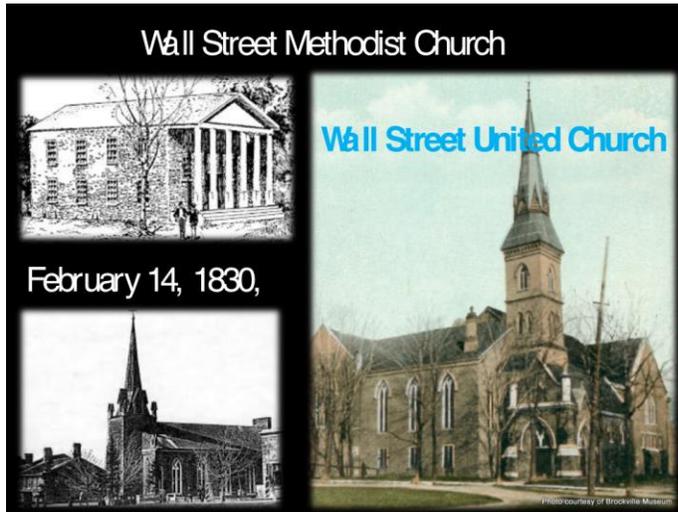


# “God is Doing a New Thing”

November 3, 2019  
Isaiah 43: 16-21

Guest speaker: Rev. Lawrence Nyarko  
191<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Wall Street United Church

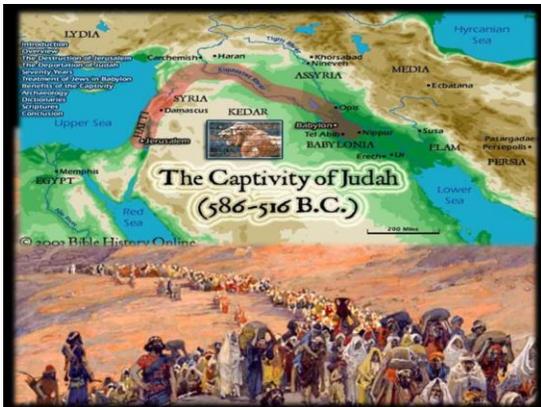


On Saturday, February 14, 1830, the Creator did a new thing in creation. A beautiful group of people was dedicated as a body of Christ to worship and fellowship together.

The group loved God and were committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That day Methodism was born in Brockville with the founding of *Wall Street Methodist Church*. It is now *Wall Street United*

*Church.*

God is doing a new thing again.



The Bible says that the people of Israel experienced trouble from foreign domination and oppression. They had incurable pains and struggles. Many were exiled to a foreign land in Babylon.

While in Babylon, the people had no hope in the future. They thought God had abandoned them. They thought Israel could not exist anymore. Their history of constant disobedience to God had led to

this. God’s people became very disappointed and lived in despair.

In December 2013, while I was in Emmanuel College, Toronto studying to become a minister, something strange happened. I was diagnosed with cancer in my left upper jawbone.

It forced me to pull out of school to fight for my life. As part of the treatment, I went through over 10 hours of surgery; many



- > Dec. 2013 diagnosed with cancer - left upper jaw
- > Treatment includes over 10 hr. of surgery Radiation & Chemo
- > Dec. 2014 diagnosed with lung cancer

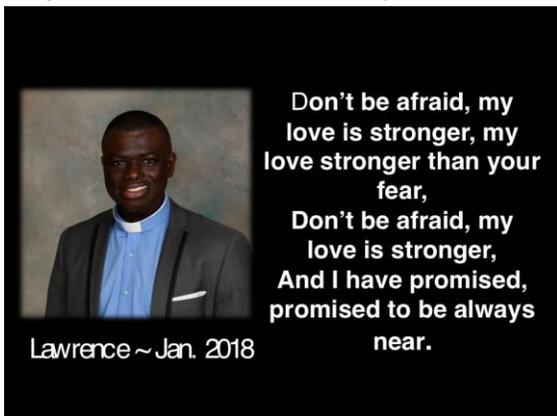
radiation treatments; and chemotherapy. It was hard on me. It was hard on my family. And it was hard on my loved ones.

I went back to school the following September to finish my remaining courses even though I was not completely healed. In December 2014, I received a call from my medical team in Princess Margaret Hospital, inviting me to report to the hospital as soon as possible.

As soon as I got there, they arranged for me to see my doctor. He told me about a concern he had on my latest CT scan. It showed something strange in my lungs. They biopsied my lung and a week later I was given a disappointing result. I was told I had another cancer, and this time it was in my lungs. I came home completely broken, looking hopeless and feeling abandoned.

Many people today are frustrated – feeling disappointed by friends; abandoned by loved ones or forsaken by family. Some people even feel that God has let them down. Not only that, many Christian churches and congregations feel despair and feel abandoned. But God is doing a new thing.

In my cancer struggle, as I nearly gave up; God showed up. Even in my frustration and despair; that same night I had a dream and heard an



angelic choir singing John Bell's song from More Voices #90: Don't Be Afraid.

*Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,  
My love stronger than your fear,  
Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,  
And I have promised,  
promised to be always near."*

I heard the song repeatedly and beautifully all night in my dream. I woke up the next morning and went straight into prayer; confessing my sin of doubting God's presence in my struggle. I knew God was with me. Friends, fear hinders faith!

In their despair, the Lord spoke personally and directly to the Israelites, offering them a future that is grounded in grace, love, and faithfulness.

*This is what the Lord says, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:  
"For your sake I will send to Babylon and bring down as fugitives all the  
Babylonians, in the ships in which they took pride." (Isaiah 43:14)*

God spoke of a future where they would be released from Babylonian captivity. God was doing a new thing in their lives. Yes, Israel had been saved before through the Red Sea from Egypt and Pharaoh. However, this time God said, *“... 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 43:18-19)*

Yeah! I understand how much we miss the 1960's and 1970's when the church was in its glorious days – good financial strength, many children in Sunday School, and many volunteers etc. Yet, God is saying: *“Forget the former things; and do not dwell on the past.” Our God is doing a new thing! Now it springs up. God says, “I will give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.” (Isaiah 43:21)*

Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our God is doing something spectacular in the world and among God's people. I tell you, *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of people the things which God has prepared for those who love God.” (1 Corinthians 2:9)*

Our God promises us renewal. God says *“I will make a new covenant with my people.”*

*“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.” (Jeremiah 31:33).*

In this new era, people will have different relationships with God. They will acknowledge the Lord as their God, the one who secures their lives and provides for them. With the law of God written on the heart of the people, everyone will know God.

God is building our Communities of Faith and planting people who love God and community. The Lord will remove any despairing attitude from the mind of the people and grant us hope and strength.

As we celebrate the 191<sup>st</sup> anniversary of this church today, let us remember that God is doing something new in this Community of Faith.

That new thing is full of hope and peace; healing and restoration for God's people. *“God is making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland for God's people to drink. God is with us and we are not alone. Thanks be to God.*

*Happy Anniversary!*

Rev. Lawrence Nyarko