HARVEST LESSONS AND CAROLS
WE SING THE SONG OF HARVEST HOME

THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

AUGUST 6, 2023
9:30AM

ST. JOHN’S LUTHERAN CHURCH
884 NEWFIELD AVE. | STAMFORD, CT 06905
WWW.STJOHNELCA.ORG  203.322.0066
PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

_All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism._

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✞ one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.
**Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

_Silence is kept for reflection._

_Holy God, Creator and Lover of all that is, we confess to you that we have sinned. We have failed in our care for the land and its creatures, we have been greedy, destructive, and wasteful of the resources you entrusted to us. Polluted air and water, eroded soil and salty earth, birds and animals deprived of habitat, and neighbors left hungry and thirsty by our selfishness: all these cry out against us. We do not know how to restore what we have damaged, and we repent in sorrow and distress. Forgive us, we pray, and have mercy. Give us grace to change our ways, to make amends, and to work together for the healing of the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen._

_Our Savior died and rose again so that for all who live in him there is a new creation. Therefore I declare to you: your sins are forgiven, through ✞ Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen._

_Send out your Spirit, O Lord._
_Renew the hearts of your people._
_Renew the face of the earth._

**Amen.**
The grace of our Lord Jesus, Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

Glory to God in the high-est, and peace to God’s peo-ple on earth.

Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al-might-y God and Fa-ther, we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo-ry.

Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,
God our creator, you have ordered seedtime and harvest, sunshine and rain. Give to all who work the land fair compensation for the work of their hands. Grant that the people of this and every nation may give thanks to you for food, drink, and all that sustains life; may use with care the land and water from which these good things come; and may honor the laborers who produce them; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

God our creator, you have ordered seedtime and harvest, sunshine and rain. Give to all who work the land fair compensation for the work of their hands. Grant that the people of this and every nation may give thanks to you for food, drink, and all that sustains life; may use with care the land and water from which these good things come; and may honor the laborers who produce them; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.
A HARVEST CAROL SERVICE

We come to sing the song of harvest home, to thank God for the harvest of our gardens and allotments, our fields and farms, bringing food to our tables and meeting many of our physical needs. We celebrate all that is seasonal and local, as we enjoy the fruit of the earth in due season. We give thanks for the fertility of the earth and the creativity of our hands in finding new ways to adapt and change in difficult times. We remember any who struggle to put food on the table, who go hungry when the harvest fails, who suffer from extreme and unseasonal weather due to climate change. We thank God too for the harvest of our community, our common life together, the harvest of our own deepest selves, our growing towards maturity and wisdom. Through hymns and anthems, readings and prayers, we raise the song of harvest home.

HYMN Come, ye thankful people, come

1 Come, ye thankful people, come; 
raise the song of harvest home. 
All is safely gathered in 
er the winter storms begin. 
God, our maker, does provide 
for our wants to be supplied. 
Come to God’s own temple, come, 
raise the song of harvest home.

2 All the world is God’s own field, 
fruit unto his praise to yield. 
Wheat and tares together sown, 
unto joy or sorrow grown. 
First the blade, and then the ear, 
then the full corn shall appear. 
Lord of harvest, grant that we 
wholesome grain and pure may be.

3 For the Lord our God shall come 
and shall take his harvest home. 
From his field shall in that day 
all offenses purge away, 
give his angels charge at last 
in the fire the tares to cast, 
but the fruitful ears to store 
in his garner evermore.

4 Even so, Lord, quickly come 
to your final harvest home. 
Gather all your people in, 
free from sorrow, free from sin, 
there, forever purified, 
in your garner to abide. 
Come, with all your angels, come, 
raise the glorious harvest home
SOIL

Harvest begins with the soil. With increasingly sophisticated tools and machinery and with the use of fertilizers and chemicals, our attention can be deflected from the core of vitality of the soil. We need to rediscover respect for the soil as the basis for sustainable farming for the long term.

READING: Matthew 13:1-9  Lois Coffin

God the Sower,
may the good news of your love for us find the good soil of our hearts, that we may embrace the changes needed to care for your creation and for one another. May our harvest be sustainable, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen, as we follow in the steps of your Son, Jesus Christ, Lord of the Harvest. Amen.

