

# The Marshan Chronicles

*For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.*



Wendy, Anne, Me, Val and Hilda. Wendy and Anne were the first to ever hear For Those Tears I Died – 50 years ago

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My favorite trips are often the ones back home in Southern California. (For one thing I actually know how to drive like a Californian!) But of course, there are wonderful friends and family there.

This particular time I got to make a very special trip. Some of you will remember the stories I've told you about what I did immediately after writing my first song, which was to run next door to where my sister was visiting with her friend Anne, and burst in to say, "God gave me a song!" My sister, Wendy, was mortified, but I sang anyway "You said You'd come and share all my sorrows, You said You'd be there for all my tomorrows..." and by the end of the song they were both crying. To my 16 year old way of thinking, that meant the "got it." As many of you know, I came out almost a decade later and another decade after that, Anne and Val (who you see in the picture) came to a concert I was doing at MCC San Diego and came out to me. God's amazing grace was always reaching out to Christ's LGBTQ+ kids – even when we didn't know ourselves. It was wonderful to see Anne and Val again. Anne is very ill and Hilda is her nurse now, so it was extra grace that I was able to spend some time with her to celebrate 50 years of being aware of God's love and grace for all of us.

Besides the family visiting and Holy Spirit "Circle drawing" time, I had a chance to minister in music. Friday evening the North Long Beach Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) did an evening party and fundraising. This is a small church with a big building and an even bigger heart. They actually support themselves largely by hosting other churches, groups, daycares for working mothers, etc, in their building. The congregation keeps it all clean and in shape for these other events, and the community benefits. I did get to catch up with a couple of amazing friends. Rev. Bob Arthur was one of the first people – back in 1984 – to

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sit down with me and study the Scripture as it relates to our LGBTQ+ community. That was such a blessing to me. A lot of it I had studied myself between when I came out in 1980 and when I found MCC (where Bob Arthur was a pastor and Bible teacher) in 1984. I had read the Bible many times, of course, but never with an eye to how it might address our community. I was shocked the first time I re-read Sodom and Gomorrah and realized how completely ridiculous it was to think that it addressed homosexuality – any more than a gang rape in a prison today would be mistaken as evidence of a large number of gay prisoners. It was all about rape and humiliation. Anyway, I won't go into the long version here, but Rev. Bob Arthur had been instrumental in really studying the Word with me. I was not going to be convinced by "we should all love one another so just don't worry about it," and Bob understood that. I got to spend some really valuable time catching up with him.

The other surprise gift of the evening was seeing Elnora Beck. She is a true gospel singer who I used to go see in Southern California. What a voice. And when she did Dotty Rambo's "I Go to the Rock" she literally did rock the place. Linda, who booked the concert for me, and Pastor Heather spent a long time sharing with me after the service and I left energized and blessed.

Sunday morning, Pastor Dan Koeshall, from MCC San Diego, graciously gave me the sermon time in both services there. The whole church is so organized and ready to host their guests that they make you feel like visiting royalty. Cynthia, who went through our upBeat! training does the music leadership and sound so I never had to worry about a mic being too loud or soft or about me being unable to hear the accompaniment. Teresa, another upBeat! artist, leads the congregational music. Rev Caedmon sees to every detail of sound check and set up and, of course, Rev. Dan is precious to my heart. With his Assemblies of God background, we have grown along similar lines all along.



Marsha and Rev. Dan Koeshall

Long time Balm Ministry supporters – and the most active 80-somethings I know, Pat and Sandy, took me out to a lovely fresh seafood dinner (not a lot of fresh seafood in Tennessee – go figure 😊). All in all, a really lovely time that you all made possible!

***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 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. Next she'll be in Vietnam and Cambodia in January!

### **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**

- ✦ *Special prayers for my sweet friend (and co-writer) Danny Ray who is in rehab after a serious brain infection.*
- ✦ *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, & prayers for the changes that need to be*

*made. Special prayers for guidance for us and our role/s here.*

✦ *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.*

✦ *Praises for my friend and record producer Mark Moseley being with family.*

✦ *Four new songs are posted FREE on the website:*

<https://balmministries.net/store>

✦ *Prayers for me to be able to set up more concerts for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of "For Those Tears I Died"*

**Consider YOUR church.**

**Please contact me. We have**

**supporters helping with**

**travel. Pray about it &**

**write me at**

**ssbalm@aol.com**

### **What You Have to Say**

*"According to the LGBT Religious Archives Network, "Marsha's song 'For Those Tears I Died' was one of the most well-known Christian folk songs of the 1970s and was published in numerous hymnals.*

*Marsha was in Children of the Day, recorded six albums, and toured continually over the next few years. When she divorced she took the bold step of coming out as a lesbian.*

*Marsha was immediately ostracized and routinely condemned by the contemporary Christian music subculture. The magazine Christian Century wrote in 1999 that Stevens became "conservative Christianity's worst nightmare--a Jesus-loving, Bible-believing, God-fearing lesbian Christian."*

*Thank God for Marsha and her continued testimony. In 2019, we #FaithfullyLGBT folks continue to advocate for full inclusion in the church, and we are making great headway. In some ways, in our*

*evangelical circles, we are pioneers, but the work we do, the progress we make in our circles, is only possible because of the brave lives and work of those who went before us. We wouldn't have Innovative Love Coalition or The Christian Closet or Q Christian Fellowship or The Reformation Project or Mission Friends 4 Inclusion without the true pioneers like Marsha Stevens-Pino." "Wow, wow, wow! I'm here to tell you, if you didn't come and hear Marsha sing tonight you missed a blessing. Her story is nothing short of inspiring. So much to learn from her and her wife and their walk with and faith in Jesus. You can just feel her love of Jesus and it will simply bring you to tears it's so inspiring."*

### **Upcoming travel**

**Oct 4-6** Special music for BUMC women's retreat in Beersheba Springs TN [www.BUMC.net](http://www.BUMC.net)

**Oct 12** First Congregational Church Hendersonville, NC 7pm concert with Cindy 😊

[www.fcchendersonville.org](http://www.fcchendersonville.org)

**Oct 13** Sacred Journey MCC Hendersonville NC 5:30pm service [www.mccsacredjourney.org](http://www.mccsacredjourney.org)

**Oct 20** MCC Windsor Canada 2pm concert [www.MCCWindsor.org](http://www.MCCWindsor.org)

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

**Nov 7-10** Seattle WA for The Reformation Project (and anything one of you wants to book in the Seattle area!!)

*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>*