

# The Marshan Chronicles

*For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.*



Sometimes it is just the two of us.

## **February 2020, Volume 24, Number 2**

Well, I ended January's newsletter asking for your prayers for my shoulder injury, so I should start this one by saying, "Good job!" My shoulder is completely on the mend with no surgery. So I am very grateful for your prayers.

Most of you know that I have a hard time asking for personal prayer. I'm not sure why, since I LOVE knowing that you pray for me, for us. But I also have been an RN for 32 years, am married to a nurse, and work 20 hours a week between over 150 doctors' outpatient offices. So I have PLENTY of medical advice. Still, the cold weather is a challenge for me. I have a degenerative muscle disorder that just flares up in the cold. All this means that I am sort of down to rest during January and February. SO...once again, prayers appreciated.

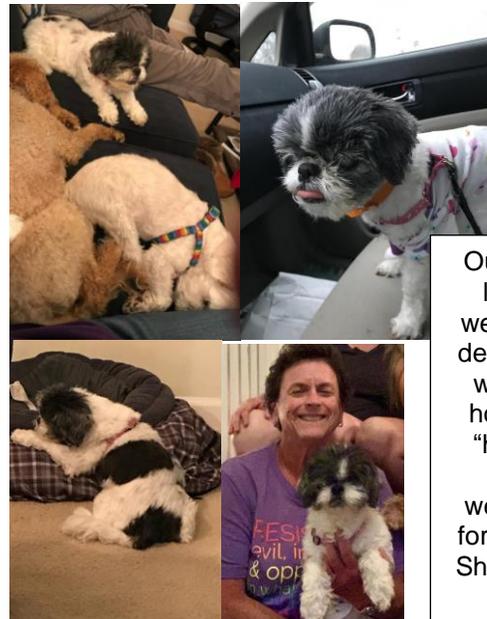
In the meantime, we are getting Cindy ready for her mission trip to Vietnam and Cambodia, and me ready for some music and trips during the spring.

Cindy leaves Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> for her trip with our previous church, Passagrille Beach Community Church. Besides getting to catch up with a bunch of our Florida friends, Cindy will travel to clinics run by local residents to help them set up protocols, programs, and pharmaceuticals so that they can continue to serve their communities after the mission team leaves.

For a lot of February, we are working on a program at Brentwood United Methodist Church (BUMC) here where we live now. Because the whole denomination is going through the throes of change with their general conference coming up in May, Cindy started a program in our own church called "Draw the Circle Wide." This is designed to do a few things. One is to bring LGBTQ allies out of the closet! Honestly, there are so many people who love us, affirm our full participation in the life of the church, but are afraid of causing controversy if they let anyone else know that. To start with, Cindy and I have sung our song, "The Silence of our Friends" in some of the services and Sunday School classes. But we are also trying to share that true justice is not up for a vote. So we are careful not to be just rallying numbers, but really doing education and support.

Right now, even the fully supportive pastors at our church recognize that we cannot in good faith tell all the member of the Nashville LGBTQ+ community that our church is a "safe" place for them. They would have to be sure they are ready to face some prejudice and resistance to their full participation in our church community. So we're working with the people we have (and our own friends) to get people to come and share their experiences and wisdom with our church. Cindy is incredibly organized and we are getting ready (probably before you even receive this newsletter) to have a meeting with several of our church leaders (Methodists already have numerous councils and committees, at a large church like BUMC, they are absolutely innumerable). The set up at this meeting is to have people of different perspectives share. That will include a lifelong Methodist man whose understanding of the LGBTQ+ community did a 180 degree turn when he really began to study Scripture on the matter; a lifelong Methodist woman who was in a mixed-orientation marriage and who still loves and understands the anguish of her gay ex-husband; two straight physicians who have seen the devastation of the church's prejudice on young people; and a straight mother of two straight daughters who knows that her daughters are not going to continue to be involved in a church where ALL of their friends are not full welcomed. I'll let you know how it goes.

The last prayer request is just for our puppies and ourselves after we lost our oldest dog this week.



Our little "pack" lost one this week. 15 yr old, deaf/blind Rags, who was sent home for us to "hospice for a couple of weeks," thrived for over 2 years. She was Cindy's baby.

*Love and Gratitude, Marsha & Cindy*

### **IMPORTANT!! YEAR END info**

Statements have gone out. Let me know if yours is missing or has errors.

