



# Connecting In Spirit

## Youth Faith Formation

### Monthly News

April 2023

#### *In this Issue...*

***Easter is this Sunday, April 9! Parents of Elementary/Preschool Children: Don't forget to bring a basket for the Egg Hunt at 12:15!***

Rainbow Camp Sign Ups

Local LGBTQIA+ Book Challenges

PFLAG Meeting April 10

Spring YFF Calendar  
and More!

### **Promise of New Beginnings**

As April begins it brings us lots of familiar archetypes: the spring, warm sunshine, dogwoods in full bloom. For many folks, Easter brings warm and fuzzy ideas of baby chicks and bunnies and overflowing baskets.

But for me, the thought of Easter brings with it an obligatory rendering of a family story, the "time Christine stood at the Easter Egg Hunt and cried and embarrassed our entire family." Though I don't remember the said event (insert psychoanalysis here) it has become mythical in our family lore. As it's told, the minute the hunt began and all the other



children went after the eggs, I froze. Unable to move, the finite number of eggs quickly dwindled and I became frustrated. And so I stood, frozen like a statute, watching every last egg being snatched away and forever out of my grasp. Not knowing what to do in this situation, and with giant, chocolate-sized bunny emotions, I burst into tears.

Over the years as the story has grown, I see myself standing in a large, barren hillside, all alone in vast wilderness. In reality, I'm sure it was a small church lawn in Topeka, KS. But to this day, it looms large in my mind every Easter.

Retelling this story for me always brings to mind Dolly Parton giving the line "laughter through tears is my favorite emotion," in the movie *Steel*

*Magnolias*. It's funny, but it still stings a bit in the way that truth does. I'm not ashamed of that scared little girl; she hadn't yet developed the skills to manage big emotions.

The part of the story that cuts deep for me now is the realization that I can still see that hesitancy in myself. All around me are opportunities--shiny, colored eggs wanting to be taken, and I yet fail to bend down and grasp them. I'm too hesitant and resistant. At times, I'm overthinking and not able to get started. Other times, I want a very specific one, and on occasion, I just decide to give up before I even try.

This April, we are examining the "Promise of New Beginnings." One of the benefits of annual holiday events is that they happen every year. Although I cringe every time I hear that story, it's not the only Easter Egg Hunt life has shown me.

One of my favorite new beginnings at ORUUC is a reframing of Easter Egg Hunts. In our version of the Egg Hunt, we start by asking the congregation to donate change, then the Middle Schoolers fill the eggs, the High Schoolers hide the eggs, and finally, the younger children find the eggs. But instead of keeping the eggs, our children open the eggs and then share the change with our Split the Plate charities.

Each year, as I watch the process unfold, and see the joy of it, I'm reminded not only to see all the colored eggs, but to reach out and grab them too. If I don't seize the many opportunities life offers, I will be left standing all alone feeling sorry for myself with an empty basket. While certainly not the greatest miracle associated with Easter Sunday, it's definitely a story of redemption for me.

This month in Youth Faith Formation, we have many shiny eggs. The aforementioned Easter Egg Hunt happens after Youth Faith Formation on Easter Sunday. There's a Big Music Sunday with a chance for people of all ages to sing. Our Stewardship campaign kick-offs. And we end the month with an early May Day Picnic. Join us this month and collect many bright, shiny eggs to fill your basket and your soul.

In Care and Faith,

**Christine**

Christine Rehder (she/her/hers)

Director of Faith Formation

**Easter is  
this Sunday,  
April 9!  
Don't forget  
your  
basket!**



Elementary and preschool children and their families are invited to the Egg Hunt at 12:15

in the grassy area on the playground side of the building. After all the eggs have been found, the children will distribute the coins to our Split the Plate recipients along the Bunny Trail. Thanks to our middle schoolers for filling the eggs, and to our high schoolers for hiding them! And thanks to everyone who donated change to make a change! ***Change may be dropped off throughout this week and on Easter Sunday morning in the donation basket in the church lobby.***

# Rainbow Camp 2023

## June 27-30

at



***Registration is now OPEN!***

**Rainbow Camp 2023: Color in Motion is June 27-30**

**Register today: <https://forms.gle/8UrCR5iTJqxivewdL8>**

ORUUC is excited to announce Rainbow Camp 2023! We hope to be partnering with the Blossom Center for Childhood Excellence to offer quality programming this summer for children entering kindergarten through rising 6th graders.

