

# 2011 THANKSGIVING OFFERING

FOR TRULY, I SAY TO YOU, IF YOU HAVE FAITH AS A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED, YOU WILL SAY TO THIS MOUNTAIN, 'MOVE FROM HERE TO THERE,' AND IT WILL MOVE; AND NOTHING WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO YOU." MATTHEW 17:20

*"The mission trip to Guatemala has been packed with activity and filled with joy. Vacation Bible School with the children has been amazing! Our worship begins with song and then the mission team tells the stories of God with puppets. During the singing the children's voices are lifted in joyful praise to God and their faces are bright with anticipation. My favorite song is about the mustard seed based on Jesus' words in the Book of Matthew.*



*Santa Domingo Xenacoj is a beautiful mountain village. It is also a village that faces many obstacles. There are no doctors or dentists in this place. I spoke with one little boy who asked me if I would please pull out a tooth that was causing him pain. Small necessities like soap and toothbrushes and toothpaste are treated like treasures. Poverty is everywhere and yet, there is faith.*

*I heard a prayer by a woman in the village and although I do not speak much Spanish, I plainly understood her thanking God for her family, and her blessings. She also thanked God for sending us to her and to her village.*

Faith in God has moved each of us on the mission team to this place and this time. Hearing the stories of God through the people of God in Guatemala has reminded me that nothing is impossible when you have faith in God."



The above is from M.Div. student Trudy Betts, a licensed minister through the Disciples of Christ serving her second Disciples congregation as Associate Pastor at Tropical Sands Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Florida, a growing congregation with four services each weekend. Her desire to attend seminary was met by the limited-residency program at LTS, which offers as much as 2/3 of the curriculum online, with intensive on-site classes that don't require students to move.

"It's all in God's perfect timing," Betts said. "It's an answered prayer--a great relief financially and emotionally. "

The Seminary's program will help span the physical divide between Disciples congregations scattered throughout the U.S., she noted.

"I can already see the sense of community this is creating," she said. "It demonstrates how seminary is still relevant to our churches, and that together, we're much stronger than we can ever be standing alone. I think we have to be open to seeing things in a whole new light."