



Connect
Unite
Act

ARJ

ALLIES for RACIAL JUSTICE

May 2026





Florence Price

Pioneering American Composer, Pianist, Organist and Music Educator

In 1887, Florence Price was born to Dr. James H. Smith and Florence Irene Smith in the decidedly prejudiced city of Little Rock, Arkansas. While her parents hoped she would flourish as they had, little did they know that their honey-toned daughter would become the first African American woman composer of eminent distinction. Price was, in fact, of mixed racial heritage: African, European, and Native American. But with the dominant culture so fixated on viewing the world as black and white, Price would always be classified as a black woman.

The Smiths belonged to Little Rock's Black middle upper class and were civically and socially active. Her father was a successful Black dentist, and her mother was a music teacher, affording young Florence the opportunity to explore her creativity. Her talents were recognized early. By age 4, she was already playing the piano and composing.

At age 14, Florence graduated high school as class valedictorian and went on to train at the prestigious New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. Initially, she passed as Mexican to avoid racial discrimination against African Americans. Florence studied composition and counterpoint and embraced her African American heritage musically in her compositions. She wrote her first string trio and symphony and graduated with honors in 1906.

Florence moved back home, became a teacher, got married and had a family. She eventually relocated to Chicago, joining the Black Renaissance movement. She became the first African American woman to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra, the Chicago Symphony in 1933. Throughout her career, Price blended Romantic-era classical music with African American spirituals and folk traditions across over 300 works. She died in 1953. The discovery in 2009 of previous scores and manuscripts renewed interest in her work.

On Sunday, May 24, the Kansas City Symphony will feature works by Price, along with other great artists, at the Celebration at the Station evening concert. The event will also be live-streamed on Kansas City PBS.

For more information about music pioneer Florence Price go to: [Biography - Florence Price](#)



Bringing people together to **CONNECT** through engaging educational events.

Let's start a conversation.



PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE KANSAS SUPREME COURT SELECTION PROCESS

Monday, May 4 – Zoom Only, 7 - 8:30 PM

On August 4, 2026, during the Kansas Primary Election, voters will consider a proposed constitutional amendment that would change how justices of the Kansas Supreme Court are selected.

Under the current merit-based system, applicants are publicly vetted by a nonpartisan nominating commission which submits three finalists to the governor, who then appoints one to the court. Through periodic retention elections voters decide whether they remain in office.

The proposed amendment would replace the current system with direct elections. Voters

would choose state Supreme Court justices in partisan elections for six-year terms, eliminating the nonpartisan nominating commission.

Judge Karen Arnold-Burger of the Kansas Court of Appeals will cover the history of judicial selection in Kansas, historic political scandal that led to establishing the merit system, and what the proposed amendment could mean for the independence, accountability, and future of the state's judiciary.

Strangers No More, United Methodist Women, and Jewish Community Relations Board/American Jewish Committee (JCRB/AJC Kansas City) invite you to join this informative conversation on Zoom.

[Join the Zoom meeting here.](#) Passcode: 240472



RACIAL JUSTICE & OUR METHODIST HERITAGE

Tuesday, May 5, 9 - 10:30 AM CDT

Free on Zoom

General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Giovanni Arroyo, will facilitate a conversation with Dr. Ashley Boggan, General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History. This session will trace the development of the racial justice mandate within the broader story of the United Methodist Church, uncovering its theological roots and historical context.

Together, we will examine how the Church's constitutional commitment to racial justice emerged from a legacy marked by segregation and reunion, and explore [the racial justice mandate](#) as both a necessary corrective and a sacred covenant shaping our witness today.

[Register Now](#) for Session 3 in the UMC's "Racial Justice: A Mandate to Our Discipleship" Webinar Series!

If you missed the first two sessions, watch the recordings available below.

- [Session 1: Actively Engaging Racial Justice in Local Congregations](#)
- [Session 2: Racial Justice & Its Implications for Today](#)



BEYOND BROWN: MEXICAN STRUGGLES FOR EQUALITY BEFORE AND AFTER BROWN VS. BOARD OF EDUCATION

Free Lunch & Learn, May 7 – Noon
8788 Metcalf Avenue, Overland Park, KS 878

The 1954 Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision marked a turning point in the fight to end racial segregation in public schools. Still, the discrimination faced by Mexican and Mexican American students has often been overlooked. This presentation explores how Latino communities organized to challenge injustice and demand equal protection under the law — with special attention to powerful examples from right here in Kansas. Join Valerie Mendoza, historian and lecturer at Kansas City, Kansas Community College, for this eye-opening look at an important but often untold part of the desegregation story.

Bring your own lunch. Drinks and desserts are provided. [Please register HERE for this free event.](#) Registration does not include Museum admission.

This program is part of Humanities Kansas's Speakers Bureau, featuring presentations designed to inspire, spark conversations that inform, and generate insights that strengthen civic engagement. This program is presented as part of the Johnson County Museum's special exhibition, Everyday Democracy, on display February 8, 2026 – January 9, 2027.



Bringing people together to **UNITE** by growing authentic relationships through interactive programs.

Let's learn from each other.

DON'T MISS CLASSIC BLACK LITERATURE BOOK STUDIES

May 27 6:30 – 8 PM

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

We are having great discussions and making new friends at ARJ's monthly book studies. A different book each month offers new understanding of the Black experience along with all the joys, sorrows and hopes of living in an upside-down world. You are welcome to join us any time.

