

Connect
Unite
Act

ARJ

ALLIES for RACIAL JUSTICE

June 2026

CONNECT

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

Let's start a conversation.



Allies for Racial Justice Presents

LET FREEDOM SING!
A Celebration of Black History, Freedom, and Hope

SATURDAY, JUNE 20
Exhibit Opens at 3:30 PM | Program 4:00-5:30 PM

RESURRECTION LEE'S SUMMIT
350 SW HWY 150, Lee's Summit, MO 64082

Juneteenth recognizes the end of slavery in the United States. It recalls the day in 1865 when Union troops arrived in Galveston, Texas to formally announce that all enslaved people were free. The holiday is a time to celebrate African American history, culture, and resilience, and to reflect on ongoing movements for racial justice and equality. ARJ is proud to present its 5th Annual Juneteenth Commemoration.

We honor the occasion with an afternoon of historical insights, music, dance, and song that you don't want to miss:

- Award-winning musician **Issac Cates** & the OneAcCORd Choir
- Heartful soloist **Devion Williams**
- Kim Jones' **Praising Grace Dance Team**
- A special exhibit that reveals the **Hidden History of the Black West**
- **Dr. James Leiker's** insights into the Kansas-Missouri Border Wars in his keynote address, *How Free Was the Free State?*
- **Lead to Read KC's** efforts to close the literacy gap and how you can be part of the success story through ARJ's Juneteenth Book Drive

Gather your family, friends and neighbors and make plans now to attend this community-wide event, presented by ARJ in partnership with St. James and Resurrection, two United

Methodist Churches.

It's all free and all are welcome! We ask that you [pre-register](#) to help with our planning. We will provide light refreshments and the exhibit and information tables will remain open after the program.

ARJ JUNETEENTH BOOK DRIVE



Only 23% of third graders in Kansas City public and charter schools are reading on grade level. Children who are not reading by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school.

Lead to Read KC mobilizes the community to solve the literacy crisis by connecting students with reading mentors, resources, and unwavering support.

ARJ is supporting Lead to Read KC efforts with a **book donation drive at our Juneteenth event**. We will collect any new and gently used books you bring for donation to high-need communities. We will also have a supply of the early elementary version book, ***Ruby Bridges Goes to School***, that you can purchase for just \$5. You can either donate this important civil rights history on the spot or keep it to share with your children or grandchildren.

The Lead to Read preferences for donated children's books are:

- Books for kids in pre-school through 8th grade
- Culturally diverse books so readers see themselves in the story
- Bilingual books, especially Spanish/English
- High-interest books, such as graphic novels
- Easy Reader books to encourage practice and success



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

Let's learn from each other.

CLASSIC BLACK LITERATURE JUNE BOOK STUDY **Featuring *Native Son* by Richard Wright**

Wednesday, June 24 | 6:30 – 8 PM | Resurrection Leawood Room B152

Summer is here, bringing a shift in our daily rhythms. If you've been wanting to dive into impactful classic literature, summer is your season to slow down, take a breather, and dedicate yourself to reading a masterpiece or two, or three!

This month, we dive into Richard Wright's *Native Son*. For decades, this novel has sparked powerful conversations, cutting straight to the heart of the illusion of mercy and psychological fear of "the other." Beyond its literary fame, the story was adapted into a critically acclaimed, award-winning musical film.

This book presents an incredible depth of themes worth exploring together. Join us and be part of the discussion. [REGISTER HERE.](#)

COMING UP:

July 29 – ***Beloved* by Tony Morrison**

August 26 – ***The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois**

MORE JUNETEENTH EVENTS

Kansas City celebrates Juneteenth with a wide range of events across the metro area. Festivities span the entire month of June, featuring parades, food truck rallies, live music, and educational programs. Here are just a few:



June 6, 10 AM – 1 PM
Johnson County Museum at the Arts and Heritage Center 8788 Metcalf Ave. Overland Park, KS 66212

The Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center is hosting its annual Juneteenth commemoration and celebration. This free family-friendly event, built with community partners, provides an opportunity to honor the holiday's history and celebrate Juneteenth with art, music, food, and more.

Features include:

- **Free Day at the Museum** proudly sponsored by Panasonic Energy.
- Enjoy the permanent exhibit *Becoming Johnson County*, *KidScape*, and the **special exhibition *Everyday Democracy***.
- A special **Sit and Read** hosted by Johnson County Library.
- Food samples from local **Black-owned businesses**, including **Brown Suga**, **Ruby Jean's Juicery**, and **KC's Wing Bar**.
- **Performances** by Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey, the Blue Curtain Project, and Desmond Mason.
- A **free art activity** for families led by JCPRD Fine and Performing Arts staff.

No RSVP is required. [Click here for the most up-to-date information.](#)

Nelson Atkins MUSEUM OF ART

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

Saturday, June 13 – 10 AM – 4 PM
4525 Oak Street – KC,MO), 64111

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art honors the enduring contributions of African Americans with a full day of festivities, including live music and dancing, storytelling performances, and educational experiences in the museum's galleries.

