It is an international order of more than 2 million Catholic men who are called to lead with faith, protect our families, serve others, and defend Catholic values in busy changing world. St Monica Council #11529 has a long history of support for the parish and any local charities. If you would like to join just scan the QR Code or go to KofC.org/join & enter council #11529.



St. Monica's "Teardrop" Ministry

The St. Monica Teardrop Ministry is a prayerful initiative where individuals and the community come together to intercede for loved ones who have drifted away from their faith, drawing inspiration from St. Monica's unwavering dedication to her husband and son's conversion. Prayer is very powerful, it only took 1 Hail Mary for Jesus to come to earth.

Bereavement Ministry

Please contact the parish office for more information.

Grief Support

For those grieving the loss of a loved one or close friend. This is a Catholic centered Support Group offering a caring, compassionate, and confidential environment to support your journey from grieving to healing. For registration and details contact Deacon John White 848-992-1652 or dcjohnw@gmail.com

Visits to the Sick and Homebound

St Vincent de Paul Society

Emergency Assistance Helpline: 732-370-0098

Youth Group

Open to all children of St Monica registered families and we would love to have you join us. For more information, call Theresa Calsetta 732-299-0261.

OCIA

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults

For those who are seeking full membership in the Catholic Faith, please contact the parish office.

New Parishioners

Welcome to our parish family! Registration forms may be downloaded at www.saintmonica.com Please contact the parish office for further info.

Adult Faith Formation Core Team

Our mission is to encourage and support parishioners in their lifelong learning in the faith in order to grow closer to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit through discipleship and evangelization.

Marriages

The Catholic Dioceses of New Jersey request a one year period of preparation for marriage in The Church. Contact the Parish Office to make arrangements.

Religious Education

Children are expected to receive a Catholic-Christian upbringing in their family life, to worship regularly at Sunday Mass, and to participate in on-going Religious Education classes. Our program includes grades 1-8. Please contact Belinda Azzollini, Coordinator of Religious Education 732-928-4038 or stmonicaccd@yahoo.com

Legion of Mary

Members participate in the life of the parish through a program of prayers and service. The Legion of Mary is open to all Catholic men and women over 18 years of age who have the good will to want to serve God through Mother Mary. Meetings are at St. Monica every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. The Legion is always looking to recruit new members. If you discern a divine connection to the Blessed Mother, and feel she is calling you to join, please contact the Parish Office.

Women of St Monica

A Ministry of Catholic women of the parish striving to fulfill their spiritual needs, sharing their faith, promoting community, and conducting fundraisers throughout the year and enhance parish life in



If you have been sexually abused as a minor by a member of the clergy or anyone representing the Catholic Church, or if you know someone who was, you can report that abuse through the diocesan ABUSE HOTLINE: 1-888-296-2965 or via email at: abuseline@dioceseoftrenton.org

CALENDAR

Saturday, February 21

- 10:00 pm Grief Support Group
- 3:15 pm Confessions
- 2:00 pm Dorothy Brown Baptism
- 4:00 pm Mass

Sunday, February 22

- 9:00 am Mass
- 10:15 am Special Communion Prep (LC)
- 11:00 am Mass
- 12:00 pm Maeve Elizabeth Carter Baptism

Monday, February 23

- 9:00 am Mass
- 4:30 pm Religious Education Classes
- 6:15 pm Religious Education Classes

Tuesday, February 24

- 9:00 am Mass
- 5:30 pm Religious Education Classes
- 7:00 pm Legion of Mary

Wednesday, February 25

- 9:00 am Mass
- 7:15 pm Adult Choir Practice

Thursday, February 26

- 9:00 am Mass
- 7:00 pm OCIA Classes

Saturday, February 28

- 10:00 am Grief Support Group
- 3:15 pm Confessions
- 4:00 pm Mass

Sunday, March 1

- 9:00 am Mass
- 10:15 am Special Communion Prep (LC)
- 11:00 am Mass
- 12:00 pm Women of St. Monica Meeting

Monday, March 2

- 9:00 am Mass
- 4:30 pm Religious Education Classes
- 6:15 pm Religious Education Classes

