

The Marshan Chronicles

For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.



Justin Ryan and Marsha at Woodlawn United Methodist Church in Birmingham Alabama



The church had provided a lovely AirBNB for Justin and I to stay in and we used our time to stay up WAYYYY past my bedtime to catch up. Justin drove back to Paducah (where he lives with his sweet hubby, Scott) and I flew back to Florida.

Back at our Church of the Trinity MCC, more music ministry opportunities were waiting. We celebrated Juneteenth a few days early (on June 15th) with Greater Hurst Chapel AME. The service was packed with evocative preaching and sharing and with outstanding music. Of course, my MOST fun is singing with my buddy Ollie (Oliver Dill) who can give any song a great big bunch of soul. In this case, we sang a sort of rock and roll version of Revive Us Again. I'm tellin' you, the AME choir joining in behind us and Ollie singing with me made it an evening to remember.



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You may remember that I was headed for Birmingham to do a concert with Justin Ryan in early June. Rev. Emily Freeman, the pastor of Woodlawn United Methodist Church, invited us to do a fundraiser there. They were raising money for the Marge Ragona Scholarship fund to honor Rev. Ragona. I met Marge in 1994 when she was pastoring Covenant MCC in Birmingham. The lead pastor there had only recently died of AIDS. She was the assistant pastor and was ultimately voted senior pastor after his death. (We were able to see the display of some of the AIDS quilt.) The scholarship is awarded to a member of the LBGTQ+ community to continue their post grad work in either ministry, teaching, or nursing. (All three categories in which Rev. Marge Ragona herself earned degrees!!) Best of all, we raised almost \$5000 which went entirely to the fund.

Last year's scholarship recipient, Kim Furlow, preached for the Sunday morning service and did a great job. I never know if it's acceptable to "shout out" in a Methodist Church, but when Kim said, "There's a song that Sandi Patty used to sing, written by Jon Mohr and John Mays that I love and I wish I could sing it for you..." I was inspired to holler out that I could sing it. I did not need the title. Some of you are old enough to remember me in the very early 90s touring with Heartsong and singing their song, "Love in Any Language." Truly a masterpiece.



Happily, ministry opportunities are opening up again. I plan to collect two years' worth of hugs so be ready. I'm also asking prayers for a small personal thing. This is a picture of our thermostat at home here

in Florida in summer.  If you can see, it is BLANK. That's right. NO air conditioning. Parts, supply chain, expired warranties have converged. A little prayer for cool would be much appreciated!

Most of all, of course, we need to be praying for the seemingly endless violence in our country. It's impossible not to put that pain out there for all of us..

With Gratitude, Marsha & Cindy

BALM Ministries P.O. Box 14937, Bradenton FL 34280-4937 www.BalmMinistries.net

Please note our PO Box address – it's too long to remember!

Cindy's Mission Work

Many thanks for those of you who have chosen to support Cindy on her mission trips. Unfortunately, as you know, the trips for the past 2 years have been canceled. 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.

Please be assured that all of the donations you sent are in savings and waiting for her opportunities to travel again!

We will let you know when she can resume mission trips.

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

- ✦ *Prayers for victims of gun violence & for leaders who will do more to be sure it stops.*
- ✦ *Praises for our supporters who have made returning to music ministry possible.*
- ✦ *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 me to be able to set up more concerts and special music.*
- ✦ *Prayers for all of us to find ways to gather safely (and resume hugs!)*
- ✦ *Prayers (and praises) for Cindy's safety as she rides her bike.*
- ✦ *Praises for the ministry opportunities opening up and for ALL of your support*

What You Have to Say

Here's a link to a new article that includes Marsha at Grammy.com <https://www.grammy.com/news/queer-christian-artists-keep-the-faith-and-redefine-praise-music-semmler-q-worship-collective-marsha-stevens-pino>

"Good morning, I wanted to reach out and let you know that I picked up three of your CDs at the church (in Birmingham) which I listen to consistently. The lyrics are profound and resonate with me in ways beyond I would have ever anticipated. Thank you for the gift of your ministry through your amazing artistry."

"I sang this for our Salvation Army Bible Camp talent contest. (I actually learned it in 1970, but didn't get to sing it for camp until the summer of 1971.) My entry of For Those Tears I Died was for the vocalist section. They announced my name as the second place winner. When I read the letter from the camp leader he said he was most proud of me because so many kids came up to give their lives to the Lord during that song. Ever since then I have prayed for you and wanted to thank you for writing the song."

This next was a quote from George Elliot, who you may know was actually a woman writing theologically when that was not really accepted. She was being sarcastic about how the modern church does not want to take time to "fish for" individual people – that's too time consuming. Let's just sweep everyone into a mega church and be done with it:

"Let him fish for souls, not with the bait of inconvenient singularity, but with the drag net of comfortable conformity."

"I love that song (For Those Tears): The message: and Jesus said come...that all inclusive message!"

"Love this song. It's an oldie I learned back in high school in the 70s at camp and youth group. It's a beautiful picture of Christ's love for us."

Upcoming ministrc.com

July 11-12 day in New York City with Dr. Ralph Blair!

Aug 14 Pass-A-Grille Beach Church 10:00 am service special music www.pagchurch.org

Sep 1-3 TEN conference Louisville KY see www.TEN.lgbt

Oct 22-23 Jacksonville FL Concert – location and times are tentative at Trinity Lutheran Church

Nov 3-5 Centerpeace Conference (PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE!!) Cindy and I will both be at the Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, TX for this conference. Please consider coming! Other guests include our dear friend Justin Lee and Matthew Vines. It will be amazing fellowship. www.centerpeace.net Then press the link for the conference.

Please consider reaching me at ssbalm@aol.com to book something for your church! We have no fees required at this time!!

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>