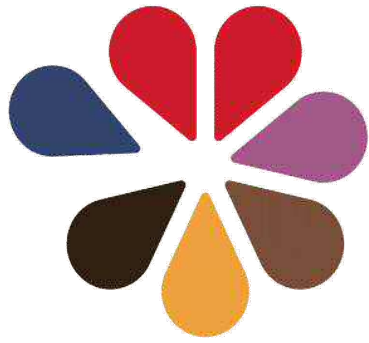


Attention

A text copy of David Lee's sermon has been attached following the bulletin.



DOWNTOWN
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

We live into Jesus' inclusive call
to love every person,
care for creation,
and work for God's justice.



June 29, 2025, 11:00 AM
13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

*If you have a joy or concern you would like to have lifted in prayer today, please complete a **Prayer Request Card**, including the name of the person (and pronunciation) or event, and additional information you'd like to share. Prayer Requests will be collected during the **hymn following the sermon** to share with the pastor and/or Deacons.*

An improvisation utilizing an organ prelude on the chorale, by Johannes Brahms

Chime

Introit

Draw the Circle Wide

Gordon Light

Let this be our song, no one stands alone, standing side by side,
Draw the circle wide."

We say, "We live into Jesus' inclusive call to love every person, care for creation and work for God's justice." In this calling we need God's help. So let us invite God to join us – in this place, during this time, among us. Let's create in today's worship a "glimpse of Paradise in a hard world."

***Invocation**

One: We are human, so we need purpose and meaning. We need belonging and inspiration. We are also “in the world.”

All: We and the world surely need God’s love and grace.

One: Love grows when it is shared. Pains are eased when they are shared.

All: Let us learn what to love and how to love. Let us learn how to listen and how to hear.

One: Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would inspire, sustain and accompany us.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Hymn

Holy Ghost, Dispel Our Sadness
(Music may be found on page 6.)

GENEVA

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (unison)

Dear God: We have lived so well for so long. We have been blessed with privileges – but we have allowed them to comfort us and insulate us from the suffering of others. Forgive us our habitual callousness.

We pray for Your help to find unwounded selves again – to have our sufferings eased. We pray to be freer to do our parts to ease injustice – the sufferings inflicted by the structures of the world.

Comfort us with your Peace; strengthen us with your Hope. Help us to live up to the blessings we have received. So that we can make brave efforts, however small, to make the world a little better.

Assurance of Grace

We received amazing and unique pieces of God – our souls – as our birthrights. Whether as children, as young or middle-aged adults, or as seniors, we can always turn our souls to God and find God gazing back at us with love and grace. The saints and prophets said so; Jesus showed the way.

ALL: May we have the comfort and peace that come from knowing that nothing can separate us from God’s love! Amen.

Reading "The Tale of Two Wolves"

Music for Reflection American Tune Paul Simon

Scripture Galatians 5:1, 13-25
Message "Help for Our Hopes" David Lee

Hymn What a Friend We have in Jesus CONVERSE
(Music may be found on page 8.)

Joys and Concerns
Prayers for Healing and Justice
† Prayer of Jesus (unison)

Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Spirit come, Thy 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 Thine is the Spirit, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering
Offertory Music What a Wonderful World Bob Thiele
Arr. Jon Batiste and George David Weiss

*Doxology
Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Let songs rise up from earth below;
Let stars and galaxies enthrone;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One! Amen

***Prayer of Dedication**

Dear God, we are giving back to You only a portion of the wonders and gifts we have received from You. In our giving, we have also let go of some of our tendencies to withhold ourselves. Thank you, God. Amen

***Hymn**

We Are One in the Spirit THEY'LL KNOW
(Verses 1-3. Music may be found on page 9.) WE ARE CHRISTIANS

***Charge and Benediction**

Postlude

You Raise Me Up
Arr. VioDance

Brendan Graham
and Rolf Lovland

Passing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be always with you.

And also with you.

Let us greet one another with the Peace of Christ.

Thank you to...

Guest Worship Leader: David Lee

Liturgist: Gail Mott

Musicians: Alan Jones and Lee Wright

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Paul Gerhardt, 1648

Trans. John Christian Jacobi, c. 1725; alt.

George Henry Day, 1940

1. Ho-ly Ghost, dis-pel our sad - ness; Pierce the clouds of na - ture's night;
2. Au-thor of the new cre - a - tion, Come, a - noint us with Your power.

Come, O source of joy and glad-ness, Breathe Your life, and spread Your light.
Make our hearts Your hab-i - ta - tion; With Your grace our spir - its shower.

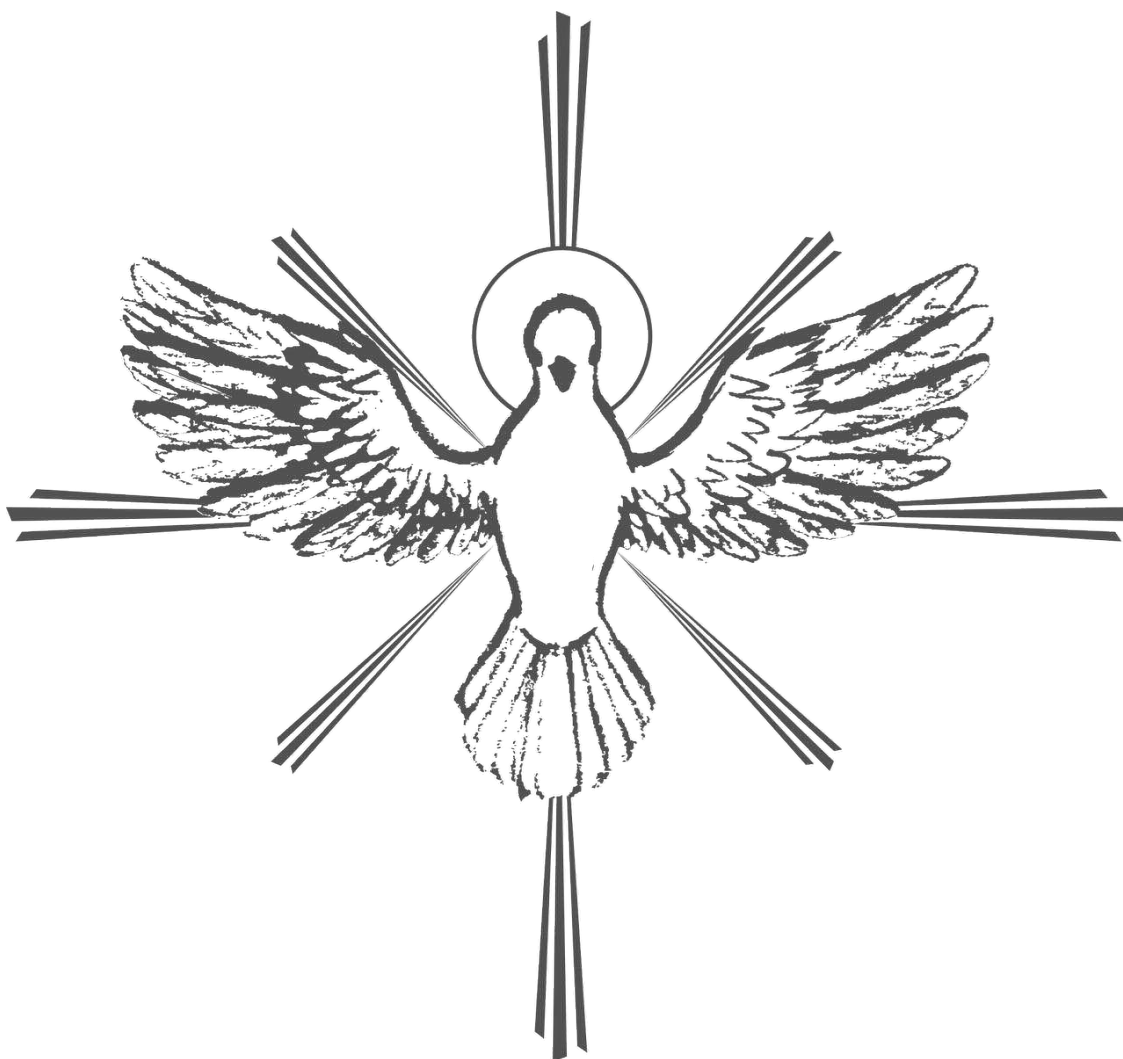
From the height which knows no mea - sure, As a gra - cious shower de - scend,
Hear, O hear our sup - pli - ca - tion, Bless-ed Spir - it, God of peace!

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves (treble and bass). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4. The first system contains two verses of lyrics. The second system contains one verse. The third system contains one verse. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand, often using chords and moving lines.

HOLY SPIRIT



Bring-ing down the rich - est trea - sure We can wish, or God can send.
 Rest up - on this con - gre - ga - tion With the full - ness of Your grace.



465 What a Friend We Have in Jesus

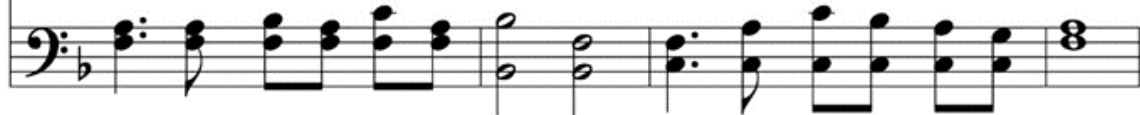
죄짐맡은 우리구주



1 What a friend we have in Je - sus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
 2 Have we tri - als and temp-ta - tions? Is there trou-ble an - y-where?
 3 Are we weak and heav - y lad - en, cum-bered with a load of care?



What a priv - i - lege to car - ry ev - ery-thing to God in prayer!
 We should nev - er be dis-cour-aged; take it to the Lord in prayer!
 Pre - cious Sav - ior, still our ref - uge; take it to the Lord in prayer!



O what peace we of - ten for - feit; O what need-less pain we bear,
 Can we find a friend so faith - ful who will all our sor-rows share?
 Do thy friends de-spise, for-sake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer!



all be - cause we do not car - ry ev - ery-thing to God in prayer!
 Je - sus knows our ev - ery weak-ness; take it to the Lord in prayer!
 In his arms he'll take and shield thee; thou wilt find a so-lace there.



This text was written by an Irish-born immigrant to Canada to comfort his mother in Ireland when she was going through a time of special sorrow. The role of prayer as a source of strength and consolation is underscored by its repeated use as a rhyme word in all three stanzas.

We Are One in the Spirit 300

They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love



1 We are one in the Spir - it; we are one in the Lord;
2 We will walk with each oth - er; we will walk hand in hand;
3 We will work with each oth - er; we will work side by side;
4 All praise to the Fa - ther, from whom all things come,



we are one in the Spir - it; we are one in the Lord,
we will walk with each oth - er; we will walk hand in hand,
we will work with each oth - er; we will work side by side,
and all praise to Christ Je - sus, God's on - ly Son,



and we pray that all u - ni - ty may one day be re - stored:
and to - geth - er we'll spread the news that God is in our land:
and we'll guard each one's dig - ni - ty and save each one's pride:
and all praise to the Spir - it, who makes us one:



And they'll know we are Chris-tians by our love, by our



love; yes, they'll know we are Chris-tians by our love.

A parish priest at St. Brendan's on the South Side of Chicago in the 1960s was very involved in the local Civil Rights movement and needed something for his youth choir to sing at ecumenical, interracial events. Finding nothing, he wrote this song in a single day.

TEXT and MUSIC: Peter Scholtes, 1966

Text and Music © 1966 F.E.L. Publications, assigned 1991 to The Lorenz Corp.

THEY'LL KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS

7.6.7.6.8.6 with refrain



Coming up at Downtown United Presbyterian Church

Sunday, June 22

10:00AM Musicians Warm-up
10:45AM Nursery
11:00AM Worship: David Lee
12:00 PM Refreshments, Sanctuary

Tuesday, July 1

5:30PM Justice Team Mtg.. Zoom

Thursday, July 3

7:15PM Worship Team, Zoom

Friday, July 4

Independence Day

Sunday, July 6

9:00AM Musicians Warm-up
9:45AM Nursery
10:00AM Worship,
Rev. Christine James
11:00PM Refreshments, Sanctuary

We live into Jesus' inclusive call to love all people,
care for creation, and work for God's Justice.

Welcome Visitors!

Nursery Care is available for children up to 2nd grade either in the library or C-23 upstairs. Check with the receptionist.

Sunday School is on summer recess.

You may place your offering in the offering plates as they are passed. If you would like to donate online, you can use the QR code to the right to make your contribution to the church.



† **We seek** to use diverse images and liberating language about divine presence in our services of worship. Please feel free to adapt the words in hymns and prayers as needed so that they express your faith.

This is a Hearing Loop equipped sanctuary – please switch your hearing aid to the “T” (telephone) position.

* **An asterisk indicates** “please rise in body or spirit.”

We hope you will join us after worship for conversations and refreshments! Cookies and drinks are available in the front of the sanctuary.

Joys and Concerns – If you have a joy or concern that you would like to lift in prayer today, please complete a Prayer Request card (available by the worship bulletins) naming the person(s), situation or event, and any other information that you would like to be shared. The requests will be collected during the hymn following the sermon and provided to the Deacons.

The Downtown Church Staff

Cheryl Bittle, Weekend Receptionist
Jason Cloen, Associate Musician
Eileen Dietsch, Director of Operations
Alan Jones, Associate Musician
David Mear, Business Manager
Moses Nhial, Maintenance
Penelope Paredes,
Nursery Coordinator
Andrea Piccone, Bookkeeper
& Receptionist Coordinator

Maria Servian Dalmas,
Office Administrator
Robin Sheikh, Sunday School Teacher
Michael Stagles, Maintenance Lead
Joseph Taylor, Maintenance Supervisor
Ed Verna, Maintenance
Lee S. Wright, D.M.A.,
Director of Music Ministry

Parish Leaders

Mary Rees and Pat Tweet - Clerks of Session
Cindy Hamilton, Jacque Hancock - co-Moderators of Deacons

Session

The Rev. Val Fowler,
Moderator
Nancy Brown
John DeHority

Lea Kone
Bob Richane
Sally Allison
Sam King

Jim Vesper
Pat Tweet
Mary Rees

Deacons

Bob Carlisle
Andrea Folan
Helen Ganotis
Cindy Hamilton

Jacque Hancock
Elizabeth Katz
Stephen Lloyd
Grania Marcus
Sandy Morales

Becky Parks
Susan Richane
Kelley Sheils
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Help for Our Hopes

Introduction

I am the child of immigrants. My parents came from China in the late 1940s as hopeful students, and struggled to find a way in a land that was foreign to them. I have been fortunate to have “succeeded” – I have been able to assimilate into the dominant (the white) culture of America. But the America of 2025 is not the same as the one my mother birthed me into in 1953. Despite my assimilation, these days it really feels like I am becoming a stranger in this land. Immigrants’ dreams are now being driven to their knees. MAGA is trying to abort their dreams. How has the idea of America – the beacon of equal justice, opportunity and security – been lost?

This church (our church) faces uncertainties. At one time it was a given that this paragon (this leader) of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant community would always be here. It evolved to be a leader in the social justice movements of the Presbyterian church: it advocated for immigrants, it advocated for gender awareness and gender equality. Now this church’s place in the world is uncertain. We thank so many of you (everyone here!). But it must be very disconcerting for you, for us, to also feel like strangers in our own land. How has there been such backsliding? Where will that end?

We welcome immigrants and strangers here. We would like to join others in the community to embrace diversity, offer inclusion, and defend equality. But we are angry and afraid that those hopes might be defeated by the forces that hold the Power – the

powers of money, ideas, numbers and even the power of using violence. Government no longer seems to be here to maintain a civil society, but is there to damage civility. We at DUPC have definitely had our “privileges” – which I could define as the conditions that might allow us to not feel the suffering of others. But even for us, there is a new worry: “Could they be coming for us?” How has that happened?

And there are “Others” in America who have felt for quite a while that they are the ones who are Strangers in their Own Land. They had expectations – that their hard work and their perseverance would allow them to achieve an “American dream” – which they now feel has been thwarted. They feel that “others” are jumping the line, others are getting breaks they did not earn or deserve. And their frustrations and anger are their vulnerabilities: those vulnerabilities are being manipulated by schemers who pretend to care, but who are taking no prisoners in political battles and culture wars. Thus, there are others (very “other” to us) who also wonder how and why things have changed to exclude them.

Everyone is feeling strange in this land. Everything seems to be chaotic, a reversion to oppression, tribalism, competitiveness and even violence. We are told that there are cycles of Order and Disorder before Reordering can occur. We are in a period of increasing Disorder – where does the hope come from?

Two thousand years ago Jesus lived and died for a message that might bring peace on earth. There is still no peace on earth. The rabbis have taught, “The day is short, the work is plentiful ... You are not required to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.” Why does the work seem so frustrating and frightening and maybe futile? Why do our best efforts not last; why do we seem to have to begin again over and over again?

But there are reasons for hope. And the reasons might come from familiar sources. Two thousand years ago Jesus lived and died for a message that might bring peace on earth. That message still stands, but it will need to be reimagined.

Human Nature

We have to deal with human nature. I have lived long enough to accept that we will never live in a perfectly balanced world. It is naive and romantic to wish for perfect balance and harmony. The best we might do is to reach for ideals.

“Human nature” contains Flaws (blemishes, bugs, defects, failings, faults, foibles, glitches, imperfections, pitfalls and weaknesses. The thesaurus has many synonyms so that we don’t have to use the word Sin.). And “human nature” always also contains Hope (recall Pandora’s Box). Every culture, every religion in history carries hopes. As individuals and as groups, we always hope that “This will change”: that I can have a better day, that we can get closer to a Promised Land. In the meantime we swing between those poles – between our best selves and our least good selves. There are

always two wolves contending with each other. We always contain *sarkos* and *pneuma*. There is no stable balance-point; there is always tension.

To keep our hopes up, we need some help. Let me offer some starting points, and then remind us that there are ethical guidelines to help us navigate and mitigate the swinging between extremes. There are ethical guidelines that Jesus provided.

Here are my starting points:

- Our species (*Homo sapiens*) evolved to compete (and it has competed successfully) against other species. Our bodies are not particularly powerful, but our brains and social structures are. Competition however is built into our genes.
- As well, human minds and human societies have always imagined (somehow) that there could be “something better” than their current situation, and have always hoped that an experience of harmony and unity could be possible elsewhere or in the future. Imagining Utopia and Heaven has also always been built-in as well.
- Finally, we can offer this observation and prediction: our species now has moved beyond the processes of a “*natural* selection” that was based on superior physical characteristics to selection pressures that will be based on superior social structures.
- In other words, we are material beings and we will always be competitive as individuals and groups, but that is never the whole story. There is also something immaterial – something in us that is not reducible to biology, that even secular

poets and writers acknowledge. William Faulkner reminded us that we humans have a “soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance.”

Machines lack those all-important human capacities, “courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice.” Having them, we are still the writers of the story of our times.

Let us start with instincts that are coded in our genes. We have (individually and in groups) traits that were powerful and useful for the survival of our species at one time, those being prehistoric times.

In a book called *The Five Commandments of Jesus: a New Approach to Christianity* (I will come to those five new commandments very shortly), the author Patrick Amer relates what many others had also noted: that human beings are prone – genetically prone – to Violence, Acquisitiveness, Kinship Altruism, Dominant- Submissive Behaviors. [repeat] We cannot deny or escape the presence of those traits; they are behavioral instincts that we have. Our species evolved these behaviors because they allowed a physically weak species to prevail because of its ability to form effective social groups.

When we feel injuries to ourselves or our tribes, we feel entitled to respond with

Violence: 9/11 and January 6 are only two extreme examples of that.

We like to get things: rewards such as money, food, sex, status make us feel good; we are motivated to work for them, too.

Kinship Altruism causes us to identify with (take on) the norms and expectations of our families and tribes, and we behave accordingly, even when they contradict self-interests. Loyalty to the team (the Buffalo Bills) is an extension of that instinct; but so is loyalty to the MAGA tribe.

Lastly, we recognize Differences in Power and respond to those differences. Whether that power is due to status, money, ideas or numbers, we tend to submit to those with power, and those with power tend to use that power to dominate others.

So we have those behavioral instincts. Those traits (these tendencies to violence and acquisitiveness, and to form tribes and hierarchies) are ingrained. But they are also morally neutral: they can be both good and bad, they can either unite or divide individuals and groups. To live in social situations, there have to be ways to channel these impulses – to be pro-social: that is, ones encouraging cooperative, helpful, harmonious behaviors.

The Five Commandments of Jesus

In this context, the Five Commandments of Jesus, as described by Patrick Amer, are wise and discerning means of channeling our tendencies, of being helpful guides for our instincts: Do you hope to love your neighbors? These are helps you would need to realize those hopes.

[Patrick Amer was a lawyer in Cleveland. Coming out of high school, he at first wanted to be a Jesuit priest, but quickly discovered he could not live a life of “poverty, chastity

and obedience.” Only after retiring did he return to his spiritual explorations. I really cannot recall how I picked up his book. But it became interesting to me partly because one of his mentors was Roger Haight, whom I had met and admired from my time at Union Theological Seminary. Amer died two years ago at age 81.]

Anyway, Amer set out to do a “thematic analysis” of the words of Jesus (to organize Jesus’ ethical teachings into categories) – just his words that were directly quoted in the Gospels. He found that he could group them into just 5 categories that he has now labeled as the “Five Commandments of Jesus.” His point is that it is possible to summarize Jesus’ ethical teachings into 5 categories (these are not Jesus’ theological or mystical comments).

The Five Commandments seem to be (and these are not in any order of importance):

- Do not do violence to any person, even in response to violence.
- Detach yourself from possessions.
- Do not judge, blame, condemn or exclude any person from your fellowship and love.
- Forgive all who have offended you.
- Act as a humble servant toward all others.

The list seems to be complete – all of Jesus’ ethical teachings seem to fall into one or several of these categories.

Amer then noted that these commandments, rather unexpectedly, were addressing the four instinctive tendencies we were just discussing! That is, without 20th century knowledge of biology and anthropology, Jesus' teachings had apparently discerned biologically programmed impulses and provided guidelines for them – guidelines to support loving behaviors.

Put another way, these Five Commandments are the policy guidelines to accompany the vision statement, "Love your neighbor."

Amer notes that the commandment to avoid violence of course counters our predisposition to violence, even violence as a response to injury or as an extension of anger. Another commandment, to detach from possessions amply addresses the tendency for acquisitiveness. Commandments to not exclude any others and to forgive those who have offended are meant to resist how tribes will use scapegoating and banishment as punishments, and to resist the tendency to form tribes in the first place. Lastly, acting as a humble servant toward all others is a reminder to overcome those "natural" tendencies to develop hierarchical roles and behaviors.

The five "commandments" are of course aspirational – even coming from Jesus, they are not enforced or enforceable in any way. Perfection is not the point. We humans seem to always have a hope (an Original Hope as it were) for eventual peace and unity, a time and place for that – Utopia, Heaven. The point of ethical guidelines is to provide ideals for behaviors, behaviors to strive for that are not instinctively (biologically)

determined. A famous liberal preacher once asked “fundamentalists” – “What would you imagine the Kingdom of God to look like? Well, let's live that way now.” You don’t have to agree on theological concepts or require mystical experiences.

Ethics are needed to live in a civilized society, to encourage “civilized behaviors.” Our instincts are always there, so we very “naturally” slip into greedy, tribal and hierarchical behaviors, with a tendency to resort to violence. But equally, our hopes are also always there – we always hope for there to be a state (internally and externally) of peace, unity, harmony.

We are biological beings (very wonderful biological beings), and we live in a world following rules made by biology, chemistry and physics – a material world. It does not follow though that all behaviors are acceptable. Nature is neutral, and behaviors can be improved. “Human nature” seems to come with some kind of “Original Hope” for peaceful coexistence. (Although that can be very different for different societies and cultures.) Peaceful coexistence requires manners, prosocial manners; it is not biologically programmed. Ethical guidelines help us achieve that hope.

It is of course humbling to realize that the Christian church has violated these Five Commandments of Jesus and violated them repeatedly. It is horrible that so much of Christian history (and continuing even now) has followed the dictates of our genetic makeup (to be violent, greedy, tribal and domineering) more than these Five Commandments (be humble, be inclusive, and non-violent, don’t be greedy, don’t be

domineering). But it is very likely that Jesus said these things – if we want to follow his call, we need to heed his words.

Concluding

Now it might seem that the road we're traveling on has somehow gone wrong. Many hopes have turned out to be unrealistic wishes. We realize how our work is not done, and we are told that we are not free to desist from it either.

We contain two wolves; we struggle with having both *sarkos* and *pneuma* (flesh and spirit); we experience cycles of Order and Disorder. We live in a material world and one that has always been and always will be competitive. But our materiality is never the whole story: we always have hopes that we can be joined to others' in peace and harmony. Jesus provided 5 new commandments to help us in those hopes.

I hope that these words and meditations have been acceptable to God. Amen.