



Connect
Unite
Act

ARJ

ALLIES for RACIAL JUSTICE

March 2026



Zora Neal Hurston was the author of groundbreaking works that defied the race, gender and cultural superiority assumptions that characterized 19th century literature.



Born in Notasulga, Alabama on January 7, 1891, she was raised in the all-Black town of Eatonville, Florida. Her father was a Baptist preacher and her mother died when she was 13. Up until then, Zora Hurston had been fairly sheltered from racism having only minimal contact with white people. While she didn't finish high school, she prepared herself for college and excelled in her studies at Howard University.

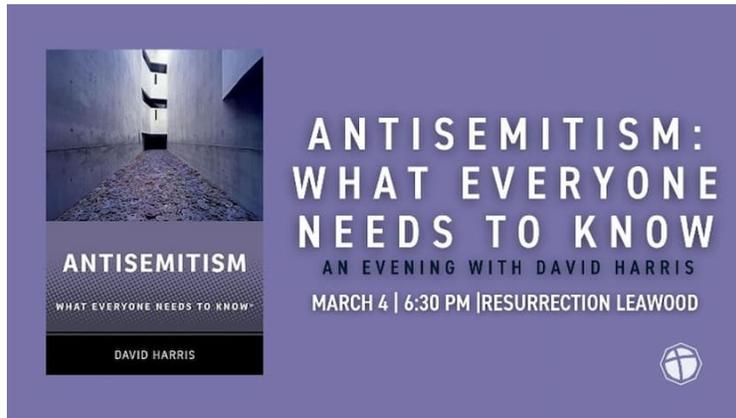
In 1925 she moved to New York and became a key figure in the Harlem Renaissance movement. She studied anthropology at Barnard and received a fellowship to collect oral histories and folklore in her home state. She also studied and published research on Hoodoo and Voodoo.

Hurston collaborated with Langston Hughes on the play *Mule Bone*. Her first novel, *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, featured a central character based on her father and was published in 1934. The most popular of her four novels, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, was our first choice for last month's **ARJ's Classic Black Literature Book Study**. It is required reading in many high schools and colleges and is cited as a formative influence by Toni Morrison and Maya Angelou. At the time of her death in 1960, Hurston had published more books than any other Black woman in America. Unable to capture a mainstream audience in her lifetime, she died poor and alone in a welfare hotel. Yet today, she is seen as one of the most important Black writers in American history.

You can learn more about her life and talents at PBS American Experience
[Zora Neale Hurston – In Her Element](#)

CONNECT 

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



We are invited to join a timely discussion with David Alan Harris, author of *Antisemitism: What Everyone Needs to Know*.

Mr. Harris served as CEO of the American Jewish Committee for over three decades and has spent five decades working on global Jewish issues – from the rescue of Jewish communities in Ethiopia and the Soviet Union to expanding Israel's diplomatic relationships worldwide. The late Israeli President Shimon Peres called him “the foreign minister of the Jewish people,” and his work has shaped conversations around Holocaust memory, interfaith dialogue, and combating antisemitism across the globe.

Scott Chrostek will moderate the conversation. Join in-person or online. Register using the button below.

[Register Here](#)



TWO FREE PROGRAMS

You're Invited!

Wednesday, March 11 & Thursday, March 12

UMKC's Cockefair Chair in Continuing Education, in partnership with the UMKC Department of English, has presented the Writer in Residence program since 1992. The program brings a renowned writer to Kansas City each year for a class with students and a public reading.

In 2020, the Kansas City Public Library, together with UMKC and five other Missouri universities, established the Maya Angelou Book Award. The \$10,000 award celebrates contemporary writers of poetry and fiction.

In 2023, the library, the UMKC English Department and the Cockefair Chair decided to collaborate further. The winner of the Maya Angelou Book Award is now also the Cockefair Chair Writer in Residence.

You are invited to two outstanding public events featuring the most recent award winner and Writer in Residence, poet Alison C. Rollins, who will present her acclaimed collection, "Black Bell." The collection's title refers to the 18th- and 19th-century practice of enslavers rigging bells to the enslaved to prevent escape and is rich with graphics such as diagrams, lithographs, ancient advertisements and shape poems. It ruminates on themes of history, resistance and liberation with ambitious, inventive imagery and sound.

**Maya Angelou Book Award
Presentation and Reading by Alison
C. Rollins**

Wednesday, March 11
6 p.m. Reception
6:30 p.m. Program

Central Library
14 W. 10th St.
Kansas City, MO 64105

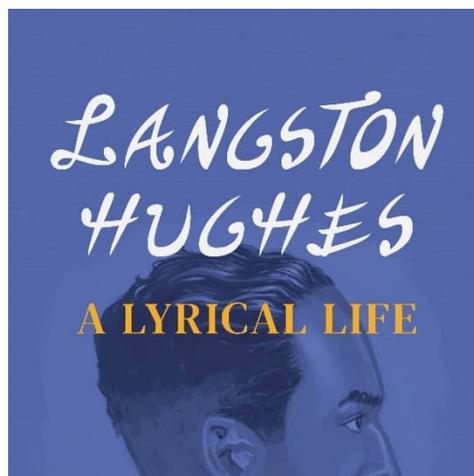
**Cockefair Lecture Activity led by
Alison C. Rollins**

Thursday, March 12
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

UMKC
Cockefair Hall, Room 105
5121 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, MO 64110

These events are free and open to the public. No registration is required.

