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News from Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church

# The Exponent



#### Congregational Meeting This Sunday After Worship!



#### **Congregational Meeting**

Sunday, Dec. 10 at 11:15 a.m. In the Sanctuary and on Zoom

No Adult Faith Formation.

Holiday Craft Hour for youth of all ages.



ORUUC's Fall Congregational Meeting takes place this Sunday, Dec. 10 following morning worship, in the Sanctuary and on Zoom; if you attend worship via Zoom, please stay in the Worship Zoom, or enter using this **ZOOM LINK**. Zoom Meeting ID: 946 8973 5846.

Along with the standard reports from the Minister, Board President, Treasurer and various committees, proposed bylaws changes will be discussed. Please see Page 5 for the meeting agenda. The agenda was also sent out to the membership by mail before Thanksgiving. If you did not receive a postcard, please call the church office (483-6761) to make sure we have your correct mailing address on file.

## You Are Not Failing Christmas

#### Liz James, UUHS Founder

Some of you have already found and connected with the UU Hysterical Society, those profound prophets of mirth and dignity who keep our Unitarian Universalist funny bones tickled year-round. In case you haven't, check out their website

(https://www.uuhystericalsociety.com/), Facebook page, or podcast for a real treat. Here, with their permission, is a guest essay by UUHS founder Liz James. ~Rev. Lisa

You are not failing to Christmas properly. You are not failing if you are missing gifts,

or if you are missing people. Or if you have people but are kind of wishing you didn't.

Or if you have given up, and are planning to stay home with Netflix, a few drinks, and the chocolates you forgot to give to your son's teacher on the last day before holidays.

Because they lied to you about what Christmas means.

Martha Stewart lied to you about the decor, the Church lied about when Jesus was born, and a whole INDUSTRY lied about shopping, and everybody lies about what a "normal" family looks like.

The real story is a terrified refugee kneeling in a barn, surrounded by dirt and poop. Pushing a baby out and then being descended upon by uninvited guests with poor gift giving skills. The real story is Mary hoping the star of Bethlehem doesn't get any brighter, because she's relying on dim

lighting to hide all the blood and mucus in the straw.

The real story is the Pagans, saying "sure, uh, Jesus was born in midwinter" to keep the church from vetoing their party holiday. The real story is Decking the Halls not with coordinated theme decorations, but with whatever was lying around. Pinecones, and anything still green, and basically garbage from the back yard.

The Christmas you're trying to return to never happened.

December is not a season of beauty and depth and connection that you have somehow screwed up. Nobody gets that holiday--certainly not consistently. The only constant of Christmas is that it is constantly getting remade to fit the world of people celebrating it.

The meaning of Christmas is not about being perfect. Every piece of the story, when you trace it back, is about the opposite of being perfect. It's about something more beautiful, more profound, and decidedly less photogenic. To be human is to be part of a great story of making do. Of changing and learning, and getting together.

AND YOU, with your best-l-can-butnot-perfect-efforts, fit right into that story. YOU ARE NOT FAILING CHRISTMAS.

You are doing Christmas exactly right.

## This Sunday, Dec. 10 A Point of Repose

As winter approaches, we're invited into a time of spiritual quiet, of germination, of dreaming. It's tempting for some to want to hibernate, to skip the winter's cold and dark, going straight from fall to spring. But winter can offer renewal, wisdom, and beauty. A congregational meeting follows this reflective service.

Worship with us at 10 a.m. in person or on Zoom. Zoom door opens at 9:45 a.m.

Go to Sunday Worship Info — ORUUC for Zoom information.
The Order of Service may be found here.
Email or Text Prayer Requests to prayers @oruuc.org



**December Split the Plate Offering: The Free Medical Clinic** 

After worship, please stay for the Congregational Meeting in the Sanctuary and on Zoom. All Adult Faith Formation classes are canceled; youth are invited to an all-ages holiday craft party during the meeting.

Covid-19 Update: Masks are <u>not</u> required in the building; we have masks and hand sanitizer available, and we encourage you to do what makes you feel comfortable.

