



# Connecting In Spirit

## Youth Faith Formation

### Monthly News

March 2024

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## **Transformation**

Our theme this month is the Gift of Transformation. I think that it's incredibly difficult to see all transformation as a gift. Often it's scary, anxiety-inducing, and nerve wracking. At least, it is for me. Many transformations I've had to go through have not been welcomed and in fact were painful and forced. I'm forced to ask myself, is all transformation a gift? Or are some a burden? A painful situation to get through by any means necessary? I will admit that some transformations can be beautiful. Growing up,

driving, graduating, marrying, having a family all were welcomed by me. They did all still cause me anxiety and there were still some painful points but a gift nonetheless. Transformations forced by death, loss of something profound, illness, situations out of my control are harder to see as a gift. Looking back now, I can see the

good that came from them. The way they shaped me. The way they made me strong. The way they made me see the world. The way they increased my empathy. But if you told me that they were a gift while I was going through them, I would have rolled my eyes and regarded you with a bitterness reserved for the people who tell me to look for the silver lining in everything all while promising me thoughts and prayers. Now, though, I do see them as a gift, perhaps an unwelcome one that I definitely won't send a thank you card for, but a gift.

That's the thing, isn't it? Everything looks different when you're looking back. Those hard times seem almost precious. Grief seems almost sweet. Difficult times almost feel treasured. Maybe because we have the privilege of hindsight. Maybe because now we know we survived it. We know that it didn't break us. At the moment though, we are scared. We wonder how we are going to live through this. We worry how this will change us. How this transformation will look on the other side of it. Will we be better off or worse? Will this be the transformation that ends us? That makes us into something we don't want to be? What will this transformation cost us?

I think that's why I struggle with seeing transformation as a gift. It always seems to cost us something. Even when it's something we want. Something that is good. A wedding costs not only money but a different future. So does having or adopting children. Changing jobs costs us the job we already know.

We have to have faith to see transformations as a gift. We also have to have optimism, something I'm not sure I have enough of most of the time. To be open to change and transformation feels terrifyingly naive, but when I'm confronted with all the hours of needless worrying that I have done in my life over transformations that I couldn't control, I wonder if being naive isn't the way to go. I'm not saying that we should jump into changes uninformed or recklessly, but sitting around worrying about losing my job, or if someone I loved was going to make it made no difference to anything except my sleepless nights. Perhaps if we all had more faith in life we would trust that the transformations we are forced to endure have a meaning we just don't see yet.

I don't know the answer to this and I don't want to pretend I do. I guess I'll just leave it as this: transformation and change are inevitable, and all we can do is support each other and help each other through it.

## **Whitney**

Whitney Cole (she/her/hers)

Multigenerational Director

[whit.cole79@gmail.com](mailto:whit.cole79@gmail.com)

# March Worship Series

## Transformation



March 3: ***Kindling the Power of Transformation*** Rev. Lisa Romantum Schwartz

March 10: ***Be Like Water***

Rev. Laura Bogle, Guest Minister

No Faith Formation classes during Spring Break. Multi-Gen Faith Formation Hour: Watercolors in the Social Hall.

March 17: ***Born of the Earth***

Rev. Lisa Romantum Schwartz

No Faith Formation classes during Spring Break.  
Multi-Gen Faith Formation Hour: Air dry clay.

March 24: ***The Colors of Spring***

Learn about the Hindu festival of Holi and enjoy the colors of spring in this Multi-Gen service.

March 31: ***A Tomb is No Place to Stay***

Rev. Lisa Romantum Schwartz

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

*Youth and Adult Faith Formation classes meet from  
11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. every Sunday.  
Nursery is available during Worship and the FF hour.*





# **HUGE** 10,000 sq. ft. **SPRING RUMMAGE SALE**

**Pre-Sale: Friday, March 1**  
6 to 8 p.m. (prices doubled)  
**Main Sale: Saturday, March 2**  
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
(prices as marked)

**Oak Ridge  
Unitarian Universalist Church**

809 Oak Ridge Turnpike  
Oak Ridge, TN  
www.oruuc.org



Thanks to all who have donated items, time, and food to the Spring Rummage Sale! Volunteers are needed to help with the Pre-Sale Friday, March 1 from 6 to 8 p.m., and during the main sale Saturday, March 2 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Or come by after the sale to help clean up and return the church to its normal look! There will be pizza and drinks after the job is done. **Youth who volunteer will earn money for the Youth Trip Fund!**

We are trying to drum up two people and a handful of high schoolers to sell hot dogs this Saturday at the church during the rummage sale from 10:30-12:30 or so (unless you run out sooner). Duties would include supervising some youth and running the grill/ supervising running the grill for hot dogs. Please email High School Coordinator Jason Fishel at [solarmanj@gmail.com](mailto:solarmanj@gmail.com) if you can help.

