RECOVERY SUNDAY

CORAL GABLES CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING, JUST PEACE, W.I.S.E., CREATION JUSTICE,
ANTI-RACISM, AND SANCTUARY CHURCH OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here

ALL are welcome to this time and place of worship.
Know that in this church you are welcome as you are and for who you are.

As followers of Christ, we are compelled by the Gospel to seek
reconciliation and wholeness in a world that is all too often an unloving place.

Therefore, whether you are gay, straight, or in-between;
whatever your country of origin or ancestry;
whether you are a believer, a doubter or a seeker;
in Christ's love, we welcome you, so that by the power
of the Holy Spirit we can work together to
usher in God's Reign of justice, peace, and mercy.

From wherever you join us today, whether in-person or online, please know that our worship is enhanced because of your presence and participation ….

ABOUT THIS MORNING'S SERVICE: RECOVERY SUNDAY

Healing was a central part of Jesus' earthly ministry. His gift of restoring human beings to full participation in their communities and delivering them from pain and illness is a hallmark of the great prophetic dream called the Reign of God. It is where no one goes hungry, the ill and grieving are healed, and those in various kinds of prisons are set free for abundant life.

For many years, Gables UCC has been home to recovery groups such as AA, Alateen, and Alanon. It is one of the ways we reach out and welcome those who are hurting or struggling to find sanctuary, hope, and support.

On this Sunday, we lift up the ministry of recovery, hearing personal stories of renewal and hope, and providing information to those who would like to hear more about what is possible for living their lives fully and on their terms.

Coral Gables Congregational United Church of Christ
3010 De Soto Boulevard, Coral Gables, Florida 33134-6317
Phone: 305.448.7421 ~ www.gablesucc.org

ORDER OF WORSHIP

February 16, 2025 *Our faith is over 2000 years old;* **11:00 a.m.**
Our thinking is not.

RECOVERY SUNDAY

We cannot tell what may happen to us in the strange medley of life.
But we can decide what happens IN us – how we can take it, what we do with it –
and that is what really counts in the end.
~ Joseph Fort Newton

Please stand as you are able

GATHERING MUSIC

Dr. Gregory Taylor, piano

WELCOME The Rev. Dr. Laurinda Hafner

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome in this ***United Church of Christ*** *congregation.*

Please check in on Facebook and let your family and friends know that you are joining us at Coral Gables Congregational UCC.

Invite your family and friends around the world to worship with us online each Sunday at 11:00 a.m. at gablesucc.org/live. Be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

You may text your prayer requests to Pastor Laurie at 305.968.6482 or email her at 3059686482@vtext.com to be included during our prayers this morning and on the Called to Care prayer list which is prayed over on Wednesdays.

CALL TO COMMUNITY *God's Eye is on the Sparrow* arr. Mark Hayes
The Vocal Ensemble

***CALL TO WORSHIP** The Rev. Megan Smith

One: Children of God: welcome!
Many: Welcome to this place of love and grace,
One: Welcome to this place of hope and perseverance.
Many: God invites all of us to be a part of the beloved community,
One: God invites all of us to share in the good news:
Many: We are welcome, just as we are. We are loved, just as we are.
One: In gratitude for all of this, let us worship God.

Please remain standing for the opening hymn.

***HYMN** *Leaning on the Everlasting Arms*

What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms;
what a blessedness, what a peace is mine, leaning on the everlasting arms.

Refrain:
Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms;
leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.

O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way, leaning on the everlasting arms;
O how bright the path grows from day to day, leaning on the everlasting arms. [Refrain]

What have I to dread, what have I to fear, leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near, leaning on the everlasting arms. [Refrain]

***OPENING PRAYER**

Many: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference, living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; taking this world as it is and not as I would have it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.

~ Reinhold Niebuhr

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

One: Friends, let us live fully, love wastefully, and have the courage to be all that we can be. Let us extend that blessing to one another as we offer the peace of the risen Christ by saying, "Peace be with you."

Many: And also with you.

If you are in the sanctuary, offer a wave, bow, hand over the heart, smile, or nod to others.
If you are gathered with others at home, share words of peace with one another.
If you are worshipping individually, know the peace of Christ is with you.
Email, text, or message your family and friends and share the peace with them.

