Welcome to our Sunday Celebration!
Sundays, 10:30 am

Kids LIFE begins each Sunday following the praise time in Worship.

Celebrating Black History Month

February 4
*Pushing Out into the Deep*
1 Corinthians 5:1-11; Luke 5:11
Pastor Lynice Pinkard
Stay after lunch for an hour of Fun and get-to-know-you Games in the Angel Room hosted by the LINC (Loving Into New Community) Team.

February 11
*Resurrection from the Sin of Racism*
1 Corinthians 15:12-20
Pastor Ama Zenya

February 18
*I Can See Clearly Now*
2 Cor 3:12-4:2
Pastor Lynice Pinkard
Guest Artist Johari Jabir

February 25
*Speaking the Word of Faith*
Romans 10:5-15
Members of First Congo
Guest Artist Linda Tillery
Followed by our Annual Meeting in the Gallery from 1–3 pm

A Year with the Universal Word
Check out the bible readings for each week at www.textweek.com

Every Sunday Worship Celebration is followed by a feast prepared by members and friends of First Congo. The first Sunday of each month is a potluck. Please plan to stay for delicious food and good company!
One of the most famous scriptures in the bible is 1 Corinthians 13:

“If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but don’t have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but don’t have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to be burned, but don’t have love, I gain nothing.”

In LIFE group as we reflected on this scripture one of our members said, ‘This can be a compass for all we do.’ What would it mean to review everything in your life in light of that passage?

No matter how eloquent I am, how insightful, how smart, how religious, how committed to social justice, if I don’t have love, I’m off base.

For me one of the hard ones is: ‘no matter how right I am, if I don’t have love, I’m not right with God.’

When I take love as a compass for everything I do, I’m reminded of that prayer that goes, “Dear God, I thank you that I have been peaceful and gentle all day, and I haven’t hurt anyone. Now, as I get out of bed, help me!”

A few years ago Pastor Lynice preached a sermon in which she asked “What’s Love got to do with it?” and then responded, “Not enough!”

- What does love have to do with the way I treat my family? My neighbors? The person who drives me nuts in the parking lot?
- What does love have to do with where I shop? What I eat? What I wear?
- What does love have to do with whether I keep my word?

And as a country, what if we – especially all those of us who identify as Christian – made this scripture our compass?

What does love have to do with our foreign policy? What does love have to do with our immigration policy? What does love have to do with our national budget? With how we pay teachers? With our health care system?

In the Message version of Philippians, the apostle Paul tells us: “Live a lover’s life…a life Jesus will be proud of.” I hope you’ve planned to spend Friday through Sunday of President’s Day weekend with our church family at the retreat in Sonoma as we learn together to love more fully.

Live a Lover’s Life! Practice Love! Make Love the compass for all you do!

Let’s do it, in the name of the one who loved us first,

Pastor Ama
Dear First Congo members, friends and visitors:

Last year I went to the First Congo annual retreat for my first time. When I look back I had two main reasons I decided to go. First, I was feeling guilty that I had not made an effort to get more involved with First Congo and I thought that the retreat would give me a chance. Second, I was trying to break an internal feeling of "not truly belonging" to First Congo; part of me felt like the church was just too 'clicky' and that I was not part of the 'click' (as it is the normal pattern of my life!). I thought that if I went to the retreat I would meet people in a better way to break that internal feeling.

Now I know that the reasons I had for going did not matter. *It was not me deciding my attendance last year, but The Spirit* deciding for me and leading me to attend.

The first night of the retreat they had a "silent meditation." I had never done one of those and I was somewhat excited to try. Without any rational intention, the meditation brought me to a deep spiritual place. That night when I fell asleep I ended up having intense nightmares. I woke myself up from my own screaming. *The Spirit was speaking to me directly.* When I opened my eyes I had no doubt that I had been given a direct message from God in my dreams, though I had no idea what it was. I shared the dream after the silent meditation and all were in awe. Later that week I called my sister in Puerto Rico and she clearly and confidently in Christ interpreted my dream.

The retreat was life transforming for me. God spoke to me directly and gave me personal guidance into my own journey in one night.

