

OUTREACH DIVISION 2011 YEAR END REPORT

CAMPUS MISSION COMMITTEE

- Provided time on the Presbytery docket for Warren Wilson College to present in January, Montreat College to present in April, and Lees McRae College to present in October.
- Asked for names of students starting college in the Fall semester in order to help connect them with Presbyterian campus ministries.
- Sponsored a workshop at the August 20 Let's Celebrate event, led by Jerry Beavers, entitled "Emerging Adult Ministry."
- Participated in a gathering of College ministry leaders in November regarding NCPHEM. Rev. Kathy Campbell, Rev. Joseph Washburn, and Rev. Jerry Beavers served on the NCPHEM (North Carolina Presbyterian Higher Education Ministries) Board in 2011. Rev. Ed Brenegar served as Interim Executive Director, and Rev. George Gunn and Rev. Shannon Kershner served on the Statewide Campaign Cabinet.
- Invited Asheville area Pastors/Educators to exploratory conversations about outreach to UNCA/ABTech campuses in Asheville, and funded a feasibility study.
- Provided scholarships to help Rev. Margie Boyd and four students from Western Carolina University attend the Jan 2-5, 2012 College Conference "Seeking Stars" in Montreat.

HUNGER COMMITTEE

Souper Bowl of Caring: Fifty-eight churches in the Presbytery participated raising \$27,606 in dollars and cans for their local food pantries, and the Presbytery's Hunger Committee supersized these offerings with \$13,803 from Nickel-a-Meal funds: \$6,586.79 from 2010 funds and \$7,216.21 from 2011 funds.

One Great Hour of Sharing: A total of \$72,541.38 for the OGHS offering was collected by congregations within the Presbytery. This offering funds the work of the Presbyterian Hunger Program, the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Program, and the Self Development of People Program.

Nickel-a-Meal Offering: \$104,283.73 was the total received in 2011. Of this amount 55% is designated to International Grants, 40% to Regional Grants, and 5% to Education/Administration (which reverts to International Grants if unused). After receiving Nickel-a-Meal applications, making site visits, interviewing representatives, and receiving Council approval, checks were presented during the worship service at the Presbyterian Congregation that sponsored the Regional Nickel-a-Meal application.

2011 Regional Nickel-a-Meal Grants:

- \$3,000 Angel Food Y.U.M.M (Sponsored by Waldensian)
- \$2,250 Carenet Back Pack Program & Soup Kitchen (Sponsored by Franklin FPC)
- \$3,000 Homeward Bound's A HOPE Day Center (Sponsored by Grace Covenant)
- \$1,000 Interfaith Assistance Ministry Food Pantry (Sponsored by Hendersonville FPC)
- \$1,000 IFA/Cleveland County Rescue Mission (Sponsored by Shelby)
- \$2,250 Pack-a-Bag program/Shuford Elementary School (Sponsored by New Vision)
- \$2,250 Pay-It-Forward Food Pantry (Sponsored by Fairview)

- \$3,151 S.O.C.K.S.(Serving our Community with Kindness in Springwood) Food Pantry (Sponsored by Gastonia FPC)
- \$5,000 Thermal Belt Outreach Feed-A-Kid Program (sponsored by Columbus and Tryon)
- \$2,250 Waldensian Presbyterian Assistance Ministry (Sponsored by Waldensian)
- \$7,216.21 SuperSizing 2011 SouperBowl of Caring partial funding (rest came from 2010 funds).
- \$9,346.28 remaining Regional Funds were reserved to help fund 2012 Regional Grants and Supersize the 2012 Souper Bowl of Caring.