SUNG INTERLUDE from Taizé

Bless the Lord, my soul and bless God's holy name;
Bless the Lord, my soul who leads me into life

At this time, all children and youth through 12th grade are invited to attend Sunday School.
Please go to the Fellowship Hall and you will be taken to your classrooms.

Please Note: Childcare is available each Sunday for children Pre-K and under in the Arts and Education Wing.

WORDS OF GRATITUDE

Richard and Jorge
Representing Almeria AA and Readings in Recovery Al Anon

A READING *The Merton Prayer* Thomas Merton

Vickie

My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always though
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

GIFT OF MUSIC *Safe Within Your Arms* Mark Hayes

The Chancel Choir

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON *Matthew 5*

Sofia

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Friends, listen. God is still speaking.
Thanks be to God!

THE WITNESS OF RENEWAL

Eddie

CHORAL RESPONSE *Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)* arr. Tom Fettke

The Chancel Choir

THE MORNING PRAYERS

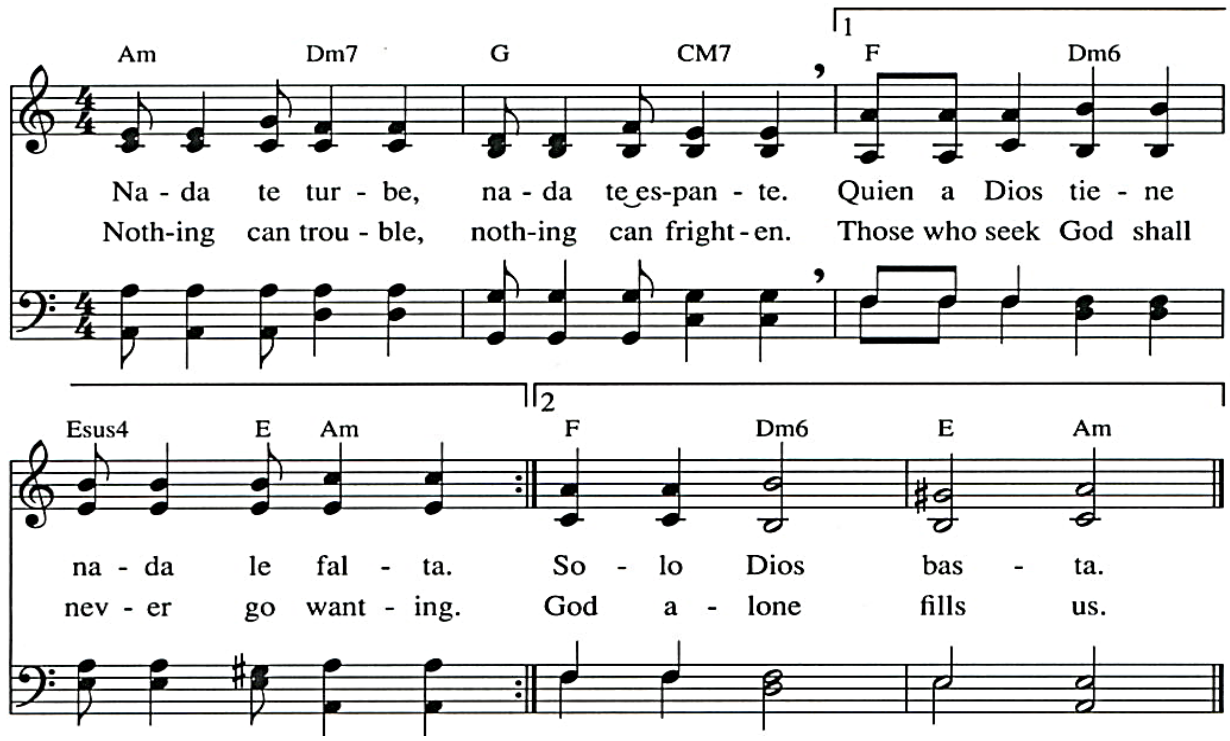
OUR SAVIOR'S PRAYER

You are also welcome to pray in the words, tradition, or language of your choosing…

O Our Creator, who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

SUNG PRAYER RESPONSE from Taizé

We will sing in Spanish and English



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INVITATION TO GIVE, SERVE, AND BELONG

Please know that your financial support of the church does great things not only within these walls but far beyond. If you wish to give on your mobile device today, please text GABLESUCC" to 833.245.6434 or go to our church app. You may also give at gablesucc.org/give. For those in the sanctuary, offering plates are at the doors.

