

Connect
Unite
Act

ARJ

ALLIES for RACIAL JUSTICE

January 2026

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Allies for Racial Justice (ARJ) is a partnership between St. James Church and Resurrection, two United Methodist churches. ARJ exists with the purpose of ***building authentic relationships to eliminate the existing racial divide in our communities and churches.***

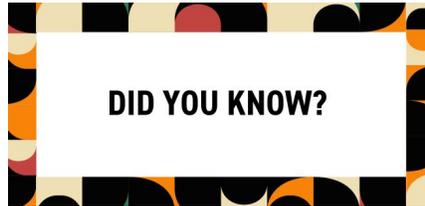
This year, ARJ is excited to promote a full calendar of events, programs, and activities designed to help all members of our community to **Connect, Unite, and Act** in ways that educate, inform and engage us on a deeper level as fellow children of God.

On behalf of the ARJ Leadership Team, we invite you to join us on this journey of faith in action.

To learn more about ARJ and how you can get involved, please visit our website at <https://resurrection.church/arj/>

Mark Mears
Co-Leader/Resurrection

Olivia Dorsey
Co-Leader S/t. James Church



FANNIE LOU HAMER HER FIGHT ISN'T OVER



“Sometimes it seem like to tell the truth today is to run the risk of being killed. But if I fall, I’ll fall five feet four inches forward in the fight for freedom. I’m not backing off.”

Photo credit: United Methodist Church Global Ministries/Kenneth Thompson

Fannie Lou Hammer was born into poverty in Mississippi, the youngest in a sharecropper family of 20 children; the only one who learned to read and write. At age six, she went to work in the fields. She survived childhood polio, involuntary sterilization, and a brutal jail house beating that left permanent kidney and eyesight damage. Despite those struggles, she went on to become one of the most important, passionate and powerful icons of the civil rights movement.

In the 1960s, Black citizens made up 40% of the population of Mississippi but fewer than 7% of Black Mississippians were registered to vote. However, even those Black registrants often could not cast their ballots due to harsh voter suppression tactics. Once Fannie Lou learned that she had a right to vote, she fought to own that right for herself and others (despite threats, arrest, harassment, being physically beaten and shot at.)

Efforts to undermine Black political participation prompted Ms. Hamer to participate in acts of civil disobedience, where non-violent actions were often met with hard-hearted white violence. Still, she fearlessly led the voter registration drive during the Freedom Summer of 1964 in Mississippi. She also co-founded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, then challenged the all-white delegation and won representation at the 1964 National Democratic Convention. She was an organizer of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the National Women's Political Caucus. She assisted hundreds of disenfranchised people through community economic and justice initiatives including the Freedom Farm Cooperative, Black reproductive freedom programs, and disability services.

Fannie Lou Hamer's fearlessness and powerful legacy should be an inspiration for all of us in the fight to protect human rights. This is especially critical in the current environment when human and civil rights are being eroded for many of our neighbors. In the article below, Dr. Nicole Brown shares insight into her past and present experiences in Mississippi and why the need for empathy requires action today in the Kansas City area.

[Find The Article Here](#)



Bringing people together to **CONNECT** through engaging educational events.
Let's start a conversation

**PASTOR CHERYL JEFFERSON BELL
CULTURAL COMPETENCY WORKSHOP**



MONDAY, JAN. 19 – 9-11 AM
Resurrection Brookside, 5144 Oak St. KCMO 62112

Pastor Cheryl Bell, Resurrection’s Pastor of Community Justice, will lead this workshop designed to help you develop important competencies for effective cross-cultural collaboration and acceptance. Growing in awareness of diverse cultural norms, practices, beliefs, and values helps you become more attuned to the needs and perspectives of others.

Through this workshop, you will gain practical skills that can increase your ability to interact with people in our diverse community with more empathy, sensitivity, acceptance, and respect.

SIGN UP

ARJ ANNOUNCES



CLASSIC BLACK LITERATURE BOOK STUDIES

Starting Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2026, 6:30–8 PM
Resurrection Leawood – 13720 Roe Ave
Bldg. B - Foundry Rm B152

Join us on a literary journey of powerful storytelling by outstanding authors who have lived the experiences of Black Americans for centuries. Together we will read and discuss classic literature that explores faith, identity, justice, and the human experience—stories that challenge us, broaden our perspective, and help us better understand one another and the world we share. These are masterful books that have shaped conversations about what it means to be human, to struggle, to hope, and to create change. Come and be part of the conversation.

Our first book selection is Zora Neale Hurston’s beloved 1937 classic, “Their Eyes Were Watching God.” An enduring Southern love story, it sparkles with wit, beauty, and heartfelt wisdom and it is recognized as one of the most important works of 20th Century American literature. You can find it online and through bookstores everywhere.

All meetings will be held at 6:30 PM on the last Wednesday of each month, **starting on Wednesday, Feb. 25**. Each monthly book title will be announced 4 weeks in advance of the meeting to allow enough time to read. Check our newsletter and the ARJ and Resurrection Leawood websites. Registration is limited to the first 25 people. Childcare available.

[Click Here to register!](#)



Skills for Disagreeing Better Online Event

Saturday, Jan. 17 – 1-2:45 PM Central

The Braver Angels organization offers this free online seminar to help us understand that values and concerns of those who differ politically and learn skills for communicating differences and finding common ground. The event is free and open to all. For more information and to sign up, [click here](#).

PRAIRIE VILLAGE, KS ACKNOWLEDGES RACIST PAST

“None of said land may be conveyed to, used, owned or occupied by negroes.”

