

A Voice in the Pines



Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines newsletter

Volume XXXIX, March 2023

We all need to get busy to reverse the Kirk's membership trends; invite someone to attend a service with you



Fifty-five years ago, I was a third-year college student at Kansas State University. After classes I worked at the Blueville Nursery. My specialty was digging holes so higher-paid employees could plant the trees.

One day after work, the boss called me into his office. He pushed his newspaper across the desk and pointed to Karen's picture in the Engagement Announcements.

"How in the world did a guy like you get this beautiful girl to agree to marry you?" he asked.

"Well, Boss," I responded, "I asked, and she said yes."

There must be a moral to this story, right? Well, as I recently looked at a graph of membership and giving trends of our church, it occurred to me we'd all better get engaged – engaged in changing these trends.

We need to do more "asking" – inviting friends, neighbors, and strangers to the Kirk.

We have great things to offer, including outstanding music, warm fellowship, and thoughtful sermons. Why not give other people a chance to be blessed?

Your Member Outreach Committee will soon begin to offer you tools and ideas to make this process more comfortable.

In this spirit, let me demonstrate "the art of the ask."

First, I invite all who are reading this to pray specifically that we will all be responsive to the moving of the Holy Spirit. The Kirk belongs to God.

Second, I ask that two people reading this will feel a nudge to step forward to help us. Email me at bmeek4870@gmail.com so I can give you options before you make a firm commitment to serve on the Member Outreach Committee.

We have been brainstorming lots of ideas. We even discussed the creation of a slogan to inspire us to action. Two we discarded were: "Put on your kilt and join us at the Kirk" and "Kiss those visitors until your lips chap." (I'm joking, okay?)

Perhaps a better slogan is "Invite three in '23!"

Ben Meek is Moderator of the Member Outreach Committee.

When we meet

Sunday worship service
begins at 10 a.m.



Saturday informal service
4 p.m. In Hoffius Hall

Wednesday Bible Study
9-10:30 a.m. Hoffius Hall



For more meeting times see
www.kirkinthepines.org/calendar



At first, Lent was to prepare new believers

By the time you read this “Pastor’s Corner,” we will already be in the season of Lent. This year Lent began on Feb. 22, Ash Wednesday, and will continue through the Great Forty Days leading up to the celebration of our Lord’s resurrection on Easter.

The word “Lent” is not found in the Bible but is an old English term rooted in the word “to lengthen” – a reminder of the lengthening of days that occurs in the spring.

Most of you know Easter has been tied to the spring equinox since the Council of Nicaea in the 4th century – the first Sunday, after the first full moon, following the spring equinox (March 21).

Historically, it was a season focused on the preparation of new believers who were preparing for baptism and entry into the Christian church. Since this baptism would often occur on Easter, the great forty days became a time of intense prayer and preparation for what it means to be a Christian.

Over the years, the church has used this time to encourage all Christians to focus on the disciplines of repentance and spiritual renewal. Some Christians try “to give something up” for Lent, while others seek to give themselves to some additional service.

In the end, whether we focus on self-denial or

The Pastor’s Corner *Bill Bailey*



service, the season of Lent continues to be a time to take stock of our lives – to give ourselves to those practices which are of lasting importance.

Lent is a rich season for all those who need discernment and who to seek to be faithful.

Our Kirk’s traditional services of worship and reflection will continue through the month of March beginning at 11 a.m. Wednesdays in the Kirk Sanctuary. These services will be followed by “Lenten Lunches” of soup and bread at 11:30 a.m. downstairs in Hoffius Hall.

As always, plan on joining us for this season of worship and fellowship and invite a friend for any or all of the lunches.