***THE DOXOLOGY**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye heavenly host; Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***THE SENDING FORTH** *Based on the seventh step of AA*

ALL: My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and others. Grant me strength, as I go out from here to do your bidding. Amen.

***THE SUNG BENEDICTION** *Alleluia*

On the second verse, you are invited to raise your hands up as a symbol of giving glory to God.

***POSTLUDE** *Etude in G Flat Major, Op. 10. No.5* Frederic Chopin

Dr. Gregory Taylor, piano

During the postlude, you are invited to come forward to the piano if you wish to enjoy the music.

Please join us in the Fellowship Hall for our Connection Café. A time to connect over conversation and refreshments. ***Visitors, we would LOVE to have you join us!***

A WARM AND CORDIAL WELCOME TO ALL GUESTS

If you are visiting with us for the first time this morning, we welcome you. We are grateful we have found each other. And, if somehow, there is something in you, some still small voice seeking a place to live out your faith, to ask important questions, and to serve beyond yourself, we invite you into our community. For more information about the church or membership, please contact Pastor Laurie at 305.448.7421, ext. 116 or at LaurieH@gablesucc.org.

We are also a large online congregation of expats from our congregation who have moved to places around the country and around the world; as well as folks who are actively involved in the church who have never set foot in our building, but are committed to our vision, values, and beliefs as a progressive, open-minded, and open-hearted Christian congregation. Whether an expat or "vurcher" (one who attends church virtually each week), please join us each Sunday for worship and for other programs and educational experiences online throughout the week.

No matter who you are or where you are on your life journey, you are welcome here.

STAY IN TOUCH

Once a week or so, Pastor Laurie emails a pastoral letter, *Laurie's Lines,* to all members and friends, filling them in on the week's events, any special concerns that have arisen, and general church business. If you would like to be included, contact Elena at ElenaK@gablesucc.org.

IN OUR PRAYERS

We remember all those places of war, violence, and unrest, as we continue to pray for peace for all people around the world. We especially remember this day those who have suffered much loss through war, natural disasters, terrorism, and violence. A lighted candle on the altar symbolizes our prayers for peace and unity.

TODAY

GAY PRIDE PARADE PLANNING
Today at 12:15 p.m. in the Library

Join us as we discuss plans for participating in the 2025 Miami Beach Pride Parade which will take place April 6, 2025. If you are interested but can't attend today, please be in touch with Pastor Lisa at LisaL@gablesucc.org.

IMPROV GROUP
Today at 12:15 p.m. in the Chapel

At its core, improv is the art of making things up on the spot—characters, song lyrics, situations, whole scenes. That sort of blank slate may sound intimidating, especially if you're just getting started. But improv can serve as an important foundation for learning teamwork, bravery, strength, and confidence! Plus, just having fun.

Led by church member Jeff McNabb, co-founder and artistic director of the Parliament Room (an Improv group based in downtown Miami), Jeff has eight years' experience as an Improvisor and coach, both with the Just the Funny and Villain Theaters. All are welcome, any age.