2011 International Nickel-a-Meal Grants:

- \$30,540.28 Malawi Orphan Care Project (Sponsored by PCUSA Mission Co-worker Dr. Barbara Nagy). This money will be used by the Orphan Care Project to buy corn for 1,500 orphans and vulnerable children who will experience a critical food shortage in December 2011-March 2012. In addition to purchasing corn, part of the funding will be used for buying fertilizer and corn seeds for 70 families who care for orphans and 35 Orphan Community Centers. It will also be used to create a chicken rearing project as an income generating project.
- \$6,421.47 Nkhoma Hospital Pediatric's Ward Food Supplies (Sponsored by PCUSA Mission Co-worker Dr. Barbara Nagy). Will provide nourishing food to children who are patients in the hospital in order to aid their recovery.
- \$7,543.77 Cameroon Food Sovereignty Program (Presbyterian Hunger Program Joining Hands Against Hunger Project). This program includes the RELUFA Food Sovereignty Program's grain banks. Mission Co-worker Christi Boyd oversees this program. For more information go to <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/hunger/cameroon/> and look at the Food Sovereignty program.
- \$12,850.28 International Funds were reserved to help fund 2012 Regional Grants. The Hunger Committee requested permission from Council to reallocate the unused 2011 International money to fund 2012 Regional Grants in order to facilitate a change in its grant schedule process. In the future, Spring grants will be allocated from funds received July-December of the previous year, and Fall Grants will be allocated from funds received from January-June of the current year. This will allow the Hunger committee to base their decisions on money in hand, rather than estimate what might come in.

2011 Education/Administration Funds:

- \$5,214.19 was reserved to help Super-Size the Souper Bowl of Caring in 2012.

Hunger Committee members: Committee member, David Tate, was supported to attend the Hunger Action Enabler Training days/Ecumenical Advocacy Days combined event March 25-28 in Washington, DC. Margarette Kennerly attended the "Come to the Table: People of Faith Sustaining Local Farms and Relieving Hunger in NC" event March 11 in Black Mountain on behalf of the committee. The committee sponsored a workshop at the August 20 Let's Celebrate Event entitled "Seeds and Roots: The Community Garden", co-taught by David Horne and Buzz Durham. In July the committee selected the materials for the Reclaiming Christmas Alternative Giving cards and projects for the Presbytery: Guatemala Scholarship program, Guatemala Theological Education, Nkhoma Hospital general fund, Ebenezer School in Nkhoma, PWNC seminary students. The committee supported the October 9 "Jacob's Join" Hunger event at Morganton FPC, featuring Bryan McFarland, Hunger Action Enabler for Salem Presbytery. The event included music from Bryan's cd "Until All Are Fed" (a portion of the proceeds from the cd help support the Presbyterian Hunger Program) and also a Bread for the World

display and Offering of Letters. The committee obtained permission from Council to invite A Unique Gift (Ten Thousand Villages store) to sell fair trade food items at the October Presbytery meeting as a way of raising awareness of Alternative Christmas giving.

The Council renewed the covenant relationship between Grace Boyer as Hunger Action Enabler and the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and the Presbyterian Hunger Program subsequently allocated \$2,250 towards her 2012 Salary Support.

MISSIONS COMMITTEE

- Commissioned the Malawi Mission Team at the April Presbytery meeting. Eleven people went to Malawi May 23-June 8, 2011, carrying with them supplies for the Ebenezer school and Nkhoma Hospital, and working mainly in the village Mlanda. A special offering was taken at the April Presbytery meeting raising \$1,670 to help fund repairs in Mlanda, where Nkhoma Hospital has a village clinic. The group represented nine churches: Fletcher, Franklin FPC, Morganton FPC, Newland FPC, Northminster, Southminster, Waldensian, Walnut Grove, and Bakersville Baptist. A written report by Doris Munday was included in the July presbytery meeting packet. The next trip is schedule for May 21-June 6, 2012.
- Welcomed PCUSA Mission Co-worker Nancy Dimmock (Lesotho) to the October Presbytery meeting. Nancy spoke twice at the meeting. First was an overview of Frank & Nancy's work and the family, the other was a presentation on "The Church's Response to the Issue of Vulnerable Children in Africa."
- Welcomed PCUSA Mission Co-worker Mark Hare (Haiti) to the Asheville area in April. He spoke at his supporting churches Grace Covenant and Warren Wilson, and also spoke at Warren Wilson College (his alma mater), to a Montreat College Class, and to The Well (which met at West Asheville Presbyterian Church).
- Disaster/rebuilding work: Provided \$1,000 for building supplies for the Camp Grier Work day on May 14 and provided time at the July Presbytery meeting for Jan Griffin (committee member and staff at Camp Grier) to speak of the Camp's new plan to have churches adopt projects throughout the year. (The next work day is scheduled for April 27-28, 2012.) The Shower Trailer was requested by Asheville Youth Mission for the summer and was approved, but they were not able to use it because of difficulty with locations. New Hope Presbytery requested the trailer in response to Hurricane Irene flooding and was approved, but then did not establish a camp to use it in as they had originally hoped. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance requested the trailer for flood relief work in Pennsylvania and was approved, but was not able to use it because of zoning issues. It is ready and available for use.
- Supported financially two PCUSA Young Adult Volunteers: \$225 to Jacob Owens (Tucson, AZ) who is a recent graduate of Montreat College, and \$1,000 to Tricia Thompson (Kenya) who is a member of Lincoln FPC. Also supported with \$500 Jessi Stitt (Malawi) from the Black Mountain Presbyterian Church who is volunteering with Nkhoma Synod.
- Supported three people to attend the PCUSA Malawi Mission Network conference in Austin Texas, August 11-14: Dorothy McKenzie who taught a workshop (Gastonia FPC), Steve Hansel and Jane Hansel (Swannanoa FPC). The next conference will be held August 23-26, 2012 in Colorado www.malawinetwork.org.
- Met with Dr. Barbara Nagy by phone in August, and mailed a letter to all churches regarding the most up to date information on Malawi.

