

**I'm sure you all know that tomorrow is Martin Luther King Day.
One of the things Dr. King is well known for is,
his "I have a dream speech" given on August 28, 1963
on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial,
5 years before he was assassinated.**

**In that speech, Dr. King gave voice to many visions, many hopes
all rooted in the values of fellowship and justice...**

Also in that speech, Dr. King said:

**"I have a dream ...that my four little children will one day live in a nation
where they will not be judged by the color of their skin,
but by the content of their character."**

Dreams are important.

**Dreams are the stuff from which we can all rise towards our better selves,
our kinder selves, our more real selves so that we might actually become
who and what we were created to be.**

Dr. King had a dream and gave his life in service of that dream.

**Sure, he was a human person with all the complexity that our humanity brings
but he was also a person who knew how to listen to the voice of the Holy One
who called forth his dream for the equality of all people...
and he trusted that voice as the voice God.**

**In our reading today, the young boy Samuel was getting ready for sleep in the temple of
the Lord when he hears his name being called: Samuel! Samuel!**

Did he think he was dreaming?

Well, we don't know but we do know, as the story goes, he ran to Eli

and said to Eli: “Here I am, for you called me.”,
mistaking Eli’s voice for God’s.
This happened two more times,
but the last time it happened, Eli finally understands,
who is really calling the boy and Eli gives Samuel some life changing advice:
“Go, lie down; and if he calls you,
you shall say, Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening”

And so it happened...
the Lord called a fourth time and Samuel did what Eli told him to do
and the Lord was with him for the rest of his life....

Now Samuel grew up became one of the judges of Israel,
(they ruled Israel before they had Kings..)
and he did great things for Yahweh’s people...
and it all began that night when he answered the Lord’s call
and said “here I am. Speak Lord for your servant is listening”

So the question I’ve been pondering this week is:
what is my dream?
whose voice am I listening to
and who helps me understand whose voice I am listening to?

I realized, as I pondered them,
that I have levels of dreams...
on one level, my dreams have changed during the course of my life.
I used to dream of getting married and having a home and a family...
that dream has come true for me.
I used to dream of living on a farm and having lots of llamas and Newfoundland dogs...
that dream hasn’t come true for me!

But on another level,

**I have dreamed of being a person who lives a life of integrity,
authenticity and compassion...**

**I have dreamed about doing something in my lifetime which will
help to make this world a kinder place, a gentler place, a more peaceful place.**

That has been a dream in progress...

**Through out the years I have talked to lots of different people
and I have read lots of different books.**

When I first began to get serious about my dream

I was always trying to figure it out...working really hard at it...

But as I pondered and prayed this reading this week,

I began to pay more attention to Eli's advice:

**Eli told him "Go lie down; and if he calls you,
you shall say, Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."**

And I noticed that Eli didn't tell Samuel to DO anything...

he told him to go lie down.

Rest.

Usually that's not what I do.

When I am trying to figure out what I want to do, I work harder!

but that is not the wisdom of Eli...

Eli told Samuel to rest.

**That is very wise advice in an age where we are constantly
on the move,**

constantly checking our emails,

constantly filing in every blank space on our calendars....

It is well known, that creativity happens most often when we have space in our lives, when we are rested, when we allow an open space in our hearts and minds and bodies for something new to emerge.

The second piece of wise advice that Eli gave to Samuel is, when Samuel heard the voice again, he was to respond:

“Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.”

Listening is hard work.

In order to listen well,

you must be present.

You must pay attention to what you are hearing.

You can't be thinking about tomorrow or

yesterday in order to listen well,

you must be fully present in the moment

and that is really hard to do when you are running on empty,

when you are so exhausted you don't know if you are coming or going....

And then, it is often times helpful to have someone

to help you understand what you are hearing.

someone you are willing to trust enough and actually follow their advice..

Samuel did what Eli instructed him to do, at least that night.

How many times have we asked for someone's advice

and then did it our own way, anyways?

**I am not saying that we always ought to listen to others,
but I do think there are times when we need to listen and follow
the advice of someone whom we respect
and whom we can trust as a guide and mentor.**

**Dr. King had a dream.
and people of all colors have benefited from his dream of freedom and equality.**

Paul and Elizabeth Sanders had a dream and The Center was born.

What is your dream?

Do you have a trusted guide or mentor?

Are you rested and ready to hear the voice of the Holy One?

Have you said: speak Lord, your servant is listening?