See a powerful presentation of the colors by Urban Rangers, discuss works of art by Black artists with museum guides and docents, enjoy storytelling by Buffalo Soldier reenactors, and so much more.

General admission to the museum and festivities are free. You may register upon arrival; however, advance registration allows for a more convenient check-in experience. For registration and complete schedule go to [Juneteenth Celebration | Nelson Atkins](#)

More Celebrations, Festivals & Local Events

- **Banneker School Foundation Festival:** Located in nearby Parkville, Missouri, this celebration highlights a Jazz & Folk Festival in English Landing Park on **June 6**.
- **KCK "Forward in Freedom" Celebration:** Hosted in Kansas City, Kansas, this event kicks off with a community parade on 5th Street and concludes with a massive evening celebration at Kaw Point Park on **Saturday, June 13**. The event features food trucks, drill team performances, live entertainment, and fireworks.
- **The Hope Center Juneteenth Celebration:** Located on Linwood Blvd in KCMO, this family-friendly event features inflatables, a petting zoo, guest speakers, food trucks, and a day of cultural pride on **June 19**.
- **JuneteenthKC Heritage Festival:** The crown jewel of KC's celebrations draws over

25,000 visitors. The festival includes live music, vendors, and a youth zone across the 18th & Vine Jazz District. The Cultural Parade takes place in early June, followed by the main Heritage Festival on **June 19–20**. <https://www.juneteenthkc.com/>

- **Johnson County Celebrations:** For more events on the Kansas side, you can explore the [Juneteenth in JoCo page](#), which details bus art showcases, a watch party at Theater in the Park, and other events.

- **Juneteenth Food Truck Festival:** Head to the South Plaza for a delicious celebration on **June 19** featuring local food trucks, music, and face painting.

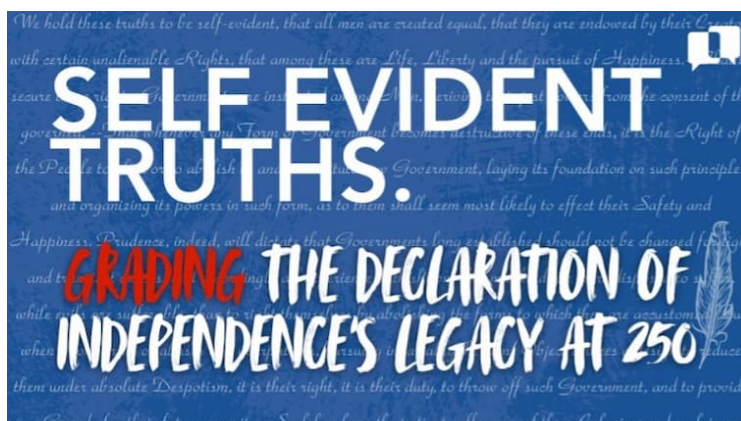
For more Juneteenth activities, check the [Kansas City, Kansas Event Directory](#) or the official [JuneteenthKC](#) homepage.



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

Let's act together.

AMERICAN PUBLIC SQUARE



June 18 – 6:00 PM | In-Person and Livestream
Midwest Trust Center - Yardly Hall on the campus of
Johnson County Community College
12345 College Blvd. Overland Park, KS 66210

How are we living up to our founding principles in contemporary America? As we approach the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, this panel invites a candid re-examination of its legacy.

Channeling the spirit of the document's original authors, each panelist will be asked to grade how well the United States has lived up to the Declaration's ideals and where we've fallen short.

From lofty principles like equality and the consent of the governed to the document's lesser known but timely grievances against King George III, this discussion will explore how the Declaration resonates in modern America centuries later.

This event aims to move beyond celebration or cynicism and offer a constructive report card on American democracy, 250 years in the making.

Free, but tickets required: Online, in person or by phone 913-469-4445

[IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE TICKET LIVESTREAM TICKET](#)

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

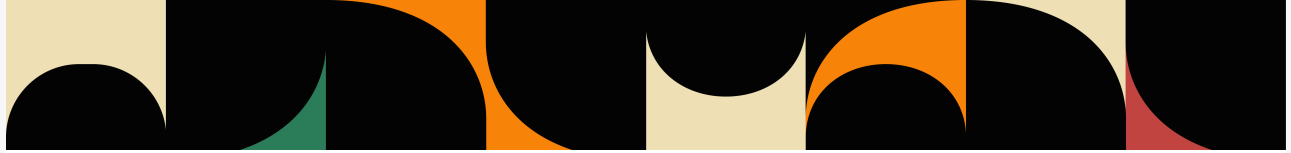
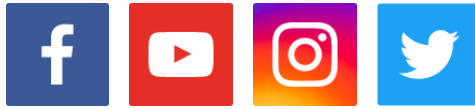
For more information on Allies for Racial Justice, visit our website:

<https://resurrection.church/arj>

or join the conversation on Facebook:

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

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