



A New Thing

by Dr. Marsha Boyd-Mitchell

Our old farmhouse was purchased by my grandparents in 1939 and is around 175 years old. Despite the cost of building materials, my husband Colin and I embarked on several improvements on our property during the pandemic. For some time, we have needed to update the windows and roof of our house. We decided on a steel roof and then we had to decide on a colour.

We circled all of the options, brought home samples, and talked about it a lot. It was just such a big decision as we would need to be happy with it, probably for the rest of our lives. We told the contractor what we had decided: copper. When he said, "Oh, you won't want to do that. It will be awfully bright," that was when I was sure it was exactly what I wanted! As the job got closer, he was surprised to

hear that we had finalized and ordered the copper

roofing. I thought about my old house getting a facelift and Isaiah 43:19 came to mind. There was a new work being done.

We waited in anticipation for the job to get started once we got the supplies home. You know how it goes with something like this; the house looks worse by the day as you anticipate the new construction. That first week when the crew shows up, you tell yourself it has to look worse before it gets better.

My next-door neighbour Pat began to take photos to document the journey (something she was famous for doing in the community). The first week, while I was at work, she entertained the crew for a full coffee break (complete with homemade muffins). Her plan was to take pictures at each stage and put them in a little photo book to show the progression. Tragically, the second week of the job

she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. This lady was a second mom to me my whole life. I could not believe someone so active and seemingly healthy could get such a terrible report. I thought there must have been some mistake.

The family decided on palliative care at home. I began to go to work in the morning and come home each day over my lunch hour to visit. I'd bring the coffee order from Tim's and drive past the crew working on my house. Pat would often mention the roof and watched the development from her bedroom window. She made me promise to finish the pictures for that progression book. Jesus called her home before the project was complete.

That new work that Isaiah describes is an inspiration to a nation that was rebuilding after

captivity. His words speak encouragement to the weak—a new thing will be done with God's people. This scripture has been on my heart since fall 2020, and when I look at my new roof I think of my dear neighbour and her love of capturing the "new," temporal things around the community. It is hard to imagine that she is gone. It is hard to not ask why. I think about the promise of a new body for Pat and an eternity with the Saviour she loved. She had a profound impact on my life.

I want to be faithful to the youth in my sphere of influence to encourage them in the Lord the way that Pat encouraged me for 45 years. While my new roof will eventually pass away, it serves as a reminder that God is still working in our midst and making things new until we make it to our eternal home.

"See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up;
do you not perceive it?
I am making a way
in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland."

Isaiah 43:19, NIV



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