

The Marshan Chronicles

For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.



What do these two things have in common?
My oldest friend, David, at his 100th birthday party and my oldest granddaughter, Bri Joy, who just turned 21. I'm pretty sure I am officially over the hill 😊

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Most of you know a couple of things about what's going on with us. One is that I'm coming up on my 50th spiritual birthday & the 50th anniversary of writing *For Those Tears I Died* & starting ministry (& I feel like I should be better at it after all this time). The other is that, as hard as many people worked with the United Methodist Church (UMC), they made some sad decisions last week.

To catch the rest of you up, the UMC is a worldwide denomination & they generally have a General Conference, with representatives from around the world, every 4 years. Their next conference will be in 2020. But this year they had a special General Conference to vote on...well, you know – what to do with the queers. It turned out to be a pretty brutal conference. I struggle with the “names” people gave themselves, such as “traditionalist.” Well, I'm pretty traditional. My kids think I am very conservative. So I'm just going to say that some of the people felt that they were not “real Christians” if they did not say that not only can LGBTQ+ people NOT serve in ministry, NOT be married in the church, & NOT perform any same gender marriages, but that there need to be harsh & certain punishments for anyone who breaks those rules. They partnered with people in some African countries & Russia to vote these changes of harsher rules into the denomination. The whole political sound of it was really miserable to listen to from both sides. People who were representing the LGBTQ+ community & our allies were trying to delay the vote when they saw how bad it was going to be. You could tell they felt like Indiana Jones running from that big rolling rock. (OK OK I'm showing my age again. If you don't know what I'm talking about, ask a grown up near you!)

The good thing, or one of the good things, was that the people in our home church in TN were horrified. As

I've said many times, I don't know anyone who doesn't love Cindy. I could tell that the people in our church who thought that it would be fine just to go on in silence about the LGBTQ+ people in the church suddenly realized that it wasn't going to work anymore. It took Cindy & I a couple of days of mourning, & a wonderful “service of lament” at a nearby church, to get our feet back under us. And it was a good thing.

At the Sunday morning service at our church there were maybe 60 or 70 of the high school kids singing to the hundreds of congregants at the early morning service; & they were passionate. They picked their own songs for that service & during communion, one of the young people stood to sing, “*We keep singing but just a song won't heal the bleeding wound, Church wake up. We're sleeping in an empty tomb.*” (@Mooring/Moak) Cindy stood up while the soloist was singing. Now you'd think that in a sanctuary that seats at least 2500 no one would notice one person stand up. But the kids are so passionate about justice, that the soloist just started to cry when she saw her. That made the other high school kids in the choir stand up to sing with her, then the choir director went & put his arm around her to support her & she just sobbed. Finally, the whole church stood to support her. That was one of those moments when you know we're all going to make it because of our kids. After the service, several of the kids came up to us & we realized that they weren't just sad, they were *angry*. Cindy reminded them that the purpose of anger is to give you energy to change something that's wrong & they were all on board. I'm not sure what all things God has in mind, of course, but silence is not one of them.

On a much happier note, I went to David's 100th birthday. You remember Dr. Jim Brix who I wrote about in my book – who made the 180-degree shift in theology when his daughter Trish came out, & his wife Carol. Well David is Carol's father, & he thinks Cindy & I are just swell. So it was wonderful to hang out with Trish & their family – & to be in the warmth of Florida for a minute! The VERY kind Rev. Jakob Hero made good on his promise to let me sing ANY time I was in town. What wonderful friends we have there. I miss them all!

In summer I'll be starting the 50th anniversary tour that I hope will go through most of the next several months. Some of the dates are up on the website & the others are drizzling in. Please watch the website for updates! And please give us a call. We'd love to come to your church.

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. Haiti was a wonderful success. In June she will head back to Uganda. 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 you can link to video of her most recent trip on BalmMinistries.net or by going to the link on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I89AAhnZ4R0&feature=share>

In June she will be continuing to teach the computer labs. 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.

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 my healing and that I could return to work two days a week with no problems – hallelujah.*

- ✦ *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, & the changes that need to be made.*
- ✦ *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, especially Justin Ryan. He and his husband have moved to Kentucky to be closer to their birth families.*
- ✦ *Please keep Mark Moseley in your prayers. He was able to get back in the studio with help from friends.*
- ✦ *Praises for the songs I finished writing & the ones in progress. I did finish recording 4 of them you might like. I'll post the one I recorded with Cindy on her clarinet at THE VERY BOTTOM OF THE FIRST PAGE OF OUR WEBSITE www.balmministries.net*
- ✦ *Prayers for ChristianGays.com – the outreach they do which is so inclusive, and their gracious support of us.*
- ✦ *Prayers for me to be able to set up a 50th anniversary tour later this year!!!!*

What You Have to Say

"I pray that in these terribly divided and fraught times more and more of us really do start to consider what it *means* that 50 years ago God sent a 16 year old #metoo #churchtoo kid to *remind* Christendom of what Christ died for. I keep coming back to that so much in recent weeks. I mean - you were a new convert. And the people you first sang to and watched break out in tears were also new converts.

So why the word "remind?" I strove to remind you that for those tears I died. A 16 year old kid. If salvation in Christ be only about "forgiveness of sins," what would Christ have to say to that girl? "I saw every tear, *that's* why I died." What if the "reminder" to this generation really *is* that yes, Christ *did* "die for tears?" That the wholeness and repair of the sinned against - a repair so much more profound than anything human healing alone could ever hope to accomplish - really *is* the "why" of salvation - and that we forgot that at our peril? That we are ALL are both "sinning and sinned against. And being "reconciled to God in Christ" *absolutely* requires letting God into where our tears live, and then walking out transforming into people who don't inflict that kind of hurt others?"

Upcoming travel

Mar 30 Brentwood UMC evening service, 6pm www.BUMC.net

Apr 21 Easter Sunrise service – my favorite!! 6:30am with Chip Davis at BUMC

June 9 Marsha's 50th birthday as a Christian AND Sunday am concert Suncoast Cathedral MCC, Venice FL and Cindy will be there!
Info@suncoastcathedralmcc.org
www.suncoastcathedralmcc.org
941-484-7068

June 16 – 23 Northern Calif TBA
June 23 the 50th anniversary of "For Those Tears I Died"
(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>