Those words are taken directly from the 1950 Declaration of Restriction Block Thirty-Six of Prairie Village, KS in Johnson County Kansas. It was the only restriction for that plot of land, though it and other restrictions appeared on plots throughout the county.

While the restrictions no longer apply, damage was done. Inspired by the work of Equal Justice Initiative Executive Director Bryan Stevenson to bring the history of injustices toward Blacks to light, Prairie Village residents and city management came together to publicly acknowledge their city’s past. An educational landmark, “Inherited Exclusion,” has been erected on Block Thirty-Six, which is now Porter Park, in hopes of helping people learn about and understand the history and hold constructive conversations.

We are grateful to the Johnson County Post for permission to use this article by Juliana Garcia so that [you can read more here](#).



Bringing people together to **ACT** by supporting racial justice activities throughout our churches and communities.

Let's act together

CELEBRATE BY DOING. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING. JR.

January brings the opportunity to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. While the official holiday is Monday, January 19th, there are activities scheduled throughout the month. We encourage everyone to participate. Here are just a few ways to take part in community service projects, reflective gatherings, and educational events.

The Gordon Parks Museum Martin Luther King, Jr. 2026 Celebration

Ellis Fine Arts Center - 2108 Horton Street, Ft. Scott, KS 66701

Thursday, Jan. 15

12 PM Noon – Lunch & Learn - Public Reading of “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

Monday, Jan. 19

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM – Day of Service - Canned & Non-perishable Food Drive

10:30 AM – Documentary screening “In Remembrance of Martin”

12:00 Noon – Lunch & Learn “The Dockum Drugstore Sit-In” presented by Dr. Prisca Barnes

Free admission, light lunch provided both days, open to the public

<https://www.gordonparkscenter.org/events>

Metropolitan Community College Foundation Chancellor’s MLK Luncheon

Union Station, 30 W. Pershing Rd. KCMO

Friday, Jan. 16 11 AM – 1:30 PM

<https://mcckc.edu/mlkluncheon>

Resurrection – a United Methodist Church MLK Serve Weekend

Days of Serving: Saturday, Jan. 17 & Monday, Jan. 19 – All Locations

Make a meaningful difference through various community service projects. Activities are designed for groups and individuals of all ages. Join for either day or both as we gather

thousands of people to go out into the community to serve! Projects on site at Resurrection but also ways to serve out in the community! Find the perfect spot for you, your family, and your small group; just [click here to learn more and register.](#)

MLK Serve - Resurrection Church

<https://resurrection.church/events/mlk-serve-weekend/>

St. James Church - Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater KC King Celebration

Church Sanctuary, 5540 Wayne Avenue, KCMO 64110

Monday, January 19, 6 PM

St. James Church will host the Kansas City Southern Christian Leadership Conference “King Celebration”, in the main Sanctuary.

Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater KC

Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. Interfaith Service

Community Christian Church 4601 Main St. KCMO 64112

Sunday, Jan. 11, 2:30 PM

Open to all. Enjoy inspired music and conversations among faiths and friends.

scicgkc@gmail.com

Other Kansas City Metro MLK Weekend Activities:

[MLK Freedom Run:](#) Saturday, January 17 - Participate in 5K, 10K, or Half-Marathon (13.1) honoring Dr. King's legacy with options for in-person or virtual participation.

[Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Nature Walk & Speaker Program:](#) Monday, January 19 - Event is focused on environmental justice, including a keynote at the Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Center (3700 Blue Pkwy, KCMO) and a walk along Brush Creek.

[MLK Day of Service:](#) Monday, January 19 - Various community service projects organized by Nonprofit Connect, including activities with the Hope Faith Homeless Assistance Campus and the Boys and Girls Choir.

OUR PARTNER CHURCHES

**Forging authentic relationships to eliminate the existing racial divide
in our churches and communities**

St. James Church and Resurrection offer inspiring worship, fellowship, studies, and community volunteer activities throughout the year. Check the individual websites and weekly newsletters to stay up to date on all opportunities.



Stay Connected – Visit our church’s web pages and sign up for pastor newsletters.

Websites

Resurrection resurrection.church/next
St. James Church sjumckc.org

Pastor Newsletters

St. James Church [e-News](#) from Senior Pastor Emanuel Cleaver III
(click the grey box to join the mailing list)

Resurrection [Weekly Updates](#) From Pastor Adam

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Inquiries are received at allies4racialjustice@gmail.com

Read, View and Learn



Visit the Allies for Racial Justice website for great video and book suggestions that can help us better understand our differences, appreciate our similarities and establish Christ-centered solutions to end racial and social injustices. Terrific selections for ARJ Small Groups!

[Click HERE](#) for all our recommended reading and video resources

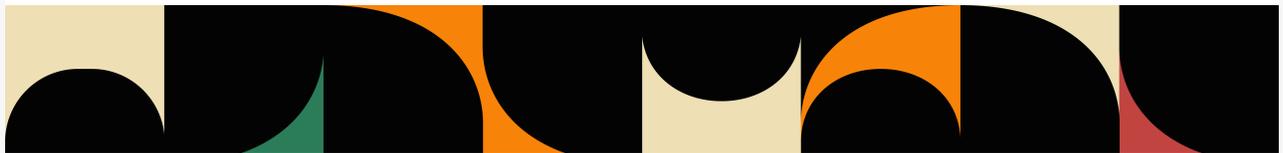
For more information on Allies for Racial Justice, visit our website:

<https://resurrection.church/arj>

or join the conversation on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/AlliesForRacialJustice>

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Resurrection 13720 Roe Ave Leawood, KS 66224