

The Marshan Chronicles

For regular supporters of BALM Ministries.



My favorite Christmas gift from a friend. It folds up to a child's book size, but reminds us what it's all about

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I hope some of you were able to hear the MCC Christmas concert. I did not hear when it would be broadcast until after it was video broadcast on Dec. 12th and they have taken it down now. I'll load the songs I contributed up on my YouTube channel for you.

One of them, written by Noel Paul Stookey, is called "The Love of it All." It was on the Christmas album we put out in 1998. When I've attended primarily Black churches near the end of the year, I've heard wonderful sermons that take us over the arc of God's interactions with humans, from Adam and Eve to present day. This song has that vibe to it.

The next one is The Star by Peter McCann. It always reminds me that we still need to make room for Jesus.

And the last one is a simple version of Mary Did You Know by Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene. It has one verse in a poignant Spanish translation. Two things I wanted to comment on with this one. First, any translation of a song has to be changed some in order to fit the rhythm and rhyme of the music and original

lyrics. I'm always fascinated by the changes. In this one, instead of "your baby boy would walk where angels trod," it says, "que Jesús antes de venir, su trono abandonó," or "before Jesus came he abandoned his throne." Such a great image of Philippians 2:5-10!

The other thing I wanted to say about this song is that I do know Mark Lowry and his heart was never to in any way denigrate Mary. In fact, like a lot of us, he thinks Mary gets overlooked in Protestantism. The lyrics were meant to express amazement that being a mother can be so prosaic and ordinary – feedings, burping, changing diapers – yet Mary was faithful to God's promise, even when it was beyond what any of us could have guessed or imagined.

We had the same Christmas most of you had – no one here but us'ns...and the puppies.



We embarrassed the dog away!

We will be moving soon. The housing market in Nashville is super hot, in spite of us having the highest rate of Covid infections, so we sold the condo. It took 4 whole days! We'll be moving into a travel trailer for a couple of months while we find a place back in Florida. In the mean time, please feel free to use anything I have on my You Tube channel. Oddly enough, you'll find that under Marsha Stevens-Pino. The advantage of our last name is there are none online except the two of us 😊.

If you have a song request you'd like me to record or if you want a facebook live concert for your church, let me know on the BalmMinistries site or by emailing me at ssbalm@aol.com.

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 the past 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. 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

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 Justin Ryan's CD/recording "Stand Closer"*
- ‡ *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

"Christmas Joy Marsha!! So I'm one of those weird people who like to celebrate Christmas through the whole 12 days, not just during Advent. Consequently, unlike the rest of the US Christian world...I'm still listening to Christmas music.

Just wanted to say what a joy it's been this year to FINALLY have you on (spotify)!! Please give Justin an extra big (virtual) Holiday Hug for me and tell him what an amazing Christmas gift his new Christmas album was for all the long time fans out here!!

I don't know how it is where you are, but every Xmas nowadays my social media feeds full up with (mostly young) female pastors snarkily lamenting "Mary Did You Know."

This usually includes repeated reminders - from the polite to the definitely profane followed by revolutionary (or at least social justice) exegeseses of the Magnificat.

*So imagine my delight at re-discovering that not only have you got an all female Magnificat on that 1998 album - complete with 70's era words by a Catholic nun that include Mary referring to God as she!!- but that that it's *right* *after* your amazing multilingual "Mary Did You Know!!"*

*It's *almost* as if you and your bestie Rev Glenna were totally on it over 20 years ago, saying "yo!! people!! she KNEW already!!"*

Reminds me yet again that for almost ANYthing in world of queer/gender non-conforming + Christian, chances are that #MarshasGottaSongForThat. So far ahead of SO many curves!"

"I am so grateful that you helped Justin Ryan get out a new recording for Christmas. ... A peaceful merry Christmas."

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Upcoming ministry

Jan 6 at 7pm Central time. *We are having a Zoom memorial service to celebrate the life of Rev. Jane Carl.* If you want to participate, you can contact Susan Deitrick at swdeit@gmail.com for the Zoom access

Please consider reaching me at 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 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>