Tuesday, March 3

- 9:00 am Mass
- 5:30 pm Religious Education Classes
- 7:00 pm Legion of Mary

Wednesday, March 4

- 9:00 am Mass
- 9:30 am Adoration
- 7:15 pm Adult Choir Practice

Thursday, March 5

- 9:00 am Mass
- 10:00 am Grief Support Group
- 6:00 pm Pre-Baptismal Training

Prayer
Fasting
Almsgiving



Here's 20 practical things you can do for Lent

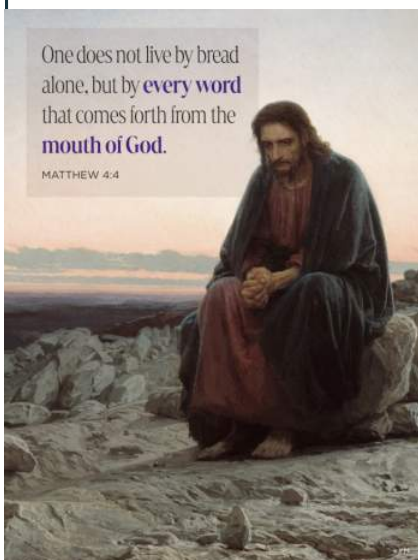
1. Think of what you typically spend a lot of money on. Do you buy too many clothes or eat out too often? Consider fasting from one of these and maybe donate the saved money to charity.
2. Take on 40 days of doing something particular like saying a particular prayer each day or doing 40 acts of kindness.
3. Pray before work. What is the first thing you do when you get to work? Check email? Consider taking 5 minutes to pray.
4. Attend week-day Mass once a week, or one extra day if you already go.
5. Pray the [Chaplet of Divine Mercy](#) every Friday.
6. Start a Lenten journal. Take some time each day in prayer and reflection on your spiritual journey and jot down what comes to you.
7. Fast from music on your drive to work and use the time to pray instead.
8. Limit time on social media.
9. Fast from snacking between meals.
10. Volunteer at a food pantry, soup kitchen or homeless shelter.
11. Write letters to those in prison, nursing homes or the military.
12. Reach out to someone you know who may be in need of companionship or offer to run an errand for someone who cannot get out.
13. Give up soda, coffee or alcohol.
14. Read the daily Scripture.
15. Think of a habit that keeps you from being who God wants you to be. Give it up! (Maybe this is something to journal about as you consider what that habit might be.)
16. Save money and donate it to the poor.
17. Spend one hour a week in eucharistic adoration.
18. Wake up without hitting the snooze button and use that extra time for prayer right away in the morning.
19. Every morning, scroll through your phone contacts. Randomly stop on a person and say a prayer for them.
20. Go through your closet and find clothes you can donate to someone in need. Don't just pick the clothes you don't like or will never wear. If you have kids, they can do the same. Maybe they could also find a few toys they would consider donating.

Reflection

By Rev. Leonard N. Peterson

The battle here described by Matthew did not have the scope of the D Day invasion of France. Nor was it as well known as the duel between Hamilton and Burr, mostly because there were no outside observers. St. Matthew, I presume, had the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to record the truly significant battle between the “father of lies” and the total Truth, as the devil set about tempting Jesus our Lord. It was unique and consequential for all human history. Along the way, we can derive encouragement for our personal battles and struggles.

As we reread the well-known gospel, there is a certain tension we can almost feel. Satan displays his complete knowledge of what “makes us tick.” He knows precisely where our weaknesses lie as he confronts Our Lord with the top three temptations, we all face: fame, power, and wealth. That is a helpful reminder to us of what we have to tackle so often in life, at different seasons, and wearing different disguises. L. “takes off the gloves” as it were, and if we are honest with ourselves, we must admit our helplessness without the help of our powerful and loving Lord to be victorious.



Who among us potential saints have not been profoundly grateful for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, or Penance, as it was formerly known?

Genesis is blunt about our origin. Corinthians posits our backup in describing Christ’s obedience. We know Jesus was and is “like us in all things...but sin.” That guarantees comfort. That is the sendoff for the next 6 weeks. It is a challenge sent our way to be as . per” as we can be in our courage and effort.

During World War II, when the Nazi were in almost every country of Europe, King Christian of Denmark stubbornly resisted the Nazis. His country was quite insignificant compared to powerful Germany, and the king knew he could not win on the battlefield, but he put up a valiant moral struggle.

One day he observed a Nazi flag flying above one of his public buildings. He reminded the German commander that this was contrary to the treaty between the two nations, and said, “The flag must be removed before twelve o’clock. Otherwise, I will send a soldier to remove it.” At five minutes before noon, the flag was still flying, and the king announced that he was sending a soldier to take it down. “The soldier will be shot,” the Nazi officer said. Then King Charles calmly said, “I think I should tell you that I will be that soldier.”

God love you and help you have a good Lent.



