

The Marshan Chronicles

For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.



Rev. Joan Saniuk, Rev. David Smith, Sharilyn Steketee, me and Cindy

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October started out with Cindy and I doing music for our United Methodist Church (UMC) women's retreat. This is the third one we've done the music for and this time, I planned ahead and got especially Methodist by using music inspired by Charles Wesley (one of my favorite hymn writers and the brother of John Wesley who started the Methodist movement). Although he wrote "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" I did not pick that one for October 😊. But he also wrote "Oh For a Thousand Tongues to Sing." SO to persuade many staid Methodist women to sing, I wrote lyrics to that hymn, each verse based on the Scripture the retreat leaders were using for the sessions. So, for instance, when the session was about the woman breaking open the perfume and washing Jesus' feet, I wrote:

*I kneel before my Master
With a passion so complete.
Like shattered alabaster
Broken open at His feet*

And so on. At the last session, the message was about Jesus appearing after his resurrection first to the group of women and instructing them to "tell His disciples" that He was risen.

*We came to praise and stayed to learn
We found a love so true.
Now send us out with hearts that burn
To bring our world to You.*

There were six sessions and by the 3rd or 4th, we had a genuine singalong. Rev. Dr. Laura Brantley from our church led the retreat along with Rev. Kaye Harvey. The messages were great and we hoped we were once again able to say with our presence, "*this is what it looks like to have married LGBTQ+ leaders at your church.*"

The very next weekend was at in Hendersonville North

Carolina where Rev. Joan Saniuk arranged our time (yes! Another weekend with Cindy – yay). We did a triple dip on Sunday when we attended our host's church service (First Congregational Church of Hendersonville), the United Methodist Church of Hendersonville, AND Sacred Journey MCC in Hendersonville. Gotta love church. Of course at MCC we could be more comfortable being ourselves and there's always a deep breath of comfort that comes with that time. Cindy shared both Saturday night and Sunday night – but she really preached at the MCC. What a gift!

The next weekend I was on my own at the MCC in Windsor Ontario Canada – and the Windsor United Church of Canada. Dale Burkholder is a long time friend, and long time lay leader in the whole MCC denomination. His hubby, Dan, picked me up at the Detroit airport to make crossing the border easier on me. (Honestly, I must just carry around free-floating guilt. Any time someone in a uniform with guns strapped on them asks me questions I become completely run-at-the-mouth. Even Cindy says, "Honey, just answer the question they ask. One word is preferable." Dan is a long haul truck driver who goes back and forth over the border daily, so it was a breeze. He and Dale made me very comfortable and ferried me around. John, their pastoral leader, is such a sweet and unassuming guy. Some of the time we just pieced things together, but it all worked. As you can see below, I forgot to take pictures – bummer. Well this is the best I can do.



Dale Burkholder and me – much younger since I'm so old I forgot to get a photo this trip!!

We had an interesting roller coaster at our own church over the past couple of weeks. Cindy's main focus at our UMC is to try to create a safe place for young people there. With 8000 member there are hundreds and hundreds of kids who are working through who they are in the world. UMC baptizes babies shortly after birth believing that this is a time for the members of the Body of Christ to commit themselves to this child. Sadly, some of the kids have come out to us before talking to their parents. In one case, Cindy said, "Well your parents know Marsha and me and that seems to be fine." The kid answered, "Yes, but you don't hear what they say when you leave the room." So, when our church website was re-launched in October, Cindy worked to be sure that if you searched "LGBTQ" it would come up with a resource with a loving and affirming pastor there to help people to find their way. Sigh. Baby steps!!

Love and Gratitude, Marsha & Cindy

IMPORTANT!! YEAR END info

We date your year-end giving by the date YOU put on your check, NOT by the date we receive your donation!

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 January!

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

- ‡ *Gratitude for your prayers for Cindy on all her mission trips & the teaching she does to help them.*
- ‡ *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.

- ‡ *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 for the 50th anniversary of “For Those Tears I Died”*
- Consider YOUR church. Please contact me. We have supporters helping with travel. Pray about it & write me at ssbalm@aol.com**

What You Have to Say

“For a work team building event, I was recently asked “what was the first concert I attended”. I laughed, knowing they meant some rock star. I said, it was a Christian Concert. It was at Calvary Chapel. It was ~ the spring or summer of 1970. It was Marsha. It was the night that my upbringing as a Christian in a fundamental Baptist church moved from head knowledge to heart knowledge. The song, Jesus said come to the waters, changed my life. I went home that night knowing everyone in that auditorium knew something/someone I didn’t. While there, I sobbed knowing I was alone in the room, isolated from this FAMILY I observed. A random stranger put their arm around me & held me as you sang. When home, I randomly opened my bible to Isaiah 51:1. And was invited by Jesus to personally come to His waters and not to feel alone any more. My family didn’t understand nor agree with my “re-baptism” – but at

16, it was my profound response to the call Jesus made with Marsha’s song, and with the Isaiah verse of invitation to come alive! God has truly been by my side through personal illness and loss, and in the raising of a daughter I adopted as a single mom. She recently told me she’s never had a moment of doubt in her faith. That is the legacy you helped me create. That is your story as much as mine. Thank you for being God’s instrument that night that changed my life forever. And also thank you for being OUT and an openly God loving witness, despite all the heartache I know you’ve known as a result. You are truly an inspiration. God’s richest blessings keep you and may He hold you in the palm of His hand. Love in Christ.”

“You are such an effective story teller as well as a musician! And, I see the Called us Good CD as being a very nice gift to give to those who God sends my way who are struggling to find their voice in the Christian Church”

Upcoming travel

- Nov 7-10** Seattle WA for The Reformation Project (and anything one of you wants to book in the Seattle area!!)
- Nov 16** Highland Christian Camp, Quebeck TN with Cindy
- Dec 6** Friday evening concert with Christmas songs along with my own. 7:15 at St. John the Apostle MCC in Fort Myers, FL
- Dec 8** Sunday morning sharing at St John the Apostle MCC in Fort Myers, FL www.sjamcc.com
- Jan 4-6** Q Christian conference in Fort Lauderdale FL

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. Join us now at <https://ChristianGays.com>