

The Marshan Chronicles

For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.

all, we always put in a prayer request and ask the person to whom we offer the bag (often someone with a sign at an intersection or in the parking lot of a shopping center) to pray for the person in the prayer request. Now our church is doing them to hand out. You'd be amazed at how happy the people I see often are to have something to "give back" by taking our prayer request. In fact recently by our supermarket I stopped to talk to Robinson, who loves our blessing bags. The first thing he did was tear open the package. I thought he was looking for a drink or snack. Instead he immediately said, "Hey! I ain't get no prayer?" So, just be aware. Robinson may be out there in this heat praying for you!



Cindy preaching, me singing with Cindy, Nancy Wilson and Ollie Dill

A few of the Blessing Bag team pics. We've made 440 so far!



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Well I did not actually take pictures at Suncoast Venice MCC Pride concert, but I remembered to ask someone else to!! What a great crowd and memorable reactions. I am sorry that every picture of Cindy playing guitar with me, has my hand blocking her face. Yikes.

It's always great to sing with others. Ollie is from our Church of the Trinity MCC (which we call COTT). He is a power house vocalist with deep soul sounds that bring the music alive. Rev. Nancy makes harmonies sound easy, and covers for me a bit when I miss a note! Cindy does the same by staying on the same chord on the guitar while I remember a word or find the right verse. But I shouldn't be telling you all my secrets 😊.

I was also blessed to be a part of the memorial service for sweet Marilyn LaVigne at COTT with Nancy Wilson organizing the service. I love the sweet goodbyes we get to say. "Save 1000 years in heaven for me."

The following Sunday I was on the listening end while the choral group from Pass-A-Grille Community Church sang "I Still Have a Dream" for their closing concert number. Danny Ray and I wrote that song 30 years ago, and it's still a powerful song.

Cindy and I have continued to do the Blessing Bags organizing at COTT. These are bags we used to carry when I traveled fulltime in the bus. Cindy or Justin and I would pack a treat bag – we tried to put in at least 10g of protein, some fruit, crackers and treats, along with something to drink and hand wipes. Most important of

As I shared with you last month, Cindy is really coming into a new phase of her own ministry. I love her playing guitar with me and preaching at our church. But this summer Cindy is also the Keynote Speaker at the Evangelical's Concerned conference. You can watch her Keynote Address at <https://ecinc.org/cindy-stevens-pino/>

Another blessing this month was singing at Collis Laton's ordination at COTT. She just graduated with her MDiv and she has been working at our church as the Director of Connections (which we often intersperse with Director of "Corrections" or "Collections"). But she certainly has a pastor's heart. Since this is a vocation she came to a little later in life, Cindy and I did "God Starts With the End in Mind" for her service.

We ended the month with another of the "artist in residence" concerts at our home church, COTT. These are so much fun. Very cozy. Minimal sound system. Lots of audience interaction and "tell the one about" moments. I think I've told you before that in this small venue I've dragged out dozens of older songs that I wrote even back in the 70s. I sometimes just tell the folks, "Well, I love this song. I can't hit the last notes anymore, but you'll get the idea and lyrics!" And everyone is completely comfortable with that. More will be coming. Hope to see you there 😊

With great thanks, Marsha & Cindy

Cindy's Mission Work

Many thanks for those of you who have chosen to support Cindy on her mission trips. She is working with a ministry centered in St Petersburg that plans to have more in the future.

Please be assured that all of the donations you sent are in savings for her opportunities to travel!

We will let you know when she schedules more trips.

(Cindy is also a keynote speaker at Evangelicals Concerned this summer:

<https://ecinc.org/cindy-stevens-pino/>)

You can support BALM when you shop online

You probably know that Amazon has stopped its auto-donations through AmazonSmile. This is a loss for Balm Ministries. Amazon made it very easy to support us online. Igive.com is a good substitute for us, but more work for you.

You can read the instructions for igive.com 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.

Prayer List & Ministry Opportunities

- ✠ Prayers for Justin's husband, Scott, who has been diagnosed with an especially aggressive form of colon cancer. And please remember to pray for Justin, too, as he battles fears for another loved one with cancer. Scott has started chemo.
- ✠ Prayers for Justin's new monthly recording called

Southern Gospel Sissy.

Every week he covers the history and make up of another gospel group or song, with clips of their previous concerts, and then sings his own version of the song. Look on YouTube under "Justin Ryan Southern Gospel"

- ✠ Prayers for Cindy and I and our health

What You Have to Say

"This week I discovered that a song I grew up singing in church and loving dearly was written by a lesbian. Marsha Stevens-Pino wrote that song in 1969 and it was very popular in the Jesus People movement where I grew up. But she came out as a lesbian in 1981 and lost all opportunity to continue sharing her music in the evangelical community after that. It is so meaningful to me to realize now that a song that was comforting to me, a closeted queer kid who was taught to hate myself, was written by a queer woman. There are queer folks that will be served by your song now in the same way. You have given the Church a gift. Thank you."

"We have not met irl, but I always loved your music. I was involved in Christian/gospel music from very young. The late Audrey Meier and Andre Crouch were mentors. I admire your dedication to live your truth and your ministry."

"I hope you are well and feel the joy and peace of God today. I want to offer an encouragement to you. I have recently begun dating a guy, and we have talked a little about faith and music. He isn't religious, though he has a catholic background. I was telling him a little about gay Christians in recent history and mentioned you and For Those tears. He later told me he went on his own and listened to Children of the Day's version of the song and really liked it. I found it pretty cool that a non religious guy would appreciate such a gospel-filled song and I hope it encourages you, too. God is working through you and all the songs you do, from the first song to the most recent."

"Years ago I searched for FTTID – I first heard it in the 70s and always loved it. What a treasure to find this morning, you singing your amazing song. The song has touched more lives than you will ever know."

Upcoming ministry opportunities

August 6 Special Music at MCC Tampa's 50th anniversary service
August 12-13 MCC Gainesville's 40th anniversary celebration. Times to be determined.

www.mccgainesville.org

August 30th – Marsha and Cindy's 20th wedding anniversary

Sept 10 Covenant United Methodist Church, Montgomery Village, Maryland 10am special music, Concert/picnic after church

www.covenant-umc.org

Sept 22 at 6:30 Church of the Trinity MCC in Pierce Hall. Marsha and Cindy in artist-in-residence concert.

www.trinitymcc.com

Oct 26-28 Reconcile and Reform in Nashville, TN

www.reformationproject.org

Nov 3 at 6:30 Church of the Trinity MCC in Pierce Hall. Marsha and Cindy in artist-in-residence concert...again! www.trinitymcc.com

Nov 11-12 concert and special music at New Life Community Gospel Church, New Port Richey, FL
Marsha and Cindy in concert

(watch the website for updates)

Please consider reaching me at ssbalm@aol.com to book something for your church! We have no fees required at this time!!

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. WE need this now more than ever! Join at www.ChristianGays.com