Offerings at Francis House of Prayer

Trenton Diocesan Spiritual Center and Retreat House

84 Walnford Road • Allentown, NJ 08501

609-877-0509 or FHOP@verizon.net

Please check www.FHOP.org for dates, registration, directions and for our other offerings!
All programs will be offered online and in-person unless otherwise indicated.

WRITING AND JOURNALING

DEEPEN OUR FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

Monday, February 23 9:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Writing and journaling can become a conversation with God! Enjoy a gentle day with God's guidance as we reflect on graces received in our lives by using writing prompts that bring us deeper into sacred stillness and love and into the truth of who God is for us.. Led by S. Marcy. Donation: \$30, includes lunch. Zoom: \$25.

IN PERSON ONLY

LENTEN CONTEMPLATION THROUGH THE MUSIC OF JOHN MICHAEL TALBOT

Friday, February 27 9:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Gentle songs from world-renowned musician John Michael Talbot can guide our prayerful contemplation of the Lenten Season. Considering the scriptural foundation of Talbot's sacred ballads opens up participants to the transfiguring power of Lenten prayer. Following the event, the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered. Led by Rev. Jim Grogan. Donation: \$30, includes lunch.

MARCH & LENTEN PROGRAMS SOWING SACRED SEEDS

Monday, March 2 9:30 AM – 1:00 PM

This Lenten retreat will focus on the seeds of love that have been sown in us and for us by others. We will notice, too, the seeds of love that we have sown in others' lives. You will receive Vince Gallagher's new book, *Sowing Sacred Seeds*, to further your Lenten journey in following Christ in all things. Good Lenten reading fills your soul with consolation and peace, so needed at this time. Led by Vince Gallagher. Donation: \$25, includes lunch. Zoom: \$20

LECTIO DIVINA

Tuesday, March 3 9:30 AM – 1:00 PM

When I use the Scriptures for prayer, I like to take one sentence at a time and let it seep into my soul in order to take it with me for the day as a means of staying in touch with the presence of God. *Lectio Divina* is an ancient form of prayer that enables us to do just that. We learn to really hear the Word of God as it applies to our ordinary life and respond to God's personal and intimate message. Led by S. Marcy. Donation: \$25, includes lunch. Zoom: \$20

FORGIVENESS: A GIFT OF LOVING AS GOD LOVES

Monday, March 9 9:30 AM – 1:00 PM

To be loved by God and to love as God loves IS our path to union with God and others. We will pray with the father of the prodigal son and reflect on the words of Henri Nouwen in *The Return of the Prodigal Son* as we absorb the beauty and the promise portrayed in Rembrandt's painting of the same name. Please come and experience the freedom found in choosing to forgive! Led by S. Marcy. Donation: \$25, includes lunch. Zoom: \$20

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION



TUESDAY FEB. 24TH

**All CCD Students & Staff
(Grades 1-8)**

**Must Attend Adoration
Please arrive for 6:15pm**

ATTENDANCE WILL BE TAKEN

*Parents are welcome to join their
children and spend this peaceful, face to face
time with our Lord.*

OLIVERIE - UPCOMING EVENTS

March 18: Preneed Seminar

11am-1pm at The Wisteria, Jackson

Please RSVP by calling 732-719-7250

Join us for a preneed seminar focusing on elder law and estate handling

March 25: Bingo

2-4pm at The Wisteria, Jackson

Please RSVP by calling 732-719-7250

Bring your friends and some drinks for a free bingo event! You must be
21 or over to win prizes.

April 18: Paper Shredding - Jackson

10am-2pm at Oliverie Funeral Home, Jackson Parking Lot

Shred those old documents safely and securely from the comfort of your
vehicle.

April 26: Blood Drive - Jackson

10am-3pm at The Wisteria, Jackson

Please RSVP by calling 732-719-7250

May 13: Spring Bingo

2-4pm at The Wisteria, Jackson

Please RSVP by calling 732-719-7250

Bring your friends and some drinks for a free bingo event! You must be
21 or over to win prizes.

Come and experience the journey to Emmaus as together we recognize Jesus in the Breaking of the Bread LUKE 24:13-35



CENTRAL JERSEY WOMEN'S

Emmaus Retreat

APRIL 17, 18 & 19th

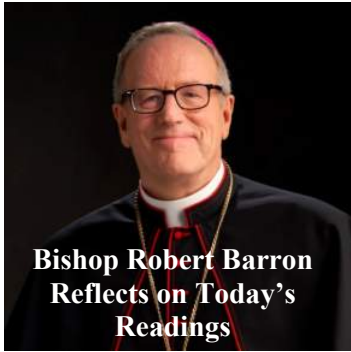
What is an Emmaus Retreat?

