

## Déjà vu and Vujà dé

Dear Friends,

This Advent I read a wonderful little devotional book written by a very dear colleague of mine, Medford (Bud) Holland. I met Bud about a year after I had arrived in Shrewsbury; he was my first “East Coast” trainer in the EFM (Education for Ministry) program. Almost everything I know about being an EFM Mentor I learned from Bud. As well as being a seasoned trainer for EFM, Bud is also an Episcopal Priest and worked for many years as the Officer for Ministry Development for the Episcopal Church. He also does a lot of parish consulting. And in addition, every good skill I acquired about being an EFM Coordinator (I have been the Coordinator for the Diocese of New Jersey since 2002) I received from Bud’s wife Annie, who was the Coordinator for Pennsylvania!

The book is called *Advent Presence*. In it he talks about something he learned from their son called **Vujà dé**. Vujà dé is the complete opposite of **Déjà vu** (that feeling that you have been/heard/sensed something before and that it is happening again). Vujà dé is that eye-opening moment when you realize you are encountering something you have *never* encountered before! It is that “brand new” feeling that leaves you a bit off-kilter, for never having experienced it before, you never know just where it might lead.

This explains something of how I feel about the approaching new year, 2019. It is a little “Déjà vu” and a little “Vujà dé”. Let me explain.

First, 2019 is a year that is beckoning us to reflect backwards on our own parish history. It is more than a historic year for us: it is a historic year times two! For if you haven’t heard this yet, you soon will: 2019 marks the 250th anniversary of the erection of our current church building (as we humorously call it, “the *new* building”). It also marks the 300th anniversary of our Graveyard (or at least of the oldest marked grave, which can be found to the left of the church door in the north corner of the flowerbed).

As such, plans have been in the works for some time now; our Parish Historian and Graveyard Administrator Robert Kelly has been working with me and with interns from Monmouth University to make 2019 a year we do not forget. There is so very much to celebrate. We have been so very blessed by the work and ministry of those who have come before us.

But the year 2019 also beckons us to look forward: what will be the focus of our work and mission in this new year? How will WE be the people of Christ Church? What mark will we make in our community and the world? How will we proclaim the good news of God in Christ to this generation? What challenges will we face – both personally, as a congregation, and as part of a much larger world?

There is something about looking at a crisp, new (and empty) 2019 calendar....the possibilities? Well, who knows! I am certain it will contain many events commemorating our past, but also many ones yet unknown. It is indeed **Déjà vu and Vujà dé**. Let us enter this new year confident that we will be all we need to be because we have our Lord Jesus Christ – and we have one another.

Peace,

*Mother Lisa+*