- Asked “Where is God calling the committee, and what is the best structure/manner to follow that call?” Then reviewed the Mission Committee’s description in the Standing Rules, wrote a new description, and sent it to the Transition Taskforce of the Presbytery.
- Sent Christmas gifts to several PCUSA mission co-workers affiliated with this Presbytery: Barbara Nagy (Malawi), Becca Young (Indonesia), Amanda Craft (Guatemala), Frank & Nancy Dimmock (Lesotho), John McCall (Taiwan), Jim & Jodi McGill (Malawi), Bill & Ann Moore (Japan), and Daniel & Elizabeth Turk (Madagascar). And also to Don & Charlene Woods (China/Mongolia), Tricia Thompson (Kenya), and Jessi Stitt (Malawi).

PEACE & JUSTICE COMMITTEE

- Sponsored two Let’s Celebrate workshops: Dr. James Aydelotte led “Peace in the Holy Land?” and David LaMotte, from the NC Council of Churches, led “Hoping Against Hope.”
- Worked with the Guatemala Partnerships to host PCUSA International Peacemakers Dr. Karla Koll and Juana Herlinda Yac Salanic September 23-29. They spoke at the following churches/events: Presbyterian Women’s Fall gathering, Waldensian Presbyterian Church, Iglesia Emmanuel, Gastonia FPC hosted a Gastonia area gathering, Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church hosted a gathering on Health issues, Black Mountain hosted an area gathering, and Asheville FPC.
- Received permission from Council to sell Zatoun Fair Trade Olive Oil from Palestine at the October presbytery meeting.
- Sent \$500 to help support the PCUSA National Multi-Cultural Conference that will take place April 26-29, 2012 in Charlotte. The conference is being sponsored by presbyteries in NC and the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic.
- Supported financially the work of NC Council of Churches \$500, the NC Council of Churches Associate for Peace Position \$500, Women at Risk program of the Western Carolinians for Criminal Justice in Asheville \$1,500, the Swannanoa Correctional Center Chaplaincy program \$1,000, Ministry of Hope (prison ministry) \$509, Presbyterians for Earth Care Biennial Conference \$250. Sent \$500 to help the Committee on Ministry fund a member attending the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center’s Mediation Skills Training November in Columbia, SC. Reallocated some returned Peacemaking funds (from 2007) to send \$750 to BorderLinks and \$750 to scholarship a young adult on work trip through the Western Carolinians for Peace & Justice in the Middle East.
- Awarded twelve Peacemaking Offering grants from the 2010 Peacemaking Offering funds, and had a presentation at the October Presbytery meeting with a visual display and two recipients speaking. The grants were for programs/projects that encouraged peacemaking. The recipients in 2011 were:
 - \$400 Black Mountain Home for Children—Planting project
 - \$500 Franklin FPC—REACH of Macon County
 - \$700 Highlands FPC – Bolivia clean water project
 - \$286 Kenilworth—Youth Community Garden
 - \$250 Montreat – Children & Friends Day Care materials
 - \$500 Newton FPC—The Room in the Inn
 - \$250 New Vision—Cross-cultural Spanish/English Conversation lessons
 - \$600 Reems Creek-Beech—OUT-House project
 - \$250 Swannanoa FPC—Mental Health forum
 - \$250 Third Street—Student Peacemaking Awards at Rhyne Elementary School
 - \$250 Trinity—LEEP
 - \$500 Waldensian—Domestic violence workshops in Guatemala