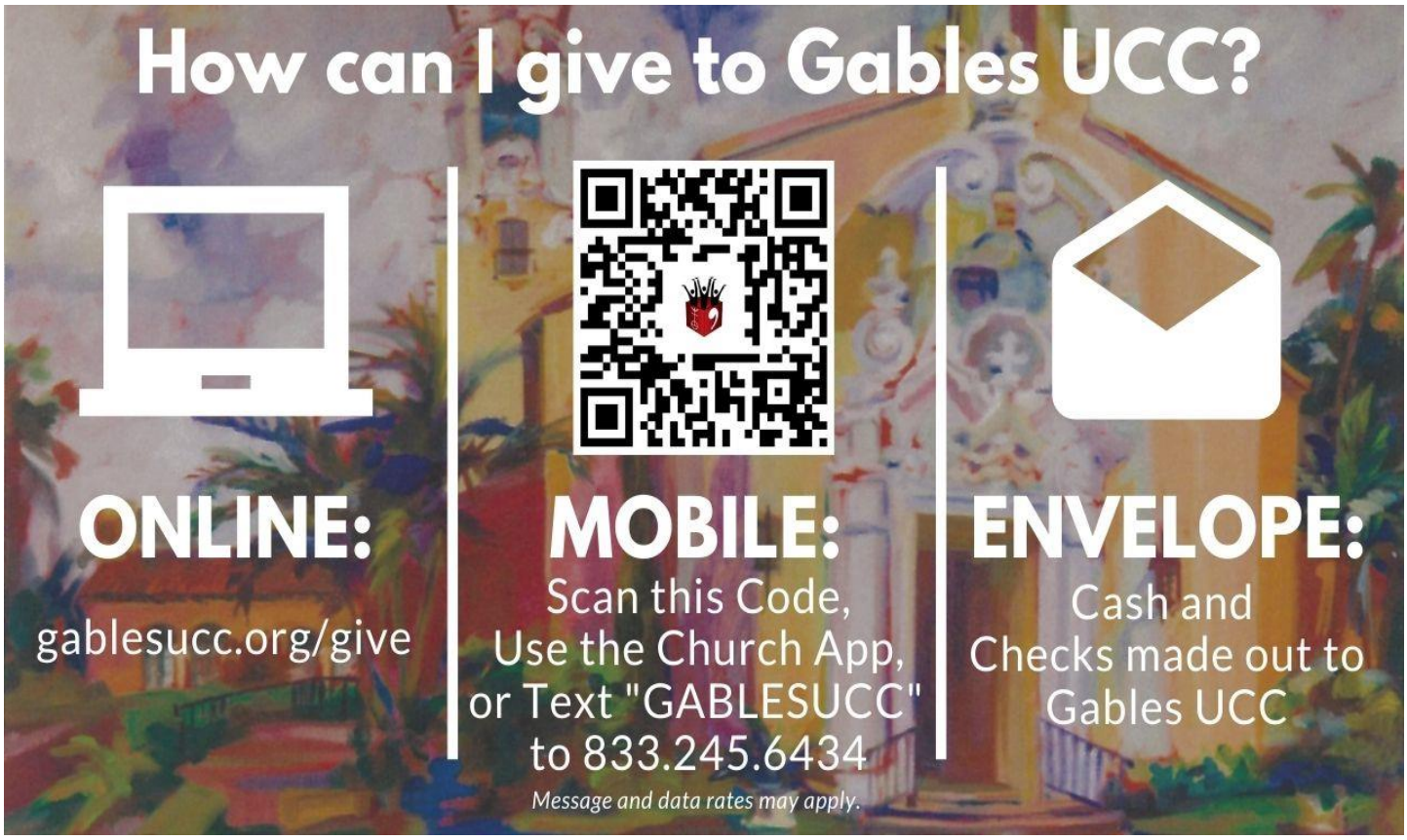
SUNDAY FUNDAY FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

High Schoolers get your cheer on for the UM Hurricanes! Today we will enjoy a Tailgate Party on the Church Green with a cook-out and some games before leaving for the University of Miami to attend a women's basketball game against Florida State University. Meet on the Green at 12:15. We should return to the church around 4:00 p.m. but you can call your parents for pick-up as we leave the game. And questions, be in touch with Pastor Laurie.

The Middle Schoolers are in for an action-packed afternoon as we head over to GameTime for video games, lunch, and a bit of friendly competition with Pastor Megan. Who will beat her at gaming—that remains to be seen! We will meet in Havighorst Lounge by 12:15 p.m. to board the church shuttle. Parent pick-up is 3:00 p.m. at the church.

ALL MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH
***Catching Your Breath*: A Lenten Devotional Book written by church members for church members**.

During this Lenten season, you are invited to share a short reflection to be included in a devotional booklet shared with the congregation to be used as part of their daily Lenten practice. We would love for folks, young and old, of all varieties and types, philosophies and faith, to submit a brief reflection, poem, or picture answering either the question, "What has made you lose your breath?" or "What gives you breath/life?" The final date for submissions is this Wednesday, February 19. Please e-mail or give to Pastor Laurie.



