

The Marshan Chronicles

For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.



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Well, we did have Sunrise Service, but it was sure different. Nancy has been through death and life with me for the last 36 years and neither of us has ever missed an Easter Sunrise service. She was at the first MCC General Conference I sang for, she was at my mother's funeral, she married my daughter and son-in-law and did the dedication for my youngest granddaughter – I could go on and on. SO, we determined we would do a Sunrise Service together this year. Then the question was HOW? Everyone thought Zoom was perfect....until they listened to live music on Zoom. The sound has some sort of compression on it to help with muting background noises and even if I fixed the sound on my computer, no one listening to it would be able to hear it very well.

But there's Facebook live recorded on an iPhone. That's better music, but you can't get two people in from two different places. As you might expect, this is where Cindy enters the picture. How to combine Facebook Live and Zoom? There is probably a lovely and technical way to do that, but what Cindy did was get up at 5am our time (since we were doing the Sunrise Service on Florida time) and get everything set up. She got the iPhone recording and lights and my guitar and music ready to go on Facebook Live. Then she got Rev. Nancy on another iPhone on a Zoom call. (See if you can picture this.) She took the iPhone with Nancy on it and attached it to a broom handle at the same height as the iPhone that was on Facebook live. So, when Nancy opened the service, Cindy was holding the phone with Nancy on a Zoom meeting up to the Facebook Live phone, with the broom handle so she could move Nancy

into the frame of the Facebook Live feed and then move her off for me to sing and then move her back to pray and preach. No one else could see how Cindy was maneuvering the phone with Nancy on it, but having it on a broom stick made it a little steadier than just hold it up.

It was wonderful and hilarious at the same time and the one thing that Cindy was devastated about was that you have to keep the phone upright or "portrait," not "landscape" when you are on Facebook Live. Otherwise for people on computers, the whole picture is sideways! Well, sunrise came and went and it was too late to change it, but fortunately people were very gracious about our goof. And Nancy didn't mind being moved about on a broomstick 😊.

Having had that experience, we felt a little better about it when someone asked us to do an online concert for a special group. Healing Housing is a place that is a ministry partner of our church, Brentwood United Methodist Church (BUMC). People at BUMC saw that there were a lot of young women who came through rehab programs of 30 days or 90 days, but then had no way to get back into regular life (remember that?) again. So we opened a home where women coming out of recovery programs could stay for up to 6 months. It provides food and shelter, but even more importantly, jobs. Local businesses partnered with Healing Housing and each woman was required to work to begin supporting herself in Healing Housing and saving for the time when she would be ready to leave the house and start out on her own. This was all going pretty well for a while before the pandemic hit. Women lost their jobs, some were quarantined elsewhere, most were staying in place but it was devastating overall to the ministry there. Last year, some of you might remember, I sang at a fundraiser for them. This year, they just asked if I could do a concert directed to the women at Healing Housing rather than directed to donors.

SO on May 5th, that's what Cindy and I will do on Facebook Live on my FB page (Marsha Stevens-Pino – there's only one of me on Facebook). You are all welcome to drop in, but our singing and sharing will be set up to be for the women of Healing Housing. (Also, there will be no need of broomsticks for this event!)

If you drop in, please think about whether setting up an online concert and sharing time like this would be helpful to any group that you're part of. We'd love to do some more.

I can't wait till we can all hug again!!!! (I actually have dreams about hugging people.) I guess cyberhugs for now. Miss you all.

Love and Gratitude, Marsha & Cindy

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. Unfortunately, as you might guess, the trips for this year have been canceled so far because of the concerns over COVID 19 (the new corona virus). Cindy is sad about this since she feels that people need the mission teams more than ever. But she also respects the concerns of the mission leaders. So for now, she is working on the computer programs for each of them, and writing to the kids we sponsor to keep in touch with them.



The girl we sponsor, Gloria, is heading into high school in Uganda. Cindy has spent several lovely visits at their home, and was able to get her a purple bunkbed. She was thrilled.

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. 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 & 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

- ✦ 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 and I figure out our place in the middle of all this & for the great musicians getting some new recordings done for us.
- ✦ Prayers for me to be able to set up more concerts online.

What You Have to Say

"This song (For Those Tears I Died) has had a special place in my heart since childhood. And today I believe I found out the reason why & what God was trying to tell me!"

(From one of the United Methodist Church pastors most active in the LGBTQ+ inclusion movement) "You are a blessing Marsha! This is song is an inspiration, especially during this time of uncertainty, pain, and death. Thank you, and I thank God for you!"

"Beautiful song with beautiful lyrics....thanks for writing and posting. Written right from the heart! Fantastic song..... We'll be singing this for the first time at our little country church this Sunday."

"Thank you so much for writing your songs!!! I first heard For Those Tears in 1977 when Al Ferry was doing

Evangelistic meetings in an SDA Church. (Seventh Day Adventist) It has been my very favorite Christian song ever since."

"I heard you and Children of the Day sing at Mid-America Nazarene College (now University) around 1980. Some students couldn't believe they were hearing the song's author singing it! lol Marsha, I stand with you!!! You are still the beautiful person I saw and heard all those years ago. Let haters hate; Jesus is Love."

"I have to give a huge Thank You to Cindy for keeping so many of us in contact these past couple of months. I know she set up dozens of people with accounts and information about online meetings. She is generous and amazing...and very patient with elderly beginners!!"

"Marsha, did you ever sing this song at Claremont High school?" (Yes, I did. We sang it at the "talent show" in my senior year... along with Leavin' on a Jet Plane!)

"As much as Marsha's music means to us, Cindy's story is so compelling for everyone out there who feels like they are hiding in plain sight too overwhelmed by their weaknesses to be useful. Please keep sharing."

Upcoming travel

May 5th – online concert for Healing Housing. This will be set up as Facebook Live on Marsha's FaceBook page, Marsha Stevens-Pino

Please consider reaching me at ssbalm@aol.com to book something online for your church!

A word from a longtime supporter of Balm ministries: 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. WE need this now more than ever! Join us now at <https://ChristianGays.com>