



Connecting In Spirit

Youth Faith Formation

Monthly News

April 2024

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A BIG ANNOUNCEMENT APRIL 7!!!

Volunteer opportunities
and more!



Help, Thanks, Wow

One of the deepest blessings of storytelling for me is how simplicity can bring deep insight and clarity to the complexity, uncertainty, and suffering life brings to us. I have always found comfort and sparks of divinity in figuring out how to explain these mysteries to a 5 year old.

Author and memoirist Ann Lamott writes that all prayers essentially consist of three parts: help, thanks, wow. As my mind wrestles with the big emotions of what was, what is, and what's to come, I'm grateful for the simple framework.

As I return from my leave of absence, I ask you for your help as I reintegrate into my role during this exciting and dynamic time for ORUUC. I ask that you give me grace as I learn and relearn about all the ways you have held and served one another and the community during my absence.

Thank you for giving me time to tend to my family when I needed it. I'm grateful to Reverend Lisa and my staff, Whitney Cole, Jason Fishel and Susan Rosenbaum, for willingly, capably, and lovingly tending to Youth Faith Formation. Also, to the many volunteers and staff who took on extra duties to keep programs like OWL and other programming. You are all so close to my heart.

This brings me to WOW- I am awed by the dedication and graciousness in our Beloved Community. I am blessed to serve in a community that shows such loving kindness.

This April also marks a pivotal time for ORUUC in the search for our new minister.

Help us open our hearts and minds to the possibilities of service, meaning, and purpose this new leader has to offer. Help us extend loving kindness to them as they begin this deep work of change and transformation.

Thanks to the Board, Rev. Lisa, and our Search Committee for preparing us for this new leader as they bring their vision of hope and inspiration in our broken world. And thanks to each and every one of you who have opened your hearts and minds to possibilities that a faith centered in love has to offer the future.

WOW-what a dynamic, passionate community we are! Through change, pain, and uncertainty, we come to this moment stronger and more united. We are seekers, lovers, builders, dreamers, dancers, and so many other things. We have so much to offer our new minister, Oak Ridge, and the world. This month, let's show up and show out for the future and for each other. May we be so.

Christine

Christine Rehder (she/her/hers)

Youth Faith Formation Director

crehder@oruuc.org



Welcome to
The Gift of
Interdependence

This month, we embark on a new worship series: Interdependence. Keep an eye out for weekly emails and ORUUC Facebook Group posts! Not receiving Friday emails? Let Rachel know at communications@oruuc.org. Thanks!

We experience ourselves... as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of our consciousness, a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires.

Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all.

Albert Einstein



THE MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

BIG NEWS! Sunday, April 7!



Your ORUUC Ministerial Search Team is pleased to announce something big... On April 7!

With your diligent support to our faithful service, we have made a mutual selection with our new ministerial candidate. This means that in a sea of prospective searchers and "searchees," we managed to find each other.

Please plan to attend church in person or online on Sunday, April 7 for this important

announcement, and stay tuned for more!



This Sunday, April 7 is our Stewardship Campaign Kickoff! Lunch will be provided. There will be no Adult Faith Formation classes; Youth Faith Formation classes will take place as scheduled. Stay tuned for details about the 2024-25 church budget and how you can make an impact!



PFLAG meets Monday, April 8 at Chapel on the Hill to talk about Mental Health

Toni Stephenson, Co-Chairperson of the Oak Ridge affiliate of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will speak at the next PFLAG meeting on April 8. The United Church, Chapel on the Hill, will host the meeting in the Activities Room, 85 Kentucky Ave., Oak Ridge.

All are welcome. The group gathers beginning at 6:45 p.m. for a short social time followed by the presentation starting at 7. The group adjourns at 8 p.m.

The presentation will cover the basics of what NAMI, the nation's largest grass-roots mental health organization, offers in general. The talk will also focus on what is now available for the LGBTQ+ community. Although a non-traditional sexuality is not a mental illness, because of stigma and misinformation many experience difficulties in their mental well-being. Participants will also be asked what additional things NAMI can do for them. Questions and feedback will be welcomed.

PFLAG (formerly known as an acronym for Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) is the United States' largest organization uniting families and allies with people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ). Its mission is to provide opportunities for dialogue about sexual orientation, gender identities, and to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

Oak Ridge has an active PFLAG group which meets monthly, rotating the venue

among faith communities including the First Presbyterian, First United Methodist, and Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Churches, United Church Chapel on the Hill, and the Jewish Congregation of Oak Ridge.

For additional information, contact PFLAG President Anne Backus at backusanne@comcast.net.

Mother Goose



Join us with your baby, toddler and/or preschooler for bouncing, tickling, touching, clapping and action rhymes, musical circle games, simple songs, and play.

of Oak Ridge

Looking for an interactive program designed to stimulate learning, introduce group activities, and encourage play? Mother Goose is the answer! Led by ORUUC's own Michael Raymond, the Mother Goose Program is a group experience for parents and their babies and young children. The program introduces adults and children to the pleasure and power of using rhymes, songs, and stories together.

Mother Goose meets April 4 and 18 this month --the First and Third Thursdays-- at 10:30 a.m. in the Oak Ridge Public Library Auditorium. It's free and open to the community.

View and sign up for the Oak Ridge Public Library's newsletter here:
<https://mailchi.mp/oakridgetn/orplapr24>

Youth Faith Formation Save the Dates

April 21 and 28 - Ministerial Candidate Sundays

April TCAP Test Break - TBD

May 12 - Last Day of Youth Faith Formation before Summer Break

May 19 - Bridging/Reception

Stone Soup

FREE
Community
Meal!



