



## Liturgical Movements in Prose with Purpose

Velda Love

I am a reader of books and have been since the age of three. One of my childhood favorites was authored by [Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss](#). My favorite of the 66 books written by Dr. Seuss was [Green Eggs and Ham](#), a short and delightful story introducing Sam I Am with a poetry and rhythm that made it easy for a child's imagination to capture the words and imagery as well as develop relationships with characters with odd and peculiar ways of being in the world.

Some readers like me are attracted to books because we are intrigued and captivated by an author's imagination with creative storytelling, use of language, beat and time, rhythms, and stories with complex characters. As we mature and become more seasoned readers, we graduate from childhood stories to adult themes that speak to the times in which one lives by observation and deep engagement.

My mother always had books by mainly Black/African American authors. Because I was a reader, I'd go through her library and read with curiosity and a dictionary close by. Her undergraduate degree focused on sociology, which included reading widely from authors whose lived experiences culminated in telling stories that resonated with the conditions of folks living while Black in America before and during the 1960's.

One of the books that formed my consciousness and awareness of the oppression of Black people was [Black Skin White Masks by Franz Fanon, written in 1967](#). I followed that read with [The Wretched of the Earth translated from French to English](#). My theological framing was developed over and over again by [James Hal Cone](#). I sat for hours reading his book [For My People: Black Theology and the Black Church](#).

The question at the bottom of the book title and his name read, “*Where have we been and where are we going?*” An important and poignant question given Cone was on the frontlines of *Black liberation theology, a theology grounded in the experience of African Americans and related to other Christian liberation theologies.*

Today, I am rereading Martin Luther King, Jr.’s book, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* I’m also reading the 2025 United Church of Christ All Church Read, *Building Up A New World: Congregational Organizing for Transformative Impact.* Several of the authors are UCC ordained clergy with lived experience of community organizing.

Both are great reads for such a time as this. We need both because they are informative for developing strategies beyond survival. They offer lessons of courage and wisdom from sages and elders, women and men, youth, and teens in the fight for justice, liberation, and justice for all. The words from brilliant organizers with profound appreciation for local congregations give us inspiration for thriving during the unraveling of basic human and civil rights in our country. Organizing from the pews, pulpits, and speaking without fear as public theologians in the streets brings about transformation that breathes life and love into generations to come.

Last year’s UCC All Church Read included a wise sage and spiritual guide, [Cole Arthur Riley](#). We all need spiritual guides. Cole Arthur Riley is a spiritual guide endowed with wisdom from her ancestors. Cole reminds us we need prayer, poems, and meditations for staying human

A Benediction from [Black Liturgies](#).

May you wake and rest with humility in your hearts. May you be protected from the greed and fear that tempt us to dominate others. Possess such moral clarity that you would be able to be both leader and follower without threat to your sense of self. May you live responsibly and tenderly, that your power would never come at the expense of someone else’s. Amen.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Rev. Velda Love serves as the Minister of Racial Justice, and Lead Minister, Join the Movement Toward Racial Justice in the National Setting of the United Church of Christ.

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