

**“I will fill this house with glory,” says the Lord Almighty.**

Haggai 2:7

We will build God’s church together into a Temple fit for Jesus,  
whatever the external circumstances

[1Corinthians 3:16-17, Ephesians 2:19-22]

We will persevere, fixing our eyes on Jesus and not on worldly things

[Hebrews 12:1-2]

We will be strong and very courageous

[Haggai 2:4, Joshua 1:7, 1Chronicles 28:20]

We will be introducing our theme in ForeCast on Sunday 3rd January, our morning livestreamed service, which will include Holy Communion. The service will be followed by an after-service coffee on Zoom, where breakout rooms led by the Leadership Team will enable everyone to comment, discuss and ask questions.

**Sermon series coming up on our vision theme:**

- January and February—Joshua, strong and courageous
- February and March—Mark’s Gospel (part 1) - fixing our eyes on Jesus

*A caring community with every member equipped to demonstrate Christ, working with others to advance God’s Kingdom in Chard and the world*

**Seek God** – in prayer, worship, study of the Scripture and fellowship, we value the pursuit of God in Jesus Christ;

**Love Generously** – in time, talent and treasure, to stimulate one another to good works and a lifestyle of generosity;

**Expect transformation** – to see God’s Holy Spirit move in individual lives, in the church and across our community

Vision 2021



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## Haggai 2:1-9

When God's people returned from exile to Jerusalem, it was a time of fear and disappointment. Everything was in ruins. Progress seemed harder than before. They were scattered and isolated. And they had no place to worship. They set about rebuilding the temple. But they did not have the resources, workforce or time which had been available to Solomon when he built the first temple. They could only use the ruins of what had gone before. When they laid out the foundations, those who were old enough to remember the first temple "wept aloud" at the contrast [Ezra 3:12]

They had a temple, but no ark. They dedicated it, but the *shekinah* glory of God did not light it up. God, speaking through his prophet, echoed their sentiment. "Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing?" [Hagg 2:3].

But the prophet encouraged perseverance and strength. Be strong, and work, he told the leaders and people. Do not fear. In a time when everything seems to be shaken, God himself is never moved. Rather, he is the one doing the shaking – shaking heaven and earth, nations and religion.

And in that temple which his people were building, he promised, the Messiah would come. God's glory would shine in a way never seen before. Thus, its glory would be greater, and God would establish perfect peace among his people.

# Building a temple fit for Jesus

## What we can learn from Haggai's message

Church life has been disrupted by COVID-19. Every congregation's physical meetings are in ruins. Even as we slowly move back to physical Sunday worship and Life Groups, we can feel like things are not as good as they were before. We may feel depressed, and wonder if our efforts are futile.

Meanwhile, as we move on in Brexit, while witnessing more distress around the world, we sense that the nations are being shaken. Many people are fearful, many are sad. God is speaking to us, as he spoke through Haggai. He says:

**"Be strong, and work"** – as Haggai told Zerubbabel, so David told Solomon (1Chr 28:20) - this is an instruction for everyone commissioned to build the temple of God.

**"Do not fear but be courageous"**, just as God also told Joshua as he entered the Promised Land (Josh 1:7).

The reason is simply that **"God is with you"** and his covenant promise is unshakeable. Emmanuel! (Matt 1:23)

Trust Jesus to keep his people safe as **"God shakes the world order"** – a shaking which Hebrews 12:26-27 tells us will continue until everything is finally settled.

**"Build the new Temple of God"** from the living stones he has provided, trusting that Jesus will walk among us and God's glory will shine from us—whatever our meetings look like.

Malachi (a contemporary of Haggai) makes explicit in Mal 3:1 that the Lord was destined to walk in that temple. The building in which Jesus walked was destroyed in 70AD, but by his Spirit he walks among his people still—as prophet, priest and king.

God's people now form the temple together – and we are filled with God's glory to the degree to which we are filled with Jesus. **"God will provide the resources"** of people, money and skills that are necessary to build this temple, too, saying, "The silver is mine and the gold is mine" (Hagg 2:8).



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