

# The Marshan Chronicles

*For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.*



Left, I'm back in concert on line.  
Right, someone from my job knew  
Cindy was Air Force, so they made  
her a special mask for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July

## **July 2020, Volume 24, Number 7**

Wow, does anyone actually talk about the quarantine anymore. It's soooooo *everywhere*. I miss you all. Even when I think I might have the chance to see someone, I remember I won't be able to hug anyone which – I don't know. Seems very hard. And you can see in the picture above that Cindy is sporting *my* styling of her hair. Still no hair salons for us. (And if you are not seeing her photo in color, it has little stars and stripes on it as a thank-you-for-your-service from the nurse who made it.)

We did get a chance to do another online concert that was more like our usual ministry. It still feels incredibly awkward to me to be singing to no one. Those of you who have known me for a long time, know how video phobic I used to be. Of course, that was because most videos then were at least semi-professional so the sole reason to put someone's concert clip on the air was to show bloopers. The playing field is pretty leveled up now. Most of us look similarly professional and goofy.

***But mostly I miss your faces. People hearing my heart and seeing it in their eyes. That is the hardest.***

One of the great things is that you very generous people have made it possible to get some new music into the studio. That has been super great and we should have at least one song on the website soon. With Tennessee even more closed down than it was, it takes a looonnnngggg time. On the one in the works now, it starts with my son, Johnny, making a rough recording of it with his guitar. Then I have to sing it to see what key I need the song in. Then it goes to the music director of the Grand Ole Opry, Kerry Marx who is - well beyond amazing. Just try reading his list of recordings on Wikipedia. It'll take you all day to read it. (On the other hand, I have to say that *his* Wikipedia

entry does not have the "Personal Life" category like *mine* does 😊.) Kerry and his wife, Catherine, have done other recording work for us. The cool thing right now, is that your donations have given him some business too in this quiet time. Then he does a click track (to keep the rhythm throughout the song) and a final guitar track. Then he sends it to the drummer (another blessing for a musician not working) to put in the drum parts. Then he sends it to a studio in Massachusetts for my son, Johnny and his wife, Rachael, to add parts to it (supporting a sound engineer in their community). Then it will go to other musicians to add to it before it goes to Justin Ryan for his magic and back to Tennessee to be mastered. Whew. Stuff that we do in 3 hours when we're all in a studio together!

But in the long run, I hope you get to see some of the fruits of your gifts.

While that has been a blessing, we've had some struggles with our ministry here in Tennessee. I've seen several of my ministry friends on FaceBook (white friends) post that they don't believe that most people judge others by the color of their skin. Whew! I guess being in the South makes racism a more stark reality. But I remember even years ago in Southern California when we got together with Andre` Crouch, seeing how he was stopped for driving while Black – they just thought he looked suspicious driving in nice neighborhoods there. Here, that still happens. For my sweet friends, who I know truly believe that they do not see racism, you are probably right. Find someone who is part of the Black community and ask them about their experiences.

On the other hand, after the years of work we have done for LGBTQ inclusion at our church here, Brentwood United Methodist Church (BUMC), it's been eye-opening to see how thoroughly the many ministers in our church will get involved in something they really believe in, like anti-racism. Please pray for us to be steadfast in our own work and gracious in working for the places of others.

The other prayer request is for more online concerts. Right now is a wonderful time to do a fundraiser for your church or charity and we'd love to do that for you. Think about what might be a good fit with Balm Ministries. Now, when our ministry is well-supported, we'd love to get some support for yours. If you want some tips on what works well with an online concert, email me a [ssbalm@aol.com](mailto:ssbalm@aol.com) (I know I know. I still use aol. Guilty.) But we'd have a blast helping you do an online event.

Meantime, we'll be working on the LONG version of getting things recorded. And we feel all of you right there along with us. Cyberhugs all around.

***With 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. Unfortunately, as you might guess, the trips for this year have been canceled so far because of the concerns over COVID 19 (the new corona virus). Cindy is sad about this since she feels that people need the mission teams more than ever. But she also respects the concerns of the mission leaders. So for now, she is working on the computer programs for each of them, and writing to the kids we sponsor to keep in touch with them.

### **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**

- ✦ ***First of all, prayers for our family of color. For the lives taken and anger unabated, for justice to finally come.***
- ✦ ***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 with "Draw the Circle Wide."***

- ✦ ***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 wisdom as Cindy and I figure out our place in the middle of all this & for the great musicians getting some new recordings done for us.***
- ✦ ***Prayers for me to be able to set up more concerts online.***

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

*"I know you must have had lots of comments about Cindy's testimony. I can't tell you how badly I needed to hear her. Even though I haven't been exactly where she has been, I have been in that place of hating my past and feeling like I would never get over it. I guess it helps that she has 'been there!'"*

*"I miss having you and Justin to minister to us. Our concerts here have been so uplifting and this is a time we really need to be uplifted. Please let us know when you are traveling again."*

*"Loved the lyrics last month. I can't wait to hear the song. When will that be?" (When we know, you'll know!)*

*"Thank you so much Marsha and Cindy for the online concert. We had a watch party. Several people came and were deeply moved. We are so grateful for you both sharing your gifts and stories with us."*

*"Thank you so much for your ministry tonight. I want to tell Cindy that she brought tears to my eyes with her testimony. I knew most of it, but not all. Love you both."*

*"When we see each other again, I'll tell you why I cry every time I hear you sing 'God be with you til we meet again.'"*

*"I love that you sign (ASL) some of your songs."*

*"Thank you for your many years and decades of sharing your voice and message. May God keep blessing you, and passing your gift to the world."*

*"I will never forget the wonderful experience of singing with you (on the Songs of Praise album). God's blessings on you and Cindy."*

*"Thank you, Marsha. Listening to you online, I don't feel alone."*

*"Thank you for being our advocate in the LGBTQ Christian community, and for helping me when I transitioned."*

*"With all you have both faced, you share such joy and light in spite of it all! And what an example of living and sharing God's faithfulness to you. Thank you for sharing music and joy in living our faith."*

*"I love you both dearly. These songs will be a testament to truth in years to come."*

*"Great flashbacks of our trip to Israel when you describe the trip in song."*

*"Marsha you are amazing and I love you and CJ (Cindy). And I love that you are part of our United Methodist Church. We are blessed to have both of you."*

*"Long time friends...and old!"*

### **Upcoming travel**

**August 2020** Cindy and I will be in Florida, mostly for vacation and personal things, but we can do concerts from there, too.

Please consider reaching me at [ssbalm@aol.com](mailto:ssbalm@aol.com) to book something online for your church!

*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. WE need this now more than ever! Join us now at <https://ChristianGays.com>*