- Decided to designate the Presbytery's portion of the **2011 Peacemaking offering** in two ways: \$250 to Oikocredit, and the rest to fund small grants (of at least \$250) to churches doing peacemaking work in the Presbytery. Six grant requests were received by the December 31, 2011 deadline, and will be voted on and distributed in January 2012. When congregations collect the Peacemaking Offering, they are able to retain 25% for use with peacemaking projects they support. In 2011, churches forwarded on a total of \$14,644.64 from their Peacemaking Offering. Of this, \$3,221.82 is designated for our Presbytery's peacemaking projects, \$1,610.91 is sent on to Synod and \$9,811.91 to General Assembly for their Peacemaking programs.
- Forwarded on the \$9,453.20 that congregations sent in for the **Pentecost Offering** which benefits PCUSA programs for child advocacy, youth ministry, and Young Adult Volunteer opportunities. When congregations collect the Pentecost Offering they first retain 40% for ministries they support which benefit children at risk, and then they forward the remaining funds.
- Rev. David Kaylor served as our representative on the NC Council of Churches Board. Dr. James Aydelotte served as Israel/Palestine Mission Network Regional Educator. Jane Laping served as Stewardship of Creation Enabler until that program was discontinued, and continues as a representative in the Environmental Ministries Action Network (EMAN).

SELF DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE

The committee met April 16 with Wayne Gnatuk of the PCUSA National Self Development of People office for their required every-three-year training. The guidelines were reviewed and a September 1 deadline for grants was set (the deadline will be September 1 again in 2012). The committee reviewed three grants applications that were received, made a site visit and awarded grants to one of them: \$10,000 to Opportunity Threads (Morganton). Opportunity Threads is a worker owned cooperative www.opportunitythreads.com. Their core values are Fair Wages & Worker Ownership, Flexibility and Problem Solving Approach, Dignity for Workers, Personable and Responsive, Passion for Connection to Local Supply Chain, Sustainable Production, and Ability to work with "Green" Textiles and Reclaimed Materials.

SDOP Grants are funded through the SDOP's portion of the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. A percentage of funds are set aside for each presbytery, and each presbytery SDOP committee can request them with appropriate paperwork from the National SDOP Office, www.pcusa.org/sdop. "Self-Development of People is a ministry that affirms God's concern for humankind. We are Presbyterians and ecumenical partners dissatisfied with poverty and oppression, united in faith and action through sharing, confronting, and enabling. We participate in the empowerment of economically poor, oppressed, and disadvantaged people, seeking to change the structures that perpetuate poverty, oppression and injustice."

Letter from Barbara Nagy

Of Power Cuts and Petrol Queues

You know you've reached a threshold when your daughter's imaginative play involves riding her elephant to the capital (60 km) to convince the power company to turn the electricity back on. We in Malawi have been in the grip of daily prolonged power cuts combined with a country wide shortage of fuel of all sorts for the past several months. Unfortunately, no end is in sight. How does this affect a 220 bed mission hospital? Ambulances and vehicles to provide medicines and vital supplies have to run on diesel, lab and X-ray equipment, sterilizers and refrigerators (vaccines, blood for transfusion, etc.) have to run, and all importantly, oxygen concentrators and emergency surgical equipment have to run in order to save peoples' lives and be true to our goal of providing 'clinically excellent Christ oriented health care'.

