the
Least
of These

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 the worship of God
is enhanced because of your presence and participation ….

ORDER OF WORSHIP

August 9, 2026 *Our faith is over 2000 years old; Our thinking is not.* **11:00 a.m.**

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: ELEPHANT IN THE PEW

A lot of folks have turned Jesus into a mascot for their tribe. If your Jesus looks like you, votes like you, hates all the same people you hate, and never challenges your privilege, that's not the Christ of the Gospels—that's a custom-made idol.

—John Fugelsang

GATHERING MUSIC

Dr. Greg Taylor, piano

WELCOME The Rev. Melanie Marsh

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.

CHORAL CALL TO COMMUNITY *Order My Steps* arr. Jack Schrader

Summer Choir with Greg Taylor, piano;
Gary Thomas, bass; Seth Woods, percussion

***THE CALL TO WORSHIP** The Rev. Lisa LeSueur

One: We gather in the name of Jesus,
who said, "What you do to the least of these, you do to me."

Many: We come to worship the God who is found not in power and privilege, but in those who are hungry, thirsty, and afraid.

One: Some read Scripture to bless nations and defend power.
We read Scripture through the life and love of Christ.

Many: We follow Jesus to the margins:
to welcome the stranger,
to visit the prisoner,
to lift up the poor.

All: God of justice and mercy,
meet us here,
shape us by your Word,
and then send us forth to serve "the least of these."

***OPENING HYMN** *You Are Salt for the Earth, O People*

You are salt for the earth, O people: salt for the reign of God!
Share the flavor of life, O people: life in the City of God!

Refrain: Bring forth the reign of mercy, bring forth the reign of peace;
Bring forth the reign of justice, bring forth the City of God!

You are a light on the hill, O people: light for the City of God!
Shine so holy and bright, O people: shine in the City of God! (Refrain)

You are a seed of the Word, O people: bring forth the reign of God!
Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice, grow in the City of God! (Refrain)

We are a blest and a pilgrim people: bound for the reign of God!
Love our journey and love our homeland: love is the City of God! (Refrain)

***THE PASSING OF THE PEACE**

One: God meets us in our questions and in our courage, in our faith and in our uncertainty, and calls us beloved. Let us share that love with one another. The peace of Christ is with you…

Many: And also with you.

If you are in the sanctuary, offer a wave, hug, handshake, smile, or nod to others.
If you are worshipping with us from home, please know the peace of Christ is with you.

At this time, all children and youth through 5th grade are invited to attend Sunday School.
Please go to the Fellowship Hall and you will be taken to your classrooms.

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

SUNG INTERLUDE *Halle, Halle, Halleluja!*

Halle, halle, halle-lujah! Halle, halle, halle-lujah!
Halle, halle, halle-lujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON *Matthew 25:31-40* From *The Inclusive Bible*

"At the appointed time the Promised One will come in glory, escorted by all the angels of heaven, and will sit upon the royal throne, with all the nations assembled below. Then the Promised One will separate them from one another, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. The sheep will be placed on the right hand, the goats on the left. "The ruler will say to those on the right, 'Come, you blessed of my Abba God! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world! For I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me; naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me; in prison and you came to visit me.' Then these just will ask, 'When did we see you hungry and feed you, or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in, or clothe you in the nakedness? When did we see you ill or in prison and come to visit you?' The ruler will answer them, 'The truth is, every time you did this for the least of my sisters or brothers, you did it for me."

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

THE GIFT OF MUSIC *I Dream a World* Andre Thomas

Vocal Ensemble with Tadao Hermida Ito, cello; Greg Taylor, piano

THE MORNING MESSAGE *Elephant in the Pew*

The Rev. Dr. Laurinda Hafner

CHORAL RESPONSE *Credo - I Believe in God from the Gospel Mass* Robert Ray

Summer Choir with Charmyn Kirton, Alex Woods, soloists;
Gary Thomas, bass; Greg Taylor, piano; Seth Woods, percussion

At this time, you may text your prayer requests to Pastor Laurie at 305.968.6482 or email her at 3059686482@vtext.com to be included in this morning's prayers and on the church prayer list which is prayed over by the Called to Care Team during the week.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND OUR SAVIOR'S PRAYER

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 glory, forever. Amen.

INSTRUMENTAL PRAYER RESPONSE

Come and Fill

Tadao Hermida Ito, cello; Greg Taylor, piano

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CLOSING WORDS

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 can also give at gablesucc.org/give.
Offering plates are available at the doors for your gifts as well.

Thank you for your generosity and support of the work of Gables UCC.