If you are questioning the idea of joining First Congo for the retreat this year, I encourage you to take the chance. If you are debating it in your heart, if you have a feeling in your mind about it, I ask you to *consider the possibility that the Spirit is leading YOU this year to attend!*

I cannot guarantee screaming nightmares for any of you, but I am convinced that God will be with us and that it will be an amazing time for all. I hope you join us!

En Cristo,
Peter Barbosa
Congregational Happenin’s
All events are at First Congo unless otherwise noted.

Community
Coming together with openness & respect

AN HOUR OF FUN AND GAMES
Sunday February 4, 1-2 pm
The Loving Into New Community (LINC) is hosting an hour of fun and get-to-know-you games for new comers, members, & friends of First Congo! Join us in the Angel Room after lunch just for fun!

COMMUNITY POTLUCK LUNCH
Sunday February 4, following worship
First Sunday of every month. Bring your favorite dish to share!

MINISTRY COUNCIL MEETING
Sunday Feb 4, 2:15 – 3:45pm
The Ministry Council has been set up by our congregation to assess the needs and opportunities in the congregation and surrounding community in light of our values, mission, and goals. To cultivate leadership to engage the gifts of our members and friends to meet the needs and opportunities identified. To oversee our ministry programs, keep abreast of the congregational calendar, and support the accountability of members to follow through on agreed-upon programs. For more info, contact Council Chair Laurel Sterling, 510.552.7542

“SELF LOVE 101” w/ FELICIA WILLIAMS
Saturday, February 10, 2007 10am – 6 pm
February is Love Month – are you ready to include You in your love story? Are you often harder on yourself than on anyone you know? Self-Love 101 is an experiential journey that provides proven techniques for managing the critical, “negative mind” and plotting a successful course to Self Love. Each participant will personally experience the energy of love in action, and design his/her own path for incorporating this love into life on a daily basis. More info and to register contact Felicia Williams 510.479.7579, EBLoveDr@comcast.net

FORUM ON MEMBERSHIP AT FIRST CONGO
Sunday Feb 11, 12:45 – 2 pm in the Angel Room
Share your thoughts and ideas about our commitments of active membership and our new process for becoming a member at First Congo. A draft of our new Membership Process and Commitments will be available on Sunday Feb 4 at worship, or by emailing a request on or after 2/4 to newsletter@firstoakland.org. The final draft will be brought to our Annual Meeting for a congregational vote. The Forum will be hosted by the members of the task force: Ryan Baum, Peter Barbosa, Sharron Abercrombie, Charley Lerrigo, Robin Kinney, Pastor Lynice and Pastor Ama.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MONTHLY MEETING
Sunday Feb 11, 2:15-4:15 pm

LIVING A LOVER’S LIFE
All Church Retreat in Sonoma, Feb 16-18
All members and friends of First Congo are welcome to a wonderful weekend of fellowship, renewal and spiritual awakening. $130 per person, all inclusive (food, lodging and program. For more info, or to sign up, email newsletter@firstoakland.org

DEBT-PROOF LIVING GROUP
February Date TBA
This group will meet the fourth Sunday of each month from 1-3 pm, January-October. February meeting will be rescheduled to accommodate for church Annual Meeting. Call Pastor Ama for Feb date & time. Get your financial health happening in 2007! working with the practices outlined in Mary Hunt’s Debt-Proof Living. Led by Pastor Lynice and Pastor Ama. To sign up or for more information contact Pastor Ama, 510.444.8511x11

RECOVERY ANONYMOUS
Sundays, 1-2:30pm in the Covenant Room
This ministry is for everyone who wants to become more fully alive! An all inclusive 12 step recovery meeting for people who wish to share and explore recovery, deepen serenity and grow spiritually in solidarity and fellowship. Wherever you are on life’s path, you are welcome to come and check it out. You need not identify as an addict to participate. For more information contact Pam Curtis-Horton 510-932-1964, mizzch@sbcglobal.net

TRAVELING POTLUCK
February’s date & location TBA
The potluck is a monthly informal gathering hosted by rotating First Congo households. All members and friends are welcome. Hosts provide the venue. Guests bring a dish or beverage to share. Please keep dietary needs in mind (vegetarian, vegan, and non-allergic options are appreciated). Please bring musical instruments!!! or group games to help keep the party hopping.

