First Things

APRIL 2026

The Newsletter of First Evangelical Lutheran Church
561 Chestnut Street | Taylors Falls, MN 55084-1110
651-465-5265 www.tflutheran.org

A Prayer for April: Jesus, Surprise Me

It's hard to talk about new life when there's still snow on the ground.

Everything is covered. Everything still looks dead. And if we're honest, sometimes the snow is convenient. It covers the stuff we'd rather not look at the moments we're not proud of, the things we tell ourselves weren't really that bad. Nobody saw it anyway. Doesn't really affect anything.

You snapped at one of your kids and moved on like it didn't happen. You got frustrated with a coworker and talked behind their back instead of going to them directly. Someone cut you off in traffic and suddenly you're riding their tail with your high beams flashing. You're annoyed and frustrated with your own life but unwilling to do anything about it, so the people around you get to feel it instead. You talked down someone's idea before you even finished hearing it. You gossiped about someone whose story you didn't know half of. You've kept your distance from God for so long that church feels more like obligation than home.

The snow covers it. Or we tell ourselves it wasn't that bad. Or we dress it up with a fine attitude and hope nobody looks too close.

But then there's the other version of Easter despair: the one that doesn't bother hiding anything because it's decided hope is already gone. Jesus died, sure. But what actually changed? There are protests in the streets. Families divided at the dinner table. Distance growing in relationships that used to feel close. Wars breaking out and more being threatened. It is still so dark: literally and figuratively. The tomb is empty, they say. Okay. So where is the new life? Where is the hope? Point me to it, because from where I'm standing everything still looks like winter.

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I get that. I feel that. And I don't think Easter asks us to pretend otherwise.

But then I look out my office window.

There are small crabapples still clinging to the tree from last fall: dry and forgotten-looking, but a quiet reminder that this tree has fruited before and will again. Down the road, a new business has laid its footings, real promise literally rising up out of the snow piles. People pass by on their way to Wild Mountain, to work, to family: ordinary life, stubborn and continuing, even in the gray.

By the time you read this, things will have changed. Maybe a little less snow on the ground. Maybe walls and a roof on that new building in town. But not Jesus. And if I'm being honest not me either. Still the same guy, still in need of the same grace, still looking out the same window and asking the same question. Where is the hope?

And the same simple prayer comes to mind: *Jesus, surprise me. As you always do.*

In the people I least expect. In the slow return of color to the hillside. In your resurrection story, showing up again in the middle of all of this: the mess, the darkness, the things I've covered up and the things I've given up on.

Yes, we are that bad. Yes, it feels hopeless sometimes. But none of that changes what you have done and what you continue to do in our lives.

He is risen. He is risen indeed.

Pastor Justin

New Members **Welcome!**

If you are interested in becoming a member, please talk with Pr. Justin or contact the office at 651-465-5265.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Worship every Sunday at 11am. Recorded services from Sunday morning worship are available Sunday afternoons on our website www.tflutheran.org and can also be found on our YouTube Channel: First Evangelical Lutheran Church of TF - 2nd.

COUNCIL MEETING

Council will meet in April 12th at 12:15pm.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

04/06 Rod Olson
04/07 Jenni Brown
04/07 Miranda Tverberg
04/11 Molly Moberg
04/16 Amelia Tverberg
04/16 Vince Tverberg
04/25 Joy Buchholtz
04/26 Jeanne Fick
04/30 Ruth Steinwall

Please contact the church office if there are any errors or omissions. Thank you.

MONTHLY GIVING REPORT

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. —2 Cor. 9:7 (NIV)

Budgeted Weekly Expenses: $2771.60

03/01 Giving:	$3,459.96
03/08 Giving:	$ 979.00
03/15 Giving:	----------
03/22 Giving:	$4,824.00

Thank you for your faithful giving. Please contact FELC Treasurer, Craig Loen with any questions or concerns at: 715-553-0519 or cloen@federatedcoops.com

Shared Ministry

First Lutheran Evangelical Church

Taylors Falls, MN
Fellowship at 10am
followed by Worship at 11am

SundaySCHOOL

Monthly Sunday school class for children elementary age right after children's message.