HYMN Open now thy gates of beauty
1  Open now thy gates of beauty, Zion, let me enter there, where my soul in joyful duty waits for God who answers prayer. Oh, how blessed is this place, filled with solace, light, and grace!
2  Gracious God, I come before thee; come thou also unto me; where we find thee and adore thee, there a heav'n on earth must be. To my heart, oh, enter thou, let it be thy temple now!
3  Here thy praise is gladly chanted, here thy seed is duly sown; let my soul, where it is planted, bring forth precious sheaves alone, so that all I hear may be fruitful unto life in me.
4  Thou my faith increase and quicken, let me keep thy gift divine; howsoe'er temptations thicken, may thy word still o'er me shine as my guiding star through life, as my comfort in all strife.
5  Speak, O God, and I will hear thee, let thy will be done indeed; may I undisturbed draw near thee while thou dost thy people feed. Here of life the fountain flows; here is balm for all our woes.
SEED

In the face of the environmental crisis, we sometimes feel the problem is too vast for us to make a difference. As individuals we can easily feel overwhelmed, powerless to bring about change. But each of us can make an impact, from small beginnings, from small changes in approach. And a handful of seeds reminds us that great things can grow from tiny seeds. What an encouragement to allow the seed of hope to take root and grow and our lives!

READING: Mark 4:26-32  Michele Effren

God of the mustard seed,
from tiny beginnings you bring abundant blessing. Give us wisdom to use your gifts well, to understand the impact of our farming. Give us courage to take even small steps in the face of climate change. Give us generous hearts to share with those who go hungry, as we follow in the footsteps of your Son, Jesus Christ, Lord of the Harvest. Amen.

HYMN Now the green blade rises

1  Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
   wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
   love lives again, that with the dead has been;
   love is come again like wheat arising green.

2  In the grave they laid him, love by hatred slain,
   thinking that he would never wake again;
   laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen;
   love is come again like wheat arising green.

3  Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,
   he that for three days in the grave had lain;
   raised from the dead, my living Lord is seen;
   love is come again like wheat arising green.

4  When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
   your touch can call us back to life again,
   fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;
   love is come again like wheat arising green.
GROWTH

Water is essential for growth; it is the vector for all life. And recent years we have seen our climate changing, with a devastating effect on the impact of water – from scarcity to deluge. Times of drought have led to failed crops; times of flood have seen homes inundated where we have built houses on floodplains. Ezekiel’s image of the water of life speaks of restored balance, of enough for all, of abundant life – God’s vision of a climate in balance, where wounds are healed.

READING: Ezekiel 47:6-12 Pat Fisher

God of the growing grain,
of the abundant earth, you have blessed us with fruitful lands, providing more than enough for our needs, with plenty to share. Help us to honor you in our care for the land, and in the healing of the nations, that the earth may continue to be fruitful, as we follow in the footsteps of your Son, Jesus, Lord of the Harvest. Amen

HYMN On what has now been sown
1 On what has now been sown
your blessing, Lord, bestow;
the pow'r is yours alone
to make it sprout and grow.
O Lord, in grace the harvest raise,
and yours alone shall be the praise!

2 To you our wants are known,
from you are all our pow'rs;
accept what is your own
and pardon what is ours.
Our praises, Lord, and prayers receive
and to your word a blessing give.

3 Oh, grant that each of us,
now met before you here,
may meet together thus
when you and yours appear,
and follow you to heav'n, our home.
E'en so, Amen! Lord Jesus, come!
GATHERING

We are sometimes tempted to achieve the maximum yield for short-term profits, but the long-term impact can be devastating for sustainability and biodiversity. We are beginning to recognize the need to take less, to leave more space for nature to flourish. God calls us to be generous and to look to a longer horizon, as well as to notice what other people need. What is true for sustainable farming is also true for sustainable community and family life.

READING: Ruth 2:1-7   Jerry Wedell

God of the stranger,
we give thanks for the harvest of our community life. We pray for all who give their time freely to build up our shared life, to contribute to the common good. Help us all to think of others and to act for future generations. May we be like Ruth, working not just for ourselves, but building bridges of trust that crossed the boundaries of difference, as we follow in the footsteps of your Son, Jesus, Lord of the Harvest. Amen.

HYMN  For the healing of the nations

1  For the healing of the nations,
    Lord, we pray with one accord,
    for a just and equal sharing
    of the things that earth affords.
    To a life of love in action
    help us rise and pledge our word.
    Help us rise and pledge our word.

2  Lead us forward into freedom;
    from despair your world release,
    that, redeemed from war and hatred,
    all may come and go in peace.
    Show us how through care and
    goodness
    fear will die and hope increase.
    Fear will die and hope increase.

3  All that kills abundant living,
    let it from the earth be banned:
    pride of status, race, or schooling,
    dogmas that obscure your plan.
    In our common quest for justice
    may we hallow life’s brief span.
    May we hallow life’s brief span.

4  You, Creator God, have written
    your great name on humankind.
    For our growing in your likeness,
    bring the life of Christ to mind
    that by our response and service
    earth its destiny may find.
    Earth its destiny may find.
ABUNDANCE

Our planet is rich and fertile, and we have enormous resources to meet our needs, provided we are willing to share. Yet much of our economic life is couched in terms of scarcity and an underlying worry that there might not be enough to go round. The psalmist reminds us of the abundance of nature’s provision – enough for everyone and plenty to share.

READING: Psalm 65:9-13       David Hendrickson

Generous God, in love you have created the universe, in abundance you have provisioned our world, and hope you have called us to know you. Open our eyes to your wonders, open our minds to your mystery, open our hearts to your love, that we may find the path of thanksgiving as we follow in the footsteps of your Son, Jesus, Lord of the Harvest. Amen.

HYMN O worship the king

1 O worship the King, all glorious above;  
   O gratefully sing his power and his love;  
   our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,  
   pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.

2 O tell of his might, O sing of his grace,  
   whose robe is the light, whose canopy space;  
   his chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,  
   and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

3 The earth with its store of wonders untold,  
   Almighty, thy power hath founded of old,  
   hath stablished it fast by a changeless decree,  
   and round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea.

4 Thy bountiful care, what tongue can recite?  
   It breathes in the air; it shines in the light;  
   it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,  
   and sweetly distils in the dew and the rain.
OFFERING

The act of offering comes from a sense of gratitude and a partnership. We offer something to God and to the water community, to give thanks for all we have received. But are we losing the instinct for offering? What’s mine is mine! In a world of self-made people, there can be a sense of entitlement, and we can lose sight of the need to give and the need to give thanks.

READING: Leviticus 23:9-14 Eric Lane

God of our first fruits,
Give us thankful hearts in this time of gathering. Grant us a generosity of spirit, to provide for those who go hungry. May we offer you the first fruits of our lives, the very best that we have, that we in turn may become a blessing, as we follow in the footsteps of your Son, Jesus, Lord of the Harvest. Amen.

HYMN For the fruit of all creation
1 For the fruit of all creation, 2 In the just reward of labor, thanks be to God. God's will is done.
For these gifts to ev'ry nation, In the help we give our neighbor, thanks be to God. God's will is done.
For the plowing, sowing, reaping, In our worldwide task of caring silent growth while we are sleeping, for the hungry and despairing,
future needs in earth's safekeeping, in the harvests we are sharing,
thanks be to God. God's will is done.

3 For the harvests of the Spirit, For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God. thanks be to God.
For the wonders that astound us, For the truths that still confound us, for the hungry and despairing,
most of all, that love has found us, in the harvests we are sharing,
thanks be to God.
SHARING

When is enough enough? The gap between the highest earners and those on low wages or benefits has never been greater. We live in a world of billionaires and beggars. But such evident inequality leads to resentment and social instability. Can there be another way – a way of sharing resources more fairly so that there is enough for all?