YOUTH/CHILDREN’S MINISTRY ADULT LEADERS WELCOMED!
Work with teens or with our younger kids in creative, faith-building time. For more info, contact Allison Kinney, 415.378.0731, youthandkids@firstoakland.org

FCCO MINISTRY LEADERS & EVENT PLANNERS
Please pick up a packet from the Ministry Council (Laurel Sterling, chair) to plan your 2007 goals and events. And don’t forget: to book rooms for groups and events, you must contact Arts First Oakland at (510) 444-8511x15. They book all the space usage here at First Congo, and it’s a busy campus, so please don’t publicize an event until you have confirmed the space availability with AFO!
Happenin’s, Con’t
All events are at First Congo unless otherwise noted.

**Elder Ministry**

Elder Ministry is preparing for an amazing 2007 and we are seeking participants and supporting members of the church. If you would be willing to offer your time or talents to the Elder Ministry, please contact us! Home visits, singing, birthday and holiday card making and so much more are just some of the ways we are going to involve the elders of our community in the new year. Be a part of a new and growing ministry and get back as much as you are giving; be a part of Elder Ministry today! For more info contact Meghan Bean-Smith, megbean1@yahoo.com, 510.648.4475.

**2007 Goals Discernment**

Thank you to all who came on Sunday January 21 for our Reflection on 2006 Accomplishments and Discernment of 2007 Goals. Teams are meeting to develop objectives for each 2007 goal between now and February 9. Objectives will be developed in each area by the team, refined by the Team Leaders (meeting on 2/9 or 2/10), discussed and approved by the Board (2/11) and then presented to the congregation at our annual meeting on February 25.

**Food Fellowship Ministry**

Thanks to everyone who signed up to host Sunday Fellowship for the last several months. See the calendar pull-out for the February schedule of cooks. And here’s a sneak peak at March:

- March 4 Potluck
- March 11 Erica Dean Glenn
- March 18 Ryan Baum
- March 25 Paul Vollmer

To sign up to cook in the future or for more information, contact Robin Kinney, 510.847.9030, robinkinney@yahoo.com. We can always use extra hands to help out in the kitchen. Just show up at 9am on Sundays.

**Campus Care—Beautifying the Grounds**

We’re pulling some old stuff, trimming up bushes and trees, and basically setting the stage for more beautiful and environmentally friendly plants on the church grounds. For more information contact Loren, 510.625.1209 or Anthony 510.444.8511x20, anthony@firstoakland.org.

**Serve One Another in Love!**

Your help is needed to maintain this community of service. Sign up for Sunday Hospitality (set-up, clean-up, cook, bring food) with Robin Kinney 510.847.9030; or to welcome our guests and friends with Amelie Hansen 510.759.2918, or to give a reading with Charley Lerrigo lerrigo@sbcglobal.net.

**First Congo Website**

**www.firstoakland.org**

We’re working hard to make our website a contribution to the community, both internally and at large. Keep watch for changes, submit pieces for the "Personal Stories" part, give us some new ideas or feedback. See the UCC website, www.stillspeaking.com/about/stories.htm for inspiration. Submissions and/or suggestions can be sent to Jon "Moses" Jackson at jonjackson@gmail.com.

**Church Directory—**

**New Edition coming out February 11!**

To update or add your contact information for the church directory, contact Dawn Raymond, newsletter@firstoakland.org or 510.444.8511 x16.

**Arts Positive**

Sharing our gifts & ourselves.

**The Songbird Sessions**

**Monday February 5, 7-9pm**

This Arts First Oakland sponsored evening is hosted by Andrej Hostynek and happens the 1st Monday of every month. Join the group as they explore the magic of both directed and improvisational singing, toning, sounding, and rhythm. Taking inspiration from Bobby McFerrin’s Circlesong format, you are invited to co-create a tapestry of sound. Bring an open mind and together we will open hearts and voices. Donations accepted to cover costs.