A CALL TO MERCY, JUSTICE, AND WALKING HUMBLY WITH GOD AND OTHERS

With a new administration soon to be sworn in, as people of faith we are compelled to witness to the work, the words, and the teachings of the ancient prophet Micah who calls us to "Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God." While we will see what this new administration brings, what we do know is that the Heritage Foundation's Presidential Transition Project, also known as Project 2025, seeks to fundamentally reshape federal government policies across various sectors, including social safety nets, civil rights, and environmental protection.

As a congregation that declares itself to be Open and Affirming of the LGBTQ+ community, a Sanctuary Church for protecting immigrants from family separation, an Anti-Racism church, a Just Peace church, and a Creation Justice church, we want to be proactive rather than reactive to the witness and work to which we may be called at this time.

Therefore, we are inviting members of the church to join us as we begin preparing for what may be a sustained and meaningful engagement in support of communities that experience historical and structural marginalization, an economy that is fair, inclusive, and productive, a cherished multicultural, pluralist society, and the protection of public health, safety, the environment, and an honest, equitable education for all. This committee which falls under the work of the Board of Justice and Witness is co-chaired by MaryAnne Lukacs and Virginia Vega Lomis. If you would like to learn more or sign-up to help, please be in touch with MaryAnne at mal@malukacs.com or Virginia at vegasivi@gmail.com.

INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW

How do I become a member of the church?

If you've wished for an open and embracing community of faith to nurture your spirit, and grow your faith, then we warmly invite you to help us build the family of Gables UCC.

If you are interested in "inquiring" about Gables UCC and what it means to be a member of our family of faith, please be in touch with Pastor Laurie at LaurieH@gablesucc.org.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Weekly, the Called to Care Team receives prayer requests from church family and friends. Each **Wednesday at 12:30 p.m.,** they gather in prayer over Zoom to lift up these prayer requests, to pray for the church, and for the needs of the world. If you have a prayer concern to be prayed over by Called to Care, you may text it to Pastor Laurie at 305.968.6482 or email Carol Fifield, the Called to Care coordinator at miamifife@gmail.com.

OUR CHURCH APP

For all Apple and Android users, get your official Gables UCC App by going to the App Store or Google Play and downloading it. It's free! And it will keep you up-to-date and connected with church information, special announcements, calendar, and the staff. Need help? Contact Elena Korallis, our Communications Coordinator, at ElenaK@gablesucc.org.

LOTUS HOUSE COLLECTION

Our Sunday School children and youth are supporting Lotus House Homeless Shelter and need your HELP! Every month, we collect a different item that the women, children, or LGBT+ youth need. **In February, we are collecting full-size shampoo bottles.** Children may bring donations with them to Sunday School. Adults may leave donations at Reception or ship them to Pastor Megan at Gables UCC via Amazon or other online retailer. Thank you for helping the homeless.

THE CHURCH FOOD PANTRY

We are always in need of non-perishable food for our food pantry. We rely on our church members, family, and friends to provide the needed donations for the many Miamians suffering with food insecurity. We have created an Amazon wish list to make donating even easier! You can shop online here: https://gablesucc.org/pantry/ If you prefer to shop in-person, please drop off donations at the church reception. Thank you for supporting your neighbors in need!

WALKING GROUP

Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m.

Join Pastor Megan, church members, and friends for a weekly walk around the Granada Golf Course and back, approximately a 5K or three miles. We will meet outside our church's Fair Trade shop on Columbus Blvd. and leave the church together as we begin our walk. Pastor Megan sets a brisk pace, but you are always welcome to set your own. Bring a flashlight.

SUNDAY MORNING SPIRITUAL FORMATION CLASS

The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon

Sunday mornings, through March 2 from 9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

In Havighorst Lounge or on Zoom ~ Led by Pastor Laurie

Join us as we take a look at Paul, this ancient theologian, letter-writer, and missionary who has taken some big hits over the years for being sexist, chauvinistic, judgmental, and xenophobic. Not so, argues Marcus Borg and Dominick Crossan, authors of the book, *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon*. In fact, they believe that he may be the most progressive voice in the Bible, even among all the prophets and Jesus himself. They argue that "Paul's message challenged the normalcy of civilization, then and now, with an alternative vision of how life on earth can and should be. "This radical Paul," as they describe him, "was a faithful follower of the radical Jesus."