DINE
IN!
Take out
meals
available

Friday, April 26
5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Or until supplies run out!

Pinto Beans and Rice
Corn Bread
Fresh Fruit

Come inside the Social Hall and share a meal with others, or pick up a take out meal. Bags of non-perishable groceries will also be available. All are welcome!

Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church
809 Oak Ridge Turnpike, Stoplight #2

(865) 483-6761



Special thanks to our Community Partners for making this Final Friday Monthly Meal possible:

Jewish Congregation of Oak Ridge
Kroger Marketplace

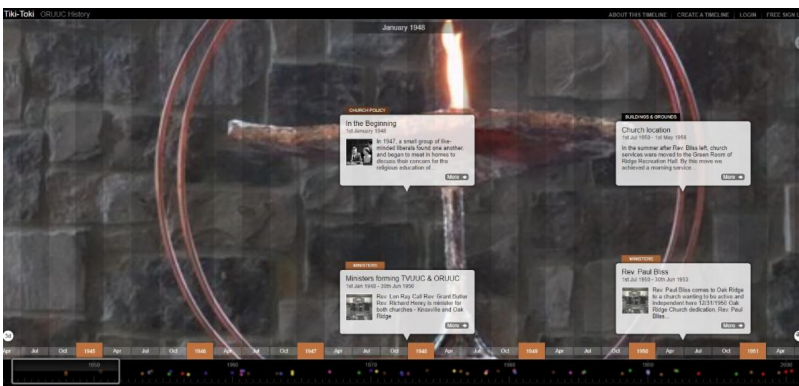


Stone Soup volunteers prepare a delicious free community meal each month. Would you or your teen like to be part of the team? There are many ways you can help plan, shop, prep, cook, bake, bag, greet, serve, and clean up. Reach out to Jen Stark at jen.stark@hotmail.com if you have questions or you'd like to help!



Need Childcare for a Church Meeting or Event?

If you or your group need childcare for a church meeting or event, please complete this form **TWO WEEKS** in advance: [ORUUC Childcare Request Form \(jotform.com\)](https://jotform.com) Childcare is provided for children ages 10 and under only. Once you click "Submit," the form will go directly to ORUUC's Multigenerational Coordinator Whitney Cole, who will work with Childcare Coordinator Laura Scott to arrange childcare for your church function. Thank you!

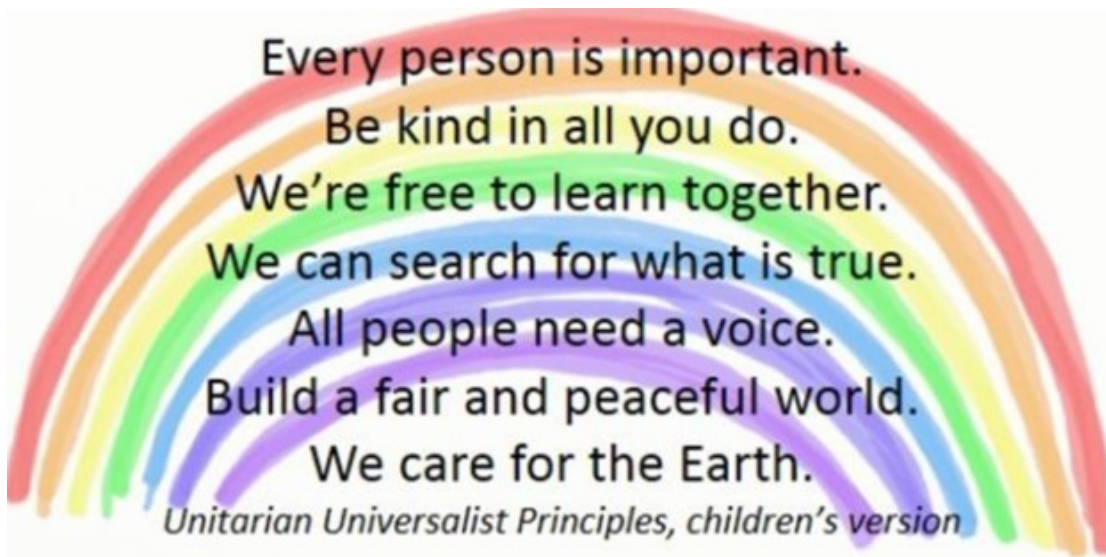


Check out the ORUUC History Timeline created by Anne Child! [ORUUC History \(tiki-toki.com\)](https://tiki-toki.com)

Anne spent countless hours compiling the data shared during the January 2023 Timeline Event and going through past church history publications. This fantastic interactive timeline includes photos and descriptions of life at ORUUC through the decades. Thank you, Anne!

Rev. Lisa Romantum Schwartz, Interim Minister

Rev. Lisa can be reached by email at Rev.Lisa@oruuc.org or by phone at 865-483-6761 ext. 102.



*Connecting in Spirit: Youth Faith Formation Monthly News is a digital publication designed to serve ORUUC families with children from birth through high school. **If you have ideas or suggestions for content, or would like to add someone to the mailing list, please email Rachel at communications@oruuc.org or Christine at crehder@oruuc.org.** To take a look at past issues of Connecting in Spirit, visit <http://www.oruuc.org/connectinginspirit>.*

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ORUUC | Contact Us

ORUUC | 809 Oak Ridge Turnpike, Oak Ridge, TN 37830 865-483-6761

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