**Rhythm Studio/Body Music w Keith Terry**

**Wednesday February 14, 7-8:30pm**

Percussive gathering held the 2nd Wednesday of every month, using the oldest instrument on the planet—the human body. A useful tool for musicians & movers of all kinds. Please wear comfortable clothing & sneakers or jazz shoes. No experience necessary. $10, no-one turned away due to lack of funds. For more info about Keith Terry, visit www.crosspulse.com. More info: Eve, 510.444.8511x15, info@artsfirstoakland.org.

**Project Writers Unite!**

**Monday February 19, 7-10pm**

This Arts First Oakland sponsored evening happens the 3rd Monday of every month. Writers in all disciplines are invited to join this ongoing group—share your work and get feedback in a supportive environment. Donations accepted to cover costs. For info: James Brown Jr, 510.568.6968. For a glimpse of the group’s activities check out www.angelfire.com/ultra/projectwritersunite.
CIRCLE-SINGING
Wednesday February 21, 7-9pm
A style of singing with lots of room for beginners and experienced
singers alike—it’s a great chance to stretch your vocal wings with
a gifted & generous leader, to create a group sound that inspires &
refreshes. Donations greatly appreciated. Check out
www.artsfirstoakland.org or contact Eve, 510.444.8511x15,
info@artsfirstoakland.org

COMMUNITY ART SALON
Monday February 26, 6-9pm
This Arts First Oakland sponsored event is held the
4th Monday of every month. Share creative space &
community. You can bring any kind of project of your
own to work on/play with. We have plenty of collage
materials. Light refreshments. Dawn, 510.625.1209,
damaraz@juno.com

TEEN ART & LEADERSHIP ENSEMBLE
(T.A.L.E. OF FIRST CONGO)
Thursdays, 6:30-8:00pm
Youth ages 11-18 are invited to participate as artists and leaders
in this service ensemble. We share our gifts and rehearse for our
role in Sunday worship celebrations. The interests/ talents of the
group will lead the way for us to become leaders in our church
community. Allison Kinney, 415.378.0731,
youthandkids@firstoakland.org

JOHN SEELEY GALLERY ART EXHIBIT
Leaf Mono-Prints, Deborah “DJ” Hamouris, 12/21/06 thru 3/21/07
Available for viewing whenever you’re at the church! All art is
available for purchase. For questions about the exhibit
510.444.8511 x15.

SING WITH VOICES OF PRAISE
Our own First Congo’s Voices of Praise
welcomes new singers. We particularly need
sopranos and basses. We rehearse every
Thursday night, 7-9pm and Sunday mornings.
If you’d like to be part of Voices of Praise,
contact Kelly Takunda Orphan,
510. 893.4875 or ktakunda@sbcglobal.net

ARTS FIRST OAKLAND VOLUNTEER OPS
Arts First Oakland (AFO), our own in-house arts collaborative, has
a number of ways you can support the creative work at First
Congo! Please call the office if you would like to help out—Eve
Lindi, 510/444.8511x15, info@artsfirstoakland.org

Peace & Justice-Making
Living our values & building
a just society

FORUM W/ ANTI-RACISM ACTIVIST TIM WISE
Thursday February 1, 7:30pm
Speak Out, the Center for Political Education, and KPFA present
an evening with anti-racism activist and author, Tim Wise. Tickets
$10 general admission, $5 for youth 18 and under. Advance tickets
available through Brown Paper Tickets, 1-800-838-3006, or online
at http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/9397 More information:
Speak Out, 510.601.0182, info@speakoutnow.org

PUBLIC FORUM W/ RABBI MICHAEL LERNER
Saturday February 10, 7:30pm
Twin Towers United Methodist Church, Oak & Central in Alameda
Rabbi Michael Lerner’s presentation, “Taking Our Country Back
from the Right: A Strategy for Liberals and Progressives for the
Coming Two Years” co-sponsored by the Alameda Chapter of
the Network of Spiritual Progressives along with the Alameda
Public Affairs Forum, Twin Towers Methodist Church,
Ecumenical Peace Institute, and Alameda Peace Network. This
event is free and open to the public. For more information:
elkrong@yahoo.com

NETWORK OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESSIVES
Bring our spirit-led values to bear on the needs of our souls, our
communities, and our world. To find out more about our local
group contact Dennis Fagaly or Marcia Lovelace, 510.465.7192

Holy Council Of Women
Saturday February 10, 6:30pm
Gather for dinner and delight. Exploring deeply the teachings and
Spirit of Jesus and what he has to say about and to women. We
will plan the 2007 calendar for our quarterly gathe-
ring of women. We welcome. No experience necessary. For more info
please contact Pastor Ama at (510) 444-8511 x11.

