

The Marshan Chronicles

For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.



January 2018, Volume 21, Number 1

Dear Balm Benefactors,

I hope your new year has started out well. We have some things coming up before we can even get this newsletter out, but I like to sum up the year for you before we get too far in to the new one.

I can't remember if I told you that the group put together by Union Theological Seminary gave ourselves a name. The whole idea was to start trying to build a bridge from Christians who would call themselves liberal or progressive, or even agnostic, to the part of the Christian community that would call themselves evangelical or conservative. The group at Union felt that this would be a way to start healing between the church & LGBTQ community. When we went to name ourselves we had a lot of thought about our goal. We all call ourselves evangelical, but we also know that this word has brought a lot of pain to the LGBTQ community. We didn't want anything that would alienate anyone further than they already felt! We also thought that we wanted to incorporate the word "Union" into our name since Union Seminary has been so generous with getting us all together. With the idea of keeping it simple as well, we settle on The Union of Affirming Christians. Going forward you may hear me refer to the UAC – that would be us.

Since I really want your prayers for this group, I wanted to fill you in on our goals – both so that you can pray & so that you can hook us up with ideas of your own. We want to advocate for an affirming vision of Christianity & promote LGBTQ policies from a faith perspective. We hope to be actively engaging policy makers & be a resource center for churches & for believers who are seeking to reconcile their faith with their sexuality – so everything from the straight pastors who are trying to move their church toward inclusion, to people in the LGBTQ

community who are finding their way to faith in Jesus Christ, to the reporter who wants to have a local resource to balance an article on church policy. I do NOT feel equipped to meet all these needs, but I want SO much to be able to contribute to these goals. We all need your prayers to be our best together!

I am hoping for prayers, too, for my work with the United Methodist Church (UMC). Again, I feel ill equipped to move this mountain. But clearly God has put us here for a reason. The Methodist church we go to has 8000 members & most of them show up to at least one of the weekly services. Just a small handful identify as LGBTQ – mostly in the music ministry (big shock!). Another UMC in the south has fired their music staff, believing that the UMC position that "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching", applied to "practicing homosexuals" in local church ministry. The UMC we go to does not hold this position. Both Cindy & I, as well as the other people who identify as part of the gay community are in several positions of "leadership." Being such a large congregation, this church has some sway with the denomination. Part of our ministry there, of course, is just "proving" there can be gay Christians by the best method possible; BEING ones. But the pastors (18 of them including the senior pastor) are willing to meet with us, listen to us, & even change some of their ways of doing things. So even though I don't have the faith all by myself, maybe you could all be like the friends who took the lame man to Jesus & let him down through the roof. Jesus said it was *their* faith that healed him. Hang in there & be *our* faith in this church.

Of course, our main ministry still continues unabated. Mine to bring the Good News to the LGBTQ community & build bridges through my music & testimony, & Cindy's – to always be there for the least, the last & the lost, in supporting my ministry & in her many mission trips and Habitat builds.

Some of you have asked about the songs I was going to record last year. As you know, the studio owner & producer of almost all of my CDs had a devastating stroke last year, & will not be able to return to work. My sweet friend, who has offered to help in his own studio, has had equipment down that is still inoperative. So, keep praying about that, too.

As you can see I'll be continuing to work with some of the Christian conferences that are in ministry to the LGBTQ community, including TRP & GCN. They're SO young! Pray that we can offer support & insight as they move forward. OK, that's the prayer list for now. You've made so much possible with your supportive prayers. Don't stop now!

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. Next is Honduras in January. Keep her in prayer. Any gifts to BALM noted to Cindy (continue to be tax deductible) will be used for her 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

- † *Pray for more concerts- starting with YOUR church! And for all the concerts that are in the works right now.*
- † *Gratitude for your prayers Prayers for Cindy on all her mission trips & the computer work she does to help them.*
- † *Praises for our church home in Brentwood United Methodist, & some truly open minds and open doors.*
- † *Prayers for wisdom for outreach here in Nashville for the LGBTQ community who mostly continue to gather in bars.*
- † *Prayers for Cindy's head. She fell on the ice and got quite a concussion. She actually asked me to take*

her to the ER, so you know it was bad.

- † *Praises for all of you!!*
- † *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.*
- † *Please pray for the book reviews that are being pitched in larger markets.*
- † *Prayers for upBeat! artists*
- † *Please keep sweet Mark Moseley & his wife Donna K in your prayers for God's healing from his stroke. He is not doing well. AND please remember that if you or someone you love has symptoms of a stroke, you basically have 3 hours to get to a hospital where they have meds that can HEAL you before all the damage becomes permanent.*
- † *Praises for the songs I finished writing & the ones in progress. Prayers that I tune in on writing the things God wants to say today.*

What You Have to Say

Partial review of my book from Ralph Blair:

"For all same-sex oriented Christians, reared under antigay preaching that pushed them into "ex-gay" frauds and the failures of mixed-orientation marriages or who, under the onslaught of antigay preaching, lost their faith, her book points to integration. Jesus does feel our tears of hurt, fear, confusion, guilt, disillusionment and despair. He died for us and was raised for us. He called disciples to make disciples of others and assured them he'd be with them always. Her song, written as a teenager, is still her testimony today. In the Foreword, Peggy Campolo recalls the first time she saw her minister to those who "knew too well the rejection of much of the church. As Marsha sang and talked to them, that audience came alive. It was as though she had watered flowers just as they were about to die of thirst. Truly, she had brought to those people the living water."

"My partner and I attended your workshop at the Reformation Project this past

October. I had a chance to speak with you for like 10 seconds, even though I wanted to pick your brain for hours!

You are the first Christian I've met that reminds me so much of myself and I felt an immediate connection to you. I am also a songwriter and a born-again Christian. I've been on a difficult, extremely painful, and yet, hopeful, journey these years, now entering a new space that is both liberating and terrifying. I have been waiting to meet a Spirit-filled believer that is also in a lesbian relationship to help ease my own fears and heal from religious trauma, and you certainly were that! Both of us were truly moved by your singing (we are both music teachers) and your faith. Your story and way of being in the world gives us hope."

Upcoming travel

Jan 17 Meeting at Denver

Community Church with the Union of Affirming Christians

Jan 18-21, 2018 Gay Christian Network conference in Denver, CO (brrrrr!)

www.gaychristian.net

April 28-29 Forgiving Heart Christian Community Church, Columbus GA 7pm concert Saturday night with Justin Ryan, special music Sunday morning.

www.forgivingheartchurch.com
(706)681-5246

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

Check the website for updates ☺

www.BalmMinistries.net

BalmMinistries.net for booking!

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>