

2011 THANKSGIVING OFFERING

JACQUE PARLATO

Jacque Parlato was active in children's ministry at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Ashland when the church's senior minister, Lexington Theological



Seminary alumnus Rev. Ike Nicholson, asked Jacque to serve as interim youth director until the church could call an associate youth minister.

"At first, I just wanted to learn enough to survive and do my best for the sake of the ministry until a full-time person was called," Jacque recalled. "As time went on, I started to see myself as much more than the 'sub,' and so did they. I felt drawn there, as though I was supposed to be there."

At the end of her first program year, Jacque accepted an offer to serve on staff as director of youth ministries, no longer the interim. She now serves as director of youth and young adult ministries and directs St. Andrew's Kids, the children's afterschool program at FCC-Ashland. She also is active in the region as an adult member of X-Committee, the regional Disciples of Christ youth council, X-Committee.

That support and involvement in lay ministry stirred in Jacque the realization that the next step in her life was to attend seminary.



"I learned that I was now ready for more disciplined preparation and filled with a desire to professionalize my work," said Jacque. "I have discovered my call through the opening and closing of doors throughout my ministry and a trend of revelation through those with whom I do ministry."

Jacque is now in the limited-residency M.Div. program at LTS, which did not require her to uproot her husband and two sons and leave the congregation she serves.

Attending seminary through the online curriculum and onsite intensives while being rooted in her congregation has added further opportunities for growth. "As I gained knowledge, I shared it with our staff, youth and sponsors. The congregation, clergy and staff have been tremendously encouraging. ... We are here because we are called to be here along with the professors, administrators and staff of LTS. It is with your prayers and support that we will learn, grow and serve together," Jacque said.