

And the only measure of your words and your deeds
Will be the love you leave behind when you're done
Fred Small from "Everything Possible"

Nothing's more important than love in the world,
Nothing's more important than love
When it's all said and done, and there's no place to run
Nothing's more important than love
Linda Allen from "Nothing's More Important"

Dear Friends,
Here in the Northwest we've been experiencing all the variety that water has to offer: torrential rains, snow and floods. And here I am today, sitting in my favorite coffee shop staring out at the blue sky and the serenity of the water on Bellingham Bay. Life changes fast!

I feel like my life is changing fast, too. Since October, I've been a chaplain intern at St. Joseph's Hospital in Bellingham. I have been learning so much -- how to come to each patient without judgment or expectations -- how to listen deeply to the yearnings of each human heart . I'm confronting my own prejudices and life experiences that can keep me from being totally present. I've learned that one of the greatest fears of people in this setting is the fear of being alone. So we are here, to connect, to listen, and sometimes to pray. What a privilege and honor to be brought into this circle of healing.

Our choirs are doing very well. Our Threshold Choir, which has been organized to sing for people who are in need of healing, continues to grow, and we are beginning to attend to community members. We are also in touch with care facilities, as we draw closer to our purpose. Our other group, Women in Song, remains a wonderful environment for me to continue passing on the skills I've developed as a vocal coach (Thank you, Frankie!), and to reconnect to the joy of singing for the fun of it. Both choirs meet Tuesday nights at 6:30. Come join us!

Susan Butruille and I have just received some funding from the Washington Women's History Consortium to work on a musical for the celebration of Women's Suffrage in Washington State in 2010. Susan is a wonderful writer, and I'm very excited to be collaborating with her on "Recipes for Justice". We're still seeking the balance of funding but it's a great start!

I'm still working on the project, "Peacebuilding Songs for the Middle East" for Dr. Sis Levin and The Children of Abraham. I'm very grateful to the Jack Straw Foundation, Every Church a Peace Church, Linn Clawson, Adam at Soundings and so many of you who contributed to the making of this CD. Thanks to my daughter Jen, to Laura Smith, and the kids of the Bellingham Co-op School who helped out musically. The CD will be inserted into a teacher's manual for use in the Middle East. I also continue to do power/point musical presentations on that remarkable journey to Israel and Palestine. Please let me know if you'd like for me to bring this presentation to your town. I will be presenting it in Bellingham in January.

I haven't been touring lately...not much time while doing my CPE internship. I am planning to do a new Artist's Way class beginning in March, with an emphasis on spirituality and healing. Although I may not be coming to you, you can still hear me and purchase CDs on my web site, or download them at CDBaby.. I haven't yet updated the itinerary...but will when my dates are more settled. Here's the link to my web pages: www.lindasongs.com. I will be available for concerts, workshops, and presentations beginning in January, so please feel free to contact me if you have some ideas.

This has been a most remarkable year of change. I love being the age I am, and to still have so many passions! My family is doing well. Mom is now 85, and a light to us all. Jen is beginning to be a voice teacher, and Kristin just returned from a six week tour with The Trucks. Nathaniel is a dedicated pitcher and a great student. Scott is my hero, as he commutes to Seattle four days a week to do such great work for King County Health, then comes home as a loving dad and husband. I am very grateful for the love in my life. Nothing's more important.

I wish you love this holiday season. And I offer you this closing thought:

A wave does not die to become water; she already is the water.
"The American Book Of Dying":

With love,
Linda

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