This month we are reading the critically acclaimed novel, *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker. It was a mainstream novel during the 1980s and adapted to film. Set during the 1930-1940s, the story takes place in the American South and an unnamed African country. The book centers on two Black women whose faith, relationships, and resilience empower them to survive racial and sexual oppression. The book won both the 1983 Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award for fiction. We encourage you to read it and come discuss it with us.

All book studies are held at 6:30 PM on the last Wednesday of each month. Book titles are announced in advance to allow enough time to read. Check the list below, the monthly ARJ newsletter, and the ARJ and Resurrection Leewood websites. Childcare available.

[Click here to register for the May event.](#) If you cannot attend in person, consider reading the book on your own to develop a deeper love and understanding of others.

Upcoming Book Selections:

- June 23 – Native Son by Richard Wright
- July 29 – Beloved by Toni Morrison

ARJ TICKETS NOW ON SALE!



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

ARJ is getting ready for our fun summer evening of baseball at Legends Field. Get your group together and buy your tickets now.

The event is set for Saturday, June 6. The KC Monarchs vs Gary Southshore RailCats game starts at 6:35 PM. We will socialize and share an all-you-can-eat buffet on the covered patio and party deck, enjoy the game, and even collect player autographs after the game. The all-inclusive special ticket price is just \$39 per person. Parking is free. [Tickets are available now by clicking here.](#)

COMING NEXT MONTH!



SATURDAY, JUNE 20

**EXHIBIT OPENS AT 3:30 PM
PROGRAM STARTS AT 4 PM**

**Resurrection Lee's Summit
350 SW Hwy, Lee's Summit, MO 64082**

ARJ is pleased to host our 4th annual Juneteenth Commemoration for St. James and Resurrection, two Kansas City Metro United Methodist Churches. We honor the occasion with an afternoon of historical insights, music, dance, and song.

This year's stellar program features:

- Award-winning musician **Issac Cates & the OneAccORd Choir**
- Heartful soloist **Devion Williams**
- **Kim Jones** Praising Grace Dance Team
- A special exhibit revealing the **Hidden History of the Black West**
- Insights into the Kansas-Missouri Border Wars with **Dr. James Leiker's** talk, *How*

Free Was the Free State?

- Efforts to close the literacy gap being used by **Lead to Read**, and how you can participate

Call family, friends and neighbors and get the date, time and location on everyone's calendar. **Watch your email and next month's newsletter for final details.**

Remember, it's free and all are welcome! We ask that you [pre-register](#) to help with our planning. Light refreshments will be provided.



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

Let's act together.

NEW ITEMS NOW BEING ACCEPTED



St. James Church invites everyone to participate in this community drive to provide baby supplies for Moms in need. Have some fun while doing some good! Go on a shopping spree for baby clothes, sizes newborn to 12 months!

Requested items include new onesies, rompers, sleeper gowns, socks, mittens and hats, swaddles, and burp cloths. **Drop off your donations between May 1 and May 23** at St. James Church during office hours: Mon-Thurs 9 am-5 pm, Fri 9 am-Noon, and before and after 9 am Sunday services.

For more information contact Dr. Yvette Richards (yrichards@sjumckc.org) or Monique Hall (hallmonique1@yahoo.com) 816-802-8234.



Generating Income For Tomorrow

2nd ANNUAL TROOST EQUITY WALK

Saturday, May 23, 6 AM

Join this community walk highlighting the progress, opportunity, and Black-owned businesses along Troost.

Walk alongside G.I.F.T. CEO Brandon Calloway and Mayor Quinton Lucas and experience Troost from a new vantage point. The 10-mile route runs from 11th & Troost to 95th & Troost. You're welcome to join for any portion of the walk – you don't have to complete all 10 miles (80 blocks).

[For more information and to register, click here.](#)

OUR CURRENT SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON PEACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Justice Takes Courage podcast series explores national and international social witness issues and actions in response to today's most pressing concerns. Podcast episodes are intended to bring people together to share ideas and perspectives that drive faith-based advocacy and legislative action.

In Episode 6, Bishop Julius C. Trimble and Bishop Tracy S. Malone, President of the UMC Council of Bishops, discuss faith, justice, and prophetic leadership in today's challenging and chaotic world. Learn how United Methodists, clergy, annual conferences and interfaith partners are responding and coping with what seems a daily flood of unbelievable, conflicting news and disturbing government actions. **Listen to Episode 6 here.** (direct link to Episode 6) Justice Takes Courage Podcast with Host General Secretary Julius C. Trimble • GBCS

SUPPORT BLACK-OWNED RESTAURANTS

Aside from enjoying a meal or coffee break in new surroundings, there are other

reasons to support Black-owned restaurants. These businesses help empower their communities and promote economic growth and equality. They are often the heart of neighborhoods where people forge connections and friendships that overcome any perceived cultural barriers.

We all spend money eating out. Just imagine what directing some of that spending power to Black-owned businesses can do. Join ARJ in bridging the economic gap by supporting Black-owned restaurants and businesses.

Check out the growing list of Black-owned restaurants frequented and recommended by ARJ participants

[Click Here For List](#)

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>

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Resurrection 13720 Roe Ave Leawood, KS 66224