Contemplative Prayer
Sundays 1-2:15pm in the Choir Room
NOTE! Sunday Feb 25 we will meet at 8:00am
This contemplative time incorporates simple movement, prayer,
check-in time and a brief teaching or reflection. Everyone is
welcome. No experience necessary. For more info contact
Grant Kinney, 510.292.6758, theaussiepea@yahoo.com

Happenin’s, Con’t
All events are at First Congo unless otherwise noted.
COME TELL YOUR RESURRECTION STORY!
Tuesday evenings, 7-8:30pm, starting in February
In preparation for our celebration of the Easter Resurrection Holy Day, the story telling group will be telling Self-Revelation stories on what brought us back to life. Bring yourself and an open heart—the stories will follow. Contact Ly Franshaua, 510.219.8073

FOUNDATIONS—THEOLOGY & BIBLE STUDY
Starts Monday February 5, 7-9pm
Sunday makeup/drop in sessions start Sunday Feb 11, 9am
An 8-week theological and bible study class that explores how to read the bible and understand the theological foundations of our church. More information: Webb Mealy, 510.444.8511x21, webb@selftest.net

LOVING INTO NEW COMMUNITY (LINC) TEAM
Saturday March 17, 4 – 6 pm
If you’d like to be part of strategizing for growing our community with love, plan to be there! Speak to LINC Coordinator Grant Kinney, 510.292.6758, theaussiepea@yahoo.com

LIFE GROUP LEADERS MEETING
Tuesday March 20, 6:30 – 8:30 pm in the Covenant Room
Note: LIFE Groups will not meet individually that week.

WOMEN EXPLORING SPIRITUALITY
Come and explore world spiritual traditions with other women. More info: Sharon Abercrombie, 510.530.7026, nurjehan3@sbcglobal.net

LIFE (LIVING IN FAITH EVERYDAY) GROUPS
LIFE Groups are a way to cultivate spiritual friendship and to grow in faith. LIFE Groups meet weekly for sharing, prayer and conversational scripture study. If you are interested please contact Pastor Ama, 510.444.8511 X11

KIDS’ LIFE
Sundays, at about 11:00 am – Noon
A creative, faith-building and friend-making time for kids! Kids LIFE happens every Sunday following the Praise Time in worship, and continues through the end of the worship celebration.

JOIN FIRST CONGO!
You are welcome and invited to become an active, voting member in the life of this church. To take part in the next New Members Class, contact Pastor Ama, 510.444.8511 x11, right away, and we’ll set the date according to what works for the most people.

2007 ANNUAL MEETING
FEB 25, 1 – 3 PM
All members & friends are encouraged to come.
All have a voice. Members have a vote.

Topics:

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2007
Approve Goals with Objectives for each goal area, and leader(s) for each objective.
Understand linkage of 2007 Goals with each Ministry Teams’ goals.

MEMBERSHIP
Approve agreements of active membership.
Approve process for becoming a member.
Create task force to develop guidelines for termination of voting rights.

DEFICIT REDUCTION PLAN
Hear the plan to plan for deficit reduction.

2007 CALENDAR
Approve 2007 Calendar.
Recognize implications of Pastor Ama’s maternity leave and sabbatical.

MISSION MONIES
Understand process for allocation of mission monies.

February Birthdays
5—Rashad Shabazz
7—Chris Carper
7—Matt Carper
8—Grant Kinney
14—Jane Kilmer
16—Mary Gonzales
18—Allison Kenny
23—Lynice Pinkard

February Anniversaries
14—Paloma Pavel & Richard Page
20—Suzette Davidson

Please let us know when your birthday or anniversary is so that we can send blessings. Contact Dawn, 510.444.8511 x16, newsletter@firstoakland.org
Celebrate Black History Month
with First Congo
Sunday Worship Celebrations
each Sunday in February, 10:30am

Music from
Linda Tillery, Johari Jabir
and our own Vocies of Praise
Messages from
Pastor Lynice Pinkard,
Pastor Ama Zenya,
and Members of First Congo

And don’t miss “Living A Lover’s Life,” our all-church retreat,
President’s Day Weekend, Feb 16-18 in Sonoma.
Sign up by Sunday February 4 at church or by emailing newsletter@firstoakland.org.