Emmaus retreats assist women in their faith journey. It is a time of reflection to deepen their relationship with Jesus and to learn about growing their faith thru scripture and the personal experiences of other women. It is a time to relax and build new friendships. It is a time to treat yourself for an amazing weekend – you deserve it. The retreat will be held at the beautiful Villa Maria by the Sea Retreat house in Stone Harbor, NJ.



Download the registration form at cjemmaus.org or by scanning the QR Code. If you have any questions, call Zina Approvato at 732-600-3360. Please note, space is limited. Get your registration form in as soon as possible.

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**Bishop Robert Barron
Reflects on Today's
Readings**

Friends, I always think of Lent as something like a spring training for baseball players. It's a time to get back to spiritual basics, to reacquaint ourselves with the elemental things in the spiritual life that we might get ourselves ordered to Christ. The Scriptures are going to teach us some of the fundamentals.

So, of course, the Church brings us back to the beginning. Today's first reading from the book of Genesis, we hear that the Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and then blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.

But we're not just that. The breathing into us the breath of life means the communication to us of something of God's manner of being. God made us as these hybrid creatures, and so we live out our spiritual lives in both body and soul.

That's why it's interesting that Lent does talk about spiritual things like prayer, but also very physical things like fasting.

God planted a garden in Eden in the east and placed there the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground he made various trees grow that were delightful to look at, good for food. God says, look, eat all the trees of the garden, all these beautiful things I made for you. It stands for all those things that give delight to our bodies and indeed to our souls.

In the middle of the garden he planted the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It's all the positive gifts that God gives us to delight both the body and the soul, and he says, eat of them all. But there is the one prohibition. Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It doesn't mean that God's against knowledge, that he's against science. No, no. It's a very particular type of knowledge that he's forbidding to us, namely the prerogative to determine for ourselves what is good and evil. You will choose whatever is most immediately advantageous to your ego. Surrender to the good that God is, and you will be fully alive. And in fact, you will eat of the tree of life, because that's the key to eternal life, surrendering to God. The serpent asked the woman, did God really tell you not to eat of any of the trees in the garden? And she clarifies, no, we can eat of them all, except for this one. But the serpent said to the woman, you will not die. God knows well the moment you eat of it, your eyes will be open.

Now in the great gospel reading from Matthew, the account of Jesus in the desert, what do we find? Well, in a way, something very similar. The devil again is a main player, but now not Adam and Eve, but Jesus himself.

After his 40-day fast in the desert, the devil approaches him. He must be very hungry, so turn these stones into bread. What's he saying? It's not the will of your Father that matters. It's satisfying your desire. It's satisfying your physical hunger. That's what it should be all about.

And you should make that decision. You should make that determination. You're the criterion of good and evil. Do you satisfy your hunger. No, man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

See, Jesus is saying, I'm not the criterion of good and evil in my human nature. It's my Heavenly Father. And then the devil takes him to the parapet of the temple.

You know, throw yourself down. The angels will pick you up. What matters most here? Safety. Keeping myself safe. No, no. Don't put the Lord your God to the test. You're not the criterion here.

Everybody, we're back to training camp, back to basics. In a way, that's the most important point. That's the most important decision. Everything else is a footnote to it.

And may God bless you this Lenten season and always.



St. Aloysius

Sun 3/8 Package Testing at St. Aloysius Church



Michele Paul



Contact

St. Aloysius is teaming up with Perritt Labs for an exciting package testing research study, inviting those aged 50 to 70 to take part. The study will take place on **Sunday March 8 from 12 - 3pm at St. Aloysius Roman Catholic Church, Jackson NJ in Morello Hall.**

Perritt Labs is leading this study to help create packaging that is easy for older adults to open while keeping children safe. If you are between the ages of 50 and 70, you are invited to try opening and closing a few child-resistant packages. The whole process takes less than 15 minutes.

By joining in, you are helping raise funds for the St. Vincent dePaul Society. For every volunteer, the St. Vincent dePaul Society receives a \$20 donation.

Take a look at the available time slots below and sign up if you qualify. If you are not in the age range, please share this opportunity with friends who are. Every extra volunteer makes a difference, and it is a wonderful way to support St. Vincent dePaul.

Thank you!



Date 03/08/2026 (Sun.)



Time 12:00PM - 3:00PM EST



Location St. Aloysius

935 Bennetts Mills Rd

Jackson Township, NJ 08527



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732-657-4900
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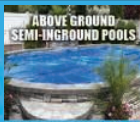
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