Next Date: April 19th

Quilting

9:30am - 11:00am
First and Third Wednesdays of the month. No experience needed! New quilters welcome!

CHOIR

Choir will meet for practice every Tuesday at 5pm, rotating locations. No experience is needed to join us!

WISDOM SEEKERS

THURSDAYS AT 9:00AM

First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Youth Room, 1st floor

If you'd like to be part of this new ministry or have any questions, please talk with Becky Hulden.

CRAFTING

CRAFTING ON SATURDAYS

SATURDAY, APRIL 11TH | 9AM - 2PM
BRING YOUR CRAFTS, A SNACK TO SHARE & BE READY FOR SOME GREAT CONVERSATIONS !!

Better Together

Immanuel Lutheran Church

Almelund, MN
Worship at 9am
followed by Fellowship at 10am

FAITH CONVERSATIONS

HOLY SMOKES!
April 23rd at 6:30pm
Jakes on the Lakes
Center City, MN

Are we living in the last days—or just beginning again? Join us to explore biblical prophecy, popular myths, and hopeful visions of renewal.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Tune in our Daily Texts with Pastor Justin

Monday - Saturday: Immanuel Lutheran Church of Almelund Facebook Page.
A daily devotional time.

Do you have a 6th-12th grader who is interested in youth group? Talk with Pr. Justin or Angie for more information!!

April 10th

Community Dinner

Free!
Everyone Welcome!
Great Fellowship!
Meet your friends & neighbors!

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Almelund
Come & Bring a Friend!
2nd Friday Each Month 4:30—6:30 pm

What's Happening In At Our Church?

Holy Week Calendar

Maundy Thursday - April 2nd
6pm Service at ILC

Good Friday - April 3rd
6pm Service at FELC

Saturday Night Vigil - April 4th
6pm-7pm Nelson/Hulden Farm

Easter Sunday - April 5th
6:30am Sunrise Service at ILC
9am Worship at ILC
11am Worship at FELC

Thurs, April 30th

4:30pm - 6:30pm

First Evang. Lutheran

Come enjoy a delicious supper and have some fun playing games out of the cold winter!! Bring your favorite or play what is available at the church!

It's time to update our church directory!!! Watch for details in April for more information! We plan to keep it as simple and more convenient for members as possible. Angie will send out information after Easter with more details!!!

A special thank you for the following parishioners for their generous donation of Easter Lilies & Mums:

Rose Anderson in Memory of Agnes, William & Joe Mallery

Roger & Joan Boleman in Memory of
Roger Boleman's Siblings: Lee, Carol, and Norma

Eleanore Collins in Memory of Larry Collins

Miriam Flysjo in Memory of Loved Ones

Verna Grover in Memory of Don Grover, Karen Grover & David Gray

Inez Heggerston in Memory of Ed Heggerston

Walter & Gail Koch in Memory of
Gail's Dad: Lauri Putikka and Walter's Mom: Irene Koch

H. Peter Lindgren in Memory of Donna M. Lindgren

The Lindgren Family in Memory of Donna Lindgren

Arne & Miriam Lagus in Memory of Loved Ones
and in Honor of our Children & our Grandchildren

Janna & Craig Loen in Memory of Loved Ones
and in Honor of Friends & Family

Carol Nelson in Memory of Leo Nelson
and in Honor of Children & Grandchildren

Sydney Paredes & Don Hansen in Memory of
Jess Paredes & Harriot Peterson

Joyce Robinson in Memory of Bud Robinson

Chieko Rogers in Memory of Tim Rogers & Lee Rogers

FAMILY PATHWAYS

Thank you to everyone who brought in food items for the Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter baskets for families in need in our community! It's a lot to ask but we were able to deliver 450 items for those three drives!!!!

Reaching out to Family Pathways, they are in critical need of cleaning products and hygiene products. For the month of April, let's fill that bin (in the room across from the office)!!!