Kirk Calendar



March 1	11 a.m. – Lenten worship followed by lunch 3 p.m. – choir rehearsal
March 4	4 p.m. – Informal worship service
March 5	10 a.m. – Sunday worship service
March 6	10:30 a.m. – PW CT meeting
March 7	9 a.m. – Outreach meeting 3:30 p.m. – Tai Chi class
March 8	11 a.m. – Lenten worship followed by lunch 3 p.m. – choir rehearsal
March 9	10 a.m. – Fellowship Committee 10 a.m. – Finance Committee 1 p.m. – Games with Shepherd Group 1 3 p.m. – Mission Committee
March 10	10 a.m. – Session meeting
March 11	5 p.m. – Informal worship service
March 12	10 a.m. – Traditional worship service

March 13	9:30 a.m. – PW Circle 2 1:30 p.m. – PW Circle 1 4 p.m. – PW Circle 3
March 14	9 a.m. – Helping Hands 9 a.m. – Outreach meeting 3:30 p.m. – Tai Chi class
March 15	11 a.m. – Lenten worship followed by lunch 3 p.m. – Choir rehearsal
March 16	9 a.m. – Christian Ed Committee 10:30 a.m. – Member Outreach
March 17	2 p.m. – Interment of June Moore
March 18	5 p.m. – Informal worship service
March 19	10 a.m. – Traditional worship service
March 20	10 a.m. – Congregational Care Committee
March 21	9 a.m. – Outreach meeting 3:30 p.m. – Tai Chi class
March 22	11 a.m. – Lenten worship followed by lunch 3 p.m. – Choir practice
March 25	5 p.m. – Informal worship service
March 26	10 a.m. – Traditional worship service
March 28	9 a.m. – Outreach meeting
March 29	11 a.m. – Lenten worship followed by lunch 3 p.m. – Choir practice
March 30	10:30 a.m. – Communications Committee

Session approves budget for this year

Loss of Kirk Members:

We are sorry to report that Marjorie Darlene Spiller died Jan. 29, 2023. No information regarding services is available at this time.

Memorial and Interment Services:

A memorial service with interment followed by a reception in Hoffius Hall was held for former long-time Kirk member Mrs. Mary Irene Wright at 10 a.m. Friday, Feb. 24, 2023. Mrs. Wright passed away on Saturday, Nov. 26, 2022.

Church Statistics:

As of January 2023: 241 members and 158 family units.

Session News:

Finance Committee: Moderator Sharon Gardner presented budget recommendations for the 2023 budget. After extensive discussion, agreement was reached and the 2023 Kirk budget was approved. Please see article by Sharon Gardner elsewhere in this issue of the Voice in the Pines.

Building Committee: The much-needed insulation has been installed around the water pipes that will, hopefully, prevent another water disaster.

Communications Committee: Bob Morrow said the committee is increasingly using the Kirk website, the Village Voice, and Facebook to publicize Kirk events. He offered thanks to the committee members who support these activities and helpful feedback from members of the congregation.

Education Committee: Reporting for Martha Nielsen, Gail Salmen said unneeded books, candles and candelabras will be given away to Kirk members after the March 1 Lenten lunch. The items are free but donations may be made. The donations will be used to support the Fran Brown library.

The Clerk's Corner Tony Booth



Fellowship Committee: Pat Kuntz reminded the Session there would be Lenten Lunches on Wednesdays from Feb. 22 through March 29. Information sheets were passed out to committee chairs with instructions for the committees who will be providing service during the lunches.

Member Outreach Committee: Ben Meek said the committee will be meeting weekly to kick-off outreach activities. He foresees finding ways to equip members with guest invitational skills and formalizing visitor follow-up procedures further. He also plans to work with other committee chairs to energize outreach. He is still seeking to identify members for this important committee and a volunteer to help coordinate the pictorial directory. See article by Ben Meek in this issue of *Voice in the Pines*.

Mission Committee: Judith Rosenthal said the Mission Committee is planning a PB&J collection around Mothers' Day. The next Missions Committee meeting will be in March.

Worship Committee: Gail Salmen said plans are underway to resume passing the plate at worship at a certain date in the future.

*Come Worship and Reflect
Lenten Services at the Kirk !*

Each Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.
March 1 through March 29th