**ORUUC will host "Color in Motion" Tuesday, June 27 through Friday, June 30th, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily. The cost is \$100 per camper;** the registration fee will be collected on the first day of camp. Rising 7th and 8th graders, or high schoolers who have not served as a Counselor in Training (CIT) during a past Rainbow Camp, are invited to be CITs; the camp fee

for CITs is \$50. Camp Counselors are high school age youth who will receive payment for working that week. **Camp Counselors and CITs will be expected to attend camp setup and training on Monday, June 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. All camp participants will need to bring a sack lunch daily.**

**Parents/Guardians: Please fill out the form linked above to reserve a spot for your child(ren), as a Camper, CIT, or Camp Counselor.** We look forward to seeing you this summer!



## **Congratulations, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade OWL students!**

Another one in the books—we celebrated the completion of our 5/6 OWL (Our Whole Lives) class on Sunday, March 26. The group was engaged, considerate and thoughtful. What a joy it is to serve the mission of ORUUC with committed children and parents! *Christine Rehder, Director of Youth Faith Formation*

## **PFLAG Meeting Monday, April 10 at 6:45 p.m. United Church, Chapel on the Hill**

Our political leaders in Nashville have been very busy passing the State of Hate bills regarding LGBTQ+ rights. **Nathan Higdon, CFO of Knox Pride, will join PFLAG to discuss laws and children of different sexual identities.**



J. Nathan Higdon, Ph.D., is the CFO of Knox Pride, the largest free Pride festival in the South. He is a sixth generation Blount County native and is active in politics. Higdon is Chair of the Blount County Democratic party and was elected State Executive Committeeman for the 2nd Senate district in August 2022. He is a professor of Marketing and Economics at Mercy College in NYC and a Social Impact, Political, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion consultant with Full Circle Strategies in DC. He will be discussing "The Slate of Hate & YOU," the proposed anti-LGBTQIA bills, and how individuals can have a meaningful impact in stopping them.

The PFLAG meeting will be held Monday, April 10 at United Church, Chapel on the Hill, 85 Kentucky Ave, Oak Ridge, TN 37830 . We will gather for social time at 6:45 p.m.; the presentation will begin at 7:00 p.m.

For more information, go to <https://fb.me/e/5jpwBZ3DI>. PFLAG is a social and support group for the LGBT community and those who love them. For more information about the PFLAG Oak Ridge group, contact Anne Backus at [backusanne@comcast.net](mailto:backusanne@comcast.net).



YOUTUBE.COM

### **Anderson County Library Board: March 27, 2023**

A public hearing held by the Anderson County Library Board in Clinton, TN.

## **Book Challenges in Anderson County Public Libraries Continue**

On March 27, the Anderson County Library Board held a public hearing at the Clinton Community Center to discuss library book challenge policies and book challenges. Speakers were allowed three minutes each to make comments on the topic. There were no other agenda items; no action was taken at this meeting. Many members and friends of ORUUC spoke during the public hearing. All of the books being challenged deal with LGBTQIA+ characters or topics. These book challenges are anticipated to be an ongoing issue.

**To watch the meeting, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BCC6NADn5g>.**

This

Spring

at ORUUC

April

9 Easter Sunday! Regular FF Hour. Egg Hunt and Bunny Trail at 12:15 (Preschool through Elementary). Bring a basket!

16 Stewardship Campaign Kickoff Luncheon during FF Hour provided by High Schoolers. Middle Schoolers can help, eat, or sing. Preschool and Elementary age children will spend FF Hour in the Sanctuary with Anne Scott and Michael Raymond, learning a song for Big Music Sunday. Nursery provided.

23 Big Music Sunday! Regular FF Hour.

30 Embers Sunday! Churchwide May Day Picnic during FF Hour. Details coming soon!

May

7 Last Day of regular Faith Formation classes. Leader recognition during worship.

14 Youth Faith Formation Year-End Celebration during FF Hour. We'll be back August 6 for a new school year!

21 Bridging Sunday! Celebrate our seniors and their families. Churchwide luncheon following worship.

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### **March Moments...**

Multi-generational Creation Stations filled the Social Hall on Sunday mornings during Oak Ridge Schools' Spring Break. Ostara-centered crafts included paintable eggs, herb sachets, and more opportunities to learn and be creative for all ages!