Generally when the power cuts (daily) we have an emergency generator that is turned on. Due to power fluctuations, the switch that activates the generator has burned out and cannot presently be replaced, so a watchman has been hired to turn it on by hand whenever the power goes off. As the generator runs for 6-8 hours almost every day, it has begun overheating and sometimes has to be switched off to cool. Prices for diesel have recently gone up, making the cost of running the generator at its current usage and price \$4,655.00 per month. This is a catastrophic cost to a mission hospital that barely manages to survive financially from month to month. After weeks of trying to find fuel in the capital we have begun searching across a nearby border with Mozambique, but this is also fraught with difficulties, dangerous and expensive. Corruption has reared its ugly head, and the tiny amount of available fuel is often sold off at much higher prices to roadside traders, posing danger of riots at the hours to days long petrol queues.

All of these circumstances converged last week when we had seven children on oxygen in the Pediatrics ward, as well as patients in the adult wards. Power was off for just under 30 minutes as opposed to the 6-8 hour cuts we normally experience, and all managed to tolerate this brief interruption with the exception of our sickest pediatric patient. Clinicians stood by as she became more and more distressed, and eventually bag/mask resuscitation was instituted as her respirations failed completely. Finally, with the last small efforts of life failing, the power came back on, and she survived, though at what cost to her ultimate neurologic function, unknown. We are now at the lowest point of the year in terms of pediatrics admissions. What these continued episodes will cost in terms of human lives when the pediatrics ward reaches its peak in the next months is unknown. Please pray with us for an end to the power and fuel shortages, as well as for just and wise governance in this country. We have two outstanding grant requests pending to fund a new generator capable of carrying the load of the entire hospital, but please also prayerfully consider helping with the ongoing costs of fuel for the hospital. **The Nkhoma Hospital ECO # is: E051772.**

We are gratified that in spite of all these challenges we have been able to continue outreach clinics, which have made health care accessible to approximately 3,000 mothers and young children per month that would otherwise be beyond the reach of any health facility. We are committed to bicycling to these outreach clinics even if the fuel completely fails, but we would only be able to offer limited services, especially as the rains limit transportation of equipment by such means. I have prepared a year end summary of activities for the hospital which can be accessed on the mission connections website.

Thanks for the prayers and support that you have offered during the 2011 year, may your Christmas celebrations be blessed and joyful!

Barbara Nagy for all of the Nkhoma Synod community

Reflections from the November 2011 Guatemala Partnership Delegation

Will Garris, Banner Elk Presbyterian Church

I am still amazed at how God works in our lives. As I went on this trip to Guatemala I built strong relationships with not only the fellow team members that traveled with me but most importantly with our brothers and sisters in Christ. This trip has been a great reminder that the love of God is not limited to those in America but in fact is offered to everyone on this Earth. To see the people of God coming together from different locations across the world and rejoice in praise and worship to the one true God, Jesus, has been such a blessing and a great experience for me. I thank God for the works he has done through these marvelous people who have impacted my life in so many ways.

Thank you God for giving me the opportunity to view the world you created from a different perspective. Thank you for showing me that life is more than which I normally perceive it to be. Thank you for all the people who helped send me on this trip as well as all the wonderful people whom I met while on this trip. God, you have blessed me beyond measure and I thank you and praise you in your name!

Ben Garris, Banner Elk Presbyterian Church

On November 14, 2011 I had the pleasure to set out on a mission trip to a country I have never visited before, Guatemala. During the week to follow my eyes were opened, my tongue was tested, and my heart was filled with a love and appreciation for God and his people the world over. My duty was to make sure our group started or ended each day with time in God's word through devotion. This proved to fuel our group with a passion for carrying out God's Will together as the Body of Christ. For me I saw God at work right away in his creation. The colorful sights of the mountainside and the buildings in the towns never ceased to amaze me at the diversity that God is capable of. Especially in creating people.

Within our own group we had people from many different backgrounds and with different talents. It was clear that God had made many different qualities to form up one great Church body to do his work. As I looked into what our partnership with Guatemala meant, I found that the Body of Christ was so much more than I could even imagine. Here in Guatemala are a people who may not have so much materially, and yet it never hinders their ability to praise and worship God with every fiber of their being. The love that comes so naturally to them as they welcomed us and provided for us could only manifest itself from God in his love for us. I got to experience firsthand what it means to have brothers and sisters of Christ all over the world because despite only spending a few days with them I felt as though they were all a part of my family.

