

The Marshan Chronicles

For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.



Singing at
MCC
Portland
Oregon with
my
daughter,
Naomi
Caster

February 2024, Volume 27, Number 2

Wow, January is an odd month, isn't it? After all the relative craziness of the November/December holidays, suddenly it's a new year with less craziness but WAY more planning. I pray your new year is starting out well.

I had noted last month that I hoped all illness & injuries were behind us. Then I made a decision. Me, a woman born & raised in Southern California where we do have snow, but it stays where it belongs on the ski slopes, who now lives in Florida where "snow" is a foreign language. I decided to go to Portland Oregon. I had a chance to sing at the Metropolitan Community Church in Portland where Rev. Nathan Meckley is pastor. I also would get to see my daughter in her birthday month, her hubby, & three of my grandkids who live there now. Perfect, right? However, no one warned me about ICE! I knew power had been on & off at my daughter's home so I stayed in a hotel that had a backup generator & thought I'd be all set. That thought did not include driving the rental car just 5 miles to the hotel OR walking from the car into the hotel. How could this be a problem? The car did spin its wheels for a bit trying to get in the hotel parking lot, but I got it in & parked in the nearest spot. Now, those of you from places that are not Florida might have thought about whether it was safe to walk into the hotel at 7pm. Never once occurred to me. Not until I was too far away from the car to return to it & unable to get to the hotel door 20 feet away. The first few times I fell, I looked around self consciously to see if anyone saw my clumsiness. All the times I fell after that, I was PRAYING someone saw me. But nope. Not a soul. 911 didn't answer. I guess they had other Floridian to deal with! Realizing that my strongest feature is my vocal cords I finally hollered & got help from a guy across the street. My wife says that pictures of bruises & wounds

are not allowed in the newsletter! (She keeps a list of stuff that's not allowed in the newsletter. It may be that I over-share a bit.)

So, other than that cold Portland welcome, I had a great trip. Naomi & I were able to do several songs at MCC Portland. Rev. Grant Helbley was serving as pastor & graciously allowed time for four songs. Todd is a fabulous music director & the guys playing my accompaniment music, Dylan & Phillip were stellar. We had a such a lovely time.

I got good visits in with each family member. I have to say that my youngest granddaughter, Hannah, is a total clone of her mom.



Hannah on the left,
Naomi on the right!
Surely the attitude
didn't come from me,
right?

Of course, the granddaughters have grown now. Jo is into rugby and Hannah is a wrestler. Sports did NOT come from my side of the family!

All the blessings of ministry that you made possible last year have been in our minds especially as a new year begins. Absolutely nothing makes me happier than singing the Good News. We've prayed with a very disparate group of people in the past year & even as travel has gotten harder for me in my 70s, you've allowed ministry to continue. You prayed us through Cindy's cancer and surgeries & kept us loving what we do. (In fact, going to the cancer support group where Cindy was hospitalized opened doors for music ministry there – sometimes in group, other times sadly, at funerals.) Our plans for this year include some easier travel, which generally means that Cindy can come with me & again, you have provided for that. We're grateful & excited to both be up on our feet again (well, mostly on my feet in my case).

Please don't forget to follow Justin Ryan & his Southern Gospel Sissy series. It is SO good. (Many of you have asked about Justin's husband, Scott, and his cancer battle. They're struggling. Keep praying!)



Blessings and Gratitude, Marsha & Cindy

BALM Ministries P.O. Box 14937, Bradenton FL 34280-4937 www.BalmMinistries.net

Let us know if you have corrections or questions on your year-end donation receipts.

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 was also a keynote speaker at Evangelicals Concerned this summer:

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

In the meantime, she is doing work with our own Church of the Trinity MCC teaching ASL, leading book studies and more.

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. He is starting new rounds of chemo & radiation and is facing surgery before too long.

- ✠ Praises for all the wonderful prayers you sent up for Cindy. She is finally getting back out into ministry opportunities and...yes, on her bicycle, but with a special vest.
- ✠ Prayers for Justin's new weekly 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" (my favorite is <https://youtu.be/xOK2lXx2JjE?si=QIA1UC43heflrGx>)
- ✠ Prayers that we can get back out singing and sharing the Good News. You have all been amazingly generous.

What You Have to Say

"I am a part of the LGBTQ community. I've been with my husband for 19 years now. I met you at the MCC in Palm Springs years ago and I wish you could return to Palm Springs to sing again. You're such an inspiration and I find myself singing your music all the time. Thank you for all your contributions to the LGBTQ community."

"I am from Brazil. My mother used to sing 'For Those Tears' a lot in Portuguese and at church events. I grew up listening to this music. Imagine my happiness that you are in our community. Thank you for your compositions."

"It's absolutely wonderful to hear you. When can I expect to hear some of the older songs of the

Jesus movement recorded by you? I would love that."

"I've been listening to your music for years, since hearing your message in 1991 at Joy MCC in Orlando, Florida. Truly a wonderful and angelic voice. I'm now living in Colorado and I needed to listen to your music and share it with many new friends. Thank you, Marsha"

Upcoming ministry opportunities

Feb 2 Church of the Trinity MCC
Pierce Hall artist-in-residence concert
6:30pm concert with Marsha, Cindy and a friend or two!

www.TrinityMCC.com

Mar 15 Church of the Trinity MCC
Pierce Hall artist-in-residence concert with Marsha, Cindy and other local artists. 6:30pm

www.TrinityMCC.com

Mar 24 Suncoast MCC, Venice FL
Palm Sunday special music. 10am

www.suncoastmcc.com

Mar 31 Suncoast MCC Venice FL
Sunrise service 6:30am

www.suncoastmcc.com

Mar 31 Suncoast MCC (to be determined)

*Watch our website for updates:
www.BalmMinistries.net*

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