## **Middle and High School Youth Hike**

### **Sunday, March 10**

#### **River Bluff Trail Norris Dam State Park**

The Visitors' Center is located off Highway 441 at 125 Village Green Cir, Rocky Top

**Meet at Church at 2 p.m. to carpool or at the Visitors' Center at 2:30 p.m.** All members and friends are welcome!

### **Don't Forget**

- ✓ Water
- ✓ Pick up at church at 4 p.m.
- ✓ Questions? Call Jim Nutaro 865-255-8578

The next hike is planned for Sunday, March 10, which is the beginning of Oak Ridge Schools'

Spring Break. We'll be hiking the River Bluff Trail at Norris Dam State Park. Meet at the church parking lot at 2 p.m. or the Norris Dam State Park Visitor Center. The loop is approximately 3.2 miles. All ORUUC members and friends are welcome! Middle school youth or higher do not need parent accompaniment (please complete a permission form at drop off). The visitor center is located at the east end of the dam on Norris Freeway (US Highway 441). It should be a fun hike and a chance to see some early spring wildflowers! Thanks to Aubrey Wick Sebastian, Jimmy Groton, Jim Nutaro, and Whitney Cole for organizing these hikes!

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# PATHWAYS TO DEEPER ENGAGEMENT

## Welcome

Register  
here:



**Saturday, March 16**  
**9:30 to 11:30 a.m.**

at   
ORUUC

The ORUUC community is an energetic place. Sometimes trying to find a “way in” to this busy church feels like trying to join in a game of jump rope while the rope is twirling, and other jumpers are already in the game. On Saturday, March 16th from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Rev. Lisa and some current members (i.e., those who were newcomers at an earlier date) will lead a brief intro to ORUUC and Unitarian Universalism. Register here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfBVMW0HVvYx-yKlJg3TerG97pu74aB1FSgHBA8PWjleH3AgQ/viewform?usp=sharing>.

The goals are to get to know our newcomers (what’s your spiritual journey been like, and how can ORUUC be a resource for you in your continued growth?), help new folks get to know each other, and of course to help newcomers learn more about the church, its mission and core values. We’ll take a brief look at history (of UU and ORUUC), talk about the mutual expectations of entering a spiritual community, and how to find ways to serve and be served.

If you’re just getting to know ORUUC, this is a great way to find out more in a less crowded space than Sunday after service. And if you’re considering membership, we’ll talk about that process. Sign up by March 9 to join us!

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# Spring Mountain CON 2024

Intermediate (Grades 6-8): February 22-23

Elementary (Grades 1-5): March 10

Senior (Grades 9-12): March 22-24

# CANCELED

Register Here:

Contact  
Whitney Cole  
after registering.



## Spring Mountain CON Has Been Canceled

**Parents: All Spring Mountain CONs have been canceled due staffing issues at The Mountain.** If you registered for you or your child, you should have received an email from The Mountain with this news, and a refund of your registration fee. If you have any questions, please contact The Mountain directly or visit <https://www.themountainrlc.org/cons>.



### 5th/6th Grade OWL Classes Continue Through March 10

These weekly sessions take place every Sunday afternoon from 4 to 5:15 p.m. in Room 126. The final class on Sunday, March 10 will be a double session, running from 2:15 to 5:15 p.m., to make up for the January 21 class that had to be canceled due to inclement weather.

#### Class Topics

1/7 Sexuality and Values

1/14 Images in Popular Culture

1/21 Body Images (Canceled due to snow/ice)

1/28 Body Images

2/4 Changes in Puberty

2/11 Gender

2/18 Feelings and Attraction

**3/10** Consent and Peer Pressure, Healthy Relationships, Family Celebration (**This session will be held from 2:15 to 5:15 p.m.**)

Questions or concerns? Contact Whitney Cole, Multigenerational Director at ORUUC, at (865) 394-0626 or [whit.cole79@gmail.com](mailto:whit.cole79@gmail.com).

# REMEMBER TO SPRING FORWARD MARCH 10!

YOU DON'T WANT TO  
MISS WORSHIP AT



## Spare Change to Make a Change

*Bring coins to church  
beginning Sunday, March 3  
to fill plastic eggs  
for our Egg Hunt  
Easter Sunday, March 31!*

All change will be donated by the children to our Split the Plate recipients along the Bunny Trail following the Egg Hunt.





# Easter Sunday Egg Hunt & Bunny Trail March 31 at 12:15 p.m.



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## UPDATE ON UT PRIDE CENTER



What's happening these days at the University of Tennessee Pride Center? Find out at the PFLAG meeting Monday, March 11 at First Presbyterian Church, 1051 Oak Ridge Turnpike, Room 102. Social Time starts at 6:45 p.m., with the meeting from 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Pride Center Executive Director Bonnie Johnson, a native Oak Ridger, will speak. They were recently named to the UT "40 under 40" which recognizes alumni under the age of 40 excelling personally and professionally since completing their degree at UT. The Pride Center is the LGBTQ+ resource center at UT Knoxville. The public is invited to attend.