First Congregational Church of Oakland
2501 Harrison St. @ 27th
Oakland, CA. 94612
Phone: 510.444.8511

To the Beloved:
### February 2007

See Congregational Happenin’s for Event Details

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<td>10:30a Worship, Communion Sunday</td>
<td>7-9 Foundations Class</td>
<td>LIFE Groups 7-8:30 Resurrection Stories w/ LyFranshaua</td>
<td>6:30 TALE</td>
<td>7pm Voices of Praise rehearsal</td>
<td>10a-6p “Self Love 101”</td>
<td>6:30p Holy Council of Women</td>
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<td>12p Lunch—POTLUCK! 1-2:30 Rec. Anon. 1-2 An Hour of Fun &amp; Games 1-2:15 Prayer 2:15-3:45 Ministry Council Meeting</td>
<td>7-9 Songbird Session</td>
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<td>6-9 Community Art Salon 7-9 Foundations Class</td>
<td>LIFE Groups 5:30-8 Potluck &amp; Power w/ Greg Galluzzo 7-8:30 Resurrection Stories w/ LyFranshaua</td>
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**WORSHIP**—Loving God with all we are

*Worship Team*  Pastor Ama, 510.444.8511 x11

*Altar Creation Coordinator*  Rainbeau, 510.530.4014

*Dance Ministry*  Amy Shoemaker, 515.229.0303

*Music Ministry Leaders*  Kelly Takunda Orphan, 893.4875

*Readers Coordinator*  Rev. Charley Lerrigo, 510.531.5539

**FELLOWSHIP & DISCIPLESHIP**—Building authentic relationships and growing in God’s Love

*Children & Youth Ministry*—Sunday children’s time and special events for youth, kids & families

Allison Kenney, 415.378.0731

*Community Care*—for members & friends

Pastor Lynice, 510.444.8511 x12

*Computer/ Internet Tech Team*—

Paul Vollmer, 510.357.1505

Nasim Uddin, 510.759.1175

*Contempletive Prayer Group*—

Grant Kinney, 510.292.6758

*Decorations Coordinator*—for fellowship & special events

Nan Lim, 510.635.6744

*Elder Care*—

Megan Bean-Smith, 510.648.4475

*Health & Wellness*—

Rebecca Faith, Parish Nurse, 510.444.8511x14

*Hospitability Team (Food!)*—Shopping, cooking, set up, clean up for fellowship meal

Robin Kinney, 510.847.9030

Frank Waters, 510.483.6122

*Living in Faith Everyday (LIFE) Groups*—

Faith-sharing groups

Pastor Ama, 510.444.8511x11

*New Members Class*—

Pastor Ama, 510.444.8511x11

**STEWARDSHIP**—caring for what God has given

*Board of Trustees*—

Pat Bruce-Lerrigo, 510.531.5539

*Beautification, Indoors*  Rainbeau, 510.530.4014

*Beautification, Outdoors*  Anthony Maples, 510.444.8511 x20

*Generous Giving Team*  Pastor Lynice, 510.433.0906

*Ministry Council*  Laurel Sterling, 510.552.7542

**MISSION**—Living our values in the public sphere

*Arts First Oakland*—An interfaith collaborative of artists and art-lovers at First Congregational Church of Oakland.

Eve Lindi, 510.444.8511x15

*Network of Spiritual Progressives*—Brings our spirit-led values to bear on the needs of our souls, our communities, and our world.

Marcia Lovelace, 510.465.7192

**EVANGELISM**—Sharing the message of God’s love.

*LINC Team*—”Loving Into New Community”

Grant Kinney, 510.292.6758

*Web Servant*  Jon “Moses” Jackson, 510.757.3839

*Welcome Coordinator*—

Greeting & follow up with visitors

Amelie Hansen, 510.759.2918