People will ask what did I take away from this and I'll be able to say things like "we strengthened relationships with our partner churches, and got to meet the kids that we are sponsoring to go to school." This is all well and good; but really, it's so much more than that. It's something that can't be put into words or a PowerPoint presentation to fully capture it or justify it. Ultimately for me it was a trip to witness the true divine love of God and how it has no boundaries of race, speech, age, sex, social status, culture or anything else to hinder it. As God is limitless so is his love and I have gained a greater awareness of what that truly means now.

Gladys Ross, Quaker Meadows Presbyterian Church

The thing that impressed me the most was the warm and caring attitude of everyone I met and how appreciative they were of all we try to do to help the children. One of the things I realized is how much we as Americans take for granted.

Martha Myers, Fairview Presbyterian Church

I want to say thank you to all who helped make this trip, a life time experience, one I will never forget. I had such an amazing time. This was my first time ever being away from my three small children, and also my first time flying. With the support of everyone on this trip, it made these two things seem like I had done this a hundred times before. I was so amazed by how quickly I fell in love with Guatemala! The love that I felt from my host family, and from my sister church (Genezareth in Los Encuentro) and my delegation team was just so touching, they didn't know me, but yet, I truly felt part of their family. I loved the way the children welcomed me, they brought me gifts to say that we love you and welcomed me in their home. They gave up their bed that had a mosquito net, just because they knew that I was not used to the kinds of insects that they had. They gave me two little stuffed animals (the only ones I saw in their house) when they found out that I had a small baby boy back at home. It was very humbling to receive that kind of love.

The families in Guatemala have very little and yet, they give so much! I told my family when I got back home, that I have never been so hungry, but yet so fulfilled at the same time. The one thing that I have definitely brought back with me is the fact that we as Americans have all of these things in our life but we always want more; yet in Guatemala, they have so little but they are willing to give it all away.

One of my favorite memories will be encountering my first fish meal. I had never eaten fish before, and when I arrived at my sister church there was a pile of bass just laying out by the fire pit stove. I knew that we would be eating it for lunch and almost immediately had an un-easy feeling come over me. I told the woman who went with me that I had never eaten fish before. She said just do what she did and peel the skin back. I tried it even without pulling the skin apart and I loved it! I enjoyed it so much that I was trying to dig my fork all the way down to get the meat on the bottom, and that's when I had a Guatemalan tap me on the shoulder to show me how to flip the fish over to finish up on the other side !!! I cannot wait to go back next year to visit our brothers and sisters again!!! Thanks for the life changing experience.

Kathy Campbell, Crossnore Presbyterian Church

Deborah Garrison and I want to thank you for supporting our trip to Guatemala. Without your financial support, Deborah and I would not have been able to participate. I was returning to Guatemala for the fifth time; Deborah had never been outside the USA. Over 20 people participated in the November Guatemala Partnership Delegation from the WNC Presbytery. There is far too much to share in such a small space but here are a few highlights from the many ways we saw God's presence in Guatemala:

- The beauty of the countryside was breathtaking; green fields, terraced crops on the mountain slopes, wild flowers in bloom—hydrangea, poinsettias, bougainvillea, and impatience.
- The vibrant color and creativity of Guatemalan artists in the local markets and on the streets were amazing—I returned with two new stoles woven from the looms of local women's cooperative.
- The many faces of the working poor were haunting and humbling when we realized that the tortillas or trinkets they sold each day may be their only income for their family.

- So many children are forced to stop their education at 3rd Grade. Public education is free but their parents are not able to buy the required uniforms and books; their families may also need the children to help provide childcare or work.
- The open arms of the Lebano Presbyterian Church members who were still waiting for us at the church when we arrived hours late. We shared in worship with them twice and were able to have meetings with the session, the women and the youth group. They are excited about the possibility of our churches supporting one another in prayer and in mission.
- The generous hospitality provided by our host family was beyond our expectations.

We stayed with Irlando and Lydia in their humble home shared with grandchildren, chickens, turkeys, ducks, pigs, and dogs. They let us live their lives for the few days we were with them...going to the river to swim and wash clothes, cooking tortillas on an open fire, going to the food market, and spending hours talking and sharing photos and stories. There were no televisions, computers, or smart phones. Can you imagine??!!