THE CLOSING HYMN

They'll Know We Are Christian's By Our Love

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
And we pray that our unity will one day be restored
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
Yeah they'll know we are Christians by our love

We will work with each other, we will work side by side
We will work with each other, we will work side by side
And we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
Yeah, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
They will know we are Christians by our love

All praise to the Creator, from whom all things come,
And all praise to Christ Jesus, the heart of God's home,
And all praise to the Spirit, who makes us all one,
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

***BENEDICTION**

One: Go now in peace,
to love and serve Christ in the faces of the least of these.
May the God of compassion open your eyes to injustice,
the Christ who suffered be your courage and your guide,
and the Holy Spirit fill you with power
to resist hatred, reject false gods of nation and race,
and embody a love that has no boundaries**. Amen.**

***THE SUNG BENEDICTION** *Alleluia*

As we end our service, you are invited to join hands with your neighbor as an expression of our unity in Christ and lift them up in glory to God on the second verse.

***POSTLUDE** *Prelude in E Flat Minor Opus 23 No 9* Sergei Rachmaninoff
Dr. Greg Taylor, piano

Following the service, we invite you to come to the piano to enjoy the postlude. 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!

TODAY: SERMON FEEDBACK CAFÉ
12:15 p.m. in Havighorst Lounge or Zoom

Join us for a sandwich and conversation with Pastor Laurie about her Elephant in the Pew sermon for the day. How would you have answered the question? Do you see things differently? Dissenting views are encouraged! Childcare is available in Room 3. To receive the Zoom link, please go to *Laurie's Lines* or text Pastor Laurie.

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.

TODAY: EXPATS AND VURCHERS
Sunday, August 9 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom
Whether you are living across the Pond, on the Gulf of Mexico, in the Carolinas, or the hinterlands of the East or West Coast, please join our special fellowship and support group.

We gather from around the world to check in with our Gables UCC members and friends living outside of South Florida. Whether you have been a former member or friend of the church and have moved away, or have found a home with us virtually, we invite you to be connected through this special group just for you. Contact Pastor Laurie or see Laurie's Lines for the Zoom link.

TODAY: SERVE AT CHAPMAN PARTNERSHIP

Join members of Gables UCC in serving a meal for residents at the downtown location of Chapman Partnership, a shelter for people experiencing homelessness. We will carpool from the church at 4:00 p.m. or you can meet us there, serve at 5:00 p.m., and then we will help clean up. This is a wonderful opportunity to serve our community and to build relationships with fellow Gables UCC members. To RSVP, please contact Zilkia-Marie at zdeni001@gmail.com.

FAIR TRADE MARKETPLACE
Open TODAY 12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m.
Located outside the Fellowship Hall

Come and shop in support of our justice ministry. Each of your purchases helps artisans in developing countries build strong, local economies. These skilled workers are paid fair-living wages while crafting sustainable products that do not harm the environment. No child labor is used.

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.

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.

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, grow your faith, and to raise your family…
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.

FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION

We are collecting 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 at gablesucc.org/pantry. If you prefer to shop in-person, please drop off donations at the church reception. Thank you for supporting our neighbors in need!

SING IN THE SUMMER CHOIR
Sunday, August 23
Rehearsal at 9:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

If you love to sing… but think you can't… or you can… the chancel choir is for you! This summer, try us on! We guarantee a fit! Come as you are and join us. We gather at 9:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall for rehearsal, prior to the 11:00 a.m. service. For more info, contact Music Ministry Coordinator, Dr. Charmyn Kirton at 305.448.7421, ext. 121. After the Summer, you'll fall for us!

CALLING ALL MEN YOUNG AND OLD
Think you can't sing? Perfect! Think you CAN sing? Even better!
Join the Men's Chorus on Sunday, August 16
Rehearsal at 9:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Whether you've been singing since the cradle, or you think a "flat" is an apartment in the UK, we want YOU! No auditions, no judgments, just good men making (hopefully) good music together. Come find your voice, lose your inhibitions, and discover that "joyful noise" is not just a theological concept, it's our specialty. **All voices welcome.**

DANCE YOUR PRAYERS
Friday, August 14 at 7:00 p.m. in the Chapel

Join church member Irene Martinez, OTR/L, on the second Friday of each month for an evening of self-care as we focus on the sacred rhythms we hold within ourselves: breath, heart, and soul motion. Through motion, we will become more conscious of God within us and fully embody that presence in the world. All ages and mobility levels are welcome. Dress in clothes you can move or be perfectly still in; feel free to leave your shoes outside the Chapel, and wear socks or footies. You may want to bring water, a journal, and/or yoga mat.