*Thanks to Multi-Gen Coordinator Whitney Cole for organizing these activities and providing photos!*



# JOIN OUR WORSHIP TECH TEAM



## Summary

Provide video & Zoom support for Sunday worship services and other ORUUC events as requested and available.



## Duties

- Set up video equipment
- Manage Zoom live stream
- Ensure smooth operations during worship service

## Apply Now

If you are interested in joining our team, send your resume to [worship@oruuc.org](mailto:worship@oruuc.org).

 865-483-6761

 [ORUUC.org](http://www.oruuc.org)

Our worship tech team is still growing and looking for another video tech. This is a paid position with a commitment of 1-2 Sunday mornings per month. Experience is preferred but not required. **High school diploma or equivalent is preferred, but qualified high school students are encouraged to apply.** For more information, please visit <http://www.oruuc.org/s/ORUUC-Video-Tech-Job-Description-221127.pdf>.

*Application information: People with disabilities, people of color, indigenous people, Hispanic/Latinx, and LGBTQ candidates are encouraged to apply. ORUUC is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to the full inclusion of all.*

Contact [worship@oruuc.org](mailto:worship@oruuc.org) for more information or to submit a resumé.





## Hiring Childcare Workers

- Must be 14+ years old and reliable
- Experience and/or certification required
- Pay is \$10 an hour

Please contact Childcare Coordinator,  
Laura Scott, at **(865)-591-8550**  
with any questions or applications.



ORUUC still needs childcare workers for meetings and special events. If you're 14 years of age or older, contact **Childcare Coordinator Laura Scott at 865-591-8550.**

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

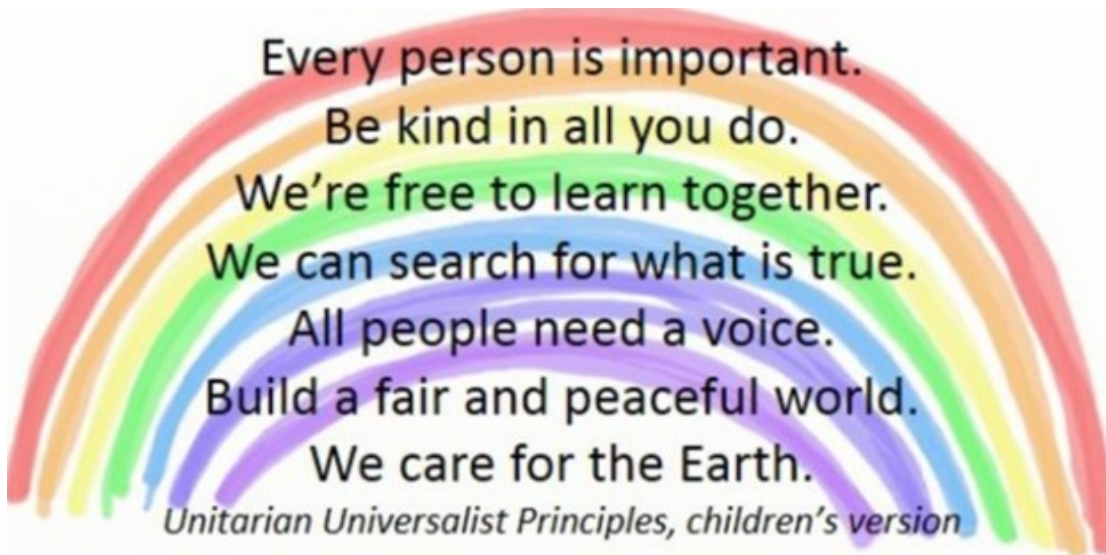
Mother Goose meets this month on **Thursday, April 6 and 20 at 10:30 a.m. in the Oak Ridge Public Library Auditorium** with "Father Goose" Michael Raymond. All are welcome to this free program!

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**Rev. Lisa Romantum Schwartz,  
Interim Minister**

Rev. Lisa can be reached by email at  
[Rev.Lisa@oruuc.org](mailto: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](mailto:communications@oruuc.org) or Christine at [crehder@oruuc.org](mailto:crehder@oruuc.org). To take a look at past issues of Connecting in Spirit, visit <http://www.oruuc.org/connectinginspirit>.*

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