

# The Marshan Chronicles

*For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.*



## **December 2019, Volume 23, Number 12**

November started happily enough at The Reformation Project Conference in Seattle. I love the Bible studies here every year and especially listening to the research that Kathy Baldock is doing on the history of same sex relationships and the church. I know most of you have heard the gist of it all, but it was amazing to see the archived papers and very old Bibles on display. Basically Kathy wondered why the Revised Standard Version (RSV) of the Bible decided to use the word “homosexual” in its translation. The word had never been used before, and after the first release of the RSV, the next printing took that word out – with no comment on the change. Making a story (that we heard over several hours) very short, Kathy found a letter from a seminary student in the early 50’s that challenged the senior translator of the RSV for using that word. For one thing, the word is a modern mash up from two different languages – “homo” Greek for the same, and “sexualis” from Latin. But the student went on for three pages to challenge why the word was better translated as “pederast” or “sexual pervert.” Amazingly, the senior translator answered the student and agreed, but because of the enormous cost of printing this new translation of the Bible, they had agreed not to make any changes for 10 years after the first pressing (the first RSV off the presses was given to President Truman in 1952). So in 1962, the word was changed. Although the student had signed his letters with his first name and middle initial, Kathy managed to track him down and Rev. David, now 82 years old, is a retired United Church of Canada pastor who did come to the conference and share his part. MUCH much more to the story that is coming out in Kathy’s new book, but it was fascinating to be there.

Then Cindy and I went to a Centerpeace retreat in Spencer TN where Centerpeace founder, Sally Gary, invited us to share in song (and clarinet) and story. It was a powerful group of seekers at the retreat. Sally is from the Church of Christ background, and I’ve shared about her in

previous newsletters. Her new movie “Loves God Likes Girls” had just been released in Texas when we saw her. It’s always powerful when Cindy is with me to share her testimonies, but it was even better when we pulled up to the cabin in the mountains and found Justin Lee already there. Justin is one of my favorite people as well as a talented author and powerful gay Christian organizer.



Many of you will have heard by now that Rev. Elder Freda Smith has gone on to glory this week. I wrote about her in my book, of course. But there is SO much more I wish I could share. One kind of cool story we shared started several years ago at an MCC General conference where Freda’s position as an MCC Elder was up for election. (She was MCC’s first female elder in the early 70s & had served ever since.) When, after several votes, Rev. Freda had lost the vote to another woman of God, she was as gracious as you could imagine; talking about passing on the mantle that God had given her and giving a positive and affirming outgoing sermon that night. As she was walking out past me, I hugged her and said, “They cast their lots for Matthias, but Paul changed the world.” And she burst into tears in my arms. She was not at all grudging about passing the position along, just had that little need for encouragement that God was not done with her yet.

Several years later, after I had been writing a conference theme song for MCC General conferences for about 30 years, I applied to write one and either sing it or teach it to a choir, but I was not invited to share at that conference. I attended the conference for one full day just for the joy of seeing everyone, but I didn’t want to hang out and try to answer people about why I wasn’t sharing a new song at conference. (Clearly, I’m not as mature and gracious as Freda!) But during the second service of that morning, a wonderful woman from CapeTown South Africa, Sharon Cox, got up to share her story. She did not know I was there and I had not heard her story before. But she shared about being raped when she was young and how a certain song saw her through her darkest nights...and she started singing, “and Jesus said, ‘Come to the water...’” Freda turned and saw me in the back of the room and immediately came over to me with Justin Ryan to lay hands on me and tell me the same thing I had told her; God was not done with me yet.

***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 and Uganda. 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](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**

- † *Special prayers for Cindy & I who are both battling the flu (yes we got our shots) & for the extensive work Cindy is doing with our Brentwood UMC to make it a safe place for lgbtq+ kids to find their own walks in Jesus.*
- † *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.*
- † *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**

*“Thank you so much for blessing us, Marsha. We are still talking about it! Also we're extremely grateful for what you wrote in your newsletter concerning your visit. You are the type of Christian who aids the lost in finding their way home, the weary to enter into His rest once again and those in ministry to rejoice that God is indeed alive and at work in this world. We continue to keep you, Cindy, your ministries and life together in prayer. Thank you again, dear sister in Christ”*

*“Keeping you lifted in prayer in this 50th anniversary year. It is a wonder that God brought you to a United Methodist Church where the battle is real. One by one...”*

*“It seems like your story, and your anointing, stand so at the crossroads of all this – crossroads in a spiritual sense; a place where you must choose which way to head, and the directions are starkly and obviously*

*NOT the same - not parallel even for awhile: you'll go one way or another, and obviously end up in VERY different locations based on what you choose - Or follow the cloud by day and the fire by night... wherever they lead. . . not even ON a road at times. No trails. . . just the leading.”* like your story, and your anointing, stand so at the crossroads of all this - crossroads in the spiritual (Like I've said, we don't really have to know the destination, just the next step to walk in the light that we have.)

*“I've listened (and sung) your song literally thousands of times, but today I got a new vision as I listened to it. I realized Jesus was with me while I went through the trial of losing (my wife). He was there and felt every teardrop as I cried at night as Alzheimer's took her mind. He was there as I cried when I struggled to help her physically as Alzheimer's destroyed her physical abilities... The vision was so clear. I know He was there. But best of all, I know He was there to greet her on Valentine's Day. Just wanted to share.”*

### **Upcoming travel**

- 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](http://www.sjamcc.com)
- Dec 21** 6pm Special music at Saturday night service, Brentwood United Methodist Church [www.bumc.net](http://www.bumc.net)
- Dec 22** 8:15 and all am services, special music Brentwood United Methodist Church [www.BUMC.net](http://www.BUMC.net)

*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>*