Here a list of items that Family Pathways is in need of:

Cleaning Products

- Laundry Soap
- Laundry Stain Spray
- Glass Cleaner
- Toilet Cleaner
- Floor Cleaner
- All Purpose Cleaner
- Dish Soap & Sponges
- Dusting Rags
- Disinfecting Wipes

Personal Hygiene Products

- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Men's 3-in-1 Wash
- Children's Shampoo
- Children's Body Wash
- Body Wash
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Dental Floss
- Mouthwash
- Deodorant

Summer 2026

Each day we will be focusing on a different way we can "wear love" through: Kindness, Humbleness, Calmness, Steadfastness and Forgiveness! Join us for another great summer at Luther Point Bible Camp!

So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Lord forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it." —Colossians 3:12–14

Member Church Discounts

This discount applies if you are a member of one of Luther Point's 75 member congregations and your congregation contributed their full per -baptized member assessment in 2025. $55 Member Discount

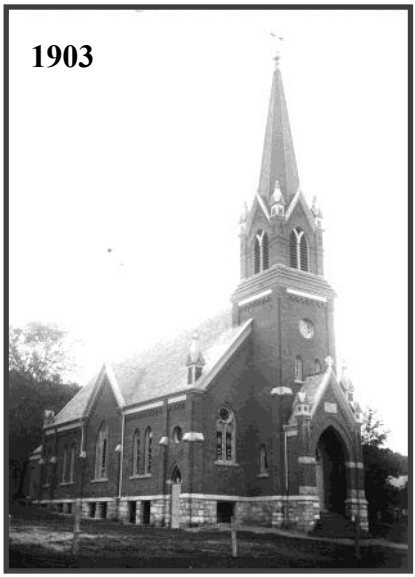
Luther Point BIBLE CAMP

Applications are OPEN for Summer 2026 Staff

Looking for:

- Junior Counselors
- Senior Counselors
- Camp Connect Counselors
- Team Leaders
- Support Staff
- Medic & Waterfront Team Leader

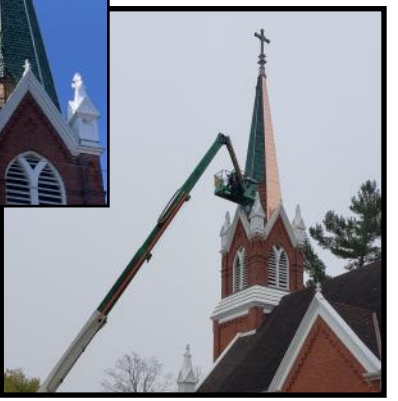
Celebrating 166 Years of First Evangelical Lutheran Church



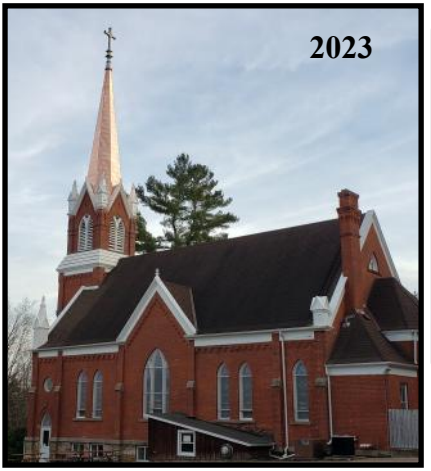
On April 10, 1860, a handful of men, women and children were gathered together through the Spirit's leading and gave birth to First Evangelical Swedish Lutheran Church.

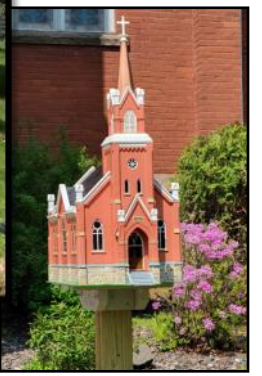
A first church building was constructed, as a gathering place for the community to worship God. Members quickly recognized God's leading to move and grow, and our current sanctuary was built, as a continuation of the work God has called this community of faith to do. Over the years additions have been built, new ministries started, and service to the community and world exercised in the name of Jesus. Through it all, God has been our dwelling place--in all generations.