*Lenten lunch of soup and bread
immediately following the service.*

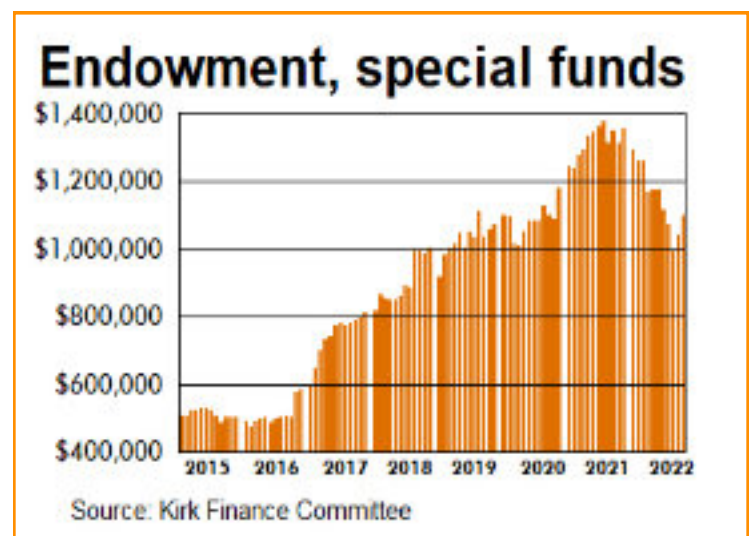
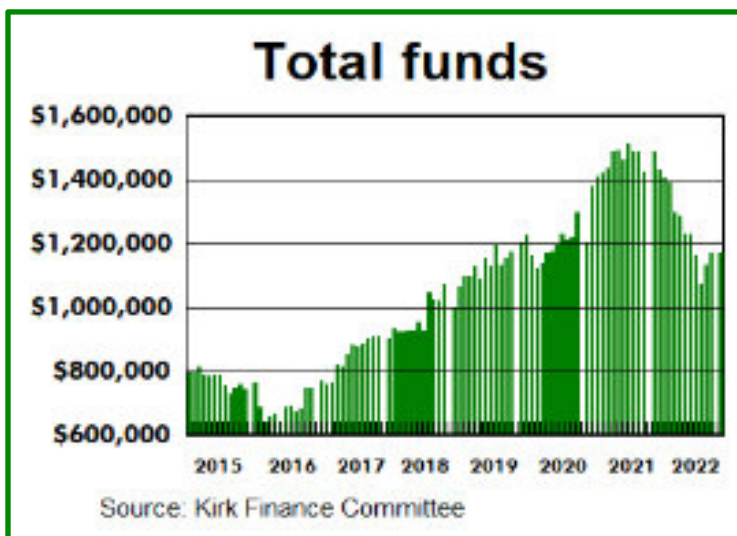


**Daylight Saving Time
begins on March 12**

Kirk in the Pines Financial Report

Year to date as of January 31, 2023

	Month		Year to date	
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>
General Fund:				
Receipts	\$ 37,974	\$ 65,311	\$ 37,974	\$ 65,311
Disbursements	\$ 37,974	\$ 25,238	\$ 37,974	\$ 25,238
Building Fund:				
Receipts	\$ 4,400	\$ 6,052	\$ 4,400	\$ 6,052
Disbursements	\$ 4,400	\$ 3,137	\$ 4,400	\$ 3,137
Total all Funds:				
Receipts	\$ 42,374	\$ 71,363	\$ 42,374	\$ 71,363
Disbursements	\$ 42,374	\$ 28,375	\$ 42,374	\$ 28,375
Checking Balance				\$ 85,321
Special Funds:				
Memorial Fund				\$ 86,149
Choir Fund				\$ 10,011
Luke 12:48 Fund				\$ 256,593
Programs Fund				\$ 16,104
Endowment Fund				\$ 663,826
Maack-Ormsbee Fund				\$ 49,250
Total Special Funds (as of Dec 31, 2022)				\$ 1,081,933



\$1,275 for Mission

Thank you for generously supporting our Mission Dollar campaign by placing your single dollar bills in the offering plate. \$1,275 was collected in January

If you wish to give more than a dollar, please use the envelopes in the pew racks. We are always grateful for your generous gifts and prayers.

Thinking of you ...

Each Saturday and Sunday the Congregational Care Committee asks Kirk members to sign a beautiful card to be mailed to a church member who has not been able to attend services due to illness or disability.

Please add your signature to these cards and join the congregation in wishing others well. Thank you.

Kirk's Finance Committee tackles budget challenges for 2023; explores IRS option

By Sharon Gardner

The Finance Committee had a productive meeting on Feb. 9. We discussed the projected shortfall of money for the coming year.