## Angel Tree Gifts Due Back at Church by Sunday, Dec. 10



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas morning in the church lobby! Reminder that all Angel Tree gifts are due back at church by this coming Sunday, Dec. 10. Gifts may be dropped off during church office hours (weekdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.) Please also donate new gloves/mittens, hats, and socks to the Mitten Tree to benefit the Blossom Center. Thank you!

# December Split the Plate Offering: The Free Medical Clinic

Every Sunday we share our offering 50/50 with a local agency chosen by our members during a vote at the Congregational Meeting each June. This month, the Split the Plate offering goes to the Free Medical Clinic.

The Free Medical Clinic is a non-profit, primarily volunteer-staffed organization offering free medical services to residents of Anderson, Roane, and Morgan Counties. It serves people who do not have insurance and cannot afford to pay for medical services due to their income level. Because they are a primarily volunteer organization, they rely on donations from individuals,



churches, groups, etc. This clinic provides medical care to those who have no other resources. It can literally mean the difference between life and death for some people (such as undiagnosed cancer). We all deserve adequate health care and to be treated with worth and dignity (our first principle). Our support for the Free Medical Clinic helps us live our principles while providing support to the disadvantaged.

Please GIVE HERE as you are willing and able, or text "ORUUC" to 73256.

## 2023 Holiday Calendar

Sunday, Dec. 3 at 10 a.m. Morning Worship: Love is At the Center Faith Formation Hour and Soup Potluck, followed by Cocoa & Caroling at noon.

**Saturday, Dec. 9 at 6 p.m. Oak Ridge Christmas Parade**Join ORUUC in this annual tradition! Line up by 5 p.m. at the
Corporate Center on Lafayette Drive. Bring candy to distribute.

Sunday, Dec. 10 at 10 a.m. Morning Worship: A Point of Repose Congregational Meeting at 11:15 a.m. in the Sanctuary and on Zoom. No Adult FF; all ages Holiday Craft Party for Youth.

Sunday. Dec. 17 at 10 a.m. The 21st Annual No Rehearse Christmas Pageant in the Sanctuary and on Zoom. *No Faith Formation*.

**Thursday, Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. Winter Solstice Service** in the Sanctuary (*No Zoom*). *Childcare provided*.

Sunday, Dec. 24 at 10 a.m. Morning Worship: Hard Candy Christmas in the Sanctuary and on Zoom. *No Faith Formation.* 

**Sunday, Dec. 24 at 6 p.m. Christmas Eve Service** in the Sanctuary only (No Zoom). Singing begins at 5:45 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 25-Monday, Jan. 1: Church Office Closed

Friday, Dec. 29 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Stone Soup Community Meal. Dine or drive thru for a delicious, free meal!

Sunday, Dec. 31. 10 a.m. Morning Worship ONLINE ONLY: Seeds for the New Year. UUA streaming service. Church will be closed. *No Faith Formation*.

Sunday, Dec. 31 New Year's Eve Coffeehouse Talent
Show in the Social Hall. Supper and Social begin at 6:30 p.m.,
followed by the 7 p.m. program. After the Coffeehouse, stay for the
New Year's Eve Party! Ring in 2023 with friends! Bring games,
finger food, and drinks to share.

ORUUC

## **Announcements**



PFLAG WINTER SOCIAL AT ORUUC--next Monday, Dec. 11 beginning at 6:45 p.m. All are welcome!

The nights may be long and dark, but lights will be bright at the PFLAG Winter Social on December 11. All are welcome to come and enjoy the holidays this season brings. The gathering will be held here at Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church. We'll party from 6:45 to 8 p.m. If you would like to share a favorite holiday finger food, please bring it ready to serve.

All are welcome. The group gathers beginning at 6:45pm for a short social time followed by the meeting and more fun starting at 7:00. The group adjourns at 8 p.m.

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. 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. For additional information, contact PFLAG President Anne Backus, <a href="mailto:backusanne@comcast.net">backusanne@comcast.net</a>.



Thanks to Martin Bauer for hanging the speakers in the Social Hall! And a special thanks to Anne Child, Nathaniel Bass, and Jimmy Groton who helped Martin get the speaker wires off of the floor and into wire molding. It feels great to get those big clunky stands out of the way!



The Oak Ridge Christmas Parade is TOMORROW! We'd love to have a large group walk with us this year! Meet at 5 p.m. at the Corporate Center on Lafayette Drive. Thanks to all who donated candy to distribute. There's always a crowd, so feel free to bring more! Questions? Multigenerational Director Whitney Cole is the point of contact. Thank you!



All are invited to join the middle and high school youth hike this Sunday, Dec. 10! Meet at church at 2 p.m. to carpool. The December hike will be along the Delaware Loop off Outer Drive near the intersection with Delaware Avenue. Parking on the street between Delaware and Ogontz is limited, which is why the group plans to carpool. The trail is about 1.5 miles, but there are lots of side trails in case the group chooses to extend the hike. Parents are welcome to hike, too! The group plans to return to church at 4 p.m. Parents: Please make sure that you fill out and turn in a release form before the hike. Forms will be available at drop off. Thanks to Jim Nutaro, Aubrey Wick Sebastian, Jimmy Groton, and Whitney Cole for organizing these monthly hikes!

### **Announcements**

#### Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church

#### CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2023 11:15 A.M. IN THE SANCTUARY AND ON ZOOM

#### **AGENDA**

I. Call to Order

II. Opening Words

III. Present June 2023 Congregational

Meeting Minutes

IV. President's Report

V. Treasurer's Report

VI. Minister's Report

VII. Bylaws Committee Report

A. Proposed changes to the membership section of the bylaws

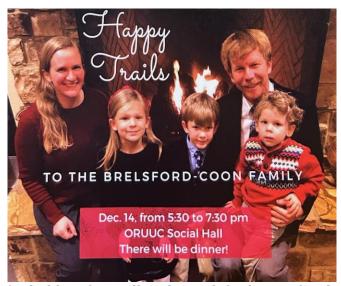
VIII. Endowment Committee Report

IX. Ministerial Search Committee Report

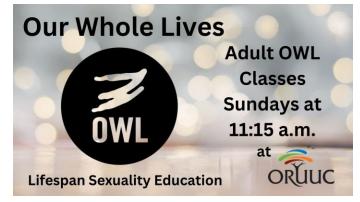
X. Closing Words

XI. Adjournment

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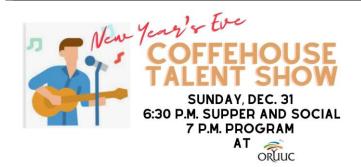


We're bidding farewell to the Brelsford-Coon family this month as they relocate to New Mexico. Church friends are hosting a gathering on Thursday, Dec. 14 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Social Hall. All are invited! Dinner will be served.



The final Adult OWL class of the 8-week series meets this Sunday, Dec. 10 at a special time (12:15) following the Congregational Meeting. The topic is Aging, Change, and Sexuality.

For more information on these classes, contact Christine Rehder at <a href="mailto:crehder@oruuc.org">crehder@oruuc.org</a>.



Start getting your act together for the New Year's Eve Coffeehouse! Any kind of rehearsed, presentational act is possible, from the silly to the sublime. All ages and all kinds of talent are encouraged. Past shows have included one-act plays, singer-songwriters, vocal and instrumental solos or ensembles, joke telling, dancers, and novelty acts. This is your chance to live out a performance fantasy, to ham it up, to build some experience performing in front of people, or to blow people's minds by unveiling a unique talent you've been keeping to yourself. Advance sign-up is required for all performers. The signup deadline is Tuesday, Dec. 26. Contact Nancy Starr at <a href="mailto:starroakridge@gmail.com">starroakridge@gmail.com</a> or (865)742-9993 (mobile).



## Caring for Each Other



Are you going through a difficult time? Are you in a situation where support and caring are needed--someone to do grocery shopping, take you to a doctor's appointment, or provide a meal following an upcoming surgery? Contact the church office: (865) 483-6761 or office@oruuc.org or a Caring Coordinator!

