



# Connecting In Spirit

## Youth Faith Formation

### Monthly News

January 2023

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#### **Happy New Year!**

2023 marks 10 years since I started coming to ORUUC. Before that time, I had not attended church in 20 years. I was so nervous that first day, I needed to sit and cry at my breakfast table to work up the courage to walk through the door.

Upon arriving, I was greeted warmly by a friendly and outgoing woman who introduced herself as Director of Faith Formation. She

told me her name was Tandy Scheffler. She promptly led me down the hall to the

Nursery where I met Susan Rosenbaum. The service included music by Scott Joplin, a tornado drill, and a now somewhat infamous pillow fight during the Story for All Ages. I knew I had found a spiritual home.

As the current Director of Faith Formation, I tear up for entirely different reasons. I had no idea or inclination that this place I walked into would not only be my church, but my chosen profession. I'm sure I would have been too scared or too cynical to believe it. But a decade later, here I am.

Although I treasure this memory, it's one of many memories, joyful and painful, that I have accumulated during my tenure. I had a lot of work to do back then and more so now. In the beginning, I needed to let go of a lot of ideas, prejudices, and hurt feelings to move back into a faith. Now, as a faith leader, I must help guide us into a new and uncertain time.

In reflecting on my time at ORUUC, I have come to appreciate the process of change. Specifically, what change can bring to us in the presence of a loving community. Transformation is mythologized as instantaneous and immediate, the "a-ha" or Come to Jesus moment. Those are wonderful and inspiring stories. But, transformation is often slow, deliberate, and sometimes painful.

Recently, I came across a saying: Change is inevitable, growth is optional. Transformation, especially when paired with love, creates possibilities for us, but only if we let it. Transformation gives us the unique and precious opportunity to discover our deepest selves and the courage to show that person to the world. It even allows us to become what we have not even imagined yet.

Ten years ago I couldn't foresee myself in this position. Through the process of connecting with the church, taking on new roles, and finding various ministries to serve, I was transformed in ways I couldn't have imagined before. My sense of who I am and even more importantly, who I could become and what I had to offer the world, changed.

ORUUC is filled with many stories of people whose lives were transformed by being a part of this congregation. And this January, **we will tell our communal story by constructing a church timeline on January 22nd.**

I encourage you to come to this event and share your story and to learn other stories. More importantly, I encourage you to write a new story for yourself at ORUUC: through transformation, through service, and through love.

In Care and Faith,  
**Christine**

Christine Rehder (she/her/hers)  
Director of Faith Formation



## **OWL Meeting Sunday, Jan. 8 for 5th and 6th Grade Parents**

Do you have a fifth or sixth grader, or know someone who does, who might be interested in participating in the Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality education program? You're invited to attend a Parent Meeting on Sunday, Jan. 8 at 3 p.m. in the Sanctuary. **There are still spots available!** Contact Christine at [crehder@oruuc.org](mailto:crehder@oruuc.org) for more information.

For an overview of the OWL program, visit <https://www.uua.org/re/owl>.

## **OWL Facilitator Training Coming in April**

ORUUC will host a training for persons interested in facilitating the Our Whole Lives (OWL) lifespan sexuality curriculum from Friday, April 14<sup>th</sup>- Sunday, April 16<sup>th</sup>. Limited space available for ORUUCians wishing to lead the program in our congregation, community members, and UU's in our region. If you are interested or know someone who may be, **please contact Christine Rehder @ [crehder@oruuc.org](mailto:crehder@oruuc.org)**.

We're also looking for a **Registrar** to help with enrollment and administrative duties. **The position is limited and short-term, but paid.** Please contact Christine at the address above if you or someone you know is interested. **Hospitality** help is also much appreciated! If you would like to **help with meal or snack preparation for the April training, or if you have some spare space in your home and could host a training participant**, please let Christine or another OWL Facilitator know.

**Bridging Retreat at Camp Wesley  
Woods, Townsend, TN  
January 14-15**

Our group of 10 Bridgers will be planning the



worship service for **Sunday, May 21**. An all church reception will follow. Save the date on your calendar!



