

# The Marshan Chronicles

*For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.*



MORE proof that Justin Ryan has been busy during the pandemic!!

a little to do with making it possible. The album is available on iTunes and other digital music outlets. You can order one of those old fashioned shiny round things (CD) from Justin's website at [www.justinryanonline.com](http://www.justinryanonline.com)

Cindy and I were going to spend Thanksgiving's long weekend by breaking in our new little travel trailer. We only have one car (well, vehicle – I don't know if an SUV counts as a car!) now and it was ready to go pick up the trailer. But the combination of Nashville's tiny, two-lane-no-shoulder roads and the deer who ran out in front of the car only came out with one winner; the deer who got up and dashed off into the grass. The car lost, so our weekend was at home. I think it was probably like most of yours. Quiet and unremarkable. And, as always, dog-friendly!

## December 2020, Volume 24, Number 12

I closed the last newsletter by saying Cindy would be home safe from her work at the polls on November 3, and we'd know more about the direction of our country. At least one was right. Cindy is home. And, as far as our country's direction goes, we know (as my friend, Toi, would say), "We are not in the Kingdom yet!!" I know we're all praying for the best outcome/s mere humans can muster.

The main thing that some of your gifts have supported in the last month, was some of the finishing touches on upBeat! artist Justin Ryan's new Christmas CD. He is ridiculously talented of course and did a lot of the recording all by himself at home. Happily, Balm was able to help with the finishing touches to get everything to sound the best we could. Again, we had help from Nashville's Grand Ol' Opry music director, Kerry Marx and his similarly talented wife Catherine. They did some really special music accompaniment for several of Justin's tracks. With all this miserable out-of-work time in COVID, there has been time for musicians to work on specialty projects like this.

Also, our über-talented friend and Balm supporter, Carolyn Woodard, was busy again with the artwork for Justin's cover. It is fun to listen to new versions of Christmas this year, and know that we all had at least



As a reminder, Justin Ryan's music video of the song, Stand Closer, is going well. If you haven't seen it, you can see it on his Facebook Page or on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/D9ep86Wx0co> . As I've said, it is a very intentionally heart piercing video. Somehow, it's hard to find the balance between how crushing so many of the images are to people of color, and how benumbed so many of us white people are until the injustice is right in our faces. (My much tamer version is here <https://youtu.be/rrli9Tvkp2Q> )

MCC should shortly be announcing the online Christmas music that I have been able to contribute some songs to. I'll put it on my website when we have a date and link.

*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. 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. Right now, we are writing to the kids we support in Africa, and Cindy is on Habitat Builds, working the polls and other fundraisers when they come up. We will let you know when we can travel again.

### **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 all of us mourning the loss of upBeat! artist and amazing musician, Vilia Corvison – especially her surviving spouse, Rev. Phyllis Hunt*

- ✦ *First of all, prayers for our family of color. For the lives taken and anger unabated, for justice to finally come.*
- ✦ *Praises for all of our churches to remember that the News is GOOD!*
- ✦ *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 health in our families*
- ✦ *Prayers for the new CD/recording "Stand Closer" and for Justin's Christmas album "Rejoice"*
- ✦ *Prayers for me to be able to set up more concerts and special music online.*
- ✦ *Prayers for our country & for all of us to find a way forward together.*

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

*"I recently received a copy of the new CD by singer [Marsha Stevens-Pino](#); Stand Closer. Hearing remakes of her music is a wonderful blessing and reminder of the love of Jesus is for all of us. I am honored to have known this woman of God and her ministry is moving forward with the spirit of the living God as the navigator to more people to be Free to Be who they are...Children of God!"*

*"I first heard Come to the Water in The Salvation Army when I was young. I always thought it was a lovely song. But it wasn't until I left the Army, and sang it in another church that the meaning of these words spoke to my heart.*

*There are times in our lives when we think everything is going fine. We are walking through life on the pathway that we believe God has set out for us. And then, something happens, and our whole world is thrown into chaos, and we seem to lose our way, only to find later that God used that time of 'wandering' for our good.*

*I had always heard that God loves everyone, but didn't always believe that love was for me. It didn't help that people said things that insinuated that God's love was somehow not extended to the whole of humanity.*

*The Church I first attended when I left the Army used this song quite frequently. That Church was filled with people who had been through many difficulties with the Church in general, and were hurt, sometimes nearly beyond repair by what had been done to them.*

*But this song is a song of healing. It's a song of hope, and it's a song of commitment. But above all - it's a song of invitation. An invitation to step into the arms of God's love. I thank God for inspiring [Marsha Stevens-Pino](#) to write these words so many years ago. Not only have they touched my heart, they have touched the hearts of millions the world over."*

### **Upcoming ministry**

**Nov 26 We are SO thankful for YOU**

Please consider reaching me at [ssbalm@aol.com](mailto:ssbalm@aol.com) to book something online for your church! A concert or a single song or two.

*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>*