#### **Caring Coordinators for December**

Irene Robbins Robbinsif1@comcast.net 865-481-3427 Freddie Nechtow freddien123@gmail.com 865-599-4359

Please call at least two days in advance to allow time for Caring Coordinators to find a volunteer to provide the care that you need. Our ability to provide transportation is limited. If your appointment is routine and/or can wait, please reschedule it rather than call a Caring Coordinator. Thank you for reserving our Caring Volunteers for those situations that address serious needs that cannot wait.

Like receiving birthday cards? Or know someone who might? The Caring Team has a birthday sign-up sheet in the church lobby for anyone wishing to receive birthday greetings. Or email Mare Martell at <a href="mailto:maremartell@gmail.com">maremartell@gmail.com</a> to be added to the list.

### Volunteer of the Month for December: Jen Stark



Our Unitarian Universalist faith celebrates diversity and encompasses a wide range of ways to demonstrate our values through service. Here at ORUUC, we have some who feed others as cooks, some who teach and serve children and Youth, some who create art to make our surroundings meaningful and beautiful, some who listen and support as caregivers, some who lead through policy and administrative positions, and some who sort and separate during the Rummage sale. We are grateful and blessed by the many ways ORUUCians share their time and talents with us.

Our December Volunteer of the Month....Jen Stark... does ALL these things and many more. If you were present in person or on Zoom last Sunday, you saw Jen in her roles as Worship leader and OWL Facilitator. In addition to those roles, Jen also serves on the Board of Trustees, is a leader of Stone Soup and EMBERS, helps facilitate the Depression & Anxiety Support Group, and is a lead volunteer for the Rummage sale. Jen also creates art that we often see adorning the walls here at ORUUC. Jen is also a Senior High Mountain CON advisor this weekend.

For her dedication and service, Jen received recognition during the Sunday, Nov. 26 worship service. She was honored with a certificate and will have access to the Volunteer of the Month parking spot for the month of December. When you see Jen, please thank her for her service. We sure do appreciate her and all that she does!

#### **Ongoing Activities** at ORUUC



#### Line Dancing

Sundays at 3 p.m. We learn a variety of dances: country, jazz, waltz and cha-chas. Through our dancing, we bring together total strangers in the community and develop close friendships with the willingness to share individual talents with others. A donation of \$3 per session is suggested .For more information, contact Jo Curran or Steven Albright. There will be no Line Dancing December 24 or 31.



Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 11 a.m. - 12 noon

We minister to health & stability through learning & practicing tai chi. Help maintain & improve balance, strength, and blood pressure, and reduce knee, arm, shoulder & back pain. For more information call Janet Hoegler at 865-963-5115.



#### Ukulele Group

We're scheduled to meet next on Saturday, Dec. 16 and 30. We're getting ready for the New Year's Eve Coffeehouse! We'd love to have you join us! Abbie Moore abbie.moore@icloud.com.

## Social and Volunteer Opportunities



Meets monthly at various churches in Oak Ridge. Visit

https://www.facebook.com/groups/3 71268369619360 or email **Anne Backus** 

backusanne@comcast.net for more information about PFLAG Oak Ridge.

#### **Ecumenical Storehouse Pickups**



Each month, ORUUC picks up donations for Ecumenical Storehouse, which supplies furniture and household goods to those in need. It is an important part of our community. There are many ways you can help! Please contact Martin Bauer at bauermlb@gmail.com for more information. There are no December pickup dates. See you in the New Year!



Eggs and Pegs are back! Play cribbage, eat breakfast, have fun Sunday, Jan. 7! These get togethers will be held the first Sunday of each month at 8:30 a.m. in the Social Hall. Questions? Talk to Brandon White, Christina Elliott, Jane Flanagan, or Shelaine Curd.



ORRUC is always looking for members to add to its Caring Team! **Contact Rachel in the church** office (865-483-6761) or communications@oruuc.org if you would be willing to be called upon occasionally to

- Provide transportation to Sunday services, evening events at church, or medical/dental appointments
- Run errands or grocery shop
- Provide/deliver meals
- Visit
- Perform minor home repairs
- Provide computer repair and
- Haul items by truck
- Provide pet care
- Help with Memorial Service receptions
- Support new parents
- Perform yard work
- Sit with someone during Worship



Pack "Food for Kids" with Second **Harvest at First United Methodist Church of Oak Ridge.** This program provides backpacks with nonperishable foods for preschool and elementary students to take home on weekends. Packing has ended for 2023. Stay tuned for the 2024 schedule! Questions? Contact Coordinator Cara Weigel at 865-481-8108.