Deborah and I left filled with the colors, the smells, the stories, and the snapshots of the faces of those who have truly become our brothers and sisters in Christ. We also return filled with the blessings of being able to make such a trip and to have a church family here in Crossnore that wants to open its doors and ministry to the world.

Martha Garris, Banner Elk Presbyterian Church

The trip to Guatemala was really a time of joy being able to meet so many people with such big hearts. From Myra and Selvin & family and cooking tortillas and sharing fabulous meals and birthdays with them to worship. Worship was by far my favorite thing in Morellia with our sister church Arca de Noe. Church members gathered each afternoon at 4:30 to fellowship with singing and scripture. The folks there greeted us so graciously. Selvin Jr. climbed a coconut tree and fixed us drinks. He also helped Ben "Bendias" and Will "Batman" get their hair to new styles.

I spent time with a health committee meeting, several health promoters Marcario, Jose and nurse Erica. Erica is amazing. She is a single Mom with an adopted child, runs two pharmacies, sutures folks up when they get machete lacerations, employs many people and donates her time to the health committee. Thanks to Erica I can say I have been to the Pacific Ocean with black lava sand beaches. Homemade duck tamales, sorry Donald, were great! Yes I sat in meetings for two days with Dr. Doug Michaels leading two Guatemalan Presbyteries into one and five year plans for health promoters in each partner church. It was grueling at times but overall much was accomplished. Doug is a great leader. I learned a bit about natural plant based medicine and a little Spanish. There's nothing like waking up and looking out your window before leaving the country and seeing a volcano. Too cool. Oh, and there was a 5.0 earthquake we felt while at the seminary. I can't imagine Haiti's 7.0. Please keep them all in your prayers and God willing, I will be able to go back soon.

Thanks for sending me.

In Christ,
Martha

Betsy and Allen Burdett, Saluda Presbyterian Church

This was my second trip to visit Saluda's sister church, El Buen Samaritano, and Betsy's fourth trip. El Buen Samaritano is a very small church in a small mountain town, just like Saluda. Each trip brings new light and strength to the partnership, and new understanding. Language is always a problem, but this time we had a translator for a day, thanks to Ellen. That translator lives in nearby Coatepeche

and has started teaching English to the pastor's grandchildren. Communication is the most difficult part of a relationship; for some of us to be able to speak the same language is a big deal. Language will give us building blocks for our partnership to grow. It was a great trip. Next time we hope to be able to spend much more time with our sister church.

Like many of our delegation, we went to Guatemala thinking that we were taking gifts to the Guatemalas. We brought back much more than we took. Ours is a partnership of faith and unconditional love - no baggage fee.

Kim Sluder, New Hope Presbyterian Church, Asheville

Guatemala is a country which is very dear to my heart. Six years ago I adopted my son Joshua and five years ago I adopted my daughter Jordan, from Guatemala. God has touched my heart in many ways and one of my dreams was to return to the country in which my children were born. I was blessed for my family to become members of New Hope Presbyterian in Asheville. I feel that God led me there and to the Guatemala partnership program. I was able to participate in the latest mission trip in November 2011 to Guatemala. The trip was difficult, but very enlightening. It was difficult to "come out of my comfort zone" as a citizen of the US and live my life briefly as a Guatemalan. I learned of their culture, their strong faith in God and their love for family. I am so appreciative for the time I spent with the people of Guatemala as well as my other fellow mission travelers. I will always hold a special place in my heart for Guatemala.

Sarah Maveety, New Hope Presbyterian Church, Asheville

This trip was a very new experience for me. I had spent a significant amount of time in South America, so I thought the culture shock would not surprise me. I think this sentiment of having a blank slate of expectations truly allowed my mind to be open to this new experience of mission work. The most important message I took home was the idea of a partnership. In working with our partner church, El Divino Salvador, and subsequent conversations with Ellen Dozier, I discovered that a partnership is about equal parts of giving *AND* receiving, and on *BOTH* sides. This idea of partnership translates both into our experiences in mission, but also into our daily lives. I am grateful to both Presbyteries - Sur Occidente in Guatemala and the WNC Presbytery - for the opportunity to experience and participate in mission abroad.

Sarah