THE LYRIC OPERA OF KC PRESENTS



FREE PERFORMANCES – MARCH 15 THRU APRIL 2 AT COMMUNITY SPACES THROUGHOUT KANSAS CITY

Langston Hughes: A Lyrical Life celebrates the life and legacy of one of America's most influential literary voices. Born in 1901 in Joplin, Missouri, Hughes was an early innovator of jazz poetry and a leading figure of the Harlem Renaissance. This semi-staged musical program and literary experience honors Hughes's extraordinary legacy and amplifies his singular voice and texts, illuminating the universal human experiences of joy, struggle, and aspiration.

Free performances in community spaces include **March 20 at the Black Archives of Mid-America** and **March 21 at the Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center**. For details and a complete listing of times and locations go to [KC Lyric Opera Events](#).

[Get Tickets Here](#)



ARJ CLASSIC BLACK LITERATURE BOOK STUDIES



March 25, 6:30 – 8 PM

Resurrection Leawood – 13720 Roe Ave, Bldg. B - Foundry Rm B152

Join our journey to read and discuss classic works of Black literature that challenge us,

broaden our perspective, and help us better understand one another and the world we share. This month's selection is *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison.

First published in 1952, it is hailed a masterpiece that changed the shape of American literature. In 1953 it received the National Book Award for Fiction, making Ellison the first African American to win the award.

On the surface, the book may seem a quasi-satirical story of a young black man on a journey of self-discovery. Looking deeper we uncover the intersection of race and individuality, the burden of systemic inequality, and the journey toward self-definition away from societal assumptions and projections.

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

[Click here to register for the March event.](#) If you cannot attend in person, consider reading the book for your own enjoyment and to develop a deeper love and understanding of our neighbors. **Please note, our April selection will be James Baldwin's "Go Tell It On The Mountain."**

JOIN ARJ AT THE THEATRE



THE AFRICAN COMPANY PRESENTS *RICHARD III*

APRIL 26 at 3 PM

Unicorn Theatre, 3828 Main St., KCMO 64111

This is not your typical Shakespeare! It is an inventive retelling of a little known, yet pivotal event in the history of our country's first Black theatrical group – The African Company of New York, circa 1821.

Forty years before Lincoln ended slavery (and fifty years before African Americans earned the right to vote) a Black thespian group was putting on plays in downtown Manhattan to which both Black and white audiences flocked. The drama reached further than the stage.

ARJ has purchased a block of \$20 discount tickets. Get your tickets now by clicking here so we can learn more about this story together.

[The African Company presents Richard III, by The Black Repertory Theater of Kansas City | Resurrection Website](#)

This play is a collaboration of Black Repertory Theatre of KC with Heart of America Shakespeare Festival and the Unicorn Theatre.

IT'S NOT TOO SOON TO PLAN!



ARJ NIGHT AT THE KC MONARCHS GAME Saturday, June 6 - Gates Open at 6 PM

ARJ can hardly wait to see everyone at our fun summer event at Legends Field, so let's get it on our calendars now!

The event is set for **Saturday, June 6**. The KC Monarchs vs Gary Southshore RailCats game starts at 6:35 PM. We'll socialize and share an all-you-can-eat buffet on the patio and party deck, enjoy the game, and even watch a Superhero movie if you want to stay late! The all-inclusive special ticket price is just \$39 per person. Parking is free. Watch for ticket purchase information in the April newsletter.



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

Let's act together

THE URBAN LEAGUE OF GREATER KANSAS CITY PRESENTS

2026 DIFFERENCE MAKER 68TH AWARDS LUNCHEON & FIRESIDE CHAT

Thursday, March 19, 11:45 AM – 1:30 PM
Starlight Theatre Community Stage House
4600 Starlight Rd. KCMO

The Urban League of Kansas City Difference Maker honorees for 2026 are **Bridgette Williams**, Executive Director of the Heavy Construction Association and the **Reverend Al Sharpton**, internationally recognized civil rights and social justice leader, founder and president of the National Action Network. Mr. Sharpton will deliver the Fireside Chat entitled “Democracy Under Siege – Radical Resistance Required”. He will explore the urgent threats facing our democracy and the responsibility of leadership to confront systemic injustice, restore public trust, and advance equity in communities nationwide. Information and tickets available at [ulkc - Kansas City](https://ulkc-kansas-city.org).