## Family News

#### You've heard of Elf on the Shelf Now get ready for



Our final tamale making day is Sunday, Dec. 17 from 1 to 6 p.m. Please let Jason Fishel know if you can help: <a href="mailto:solarmanj@gmail.com">solarmanj@gmail.com</a>. Many hands make light work, and the money we raise from this will go towards our next youth trip.

Have YOU ordered your tamales from ORUUC yet? \$25 per dozen. They're made by our hard working high schoolers and their parents, frozen, and available for pickup Sunday, Dec. 10, 17, and 24, or in the church office during business hours starting December 11. Don't miss this delicious annual fundraiser!

Tamales are on sale now! Order yours <u>HERE</u> today!



Mother Goose with ORUUC's own

"Father Goose" Michael Raymond! Babies through preschoolers will have fun singing, clapping, dancing, and moving with their parents, grandparents, or other caregivers.

First and Third Thursdays <sup>at</sup> 10:30 a.m. in the Oak Ridge Public Library Meeting Room

Don't miss the next gathering

December 21!

View and sign up for the Oak Ridge Public Library's newsletter here: https://mailchi.mp/oakridgetn/orpldec23



#### 5th/6th Grade OWL Parent Orientation Sunday, Dec. 10 3-4:30 p.m.

For those interested in enrolling their child(ren) in the Grades  $5/6^{\text{th}}$  Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality education class next semester, we will be having a Parent Orientation meeting on Sunday, Dec. 10th from 3 to 4:30 p.m. in the ORUUC Sanctuary. There is room in the class for others, so please invite people you feel may be interested and available to take the class.

This meeting is mandatory if you have not previously attended OWL. If you have already attended a previous OWL orientation with another child, you are not required to be at orientation, but we will be discussing meeting times and taking care of permission forms and fees, in addition to the program overview. The cost of the class is \$50 for members and \$75 for nonmembers. If you need assistance with the fee, please see me; we have financial assistance available. Also, reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns about your child.

As Unitarian Universalists, our 1st Principle affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every human. Healthy intimate relationships and identities are the ultimate affirmation of this foundational value, and unhealthy and exploitive ones are it's ultimate violation. I thank you for giving your Youth the tools and skills to build loving relationships for themselves and the world around them.

In Care and Faith, Christine Rehder



Childcare is provided for children ages 10 and under for church meetings and events. Please complete this form TWO WEEKS in advance:

https://form.jotform.com/231284551294053. Thanks! 8

# December Worship Series Mystery

December 3: Love is At the Center Rev. Lisa Romantum Schwartz FF Hour and Soup Potluck, followed by Cocoa & Caroling

December 10: A Point of Repose Rev. Lisa Romantum Schwartz

Congregational Meeting at 11:15. No Adult FF; all ages Youth Craft Party. Angel Tree gifts due. Pick up tamales!

December 17: **No Rehearse Pageant**No FF Hour. Pick up tamales!

December 24: **Hard Candy Christmas** Rev. Lisa Romantum Schwartz

No FF Hour. Pick up tamales!

December 31: **Seeds for the New Year**UUA streaming service. Online only. Church will be closed. No FF Hour.

Join us for Sunday Worship at 10 a.m. in person and on Zoom

Youth and Adult Faith Formation classes are from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Nursery is available during the FF hour.



## Community News



It's not too late to get tickets to The Appalachian Equality Chorus (formerly the Knoxville Gay Men's Chorus ) presents "Christmas is a Drag!" as they return to the Historic Bijou Theatre for their annual Holiday Concert Spectacular Friday, Dec. 15 show at 8 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 16 at 2 p.m. Featuring performances by the AEC Tenor Bass Chorus you've come to love since 2012, AND INTRODUCING the brand-new Soprano Alto Chorus in their mainstage debut! There's some comedy show stuff as well, so it should be a good time!

