

If you think God leads you only beside still waters, think again. God will also lead you beside turbulent waters. If you have the courage to enter, you'll think you're drowning. But actually, you're being churned into something new. It's okay,...dive in.
from *When the Heart Waits* by Sue Monk Kidd.

This week we've all been up to our knees in water. We're seeing some of the worst floods in our history. I've been thinking that it's been like that for all of us over these past turbulent months -- up to our knees in water and mud. The news out of Gaza is breaking my heart as I see the faces of children, so like the children I sang for on my visit to Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Hebron. I just saw a film, "A Death in Gaza", showing the effects on children -- how children are being raised to hate. When will our leaders recognize that war and violence will never be the way to peace?

Yet in amidst the rubble, seeds are sprouting. I begin this new year with more hope and energy than I've felt in a long time. I believe that peace will come. I believe that something new is being born, and it is born of hard work, patience and compassion.

Lessons from home: Patience. Mom is now 86, and it is always a gift for me to slow my pace when I am with her....to not miss a moment of the time we have together. Hard work: I see Scott head to Seattle to work in Seattle at 3 AM, four days a week, to come home and be present with us at 4:30 -- and I continue to be astounded that he can do that with such grace. Compassion: My children are good teachers, as they find their voices these days. They are all adults now -- and inheriting a world in trouble. They need all of our compassion.

Connections:

I have a request. I've been working with a school and two families in Africa. Our personal financial resources can't stretch to give the support needed. Right now the school needs computers -- and money. One of the families needs tuition money for school -- to be paid directly to the school. The new term is beginning, and I'd so hoped to be able to get these five young people in one family -- without parents -- into school. I have details, if you can possibly help. Please call me or email me, and I can send more information. My hope is to find four other families or individuals to each pay tuition for one child.

Music Work:

First, I'll be updating my itinerary soon, but I'm waiting on a few confirmations. You can visit my link at www.lindasongs.com in a week or

so to find where I'll be singing and/or presenting. I recently premiered the Here's to the Women! power point/music presentation that I prepared for Inquiring Mind, with support from the Women's History Consortium. Here's a link to the description:

http://www.humanities.org/inquiringmind/speaker_page.php?name=Linda_Allen

I'm also hoping to have some of my presentations on the Women's History Consortium web pages -- a great resource as we approach the celebration of Suffrage in Washington State. I'm now seeking funding to do a women's history recording called Here's to the Women! which will include some of my historical songs, and some of the new ones I wrote with the support of the Consortium. So if any of you have thoughts on a likely funding source, I'd be delighted to know about it! I'm also seeking a publisher for my Recipe Songs project -- I have a bunch of wonderful songs ready to go! So I'm never out of ideas -- but I do run out of time and money!

I'm now in my internship in therapeutic music, so am singing at the bedside more frequently -- either alone or with members of our Bellingham Threshold Choir. The Threshold Choir and Women in Song continue to meet Tuesday evenings, and they are going strong! Come join us, if you're up this way! Also, I'll be teaching a class on "Singing at the Bedside" this summer at Naramata Centre in BC -- one of our family's favorite retreats. Check them on the web.

Teaching

I'm starting a new class on February 5th. Here's the description:
The Spirit of Creativity: Integrating Art, Spirit, and Justice-Making
This thirteen-week class will explore, through discussion and art-making, the new world that is emerging and ways we can bring our creative gifts into the process. Thursdays, 6:30 – 8:30. February 5th through April 30th. \$275.00. Phone 360-734-7979 for more information, location, and to reserve a place.

I'm also teaching individual lessons in a combination of guitar, voice, and songwriting. Great fun!

Ministry

Ok, so it's all ministry to me. But...I did my first wedding last summer -- loved it -- and am making myself available for memorial services and other "ceremonies of life". Even made up a business card and attended a Bridal Faire last weekend. Quite an experience!

So this work of mine in the world continues to express itself in strange, unexpected and amazing ways. I thank you all for your love and support through these years, and I hope to see some of you in this new, hopeful year.

May this new year bring you good work to do and a courageous heart.

Linda

PS - If you haven't yet seen this -- please give yourself five minutes to remember the power of music to bring the world together!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_A_ma2h0idk

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