

A Mountaintop Reminder

Most of us never imagined we would be standing four thousand feet above sea level on the side of a Costa Rican mountain. Yet, there we were—thirteen friends and graduate school classmates—planting trees to protect local water springs and offset some of the carbon dioxide emitted just to get us there.

We spent most of that day on a nearly 45-degree slope, forging paths through rows of coffee plants, stepping over muddy ravines, watching out for snakes and fire ants and giant furry spiders, clearing away overgrown brush, throwing our weight behind shovels, unwrapping tree saplings, and getting our hands grubby in the dirt. At one point, on uneven footing, I felt my center of gravity shift as I turned to talk to a colleague. My body pitched backward, and panic washed over me for a moment as I imagined myself rolling down the mountain to the valley below.

The experience was messy, hard, and overwhelming at times. But each one of us also experienced a fullness of joy. The day was a reminder of this amazing heritage that God has given us. And, it was a reminder of our call to be responsible stewards of this beautiful creation, now and into the future, so that others might also forge a path and be filled with joy in God's presence.

—Madalyn Metzger
Bristol, Indiana

Text for today: "Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the LORD, 'You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.' As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight. Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names upon my lips. The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage. I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure. For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit. *You show me the path of life.* In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:1-11, NRSV). **Bible readings for today:** Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Psalm 16 (11); 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31.