Using a combination of reduced expenses and increases in revenue recommended by the Finance Committee, the Session subsequently approved a budget for 2023 that will sustain the vibrant ministries of the Kirk.

This would not have been possible without your generous giving and for your increasing financial commitments to the Kirk over the years.

To develop the 2023 budget shortfall, many individuals, including all Kirk committees, worked to reduce the projected revenue shortfall.

On the expense side, the Finance committee, along with the Session and Kirk staff, have adjusted the budget for some committees.

The primary impact has been on funds budgeted for the Missions committee which saw a modest reduction in funding. The Session agreed to not fund a cost-of-living increase for Pastor Bailey at his request.

Cost-of-living increases for other staff, however, were funded. These raises are a way we show our gratitude to our wonderful staff who work above and beyond expectation all the time. We thank them for that.

On the revenue side we decided on a distribution rate of 5 percent for the Endowment funds which is an increase of 1 percent over the prior year. Part of this distribution will be used to support missions and the other part will support other Kirk ministries. Without the Kirk there is no mission. We will continue to work toward being able to increase our mission giving again next year.

Typically, when the budget is prepared, we work with new anticipated pledged and non-pledge giving, not funds remaining from the prior year. It is important to maintain an adequate cash balance to provide for continuing needs of the Kirk even in circumstances when monthly giving is less than the budgeted amount.

But the undesignated funds ending balance in 2022 was a generous \$60,913, so in this case, a portion of

this cash on hand will be used to adjust the budget while maintaining adequate funds for operations.

We also discovered a government funding program through the IRS – the Employee Retention Credit – which may provide new revenue to be used in the 2023 budget.

The IRS publicizes this program with the following announcement: “Did your small business keep employees on your payroll through the pandemic? Congratulations! You may be eligible for a tax credit from the Internal Revenue Service, too.”

The paperwork has been filed and we are waiting and hoping for approval. We will report back to the congregation when we know how much we will receive. We should know soon.

If you have questions, please contact me. There are no secrets, except gift givers who wish to remain anonymous, and I am happy to discuss Kirk Finances with you at any time.

Sharon Gardner is Moderator of the Finance Committee.



The Mail Corner

Ken Wolf appreciates all the recent support

Thank you to our wonderful church family, especially our Shepherd Group, for the prayers, cards, phone calls, meals and visits, and the Greenhorns for those delicious lunches during my recent illness.

Thank you for being so thoughtful and caring.

Peace & Grace,
Ken Wolf



Kirk Choir is ready for Lent and Easter

Planning our worship music for the seasons of Lent and Easter begins immediately with each new year. The few weeks between Christmas and Lent, varying in number every year, give musicians opportunities to sing and play hymn favorites and interesting new pieces.

When possible, we use the lectionary as our guide, looking for ways to coordinate the music with the sermon topic and scripture readings.

Lent and Easter are two of our most significant seasons. Christians are called to be introspective about their lives and focus on our God's loving presence in them. The selection of music should reflect that.

Some churches want Lenten music to be sober, somber, and, perhaps, doleful. But, even while Lent keeps us focused on our shortcomings and the need to repent, it's still possible to make music with joy and power.

John Wesley, in his *Directions for Singing*, which appears in the United Methodist Church's hymnals today, asks worshipers to:

"Sing lustily and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead or half asleep. Do not bawl so as to be heard above the rest of the congregation but strive to unite your voices together."

He could certainly communicate his message clearly!

The anthems we have chosen are a mix of current and traditional styles. The choir's planned offerings during Lent include the following:

- *Not Ashamed*, by Dan Forrest – a setting of Isaac Watts' text: "I'm not ashamed to own my Lord, and to defend His name, maintain the honor of His Word, the



Choir Notes

By Randy Toney

glory of His cross." This piece is a powerful affirmation of our devotion to God.

- *Jesus, Name of Wondrous Love*, by Everett Titcomb – from the more traditional choral literature, this one has a rather simple musical form, the highlight of which is a soprano solo surrounded by rich, choral sounds.

- *Take Up Your Cross*, by Thomas Keesecker – from the Scottish tune DANBY, the arranger has beautifully woven the familiar hymn text. The middle verse is an acapella (unaccompanied) section that keeps the choir on its toes!

