

# The Marshan Chronicles

*For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.*



Far left Robin Ridenour,  
me in the middle,  
Bishop Oliveto far right

## **March 2018, Volume 21, Number 3**

Thank you for bearing with me while I was traveling and then caring for my daughter. She is back on her feet and already back at her work as a counselor part time. She and I both appreciated your prayers and it was fun to spend some time with my son-in-law and grandkids, too.

You know I was in Denver (in JANUARY) for the meeting with the Union Seminary group of Evangelical gay-affirming Christians. Denver. Just sayin' it is nothing like January in Florida or California. But I am so glad I was there. The Union group (UAC) did some great work and visited with government officials and Christian leaders in the area. I stayed after our last meeting to attend the women's conference part of the GCN convention. Wow.

SO, among the people there were Nadia Bolz-Weber and Bishop Karen Oliveto and her wife, Robin Ridenour. I was awestruck. If you don't know Nadia, you need to YouTube her or read one of her books. She cannot be described. But, about Bishop Oliveto; let me give you some back story.

The United Methodist Church (UMC) is the largest mainline denominational church in the US – second only to the Baptists who for some reason are not called “mainline.” (It's in Wikipedia so it must be right.) Many years ago the UMC General Conference added wording to their Book of Discipline that affirmed that all people regardless of...(you know the list) are of sacred worth...and they will “not reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends.” But apparently immediately after that some people thought that extended the grace of Christ too far, so at the end of this lovely inclusion, they put in, “The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church...”

At the last General Conference of the UMC in 2016 some people tried to get the denomination to turn that last part around, but amid a lot of heated words they finally decided to appoint a commission of leaders in the UMC to find a way to deal with this “issue” (or these human beings of sacred worth, you know). It is called The Commission

on a Way Forward and they are set to make their recommendation/s for the denomination in February of 2019.

In the meantime, the Western Region of the UMC, which includes the Pacific Northwest, northern California, Alaska, Hawaii and a few other states, elected a new Bishop last year, Rev. Karen Oliveto who is married to a woman. A lot of people outside that Region disagreed with the decision to make her a Bishop. I told my own pastor that once in a while it is just TIME to overturn the moneychangers tables and perhaps they felt it was time. He disagrees. The College of Bishops, however, found that they could not prove she was a “self avowed” homosexual, so they let her stay on, but they said that going forward, if you were married to someone of the same gender they were going to “interpret” that as being “a self-avowed, practicing homosexual.” SO they let her through the loophole, and then closed it behind her.

When I met her it was on a short break at the conference and I rushed up and said, “OK, I'm just a sycophant who had to shake your hand.” She took my hand then looked at the name tag around my neck and said, “I know who you are! You're my shero. I grew up singing your songs and you came out when no one would.” I wanted to jump up and down like a 5 year old I was so happy 😊. But she said it was NOT a turning over the moneychangers table decision. She said, “The Holy Spirit just fell on us. It was overwhelming and powerful.”

So Balm Ministries is partnering with RMN (Reconciling Ministries Network), the group committed to bringing the inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in both the policy and practices of the United Methodist Church (UMC). We will be meeting at least once a month, in person or by tele-conference, to prepare the Tennessee Region of the UMC for the report from the Methodist Commission on a Way Forward. So far two of the 20 clergy at the 8000 member UMC we belong to in Brentwood TN have joined the group, although this giant church is not a “reconciling congregation”. (Is there anyone besides me who finds all these euphemisms for “letting queers be fully part of the Christian church” awkward? Why don't they just say what they mean?) ANYway, please pray for us. The UMC worldwide has well over 12 million members so this will be a big decision for a church that has so far said that gay clergy and gay marriage would not be accepted.

In the meantime, come to a concert or event listed on the other side or better yet, invite us to yours!

***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](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**

- ‡ *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.*
- ‡ *Praises that my daughter is better and got the help she needed!*

- ‡ *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.*
- ‡ *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**

*"Something extraordinary happened today. I'm an interim pastorate at a United Methodist church outside Dayton, Ohio. They nearly imploded when the synod sent me, a queer pastor to them in September. But over the last many months we've mutually fallen in love. Today I was preaching on Jesus cleansing the temple and how you used to sing, The Body of Christ Has AIDS, we need to see through Jesus' eyes and call out injustice. I found myself telling them about your song and a bit of your story. I asked them if they knew about "For Those Tears I Died." They gasped. Apparently, it's a favorite in this congregation.*

*But they had no idea the story behind its writing and how it was ripped out of hymnals when you came out. I was in the moment and after service the music director came to me with an open folder of music. The folder was open to "For those tears I died." They all got so excited when I said I knew you when I was in MCC. I said " I have GOT to send Marsha a note and tell her about this!"*

#### **Upcoming travel**

**Mar 17** Brentwood United Methodist Church (BUMC) 6pm 309 Franklin Rd, Brentwood TN 6pm service, special music with Cindy and with Chip Davis

**Mar 18** BUMC 8:15, 9:45, and 11:05 (see address above) special music with Chip Davis

**April 1** Happy Easter!! 7am Sunrise service at BUMC, special music with Chip Davis

**April 22** Passagrille UCC 10am service, special music with Brian Feist

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

[www.forgivingheartchurch.com](http://www.forgivingheartchurch.com) (706)681-5246 **June 21-23** Sandy Cove Ministries North East, MD. Cindy & I will do a concert and special music for the camp.

[Info@SandyCove.org](mailto:Info@SandyCove.org)

**June 24** The Green Church, Glen Mills, PA 11am mini-concert with Cindy. 610-459-5050

(I would love to see you. You can reach us through the website or at [ssbalm@aol.com](mailto:ssbalm@aol.com) – I know, I'm old, I still use aol!) Check the website for booking or updates [www.BalmMinistries.net](http://www.BalmMinistries.net).

Check the website for updates ☺

*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>*