READING Matthew 14:13-21

God of abundance and plenty, where we create scarcity and need through our narrow self-interest and greed, break us open, to find in you a generosity of spirit and willingness to share, as we follow in the footsteps of your Son, Jesus, Lord of the Harvest. Amen.

HYMN For the beauty of the earth

1 For the beauty of the earth, for the beauty of the skies, for the love which from our birth over and around us lies:

Refrain
Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise.

2 For the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night, hill and vale and tree and flow'r, sun and moon and stars of light:

Refrain

3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's delight, for the mystic harmony linking sense to sound and sight:

Refrain

4 For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child, friends on earth and friends above; for all gentle thoughts and mild:

Refrain

5 For each perfect gift of thine, peace on earth and joy in heav'n; for thyself, best gift divine, to our world so freely giv'n: Refrain
FEAST

God’s vision for humanity is not one where some have everything, living with lavish excess, while many go hungry. In God’s Kingdom, there is provision for everyone, with restoration and healing for all who have been excluded or forgotten. Can we make our harvest festival a foretaste of that kingdom?

READING Isaiah 25:1-10             Max Leffers

God of the feast,
give us eyes to see your kingdom in our midst, a table prepared for all, rich food and wine, with oil to gladden the human heart, where all are included, where none are left outside, as we follow in the footsteps of your Son, Jesus, Lord of the Harvest. Amen.

HYMN Joyful, joyful, we adore thee

1 Joyful, joyful we adore thee,
    God of glory, Lord of love!
Hearts unfold like flow’rs before thee,
praising thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.

2 All thy works with joy surround thee,
    earth and heav’n reflect thy rays,
stars and angels sing around thee,
center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flow’ry meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird, and flowing fountain
call us to rejoice in thee.

3 Thou art giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean-depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our brother,
all who live in love are thine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine!

BREAD

Jesus shared bread with all sorts of people as a sign of God’s acceptance and love. He asked us to remember him every time we break bread. God is in the business of making bread, the bread of community. We are the yeast, the leaven in the lump. The way we live can change the world, if we can dare to believe that God is with us.
Loving God, you provide enough for everyone:
this earth is fertile, fruitful and abundant, but we are sometimes greedy, wasteful, and selfish. Many go hungry despite our plenty, many are left outside while we enjoy a feast.
Lord Jesus, bread of life, break us open to your promised kingdom, give us hearts to gather and share, as we follow in the footsteps of your son, Jesus, Lord of the Harvest. Amen.

HYMN Draw us in the spirit’s tether

1 Draw us in the Spirit’s tether, for when humbly
2 As disciples used to gather in the name of
3 All our meals and all our living make as sacred

in your name two or three are met together,
Christ to sup, then with thanks to God the giver
ments of you, that by caring, helping, giving,

you are in the midst of them. Alleluia!
break the bread and bless the cup, Alleluia!
we may be disciples true. Alleluia!

Alleluia! Touch we now your garment’s hem.
Alleluia! so now bind our friendship up.
Alleluia! We will serve with faith anew.
God of the harvest,
bless the labors of our hearts and hands, bless the fruits of our cooperation and community,
blessed the gathering of neighbors and strangers. Awaken us to your longing for a different
world, where all are welcomed, valued, and appreciated. Give us grace to discern your
presence in one another and in the invitation of your Son, Jesus Christ, that, together, we
may come to the eternal harvest of your grace. **Amen.**

**CREED**

_Apostles’_

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. **Amen.**

**PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.
OFFERING
OFFERTORY ANTHEM  
Concerto #3 for Two Organs

*HYMN AT THE PRESENTATION  
PUER NOBIS

O Holy Spirit, root of life,  
creator, cleanser of all things:  
Anoint our wounds, awaken us  
with lustrous movement of your wings.

*OFFERTORY PRAYER  
Create in us clean hearts, O God.  
And uphold us with Your free Spirit.

*GREAT THANKSGIVING  
Adapted from “Harvest Festival Communion Liturgy” – Andrew T. Murphy

The Lord be with you.  
And also with you.  
Lift up your hearts.  
We lift them to the Lord.  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow’r and might,  
heav’n and earth are full of your glory.