- *Lamb of God*, Faure/arr. Petker – Faure's sublime Pavane is set to original lyrics by the Presbyterian minister Russel A. Kane. A beautiful melody and thoughtful text combine to express our own frailty and wonder at God's wondrous love for us.

Along with Donna's weekly Music for Reflection and our congregational hymns, we hope your worship is enhanced by these offerings. Preparation for Holy Week is also well underway and will be previewed in the next newsletter.

Randy Toney is the Kirk's Director of Music.



Pianist Dr. Neil Rutman delighted a large audience at the Kirk with his brilliant piano skills. (Robert Sonnen photos)

Pianist Neil Rutman thrills audience in Sunday afternoon concert at the Kirk

By Susan Morrow

The Sunday afternoon concert on Feb. 5 featuring renowned pianist Neil Rutman was indeed enchanted. We were fortunate to have the Hot Springs/Hot Springs Village Symphony Guild host this performance by Dr. Rutman who is currently the artist in residence at the University of Central Arkansas.

The appreciative audience of approximately 150 arrived early and was eager to enjoy the program which included Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, Francis Poulenc's whimsical *The Story of Babar the Elephant* and finally the tour de force piano piece, Chopin's *Ballade No. 1 in g minor*.

The afternoon's concert began with a surprise opening appetizer by Bach titled *In dir ist Freude* or "In Thee is Joy." The spirited piece was originally a Lutheran chorale but was transcribed for piano by Ferruccio Busoni.

Selections from Bach's *Goldberg Variations* followed this "warm-up" and displayed a gamut of musical emotions, bookended by a beautiful aria that begins and ends this monumental piece.

Rutman rolled up his sleeves, literally, and performed with the requisite gymnastic dexterity required for these selections originally written for the harpsichord's two keyboards.

The endearing children's story of *Babar the Elephant*, by Jean de Brunhoff, was spoken by Rutman

from the piano alternating with playing the piano interpretation of the story.

Babar's story of fleeing his beloved great forest after seeing his mother killed by the hunter and later, returning as King of the Elephants is a beautifully told story and has delighted three generations of readers.

After Poulenc's nieces and nephews asked him to "practice" the story of Babar, he responded by writing this charming and, also, challenging narrated musical story. Rutman brought to life Babar's pounding steps and the dancing musical celebration at the coronation ceremony which resounded throughout the sanctuary.

The expressive *Ballade No. 1 in g minor*, written by Frederic Chopin, concluded the afternoon's concert. Though Chopin's ballade is admittedly technically demanding for the artist, the technical aspects did not cloud the musical expressiveness and varied emotions displayed by Rutman throughout the performance of this beloved piece.

After a rousing standing ovation, Dr. Rutman graciously extended the delightful musical afternoon's offerings with an encore of *Some Enchanted Evening*. This piece seemed quite well chosen as a capstone to this unique opportunity to experience the expressive virtuosity of this gifted pianist.

Susan Morrow is a member of the Communication Committee.



Peggy Gram Scholarship concert and ice cream social draw big crowd on Super Bowl Sunday

By Judy Corwin

On Super Bowl Sunday, many people got to experience a “fun” time of entertainment in our Kirk sanctuary.

The Feb. 12 concert included some glittery ladies from Harmony on the Rocks, Random Mix, Roundelay Quartet and Treble in the Village joining forces (or should we say, voices) along with Top of the Rock Chorus to benefit the Peggy Gram Scholarship.

The ladies were in fine voice and as the audience could see – they all were having a great time with lots of laughter while still enjoying their task at hand – raising money for a good cause.

Although there were a few “hiccups” with a video presentation, we got to hear the voices of some of the young ladies who had benefited from receiving prior scholarship awards.

After the concert many took advantage of having ice cream

sundaes served in Hoffius Hall. It may not have been low in calories, but it was definitely high in the energy exhibited by all these terrific gals.

We wish them all well when they enter the Sweet Adeline’s competition later this year in Dallas.

Judy Corwin is a member of the Communication Committee.



