

Dear Members,

Welcome to the 2021–2022 United Methodist Women Reading Program. The year 2020 was tumultuous and uncertain. A global pandemic highlighted the importance of connection, even (or especially) while social distancing. Reading books at home and sharing them with friends and family—through email, phone, or video calls—can be a way to relax and engage in the world without leaving home. In the “Overview” section, we’ll share ways to get the most out of the Reading Program, even if we are unable to participate in the same “real world” activities as in the past.

The year also marked a civil rights uprising. Black lives matter—and Americans are raising consciousness and moving the country towards great social, political and cultural change, opposing police brutality, systemic racism and anti-Blackness.

The Reading Program has always included books showcasing diverse characters and provoking critical thinking about many issues, including race and racism. We hope you’ll read at least one of these books that center stories around the Black experience and elevate our understanding of how to be anti-racist, including:

- *Sulwe*, a picture book by Lupita Nyong’o about one girl’s journey towards loving her dark skin.
- *Anxious to Talk About It: Helping White Christians Talk Faithfully About Racism*, a practical guide for having difficult conversations.
- *The Unstoppable Garrett Morgan*, a charming, inspirational story of a Black businessperson and entrepreneur that is suitable for youth.
- *So You Want to Talk About Race*, a book that appeared in last year’s Reading Program and is now available in Korean.
- *Rise!: From Caged Bird to Poet of the People, Maya Angelou*, which has beautiful illustrations.
- *The Hate U Give*, a young adult novel that was written in response to the shooting of Black American Oscar Grant.

I’m so pleased you will be participating in this program which, for the first time, will span two years instead of one. The purpose of the Reading Program is to better understand and participate in God’s mission today, to increase sensitivity to all human beings, to explore contemporary issues, and to enhance and act on self-knowledge. Even when we’re apart, we’re together—and still working to deepen our understanding of the intersections of race, class, sex, religion and gender through books and discussion.

God Bless.



Andris Salter
Operations Officer
United Methodist Women

