

NKMC Service 31 Jan 2021: Vic Downs

Approach to worship.

All from third avenue.

The Potters Field
Open the eyes of my heart
Praise is rising
Holy Spirit rain down

Welcome

Good morning and welcome to you all, wherever you are. as we gather each in our own spaces. Praying that we may all sense God's presence with us as we worship together.

I'm Vic Downs, a retired diaconal minister in the North Kent Methodist Circuit, and based at Gravesend. Today I'm joined by Linda Brereton, a worship leader at Gravesend.

Call to worship

May God be gracious to sand bless use; may He cause His face to shine on us. That His purpose may be made known on earth; His saving power among all nations. Let all the people praise You, O God.; let all the people praise you. Speak Lord for Your servants are listening.

Prayer

Let us pray.

Father God we have come together, through the internet, to meet as Your children, seeking to worship You, laying aside our burdens and lifting our hearts to You; thank you that have blessed us with a wonderful and beautiful world, and we know that through the past year especially, the wonders of Your creation have given us more pleasure because we have had more time to ponder. We know we can hide nothing for you.

Thank You that You are able to use all things to Your purpose. Thank You that You still speak to us. Help us to hear and understand what is Your will for us.

Thank You for Jesus Your son, whom You sent to teach us and bring us to that point of salvation as we remember that He died on the cross for us, not only as a group, but as individuals. Thank You that it doesn't matter what our sin burden is, Christ's death has destroyed it, and it is lost.

So lead us through this act of worship through Your Holy Spirit, as we pray in Jesus' name.AMEN

Song StF 407 Hear the call of the Kingdom. Third avenue

Now Linda will bring us the Bible reading for this morning.

Reading 1 Samuel 3: 1-12

3 The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

2 One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. **3** The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the LORD, where the ark of God was. **4** Then the LORD called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." **5** And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

6 Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

8 A third time the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. **9** So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

11 And the LORD said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle. **12** At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end.

Resume of sermon

As a teenager, I practised on the organ in local church, the vicar had given permission to use the organ. It was late evening and as I left, only 'the light of the presence shining in when church lights turned off, and I had to find me way to the door with barely any light!

The temple was almost dark. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, a light which usually burned from morning to evening, placing our story in early hours. I've heard it said the light's state is a parable of the state of the nation, or just the priest. With failing eyesight He had the pupil to train, but had he taught him about the god who they worshipped? We're told Samuel didn't yet know the Lord. Had he lost his way? He had Samuel to help him but had Eli neglected his duties?

Samuel, a lad who'd been at the temple since his parents had dedicated him to God, and placed him with Eli. He was a willing lad as we see when he thought Eli was calling him

Samuel's call. The two people are sleeping in different parts of the building. Semi darkness comes from a small light in a large space. Samuel hears a voice. He thought Eli was calling him, especially as the man was frail, at least, of eye.

Samuel goes, is sent back to bed. it happens again. And a third time. Only then Eli realised God was calling the lad, who didn't yet know the Lord. This time he is told to respond. Speak Lord for your servant is listening. God calls again. Samuel is given a message, which Eli instructs him to pass on. Samuel anxious as the message was severe - but that goes too far in the story. God says the message will shake the nation and Samuel came to be a servant of God with many missions and journeys to make.

Story teaches us that age is no barrier to God when he sees a job to be done. All of us are vulnerable to the call of God, regardless of age, . We are all in a position where we should be encouraging young people to come to know God.

All of us are able, at times, to fall away from the relationship we have with our God. We have need to be open to Him and seek to nurture the relationship we have with Him

Most of all we need to listen for the call of God. It will come, not necessarily when we expect it, as I found out when called into ministry! The we can be ready to say "Speak Lord for your servant is listening"

After our next hymn Linda will lead us in prayers of intercession. You are invited to share prayer requests, using initials, in readiness for when Linda will lead us in prayer

Song MP 253 Hushed was the evening hymn

Prayers of intercession

Song SoF 2560 There is an everlasting kindness Third avenue

We share together as we say the Lord's prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.

Your Kingdom come,

Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are Yours, now and for ever.

Amen

Thanks you to Linda for her contribution; to Martin and the e-steward who have done wonderful work behind the scenes, and thank you all for joining us this morning.

We hope to see you all next Sunday when the preacher will be
Revd Bonni-Belle Pickard

Now a blessing

May the God who called Samuel in the darkness, and brought Him to a point of saying, "Speak Lord, Your servant is listening" open us up to receive His words of hope, life and challenge. May He bless us through this week, keeping us safe, and leading us through whatever should come our way. Most of all, may we know his peace and the joy of His presence in our lives. Amen