

The Marshan Chronicles

For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.



Fascinating tour up the East Coast of the US this month, pix with Jane Clementi, Dr. Ralph Blair and Rev. Jean Simpson (with Gracie and Emmy)



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Well, this was basically a month of vacation for us in an 18 foot trailer. We drove all the way up to Maine for Cindy to do a huge bicycle ride. But happily we stopped along the way for me to see some of my favorite people. Dr. Ralph Blair has been a psychologist advocating for LGBTQ+ rights since the 60's. He's been a friend since 1985 and I got to spend five hours with him in Manhattan (his stomping grounds). We had bagels for breakfast and talked for so long that we had to head back to a deli for lunch. As I noted on FaceBook, I was so enthralled with the many stories and conversations that I forgot to take photos! So the above is a pic with Ralph with me from 2008. Fortunately, neither of us have aged a bit. ☹ I got to hear stories about some of his family members who had helped to finance or start up well-known ministries and institutions, like Bob Jones University, the history of homosexuality and the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual that is used to diagnose mental disorders), and the more recent history of gay acceptance in the protestant church.

The other person whose picture I failed to get was Jane Clementi. Sweet Janie drove out to a Starbucks in New Jersey to meet Cindy and me – although in the spirit of full disclosure – Jane and Cindy both went to

get ice cream since it was allegedly National Ice Cream Day, so you know, they *had* to. What a wonderful carefree time to catch up. The picture above is me with Jane in 2016. But the visit in New Jersey was great. There were no other people waiting in line to talk to her and no conference appearance or meeting to get to. We mostly caught up on personal stuff, but we also got to fill her in on the work that we had done at Brentwood United Methodist Church (which she had a part of), and hear what the anti-bullying program (The Tyler Clementi Foundation that she set up after her son Tyler committed suicide after being secretly filmed in his dorm room and outed on Facebook Live) is active in now. Lots of school anti-bullying programs of course, but who knows if Florida will allow any since we can't say "gay" in school.

Last, but not least, I got to get into Rhode Island to visit with Rev. Jean Simpson. Jean was the Conference Minister for the Florida area of the United Church of Christ a few years ago when we were living up in St. Pete. She was the one who asked me to write a song for the 17 churches she was visiting in Florida that were all voting at the time to become Open and Affirming. (I do still shake my head at all the different euphemisms in different denominations for "queers are welcome here!") Jean plays amazing professional French Horn, so she wanted a song for "voice and French horn". Cindy, the actual musician in the family, totally had to take my idea and turn it into a canon. (It's called the Silence of Our Friends and you can download it from Apple Music, with Cindy on clarinet instead of the French horn.) I think that I remembered to take pictures at this visit only because we both have new puppies!

Cindy, on the other hand, saw some people and lots of stuff. She rode her bicycle all over Maine including half a dozen remote islands that she reached on ferries. She rode up and down the Outer Banks in North Carolina, and we saw (*I'm trying to count*) maybe 16 members of her family including sisters, cousins and several nieces and nephews.

Now we're home and ready for ministry opportunities. Hope to see you out there! We are grateful for all you make possible!

With Gratitude, Marsha & Cindy

I think most of you have kindly switched over to our new PO Box in Bradenton, FL. Thank you!

Cindy's Mission Work

Many thanks for those of you who have chosen to support Cindy on her mission trips. Unfortunately, as you know, the trips for the past 2 years have been canceled. 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.

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

We will let you know when she can resume 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. 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.)

(I forget myself sometimes, but it makes a big difference if you can remember.)

Prayer List & Ministry Opportunities

- † *Prayers for victims of gun violence & for leaders who will do more to be sure it stops.*
- † *Praises for our supporters who have made returning to music ministry possible.*
- † *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 me to be able to set up more concerts and special music.*
- † *Prayers for all of us to find ways to gather safely (and resume hugs!)*
- † *Praises for our safe return from vacation. (We blew a tire on the freeway when we were almost home. Felt like old times! 🙏)*
- † *Praises for the ministry opportunities opening up and for ALL of your support.*

What You Have to Say

"Marsha, you have planted the seeds for decades and only God knows the true number of fruits and the innumerable amount of fruit bearing trees that have been and are now still producing in their walk with God. (Also I didn't know there was a third verse to For Those Tears. What a pleasant surprise!)"

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/akeg9b/christian-rock-music-lgbtq-musicians-acceptance>

This is a link to an article I was interviewed for. This part did not make the article, but my favorite part of the interview was after he asked about why I started writing music. I told him there was a purity about it back then. No one was recording, publishing or playing our "Jesus People Music" on the radio. "There was no ulterior motive for writing it. The only reason was to share with your friends what Jesus was doing in your life." The interviewer asked me how I have changed since the Jesus Movement. I had to tell him that they changed. They became CCM; a money-making, competitive genre intended to appeal to certain customers. I'm still writing songs to share with my friends, like you, what Jesus is doing in my life.

"I listened to your music all those years ago, one of the thoughts that kept running through my mind over and over was how you wrote the truth of your doubts as well as your faith. I

remember SO clearly thinking that any Christian...could find themselves in your lyrics. It was all SO the opposite of the proselytizing for queerness that you were accused of (or the proselytizing for anti-queerness that seems to dominate what's out there now)"

Upcoming ministry opportunities

Aug 7 Church of the Trinity MCC Sarasota FL, Special music at 10am service www.TrinityMCC.com

Aug 14 Pass-A-Grille Beach Church 10:00 am service special music www.pagchurch.org

Aug 20 Marsha turns 70!

Sep 1-3 TEN conference Louisville KY see www.TEN.lgbt

Sept 25 Suncoast MCC, Venice FL for Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson's 50th anniversary in ministry www.suncoastmcc.com

Oct 22-23 Jacksonville FL Concert – location and times are tentative at Trinity Lutheran Church

Nov 3-5 Centerpeace Conference (PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE!!) Cindy and I will both be at the Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, TX for this conference. Please consider coming! Other guests include our dear friends Justin Lee and Matthew Vines. It will be amazing fellowship.

www.centerpeace.net Then press the link for the conference.

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 us now at <https://ChristianGays.com>