# SOPHIE LABELLE

INTERNATIONAL TRANS AGENDA SPEAKING TOUR

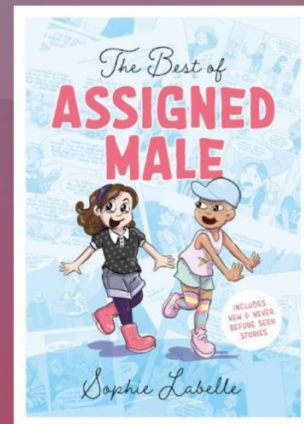
SUNDAY, JAN. 29, 2023

2:00 PM IN THE SANCTUARY

AT



<https://www.serioustransvibes.com/>



Sophie Labelle is a neurodivergent trans cartoonist and novelist from Montréal, in French Canada. She is the author of the webcomic *Assigned Male*, which has been running since 2014, and the Ciel novel series. She likes to collect rocks and lives in Finland with her Finnish husband. "The Best of Assigned Male" was recently published by Hachette UK.

During her talk, she will speak about her art and activism, her artistic process, comic-making,

community building and empowerment through art. She also has a bunch of great jokes about TERFs (trans-exclusionary radical feminists). She will answer questions from the audience and sign books at the end. For digital books, children's books, novels, and more, check out <https://www.serioustransvibes.com/>

Follow Sophie on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/labellesophie/?hl=en>

To donate to Sophie's honorarium, go to <https://onrealm.org/oruuc/give/Sophie>. Or text "ORUUC Sophie" to 73256 to give using your mobile device. Thank you!

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## Angel and Mitten Tree Abundance



Thanks to everyone who helped with this year's **Angel Tree**! We are making a difference in a lot of children's lives! I love our church family! ~Susan Rosenbaum

Thank YOU, Susan, for coordinating this effort each year! This year's tree had 42 names of children in need in our community.

Thanks also to all who brought in mittens and hats, socks and scarves for the **Mitten Tree** to benefit the children at the Blossom Center, and to Jason Fishel for delivering the donations.



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**December Moments...**  
**Holiday Craft Party and the No-Rehearse Christmas Pageant**







## ***Thoughts from The Mountain***

***Sarah Gunter, CON advisor***

Last month, I had great fun with Brandon White and Robyn Knouff Naughton taking the high schoolers up to "The Mountain" for the fall Mountain Con at The Mountain Learning and Retreat Center along with a huge group of 13 kids.

For those who do not know, The Mountain is a beautiful retreat, center composed of cabins, a large, and housing along with a huge community farm founded by Unitarian Universalists who bought the property originally built in the 30s as a retreat for girls to learn outdoor activities. The Southeast UUs bought the property in 1979 and envisioned as a UU retreat center where UUs from all over could come and be together. The property is on top of Ole Scaly Mountain in Highlands, NC.

The center offers Mountain Cons twice a year for second graders up to senior high and our church has always been a supporter by sending youth groups up there, along with trusted and responsible adults, who advise the kids during the weekend.

They also have family summer camps, farm camp, adventure camp, and even adult summer camp in the summers which fill up quickly.

They are currently looking for young adults to work this summer at the summer camps. They provide housing and pay. The Mountain is also known as a place that features some communal living for those who volunteer a certain amount of hours a week and don't mind living in quite minimal but beautiful surroundings. There will be a need for summer cooks, farmers, and other staff. It's a great opportunity and a way to connect with the wider UU community.

The magic that happens on the mountain has inspired me





lately so much especially as our church is going through so many changes.

If your kids have never been and you are interested please reach out to me. ~Sarah Gunter

*MountainCON, December 9-11.  
Thank you, Sarah Gunter and  
Robyn Naughton, for serving as  
advisors and sharing photos!*

**The Mountain is hiring positions for summer camp now!  
Ages 16 and up may apply. Housing and lodging is  
included. For more information, go to  
<https://www.themountainrlc.org/jobs>**



**Already looking forward to Spring?  
Reserve these Spring MountainCON  
dates on your calendar now!**

Registration will open a month or so before the event:

**Elementary CON (Grades 3-5): February 17-19,  
Intermediate CON (Grades 6-8): March 3-5  
Senior High CON (Grades 9-12): March 17-19**

Thank you to all the adults who served as advisors in the fall. **If you're interested in being an advisor this spring, please contact Christine at [crehder@oruuc.org](mailto:crehder@oruuc.org).**

**Want to learn more about Mountain CON programs? Check out their website:  
<https://www.themountainrlc.org/cons>**



## ***Another Year of Tamales!***

The High School Youth made over 100 dozen tamales and \$2,000 for their trip fund! Thanks to all who helped with this annual fundraiser. And thanks again to the Endowment Committee for covering the purchase costs of our tamale making supplies so that all of the proceeds from our sales can go into the Youth Trip Fund!



## 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.



Mother Goose



of Oak Ridge

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 the **First and Third Thursdays of each month at 10:30 a.m. in the Oak Ridge Public Library Auditorium** with "Father Goose" Michael Raymond.

## **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.





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*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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