1860 First Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church
1872 First resident pastor
1887 Parsonage built
1903 Present church erected
1910 Hilgreen & Lane organ installed
1937 Swedish services discontinued
1959 Interior painted white for 100th Anniv.
1964 Education wing built.
1986 Aging parsonage destroyed
2008 Church interior decoratively painted for 150th anniversary
2010 150th anniversary
2020 Steeple Repair
2024 New roof shingles



Our church as changed over the years. We've had several pastors, different council members, changes in staff. We've seen physical features updated: the roof, the steeple, the bathrooms, new tables and chairs purchased for the fellowship hall, and the new TV in the sanctuary. The playground has evolved and things were added along with simple landscaping and a little library for anyone to come for a free book. We are part of a shared ministry with Immanuel Lutheran Church in Almelund.





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What hasn't changed? The reason we are here.

We come together on Sunday mornings to grow in our faith. We share coffee together to nurture relationships. We work together to care for our church and the grounds. We welcome people in the church with open hearts and a excited energy. We smile when kids are heard during worship. And that's not all!!

These pictures are only over the past year (in no particular order). Just goes to show you how many things beyond Sunday morning are happening!

We said goodbye to Pr. Dwight & welcomed Pr. Justin

Maple Syrup Ministry

Graduates honored with quilts done by FELC members

Feed My Starving Children

Activities at The Lodge in Taylors Falls

Lenten Services

Sunday Morning Moments

Joint Choir

Game Night

Community Program: Together with Friends

Quilters Group

Lighting Festival Community Event

Gods Work, Our Hands

Women's Retreat

Christmas

Saturday Crafting

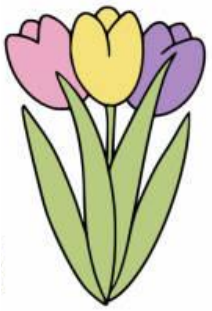
We will continue to live out our mission: Proclaim the Gospel and Love our Neighbors. We will continue to welcome new people into our church. We will continue to care for one another. Why? Because…..

You are the church.
We are the Church.
Together

Special Music

Sunday School

APRIL



Sun	Mon	Tue
	FELC First Evangelical Lutheran Church ILC Immanuel Lutheran Church	
5 6:30am Sunrise Service at Immanuel 9am Worship at Immanuel 10am Fellowship at FELC 11am Worship at FELC	6 8:30am Counters Meet 	7 5:30pm Choir Practice-ILC
12 9am Worship at Immanuel 10am Fellowship at FELC 11am Worship at FELC 12:15pm Council Meeting	13 8:30am Counters Meet	14 5:30pm Choir Practice -TF
19 9am Worship at Immanuel 10am Fellowship at FELC 11am Worship at FELC w/ Sunday School	20 8:30am Counters Meet	21 5:30pm Choir Practice -ILC
26 9am Worship at Immanuel 10am Fellowship at FELC 11am Worship at FELC	27 8:30am Counters Meet	28 5:30pm Choir Practice -TF

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:30am Quilting	2 9am Wisdom Seekers 2:30pm Community Coffee at The Lodge 6:30pm Maundy Thursday Service at ILC	3 6pm Good Friday Service at FELC	4 7pm Saturday Vigil at Nelson/Hulden Farm
8 10am Book Study at The Lodge	9 9am Wisdom Seekers 2:30pm Community Coffee at The Lodge	10 4:30pm Community Meal at ILC 166th First Evangelical Lutheran Church Anniversary	11 9am Crafting Saturday
15 9:30am Quilting 1:30pm Worship at The Lodge	16 9am Wisdom Seekers 2:30pm Community Coffee at The Lodge	17 	18
22 10am Book Study at The Lodge 	23 9am Wisdom Seekers 2:30pm Community Coffee at The Lodge 6:30pm Holy Smokes	24	25 International Organist Day - Celebrating our amazing organist & choir director today: Toni & Momoh
29	30 9am Wisdom Seekers 2:30pm Community Coffee at The Lodge 4:30pm Supper & Game Night at FELC		

WHAT'S HAPPENING

IN OUR COMMUNITY

THE LODGE OF TAYLORS FALLS

Join the residents at The Lodge in Taylors Falls!