Join us on these Sunday mornings as we look at this intriguing and challenging man, considered one of the most influential people in history. It is even said he had a greater impact on the world's religious landscape than any other person besides Mohammed and Jesus. Folks traveling to Greece as part of the upcoming church trip to walk the way of Paul are encouraged to attend but this is for all people interested in church history, theology, the Christian faith, and scripture.

I WANT TO DO THAT, JUST NOT ALONE

Join us for an evening at the theatre:

Jersey Boys

Thursday, February 20 at 8:00 p.m. at Actor's Playhouse

Pre-Show cocktails for Gables UCC members and friends at 7:00 pm in the lobby.

Featuring our own Gables UCC church member Clay Ostwald as Musical Director.

The Tony-Award Broadway Musical Jersey Boys chronicles the incredible journey of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons. This Tony Award-winning musical takes the audience through their rise to fame, personal struggles, and eventual triumph of the iconic 1960s rock 'n' roll group. Purchase discounted tickets from Geneviève in Fellowship Hall on Sunday after 11:00 a.m. worship. Price $65. Quantities are limited.

PACT (PEOPLE ACTING FOR COMMUNITY TOGETHER) NETWORK MEETING

Sunday, February 23 at 12:15 p.m. in the Chapel

Have you or someone you know been impacted by the high cost of living and rents in Miami? The Gables UCC Social Justice Ministry is tackling this problem with PACT, an interfaith organization working to hold public officials accountable for fair policies and practices. You can be a part of this essential work by joining us on February 23 in the Chapel after 11:00 a.m. worship. We will be discussing how to get involved and possible solutions.

This meeting is for all Network Members and anyone interested in learning more about PACT's mission and the issues in which PACT is currently engaged. We hope to see you on February 23!

ALL-CHURCH BOOK CLUB
James: A Novel
In-Person: Friday, February 28 at 6:30 p.m. at Pastor Laurie's House
Virtual: Saturday, March 1 at 1:00 p.m. on Zoom

Let's gather as a church family and read a book and then have a great conversation no matter gender, background, culture, age, etc. Join us either in-person for a potluck of appetizers and drinks at the home of Pastor Laurie or on Zoom as we discuss the book, *James: A Novel* by Percival Everett. Described as a brilliant, action-packed reimagining of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, both harrowing and humorous, told from the enslaved Jim's point of view. It is currently in development as a feature film to be produced by Steven Spielberg. Led by church member Liz Stack.

THE STATE OF THE MIAMI-DADE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY
A Conversation among Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava,
Equality Florida, SAVE, and the Coral Gables United Church of Christ*

Sunday, March 9, at 1:00 p.m.
The Gables UCC Sanctuary
All are welcome

***** A landmark Equality Florida/SAVE needs assessment and action plan will be presented and discussed.

A light lunch will be served for those attending the presentation in Havighorst Lounge at **12:15 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

Sponsored by:

EQUALITY FLORIDA

SAVE LGBTQ

CORAL GABLES UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

God is still speaking,

YOU ARE INVITED
TO THE GABLES UCC

ALL-CHURCH PICNIC AND COOKOUT

Face painting, crafts, relay races, and music!

Saturday, March 15
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at Tropical Park
$6 per person

Register by March 9 here

or at gablesucc.org/picnic

CORAL GABLES CONGREGATIONAL UCC STAFF DIRECTORY
305.448.7421 (Extensions listed below)

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All Members of the Church

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Maintenance and Custodial Team
Rene Dominguez (Lead Custodian)
Carlos Barrios, Eddie Oviedo, and Hortensia Piloto Lopez

WE ARE OUT OF THE BOX PEOPLE

Coral Gables Congregational United Church of Christ
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Phone: 305.448.7421 ~ www.gablesucc.org

BE THE CHURCH
Protect the environment.
Care for the poor.
Forgive often.
Reject racism.
Fight for the powerless.
Share earthly and spiritual resources.
Embrace diversity.
Love God.
Enjoy this life.
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST