



Tensions, temptations and taunts

The temptation of Jesus speaks to me of our human condition stretched to the limit! That in turn speaks to us at this time, as we enter a third Lenten season under the shadow of Covid, with angry protestors camped outside Parliament, hospitality and tourism businesses going to the wall, and heightened anxiety in response to the fast-approaching Omicron wave. We are being stretched.

For us, as for Jesus, there are tensions, temptations, and taunts to cope with.

In my mind's eye I can see the tension on the face of Jesus as he came to the end of his 40 day fast. The biblical text simply says, 'he was hungry'. I read a quirky novel once that went into graphic detail about how a fast this long would actually affect him! The haggard tension on his face from the sustained deprivation would be palpable. We too know tension from sustained pressure. We face ongoing cycles of planning and cancellation, anxiety and relief, hope and despair. Most of us have relationships strained by differing opinions.

At this point of extreme vulnerability for Jesus, he is tempted to take false paths. What are the temptations we face at this time of vulnerability? Early in the pandemic the temptations were around economy verses health. Now it comes to us in the form of demonizing those who disagree with us, and some proclaiming individual rights versus the good of all.

And there are the taunts. The devil saved this best for the last when it came to Jesus – "if you are the son of God...". I see this kind of behaviour on TV, and I hear it on the deck after a game of golf: politicians mocked and even threatened, police belittled, and school students teased for wearing masks! It is hard to deal with.

So how did Jesus deal with the tension, temptations and taunts? Huge resilience indeed. And the text gives two sources for this resilience, still available to us today. One was the filling of the Holy Spirit. The other, a deep and informed use of scripture that empowered him to combat the misinformed misuse that was thrown at him

As we navigate the tension, temptations, and taunts in our context this Lent, may we too draw on these deep spiritual resources to sustain us.

In a season popular for what we can give up, I have always thought the emphasis should be more on what we can take up! Now, as much as ever, we need to be taking up spiritual practices which allow us to be more and more open to the sustaining power of the Holy Spirit and to the scriptures that carried Jesus through a time such as this.

Right Rev Hamish Galloway

Moderator Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
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COVID-19 Protection Framework & Worship @ Flagstaff Community Church

In these challenging days, Flagstaff Community Church will continue to celebrate the good news of Jesus Christ, provide support to each other, worship, pray and reach out in aroha.

He waka eke noa – We are all in this together: We are gathering for Sunday Worship. You are welcome to come and go at any time. We will continue meeting safely and follow advice from Ministry of Health (see (<https://covid19.govt.nz/activities/faith-based-gatherings;>) and our National Church (PCANZ). Your health and safety is our top priority.

In relation to our face to face worship at Flagstaff Community Church

- Please stay home if you are unwell.
- A Vaccine Pass will be required for entry.
- We are practising good air ventilation so dress accordingly and if cold bring a rug or extra warm top.
- Please scan in or sign in, and sanitize your hands.
- Wearing a stipulated mask is required.
- Physical distancing with those you don't know well is encouraged.
- We will refrain from serving morning tea until we're back at Green Light.
- Please put any koha/offering in the kete/basket when you arrive.

If you have not got a vaccine pass please contact the Minister or Session Clerk and other worship arrangements will be made. There are both inventive and creative ways we can stay connected.

Church Buildings: All gatherings, meetings, hui in both Halfway Bush and Wakari buildings are not permitted unless approved by Parish Council. This includes providing a Health and Safety Plan. Please ring Sarah Barton if you wish to discuss this and require more information. *In times like these we are reminded that "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear..." Psalm 46:1-2*

Combined Churches Appeal Letter for Tonga

As you know, Tonga was recently severely affected by a volcanic eruption and tsunami. Please find attached a joint letter signed by church leaders supporting appeals to assist with Tonga's recovery from this disaster.

This joint appeal letter has been coordinated by Christian World Service (CWS) with the cooperation of all the churches represented by these signatories. The PCANZ traditionally supports CWS in appeals like this. As part of this collaborative approach, the Anglican Missions appeal is also included here so your congregations and members are invited to read

the information about the appeals on the respective websites and support the appeal of their choice.

The links to the appeals are in the attached PDF, and also here:

<https://cws.org.nz/donate-now-tonga/>;

[https://angmissions.org.nz/appeals/emergency-appeal-for-tonga](https://angmissions.org.nz/appeals/emergency-appeal-for-tonga;);

News reports are beginning to reveal the extent of the damage and loss of habitats and livelihoods caused by the eruption and tsunami. Let us encourage our members to be generous in their support for our Pacific neighbours in their time of need.

Phil King

Global Mission Director

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

Homestay wanted urgently. Two first year students are moving to Dunedin to study at university. They are looking for a Christian homestay. Are you able to help? Rent and living costs will be paid. The two women are happy to share a single bedroom if need be. Contact University of Otago chaplain, Jordan Redding at jordan.redding@otago.ac.nz to find out more.

Interested in studying Theology? The Theology Programme at the University of Otago offers a wide range of papers and qualifications, all available via distance learning. Some papers are taught via videoconferences, others include teaching days in Wellington, while a few involve week-long intensives. For further information go to www.otago.ac.nz/theology or ph 0800 80 80 98 or 03 479 8639.

Pastoral Visit: If you would like a pastoral visit from someone from within the pastoral team or the minister please ring elder Sarah Barton 021 385905.

Flagstaff Prayer Time: Sharing life, ministry and prayer together. Everyone Welcome. Every Tuesday 8.30 – 9.30 am in Tocher Lounge. Join us as we share and celebrate stories of God's action amongst us and pray for one another and discern God's leading into the future.

Green Fingers: We are currently restoring our awa next to the church. This little creek is showing signs of life and is breathing again and some native birds are showing up. There are a few folks who meet for a couple of hours on a Monday and pot away at planting, trapping pests, removing, weeding, etc. Occasionally we have a project in which everyone is invited including our local school. If you want to join us ring Neil Brown 027 435 4672.

Life Groups: Life Groups @Flagstaff are a vital part of who we are as a community of faith as we seek to grow in Jesus. Not only do we explore the messages God has for us from the Bible but we also have the opportunity to connect with others and experience a place where no-one stands alone.

Discipleship Groups: which focus on study and prayer. Wednesday 1.30 p.m. Contact Sarah 021385905.

Community Facing Groups: Where the focus is on friendship around a common interest. These groups are welcoming which may centre on an activity, a hobby, a talent, a life stage, a project or service. Groups include, Steady as you Go, Hire a Helper, Community Garden, Women's Coffee Group @ Coffee Culture (Held 1st Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm), Green Fingers, Walking Groups and more! If you would like to join a group, start a group or find out more information then please contact Brendon on 0273569200.

Tithing/Giving: There are many ways we can support the activity of God in our church, community and world. Two ways of making your church offerings.

1. Use internet banking to make direct credits or automatic payments to the Flagstaff Community Church. Westpac bank # 03-0903-0192517-03. Please include your name for reference or if you use Envelopes use your Envelope reference/number.
2. Join the envelope system by contacting Alison Jenkin (Wakari) 021 1052 320. You will receive a set of personally numbered envelopes. This can be placed in the kete/basket at the foyer entrance anytime during Sunday Worship.

If you give to special appeals or missions, you can claim on these donations by identifying the appeal by naming it when you make the internet payment or by putting your number or name and address on an envelope.

Contacts:

Prayer Chain: Sue Yule 476 7655, or Sarah Barton 021 385905

Pastoral Care: Sarah Barton 021 385905

Envelope System: Alison Jenkin (Wakari) 021 1052320

Hall Bookings: Sarah Barton 021 385905

Technical Equipment: Gary Dent 027 4763155

Church Newsletter: Jenny Neill 467 5813 dandjneill@xtra.co.nz

Minister: Rev. Brendon McRae

Phone: 027 356 9200

brendon@churchatflagstaff.co.nz

Presbtery Elder: Sarah Barton

Phone: 021 385 905

sarahbarton629@gmail.com

Flagstaff Community Church Services 9:30am (Communion 3rd Sunday of each month)

Parish contact details: PO Box 10074,
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Website: www.churchatflagstaff.co.nz;

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