Every Thurs at 2:30pm for their free Community Coffee Hour!

Book Study
April 8th at 10am
April 22nd at 10am

Worship at The Lodge
April 15tth at 1:30pm

CHISAGO LAKES
COMMUNITY MEAL

Monday Evenings
4pm - 6pm
Zion Lutheran Church
in Chisago City.
All are welcome!

Knit & Crochet Group
Monday, April 13th
6:00pm - 8:00pm

Come and stitch with us! Bring your project or start a new one. Don't know how to knit or crochet? We would be happy to teach new crafters! Bring some yarn and needles (size 6, 7 or 8, preferably wood) or a hook (size G, H or I) and a sense of adventure!

St Croix Falls Library

WORK PLAY EARTH DAY
AT INTERSTATE PARK

Saturday, April 18th 9am - 12pm

Help park staff get the North Campground ready for the upcoming season! Volunteer activities will include raking, garbage clean up, fire ring cleaning, picking up branches, placing wood chips on campsites and tree planting. Volunteers should bring water, snacks, work clothes including, pants, boots, socks, gloves, eye protection, a hat and any other clothing items needed for outside work. Park staff will provide needed supplies and equipment. Volunteer work will be modified for adverse weather. This event will be held rain or shine.

Earth Day - April 22nd
Our Power, Our Planet

Let's come together to celebrate Earth Day! Each one of us has the power to create positive change for the Earth.

- ♥ Plant trees and nurture nature
- ♥ Conserve water and energy
- ♥ Reduce, reuse, and recycle
- ♥ Support clean and renewable energy

Every small action matters.
Let's protect the Earth today for a better tomorrow.

Taylors Falls
Farmers & Crafters
Indoor Market

Saturday, April 18th
11am - 3pm

Taylors Falls Community Center
Variety of vendors, food and music from your local vendors!

Family activities at the St Croix Falls Library

Mindful Movement
for Families
April 18th | 10am-11am

Preschool Storytime
Mindful Movement
April 29th | 10:15am-11:15am

Bring a mat if you have one, there are some available.

Minutes of the Church Council of
First Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sunday, March 22, 2026, 12:15pm
Next meeting: April 12, 2026, 12:15pm

Council Members Present: Rose Anderson, Kathy Carlsted, Becky Hulden, Craig Loen, Julie Valez,

A. Opening Devotions – Julie (Thank you, Julie)
March-Kathy

B. Sharing Stories of God's Love in our Lives – Gratitude for safe and successful travels. Kind words of support between members at coffee hour.

C. Pastor Justin's Report –

1. Technology upgrades and changes-no report
2. Joint Council – met on 3/16 at ILC. Pastor Justin presented a draft of a One-Year Shared Ministry Covenant. We discussed the successes and concerns that we have and that we have heard in the congregations. Members of the Joint Council will make revisions and meet again to ratify it on Monday morning, 3/23/2026 at 9:00 at FELC. The completed covenant will be presented to the FELC Council on 4/12 and voted on by both congregations on 5/17/2026.
3. Staff meetings at FELC - The FELC staff met on 3/5 with Angie, Pastor Justin, Tim and Becky in attendance. Angie presented an agenda with 21 items. Facility upgrades, Lenten and Easter worship services were all discussed.

D. Treasurer's Report – Craig

1. Our income for February was $9,908.96, which was below budget by $244.08. But we are still above our budget for income by 1.31% for the year.
2. Our expenses for the first 8 months are $100,757.68 which includes the following line items:
    1. 6145 - Pastor 90-day contract - $19,170.00 for 8 months. This is what we pay to Immanuel for Pastor Justin @ $2,130.00 per month.
    2. 6712 - Equipment Purchased - Parish Coordinator's new computer equipment - $2,296.00
    3. We are above Expense Budget by 20.61% or $19,533.36.
3. We had an offering of $500 for the Samaritan Fund in January.
4. Julie made a motion to approve the Treasurers Report. Rose seconded. Motion carried.