A glittering and fun concert and ice cream social was enjoyed by all, including Mel Kuntz (above), on Super Bowl Sunday. (Robert Sonnen photos)





Happy dates



Birthdays

March 6	Ray Bates	March 14	Bill Worthley	March 19	Nancy Patton
March 8	Stanley Dean	March 15	Vicki Rosenquist	March 23	David Salmen
	Joyce Hayek	March 16	Lee Ann Hill	March 25	Paul Hayek
	Samuel Arant		Rita Martick		Mary Amundsen
March 9	Duane Sonnenburg		Patricia Poole	March 28	Vianne Huff
March 11	Dave Hamilton	March 17	Mike Hoagland	March 30	Bud Strautman
March 13	Jim Adams		Kelle Wolf	March 31	Norma Stevens
	Cindi Erickson	March 18	Mel Kuntz		

Anniversaries

March 6	Bev and Jack Bullard	52 years	March 16	Jamie and Rick Federick	32 years
	Leslie and Jim Pfeiffer	31 years	March 20	Della and Jim Reimers	64 years
March 12	Melissa and Robert Sonnen	31 years	March 28	Vianne and Bob Huff	63 years
March 14	Claire and Kenneth Rhodes	33 years			

Library treasures to be given away on March 1

Silently and out of sight, Martha Nielsen and members of the Education Committee have been reorganizing the Fran Brown library and cleaning out closets. As a result, we have books and other treasures, including candles, candelabras, and other items no longer in use.

We plan to give these away to Kirk members and friends on Wednesday, March 1, in Hoffius Hall after the Lenten Lunch.

While the items are offered free, donations will be accepted. All donations will go to the library for additional resources to be made available to the congregation.

For questions, contact Martha Nielsen.

Good Friday

By Christina Rossetti (1866)

Am I a stone, and not a sheep,
That I can stand, O Christ, beneath thy cross,
To number drop by drop Thy Blood's slow loss,
And yet not weep?

Not so those women loved
Who with exceeding grief
lamented Thee;
Not so fallen Peter weeping
bitterly;
Not so the thief was moved;

Not so the Sun and Moon
Which hid their faces in a
starless sky,
A horror of great darkness at
broad noon--
I, only I.

Yet give not o'er,
But seek Thy sheep, true Shepherd of the flock;
Greater than Moses, turn and look once more
And smite a rock.



The 'Good News' of Atonement

The word “tone” makes reference to the quality and strength of a musical note, a place, a situation, an expression, and all or a part of the human body. Add the prefix “a” and “atone” then signifies restoring the true value to all the above and more.

The challenge is the manner that restorative value is achieved. Does one tune the musical instrument, spruce up the place, alter or extradite yourself from the situation, extract your foot from your mouth or head to the gym?

Theology may be a terrifying word for some. It need not be in this situation. The word atonement is quite straight-forward!

“God don’t make junk!”

The Psalmist declared, “I praise

you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” (*Psalm 139:14*)

Along the way, by action, reaction, circumstances or misunderstanding we screw up. Most often we know it and guilt kicks in. “The bloom is off the rose,” so-to-speak. Now what?

Aha! There is atonement. But how? The guilt we experience is the built-in alarm bell called conscience. We are reminded we are not built for this. We are built for better stuff.

The problem: God is perfect and not associated with junk. There are consequences.

Now the GOOD NEWS.

The God who created us foresaw all this and had a plan. God

would deal with the consequence Himself through His Son’s life, death and resurrection.

What we must do is say we are sorry, mean it, seek His help in not repeating it and have trust in Him (He’ll help), His Son and the process.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith – and this not from yourself, it is a gift from God – and not by works so no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (*Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV*)

Tone up anew!

Lowell Gardner is a former Moderator of the Communication Committee.

Kirk staff

William B. Bailey – Senior Pastor

Randy Toney – Director of Music

Donna Toney – Organist/Pianist

Congregational Care Coordinator – Carol Clark

Chris Taylor-Wilmoth – Secretary

Beverly Schaumburg – Business Administrator

Arthur “Chip” Johnson – Sexton

Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines

275 Asturias Drive

Hot Springs Village, AR 71909

Phone: 501-922-1333 Fax: 922-6005

Email: kirkoffice1@gmail.com

www.kirkinthepines.org

A Voice in the Pines is a monthly publication of Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines. It is produced and edited by the Kirk’s Communication Committee – Bob Morrow, Moderator. Its email address is: kirkinthepinesvoice@gmail.com