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](mailto:backusanne@comcast.net).

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## 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.

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 March 7 and 21 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://orpl.oakridgetn.gov/>

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### Youth Faith Formation Save the Dates

~~March 8-10 - Spring Elementary CON (Grades 3-5) CANCELED~~

March 1-2 - Rummage Sale

March 9-25 - Oak Ridge Schools Spring Break (Special MultiGen Programming for Faith Formation Hour March 10 and 17.)

~~March 23-25 - Senior High Mountain CON (Grades 9-12) CANCELED~~

March 31 - Easter Egg Hunt

April 21 and 28 - Ministerial Candidate Sundays

April TCAP Test Break - TBD

May 12 - Last Day of Youth Faith Formation

May 19 - Bridging/Reception

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## 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!

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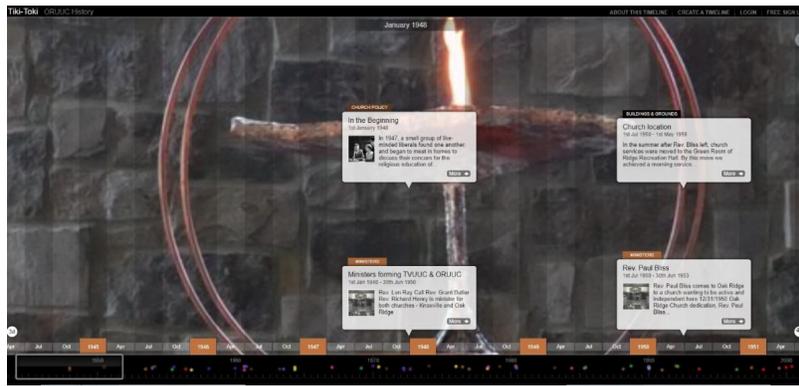
## Weather Closure Reminders



**Weekdays:** If Oak Ridge Schools are closed, the church office will be closed.

**Sundays:** A decision will be made by 9 a.m. whether to have in-person worship. Please check your email and the [ORUUC Facebook group](#) for updates.

**Weeknight and Saturday events:** A decision will be made one hour prior. Check email and [Facebook](#).

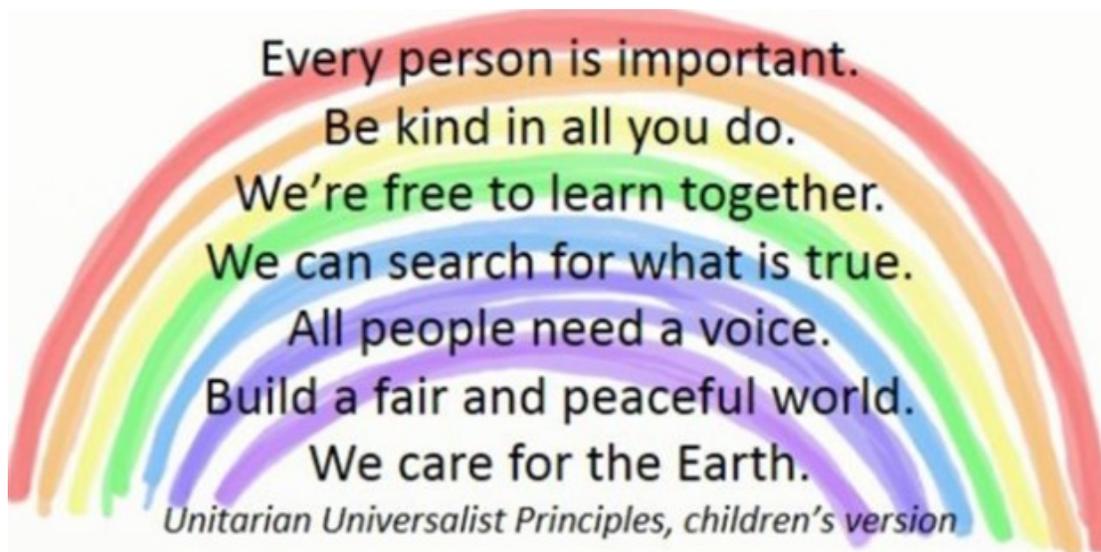


## Check out the ORUUC History Timeline created by Anne Child! **ORUUC History (tiki-toki.com)**

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](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 Whitney at [whit.cole79@gmail.com](mailto:whit.cole79@gmail.com). To take a look at past issues of Connecting in Spirit, visit <http://www.oruuc.org/connectinginspirit>.*

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