

Dear Friends,

It's been a busy month. I just returned from an incredible week of study with Rev. Cecil Williams of Glide Memorial Church, and Dr. Dorsey Blake - who both reminded me of the importance of putting Compassion into practice! And the key seems to be, according to Rev. Williams, unconditional love and unconditional acceptance. In these uncertain times, it's good to encounter that kind of certainly.

In the afternoons, I studied with Russill Paul - a true master of Hindu sound yoga. So there was the going out into the world, and there was the importance of the inner journey - coming face to face with our deepest selves, the Creative Spirit, for renewal and sustenance for the journey. The vocal work continues to be an important journey for me, and I'm excited to share what I'm learning. This week I heard Susan Osborn speak about her voice workshops -- about coming home to our bodies through voicework. She told me about the work of Kate Munger and her "Threshold Choruses" --choruses who sing for the dying. The connections go on and on.

Being empowered to use our voices is also about how and when we lift up our voices. Who can speak for us if we do not? Here in Bellingham, we had a close-up look at what happens when folks who have not felt heard get together. A group called People for Public Spaces took over a burned out "pit" in the center of town and lobbied for it to be turned into a park. Life seemed to spread itself all over that cold, grey pit as slabs of concrete were torn up and piled into make-shift tables and chairs. Colorful slogans and pictures graced the walls. Gardens were planted. It lasted five days. Then the arrests began and the walls were painted over. The event has left many of us wondering how that wonderful energy could have been celebrated, and those voices heard. Songwriting is my most succinct way of commenting on events around me. The lyrics to a new song on the "Pit" protest are at the end of this email.

When I think of my life's work, I think the first 25 years was about giving voice musically to those who have no voice. I still do that, but these days my work also seems to be about empowering people to find their own voices: physically, spiritually, and creatively. We need everyone's voice these days.

So here's what I'm up to. Over the next months, I'll be facilitating three Voices retreats, each focusing on exploring our creative, physical, or spiritual voices. The first one, The Artist's Way Retreat, is on July 14th and 15th and will be held at beautiful Blue Mountain Retreat Center. Next month I'll also be doing a concert and workshop at the CyberCafe and

Bookstore, sponsored by the Whidbey Institute on July 21st. Click here for a poster about that event.

http://lindasongs.com/pages/newest_poster.htm

I'll also be teaching a class for beginning and advanced vocal students at the Puget Sound Guitar Workshop July 28 through August 3rd.

Here in Bellingham, I'll be the guest lecturer at the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship on July 22nd.

My complete itinerary, including information about the upcoming Fall tours to the Midwest and Southwest, and Oregon, please click here, or copy and paste.

<http://www.lindasongs.com/pages/itinerary.htm>

I'm still hoping to fill dates on these tours. If any of you have considered hosting a house concert, it's easier than you think! Click here for "How To Host A House Concert."

http://www.lindasongs.com/pages/house_concerts.html

As always, if you wish to be removed from these occasional notes, please let me know. I heard Rachel Riemen (Kitchen Table Wisdom) talk recently, and she described "blessing" as anything that moves you towards your true purpose.

May your life be blessed!

Linda

"The Pit" 2001 Linda Allen

There's an empty lot in the heart of our town
Some people got together, knocked the fences down
They climbed into the pit where a building had been
They said, "We'll build a park for our neighbors and friends"

Because the city is you and the city is me
It's our neighbors and friends in community
And it may not be all we would want it to be
But it's home, and home is where the heart is.

The concrete gave way to the picks and the spades
Gardens were planted, friendships were made
There was music and dancing 'til police said to go
The people decided - the people said, "no!" CHORUS

They were planting much more than a garden, it seems
They were planting a vision to capture our dreams
Of a city whose heart is as big as its plans
With spaces for beauty, and work for each hand CHORUS

The laws were enforced, and the people are gone
But we still remember their laughter and songs
Grey paint may cover the walls of that place
But they can't cover over our heart's open space