**900 Linwood Boulevard
Kansas City, Missouri 64109**
Last day to buy tickets Friday, March 27, 2026 11:59 PM, CST

KC G.I.F.T. (Generating Income for Tomorrow) invites us to attend the The Vision of Equity Business Summit & Pitch Competition. It is a high-energy, one-day experience bringing together entrepreneurs, business owners, and community leaders for learning, connection, and investment.

You can experience a live pitch competition where 10 businesses take the stage to compete for \$10,000, \$20,000, or \$30,000 in funding. Explore a curated vendor marketplace, attend targeted breakout sessions designed to help businesses grow and scale, and connect directly with Kansas City G.I.F.T. and its network of resources.

This event is built for those who want to:

- Discover emerging businesses
- Learn practical strategies for business growth
- Build meaningful connections within the entrepreneurial ecosystem
- Support equitable access to opportunity and capital

Tickets are just \$10. A powerful experience. A seat you don't want to miss! For more information, call 816-766-7860,

About KC G.I.F.T. (Generating Income for Tomorrow) intends to reverse the effects of systemic racism by building an empowered community of Black business owners. Founded in May 2020, their small-business accelerator knocks down barriers to success by offering access to financial support, marketing services, and other professional resources. By participating in the program, grant recipients are equipped to take charge of the future of their businesses and their lives—positively impacting their communities by creating new jobs and generational wealth and improving quality of life for all. Together, with visionary business owners and generous donors, they are advancing Black businesses, one gift at a time.

[Click Here](#)

EXPLORE THE RACIAL JUSTICE MANDATE

A Free United Methodist Church Webinar Series

- **April 7 – Racial Justice & Its Implications for Today**
- **May 5 – Racial Justice & Our Methodist Heritage**
- **June 2 – Understanding Racial Inequity, White Privilege, White Supremacy, and Colonialism**

The United Methodist Church proclaims that from God's goodness and love, God created all persons as God's unique and beloved children. Racism opposes God's law, goodness and love and diminishes the image of God in each person. Fueled by white privilege, white supremacy and colonialism, the sin of racism has been a destructive scourge on global society and throughout the history of the United Methodist Church. It continues to destroy our communities, harm persons, obstruct unity and undermine God's work in this world. Racism must be eradicated. Therefore, The United Methodist Church commits to confronting and eliminating all forms of racism, racial inequity, colonialism, white privilege and white supremacy, in every facet of its life and in society at large.

Text of Article V – Racial Justice as approved at General Conference 2024

Explore the racial justice mandate of the United Methodist Church – its origins, meaning, and ongoing significance. Through guided teaching, reflection, and dialogue, participants will deepen their understanding of how our collective identity and responsibility as a denomination is committed to racial justice.

All sessions 9 - 10:30 am Central. For more information and to [register for remaining sessions, click here.](#)

SUPPORT LOCAL COMMUNITIES & SMALL ENTERPRISES

More Kansas City BIPOC-Owned Businesses

Here is an easy way for you to act in becoming a better neighbor and bridging the economic gap. Support smaller, locally owned establishments in the inner city and in underserved neighborhoods. Blacks, Indigenous, and People of Color own and operate businesses throughout the Kansas City Metro area. Support them and you'll very likely forge connections and friendships that overcome any perceived cultural barriers. Here are two more to check out soon.

Ruby Jean's Juicery

Inspired by the legacy of Ruby Jean, the proprietors believe there is life in fruits and vegetables, so we craft fresh, cold-pressed juices and healthy snacks to support vibrant living.

3000 Troost Ave., KCMO 64109
Ph. 816-708-3700
www.rubyjeansjuicery.com

Union Hill

Nestled in the heart of historic Union Hill, this lively restaurant features something for everyone. From business lunches to dinner with friends or brunch with family, their menu is crafted to satisfy every palate.

2976 Gillham Rd., KCMO 64108
Ph. 816-298-6047
www.uniononthehill.com

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

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

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

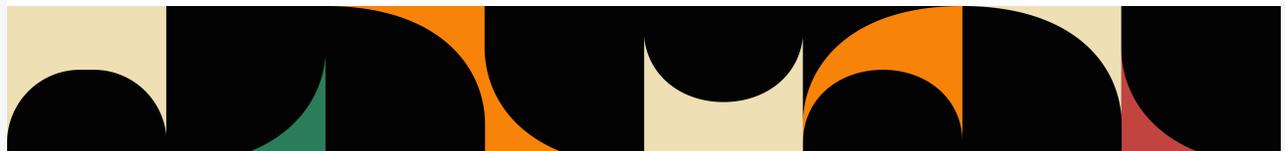
For more information on Allies for Racial Justice, visit our website:

<https://resurrection.church/arj>

or join the conversation on Facebook:

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

Allies for Racial Justice (ARJ) is a partnership between St. James Church and Resurrection, two United Methodist churches. ARJ exists to build authentic relationships to eliminate the existing racial divide in our churches and communities. Inquiries are received at allies4racialjustice@gmail.com



No longer want to receive these emails? [Unsubscribe.](#)
Resurrection 13720 Roe Ave Leawood, KS 66224