Friday show link -

https://knoxbijou.org/.../appalachian-equality-chorus.../

Saturday show link -

https://knoxbijou.org/.../appalachian-equality-chorus.../



Join Westside UU Minister Rev. Carol Bodeau for an earth-centered gathering each month on third Sundays. We will sit in a sacred circle, share experiences of inspiration in nature, create ritual together, and set intentions for the coming month. Then we'll have time for food and fellowship. Meetings outdoors (weather permitting) at Westside at 3-6 p.m. <a href="https://fb.me/e/bK9hRhITh">https://fb.me/e/bK9hRhITh</a>

## Tomorrow is the last day to use FREE coat vouchers at KARM!



Knoxville Area Rescue Ministries (KARM) Stores and Prestige Cleaners work together each year to collect donations of coats and clean them for the Coats for the Cold drive. From November 13 through December 9, customers with a Coats for the Cold ticket can get a free coat at any KARM Store location. ORUUC still has a few coat vouchers left. Contact the church office if you know someone who is in need! More information on Coats for the Cold can be found at

karm.org/coats-for-the-cold/.



The Winter Solstice service is an in-person only service; no Zoom. Childcare will be available.

## This Week at ORUUUC

#### Friday, Dec. 8

11am Tai Chi Practice

#### Saturday, Dec. 9

6 pm Oak Ridge Christmas Parade

#### Sunday, Dec. 10

8:15am Circle of Trust VII

#### 10am Worship

11am High School

11am Together in Spirit (Canceled)

11:15am Circle of Trust IV

(Canceled)

11:15am Congregational Meeting

11:15am Youth Craft Party (all

ages, in lieu of Faith Formation)

11:15am Newcomers (Canceled)

11:15am Reflections (Canceled)

11:30am Circle of Trust II

(Canceled)

12:15pm Adult OWL

12:15pm Circle of Trust V

12:30pm Buddhism Study Group

1pm Circle of Trust VI

2pm Middle/High School Youth

Hike

3pm Line Dancing

3pm 5/6 Grade OWL Parent

The deadline to submit news for

The Exponent is

Wednesday at noon.

Please send news, comments, and

feedback to Rachel at

communications@oruuc.org.

There will be no Exponent the week

between Christmas and New Year's.

Orientation

5-7pm Zentangle Group

#### Monday, Dec. 11

11am Tai Chi Practice 6:45pm PFLAG Holiday Party

#### Tuesday, Dec. 12

6pm Presidents Council 6pm Depression and Anxiety Group

#### Wednesday, Dec. 13

6:30am Breakfast Rotary

11am Tai Chi Practice

5:15pm Circle of Trust III

7pm Choir Practice

7:45pm Band Rehearsal

#### Thursday, Dec. 14

12pm NWUUC & Launchpad Meeting (Canceled)

12:30pm Lunch Bunch

5:30pm Brelsford-Coon Goodbye

Gathering. Dinner served. All are

invited!

To view the church calendar anytime, log into the Members' **Section of the ORUUC website:** https://www.oruuc.org/memberssection Need password help? Contact the church office!

#### **ORUUC Board of Trustees** 2023-24

President: Jason Fishel

Past President: Michele Thornton

President-Elect: Kara Raymond

Secretary: Nathaniel Bass

Treasurer: Brandon White

Members-at-Large:

Freddie Nechtow

Charles Davis

Jami Garner

Jen Stark

#### ORUUC Executive Team

Rev. Lisa Romantum Schwartz

Christine Rehder

Amanda Fishel

Donna Maloney

Jeannie Cuevas, Office Administrator

#### Sunday, Dec. 17 21st Annual No Rehearse **Pageant**



This joyous ORUUC tradition is not your grandma's Christmas pageant! You can choose to sit in your seat and enjoy the fun, and you're most warmly invited to participate in this irreverent take on the familiar Christmas story. There will be no Faith Formation hour following worship.



809 Oak Ridge Turnpike Oak Ridge, TN 37830 Contact us at 865-483-6761 http://www.oruuc.org/

