

The Marshan Chronicles

For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.



Cindy and I with Rev. Glenna Shepherd (and her puppy Piper)

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Oh hurray. Lots of healing this last month and I'm pretty much on my feet most days. This means that I got to sing a lot. Ahhh, my favorite thing.

Cindy and I started out by going to Glenna Shepherd's church in Pleasant Hill, TN. Do you all remember Glenna? I've told a lot of stories about our friendship over the years, but you might know her because she produced several of my CDs including the Christmas one and Songs of Praise. She is pastoring a United Church of Christ (UCC) here in Tennessee now, about 2 hours from us. This is a fascinating church. Most of the people there live on the same grounds in a center for retired pastors and missionaries from the UCC and the Disciples of Christ denominations. Both of those denominations have long since dealt with full inclusion of women and of the LGBTQ community. Some of these wonderful people shared their stories with us. One woman went to Hiroshima as a medical missionary in 1948. Another man who served in South Africa in the 40s and 50s told us how it took 28 days each way to get there on a freighter. It was a humbling place to go to minister.

Cindy and I did special music in the morning service – a song I wrote in which I sing and she plays her clarinet. After Sunday lunch everyone came back for a concert. I started out thinking I might tone it down a bit for the older crowd, but they were all in to it – laughing at my stories, crying at my songs, and then it was time for Cindy to share her story. She actually tried to back out for a second – she felt like they couldn't possibly be interested in her testimony about drugs, alcohol and coming out. BUT, she was wrong. They were enthralled and the best listeners ever. There were so many tears afterward that they shared tissues and one man told her that he'd never gone forward at an altar call, but he would to pray with her.

We were still basking in all that love, when it was time for me to leave for California to share at the All Nations Gathering at Glory Center. They were doing a sort of Double Jubilee celebration of both the 50 year ministry of MCC, the first church dedicated to ministry to the LGBTQ

community, and the beginning of the 50 year anniversary of the of the Jesus Movement. The conference started Thursday evening and continued all day Friday and Saturday until Sunday morning. Since I was part of both of those movements of the Holy Spirit, Rev. Sandy Turnbull was kind enough to invite me to sing at every. So, I got to sing "Jesus Music" with my guitar for several services. Then as a big plus, the wonderful Joe Hogue and their praise band learned some of my songs about coming out. My friend Connie was able to come down from the Bay Area, and Bea and Sandy made me feel at home in their guestroom. On top of all that there were moving messages, Spirit filled services, tender prayers, and the magnificent ministry of Marvin Matthews. I got to catch up with Chuck Smith jr who so graciously took us to Israel a few years ago. It was one of those blessings that keeps you buoyed up for months. The theme? "Do it Again, Lord!"

To the right is Sean and me with Joe Hogue. Below is my bestie Marvin Matthews.



The Glory Center praise band including upBeat! artists Joann and Cathy Bridges.

These were such tender ministry opportunities. At both places so many people shared with us about finally knowing that they (or their LGBTQ friends and relatives) were safe and loved by God, and that the Word of God is their friend and comfort. Thank you so much for your support and prayers.

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 was in Uganda. She returned safely from Honduras. She has one more trip to Uganda still this year. Haiti will be January 20-26th.

Keep her in prayer. Any gifts to BALM noted to Cindy (continue to be tax deductible) will be used for her mission trips. She has some pictures posted on her Facebook page and they've made a video we'll try to get up on the BALM website soon.

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

- ✦ *Pray for my healing and return to work on Oct 22.*
- ✦ *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, & MANY prayers for the Methodist Council of Bishops who are currently meeting to help prepare a suggested "way forward" for the United Methodist church and the LGBTQ community.*

✦ *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 upBeat! artists*

✦ *Please keep sweet Mark Moseley & his wife Donna K in your prayers for God's healing from his stroke & of course Donna K's brain tumor, treatment, & peace.*

✦ *Praises for the songs I finished writing & the ones in progress. Prayers I can get at least this short recording done and ready for you to hear.*

✦ *Prayers for ChristianGays.com – the outreach they do which is so inclusive, and their gracious support of us.*

What You Have to Say

"Marsha was the only person who could have reached my father. She found a real dad in him and she was one of the few who could call him 'Papa Chuck' without bothering me...she went in to see him and just shared from her heart all that Jesus has done in her life and ministry since she came out of the closet and chose to be honest about who she is. She could touch him in a way no one else could. At the end of their meeting he just said, 'Well, you're reaching people we will never reach.' And he told others that as well."

"Thank you. Your song has been my rock so often. I learned it listening to my mom singing it in church."

"Marsha is my HER-o. She came out when none of us would and paved a way in what was still a wilderness. All the rest of us sing and minister because she blazed this trail for us."

"I knew from the very first time I met her that Marsha was here for such a time as this. She was willing to do what others had not been able to do – step all the way out of the closet and fully in to the light of her calling in Christ Jesus. She heard the call and she answered it."

"I was so excited to get to meet you and sing with you. I loved your stories about the moves of the Holy Spirit in the Jesus Movement and in MCC. It made me feel like I was there and it made it easier for me to pray for God to 'do it again' as we did at conference."

Upcoming travel

Oct 13 7pm concert at Trinity MCC in Grand Prairie, TX

www.TrinityMCC.org

Oct 14 11am Special music at Trinity MCC Grand Prairie, TX

Oct 18-20 Beersheba Springs, TN campground women's retreat – everyone is welcome. Go to BUMC.net and search for Breathing Space or Women's Retreat to register, or call the church for information.

Dec dates to be determined for Cindy to return to Uganda

Jan 20-26 Cindy in Haiti

(I would love to see you. You can reach us through the website www.BalmMinistries.net or at ssbalm@aol.com – I know, I'm old I still use aol.)

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>