E. Building and Grounds Committee Projects – Don

1. Security cameras installation - Don is continuing to add security cameras indoors and out.
2. Bathroom remodeling almost done - painting planned by Angie and Carli - after Easter.
3. Gift to Bruce - $300 Gift card to menards. Angie got the gift card and council members signed the card today. Kathy will deliver the card and gift card to Bruce.

F. Library Report – Julie

1. Julie will work with Tim to attach the plaque to the library. Then we will plan a dedication and contact the Chisago County Press with pictures.

G. Sunday School – will report twice annually

H. Vision Group -> Mission and Outreach Committee

1. Leadership will be Rita and Wendy. No report.

I. Shared Ministry – Better Together with Immanuel

1. The Joint Council met on Monday, March 16, 2026 at Immanuel with Pastor Justin. See the report under Pastor's Report.
2. Music and Worship Coordination - Becky is attending weekly meetings with Immanuel staff and Pastor Justin. Toni is again employed full time and is not available to meet with this group.

J. Personnel - all of these positions are addressed in the next Shared Ministry Covenant

1. Positions to hire over next several months.
   a. Music and Worship Director - organist at both churches, direct joint choir, coordinate special music, participate in worship planning for both churches.
   b. Choir accompanist - rehearsals and worship services
   c. Financial Secretary - for both churches
2. We need to update job descriptions for organist, janitor, and parish coordinator.
3. Jerry Rhoads would like to retire from his Financial Secretary position. He is willing to wait until we have a replacement and will train that person in.

K. Sunday Morning - Council Person on Duty (CPOD)

1. Security and emergency Plan – Angie D.- no report today.

L. Caring Ministry

1. ELW Pastoral Care booklets are here and available for communion visits.
2. Communion visits continue to 3 shut in's.

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M. Report on Events

1. Women's Retreat - 7 people attended for the entire weekend and 3 more for the day on Saturday. Everyone agreed to begin planning to repeat this retreat next winter.
2. Ash Wednesday - no report.
3. Lenten services are going well at both churches. Many Immanuel members come regularly to the 11am service at FELC.
4. Mi-Chi-Lu Pancake Feed - Rose and Eleanore worked at the event. Perhaps a lower turnout than last year
5. Game Night and Dinner - Only 1 table (10 people) of folks at this event.

N. Upcoming Events: - leadership?

1. Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast - Combined with Youth Breakfast at ILC. Hopefully this will help us feel more connected.
2. Maundy Thursday - 6:30pm at Immanuel
3. Good Friday - 6:00pm at FELC
4. Saturday Vigil - 7pm at the Nelson-Hulden Farm
5. Easter Sunday - 6:30am Sunrise Service at Immanuel, 9:00am Service at Immanuel and 11:00am Service at FELC
6. Feed my Starving Children - Friday, April 17th at Hosanna Lutheran in Forest Lake. Sign up for 10 people is almost complete.

O. Motion to Adjourn-MMC Adjourned at 1:30pm

First Evangelical
LUTHERAN CHURCH of TAYLORS FALLS

Church Office
651-465-5265
www.tflutheran.org

Pastor Justin Fenger
c: 651-308-7717
pastor@immanuelalmelund.com

Angie Linngren
Ministry Coordinator
felctf@gmail.com

2025-2026 Council/Officers:

Becky Hulden—President
Kathy Carlsted—Vice President
Craig Loen—Treasurer
Don Hansen—Secretary
Julie Valez
Rose Anderson
Angela Dahlstrom
Riley Linngren

Financial Secretary
Jerry Rhoads

Please hold the ministers and council members in your prayers that God would give them the wisdom, strength, courage, patience and perseverance to serve this community of faith as they lead us in our mission for the sake of the world and the glory of God.

Next council meeting will be held on Sunday, April 12, 2026 at 12:15pm

Mission Statement

Proclaim the Gospel and Serve our Neighbors.

(Mission Statement approved 2023)

"Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations." Psalm 90:1

Please send submissions to: felctf@gmail.com
Articles due the 12th of each month.

First Evangelical
LUTHERAN CHURCH

561 Chestnut Street, Taylors Falls, MN 55084-1110

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ORGANIZATION
US
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