#### **Cindy's Mission Work**

Many thanks for those of you who have chosen to support Cindy on her mission trips. She is also working on ways to make the computer programs she uses available to all the missions she travels to, particularly to those our church runs in South Africa. The programs track everything from school attendance and performance to health and vaccination status to who is sponsoring that child or teacher and whether they are up to date on their donations. Next she'll be in Vietnam and Cambodia in February!

#### **You can support BALM when you shop online**

(You can read the instructions online but the simple thing is this: when you want to shop online at a major store, you go first to [www.igive.com/BALM](http://www.igive.com/BALM). You put your info in & then it gives you a list of most stores you've ever heard of.

So, for instance, you go to [igive.com/BALM](http://igive.com/BALM) & pick BestBuy, it takes you to that site & you order whatever you want to online. All your coupons & 'special deals' still apply. There's no extra charge to you at all, but that way, they automatically donate part of their profit to BALM Ministries.)

(I forget myself sometimes, but it makes a big difference if you can remember.)

#### **Prayer List & Ministry Opportunities**

- † *Gratitude for your prayers for Cindy on all her mission trips & the teaching she does to help them. Special prayers of protection in Vietnam and Cambodia*
- † *Praises for our church home in Brentwood United Methodist, & prayers for the changes that need to be made. Special prayers for guidance for us and our role/s here with "Draw the Circle Wide."*

† *Prayers that we may all keep on sharing the Good News with the least, the lost and the hungry – to give as we've been given to; to love because Jesus first loved us and we have SO much to give away.*

† *Prayers for wisdom as Cindy heads into – well, her retirement years. Whatever the plans are, we say, "yes."*

† *Four songs are posted FREE on the website:*

<https://balmministries.net/store>

† *Prayers for me to be able to set up more concerts after my time off in February. Consider YOUR church. Please contact me. We have supporters helping with travel. Pray about it & write me at [ssbalm@aol.com](mailto:ssbalm@aol.com)*

#### ***What You Have to Say***

*"I have learned so much about relationships from watching you and Cindy at our church. I know God has prepared me for each thing I will do in my life, but I've learned things I never understood before by watching your abilities to care so deeply for one another without having expectations or being co-dependent. I just wanted you to know that."*

We also had a lot of response from our Methodist church after one member waited until Cindy walked into the narthex after a service, pointed at her, and told her the way we take communion (serving it to one another) is WRONG and we need to stop it. It was so startling and disheartening that another member reached out to Cindy and Cindy burst into tears. Not for herself – she's a tough cookie – but for the level of vehemence that she knows might be unleashed next on someone who cannot withstand the onslaught. One person told Cindy that when someone tosses something out like that, she didn't need to "catch it," she could just duck (figuratively). Cindy said she could not do that, since when she ducked, it would just hit the kid behind her.

*"I really thought there was a sort of exaggeration about our members – that people just sort of benignly disagree. I felt terrible that anyone was so unkind and confrontational at our church. Let me know how I can help."*

*"I hate to say this, but maybe it was a good thing that someone spoke out against you so strongly – now they can't hide behind how they just believe in the supremacy of Scripture. Pretty sure there's no scripture about giving each other communion."*

*"I've always thought the way you two treat in other in church was extremely respectful, both of each other and of our congregation. You really live out what you have told me – that you're always sisters in Christ before anything else."*

*"Our senior pastor has told me a couple of times that he would never tolerate bullying in our church. We'll find out what that means now I guess."*

*"I'm so sorry I missed you at the Q conference, but I pray you're on the mend. Good for you for taking care of yourself!"*

#### **Upcoming travel**

**Feb 27-29** Belmont United Methodist Church, Nashville for Reconciling Ministries Network conference.

**Mar 19** – First Congregational United Church of Christ, Lake Worth FL 7pm [www.LakeWorthUCC.org](http://www.LakeWorthUCC.org)

I will be in Portland OR March 5-9 if anyone wants a concert near there.

I will also be in the Providence RI area May 1-5 – let me know!

Please consider reaching me at [ssbalm@aol.com](mailto:ssbalm@aol.com) to book something for your church!

*A word from a longtime supporter of Balm ministries: [ChristianGays.com](http://ChristianGays.com) is a community for ALL LGBT people to meet & develop friendships based on faith & other common interests. We offer Chat Rooms & Forums, & all information is private, accessible to members only. Join us now at <https://ChristianGays.com>*