MEN'S GROUP
Friday, August 14 at 6:30 p.m. in the Malaga House

It's often been a joke, that men's groups in churches only exist in theory–apart from an occasional golf outing or a random group of guys who get together at Cracker Barrel. This isn't your father's men's group. Here at Gables UCC, all guys of the church, young and old, gay and straight (and everyone in between), are invited for dinner, fellowship, and a laid-back time. Join us for a potluck this month at the church's guest house: 1207 Malaga Ave. Men of ALL ages are welcome. To get more information or a calendar of events, please be in touch with Mark Smith at mrsmith103069@gmail.com.

GERMAN LANGUAGE MINISTRY
Back to School Worship
Sunday, August 23 at 3:00 p.m. in the Chapel

Join us for our annual back-to-school service and blessing of the backpacks led by visiting pastor, the Rev. Dr. Juni Hoppe. Michael will also teach the kids a song and the youth will talk about their trip to Cleveland, led by Rev. Melanie. After the children's song, the Kindertreff will meet for kids' activities.

WORSHIP WITH US EACH WEEK
One Church ~ Three Congregations:

9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. - We gather to be engaged in meaningful worship, which feeds our spiritual hunger. It is said that each week is a bit different; there is always something that calls us to our authentic selves. Join us online at 11:00 a.m. at gablesucc.org/live.

10:00 a.m. Spanish-Language Worship - Spanish language worship is available each Sunday at 10:00 a.m. in the Chapel. Under the leadership of Pastora Mairolet Vega, the congregation is a warm, supportive, and caring community of those who enjoy worshipping in Spanish.

German Language Worship - If you are part of a German-speaking family or would like to worship in German come and join us for services, Bible studies, and cultural activities conducted in German. For more information contact germanministry@gablesucc.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE SCREENING OF *ALLIGATOR ALTAR*
Sunday, September 20 at 1:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Filmmaker Leslie Ramos premieres this short film, a prayer turned immersive experience, in which she follows Betty Osceola, a Miccosukee elder and activist, as she speaks with the Creator in the shadow of the migrant detention center built on her tribe's sacred land. Then join us afterwards as we come together as a community and talk about potential paths forward and the land that unites us all.

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

Ministers
All Members of the Church

Ministry Team
The Rev. Dr. Laurinda Hafner, Senior Pastor — LaurieH@gablesucc.org ext. 116
The Rev. Megan Smith, Associate Pastor — MeganS@gablesucc.org ext. 119
The Rev. Lisa LeSueur, Assistant Pastor for Congregational and Staff Care — LisaL@gablesucc.org ext. 150
The Rev. Melanie Marsh, Assistant Pastor for Emerging Generations — MelanieM@gablesucc.org
The Rev. Brandan Robertson, Theologian in Residence — br@brandanrobertson.com
The Rev. Mairolet Vega, Spanish Language Worship — Mairoletvega@gmail.com

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

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

WE BELIEVE GOD CAN BLOW THE LID OFF ANY BOX AND TURN IT INTO A DANCE FLOOR. WE ARE OUT OF THE BOX PEOPLE.

JUNE 11 – AUGUST 20, 2026

Thursday, June 11
Empire Wild
Epic genre-busting cellists! From Bach and Gershwin, to the Beatles and beyond!

Thursday, June 25
Langston Hughes II
Remarkable saxophone player. An evening of pure, traditional jazz joy!

Thursday, July 9
Warren Wolf
Outstanding vibraphone artist. Celebrate America250; Americana jazz and surprises.

Thursday, July 23
Leonela Alejandro
Multi-award-winning classical guitarist. Powerful and energetic!

Thursday, August 6
Clayton Stephenson
Van Cliburn artist. Dazzling and brilliant!

Thursday, August 20
Kate Kortum
2025 Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition first-prize winner!

Community Arts Program
2026
SUMMER
CONCERT SERIES

41st Year

Reserve your tickets today, before they SELL OUT!
305.448.7421, EXT. 120 / CommunityArtsProgram.org

Tickets $35 - $50
Packages Available

7:30 p.m. Concerts at:

Coral Gables Congregational United Church of Christ
3010 De Soto Boulevard
Coral Gables, FL 33134
(Across from the iconic Biltmore Hotel)
Free & Convenient Parking

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LADY SUZANNA P. TWEED AND CARLETON TWEED CHARITABLE FOUNDATION, INC.

Florida Arts & Culture

CORAL GABLES
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

BACK TO SCHOOL SUNDAY

Sunday, August 16
11:00 a.m. Worship

Join us for the Blessing of the Backpacks and Laptops with Special Music by our Vacation Bible Camp Singers

Followed by an All-Parent Meeting and Pizza Lunch after Worship

Pastor Laurie also Continues her Elephant in the Pew Sermon Series and Sermon Feedback Café

Questions? Contact Pastor Megan Smith at MeganS@gablesucc.org
3010 De Soto Blvd. Coral Gables, FL 33155