Ho-san-na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes  
in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high-est.
Father almighty, creator of all, it is indeed right to bring you thanks and praise. 
Your glory is made known in the beauty and wonder all around us. 
Your amazing love is seen in nature’s bounty. 
You have spoken, and this world came into being – bursting with life.

For the fruits of his creation,
**Thanks be to God.**

Everlasting God, sower of the word,
You have spoken to your people in season and out of season: 
through prophets, priests and kings, through holy families and faithful saints. 
Your Word has been our nourishment throughout the ages, like honey to the lips.  
And you have spoken through your Son, the Savior of the world.

For his gifts to every nation,
**Thanks be to God.**

King of the heavens, grower of the vine, we thank you that Jesus lived among us: 
walking with his friends as they plucked grain from the wayside, 
breaking bread with the hungry on a hillside, 
overseeing a great harvest of fish at the lakeside. 
With us; for us; as one of us;  
The Lord of life, given for us.

Most of all, that love has found us, 
**Thanks be to God.**

In the night in which he was betrayed, 
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; 
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: 
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. 
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, 
and gave it for all to drink, saying: 
This cup is the new covenant in my blood, 
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. 
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever.
Amen.

*INVITATION TO COMMUNION*

Come to the banquet of bread and wine, the very presence of Christ, for all is now ready.

COMMUNION

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.
*POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray.
Creator God, provider of all, we bring our thanks today.
We bless each other that the beauty of this world and the love that created it might be expressed though our lives and be a blessing to others, now and always.
Amen.

ENDING

*BLESSING

Bread of Life, you feed us through word and sacrament.
The bread we share, a remembrance of your presence with us.
Strengthen us for service, that seeds we sow in fertile places might grow and flourish,
that food we share in fellowship might nourish and revive,
that words we share in our daily walk might glorify your name.
Bread of Life, you feed us through word and sacrament that we might feed others.
Blessed be your name!

Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.
Amen.

*HYMN Now thank we all our God

1 Now thank we all our God
with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done,
in whom his world rejoices;
who from our mothers' arms
has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.

2 O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us,
to keep us in his grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills
of this world in the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given,
the Son and Spirit blest,
who reign in highest heaven
the one eternal God,
whom heaven and earth adore;
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.
*DISMISSAL*

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

August 27, we worship outdoors, weather permitting. Bring your lawn chair. We also Bless the Backpacks, so children and youth should bring their school backpacks to worship.

**Rally Sunday** - September 10. Worship at 8:30 & 10:30 am | Sunday School at 9:30 am.
Church picnic at 11:30 am.

**Worship Leaders Today**

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<th>Celebrant &amp; Preacher</th>
<th>The Rev. Dr. Duane C. Pederson</th>
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<tr>
<td>Musicians</td>
<td>Cantor Nathan K. and Marnus Lively-Greiling, Tom and Nanette Jordan, Alex McGuiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worship Assistant</td>
<td>Eric Lane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Readers</td>
<td>Lois Coffin, Michele Effren, Pat Fisher, Jerry Wedell, David Hendrickson, Eric Lane, Jennifer Leffers, Max Leffers, and Gary Olson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communion Assistant</td>
<td>Lois Coffin, Marie Sweglar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acolytes</td>
<td>Gus Leffers, Max Leffers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Altar Committee</td>
<td>Pam Bartlett, Cathy Mahler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counters</td>
<td>Charlie Enright, J. Geils, Janet Halpin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little Free Pantry</td>
<td>Eric Lane</td>
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Our thanks to Janet Segerdell & Mona Wedell for hosting the fellowship time.

**Birthday Celebrations**

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<tr>
<th>Abbey Enright</th>
<th>August 6</th>
<th>Caroline Eno</th>
<th>August 11</th>
<th>Michael Medeiros</th>
<th>August 12</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richard Leach</td>
<td>August 7</td>
<td>Matthew Miceli</td>
<td>August 11</td>
<td>Michele Taylor</td>
<td>August 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina Bartlett</td>
<td>August 10</td>
<td>Jack Kovac</td>
<td>August 12</td>
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