



Friedens Church of Washington, UCC

*"A Country Church with a New Spirit"
Open Doors and Open Hearts*

Grace to you and peace in the name of Jesus Christ,

It is good to be back! I feel so blessed to have had my sabbatical. Like the dawn of a new day, God's grace shown on me bringing renewal, passion, and new light. It was like my batteries all got recharged, and I feel the calling of the Lord and am getting swept up once again by the power of the Holy Spirit and the great work God is doing here at Friedens.

First, a word of thanks: Thanks to Rev. Frank Dietz for his ministry during my absence. Thanks to Rev. Campbell for helping out with the two funerals. Thanks to Joy Dickschat for the extra work she had to do in my absence, and also thanks to Charles Buck for his leadership. A special word of thanks to Anna Mohr for her ministry to those who were ill or grieving as well as to all the people who visited folks in the hospitals and nursing homes and those home-bound. Thanks to James and Jackie Schroeder for opening their home to the Dietz's and to all the folks who took them out to dinner. And thanks for all those who did a little more, getting involved in the ministry of our church. You have my thanks but also my hope and prayer that this time has awakened gifts in each of you, for I believe we are all called by God to do the work of Jesus Christ. And finally, thank all of you for giving me this time of renewal and growth. May you see within me the fruit and blessings you helped to nurture through my sabbatical.

My sympathy and condolences to the families of Gilbert Lauter and Joan Hinze. It was really tough on me when I learned of their deaths, as I really wrestled with wanting to come back. But I also knew I needed to respect and honor my sabbatical time, trusting that others would step up and minister to the families.

My time at Lifeworks was truly inspiring, and I look forward to sharing more about my time in Austin with you. At each group gathering—Women's Fellowship, Men's Breakfast, and UCC Women—I hope to share a power point presentation on the work I did at Lifeworks. But let me say a few words now:

Lifeworks serves Austin's street youth and young adults, offering a variety of services to help kids living on the streets. During my time there, I volunteered at their drop-in center. I cannot emphasize enough how important it simply is to give these kids a safe space they can come to during the week, but the agency did much more. At the drop-in, the kids can hang out, check email and voicemail, get food, clothes and hygiene products as well as sign up for case management where they get one-on-one assistance with a case worker who will work with them to improve their situation. Also, once in case management, they may qualify for additional help. On Thursdays, Lifeworks provides a free health clinic and dental van.

Friedens Church of Washington, UCC

*“A Country Church with a New Spirit”
Open Doors and Open Hearts*

Although I had worked with the homeless before, it was an eye-opening and heart-wrenching experience to work with homeless youth, many of which simply came out of the foster care system. Without any network of support like a caring family, these kids often cannot make it when they turn 18, and thus, end up on the streets. And yet, where older homeless sometimes have this dejected sense about them (who could blame them?), almost like they are resolved that this is their “lot in life,” I saw so much hope in these kids. They wanted to get jobs, find a place to live—make it off the streets, and it was such a blessing to work with an agency that really made a difference.

For me, the greatest blessing was simply getting to know some of these kids and their daily struggles. And my heart goes out to them. I still can picture the young woman, 8 months pregnant, lying on the couch with no where to go but out on the streets, or the young couple with their two children—one about 5, the other just a baby about 1 year old dressed in a filthy outfit. These young people are homeless! It about broke my heart to see the 5 year old with chigger and mosquito bites all down her legs, knowing this family sleeps in a park in Austin. These are the faces of the people Lifeworks helps and who **you** were helping by giving me this time in Austin.

Again, thank you for this Sabbath-time! I am fired up with the Spirit and looking forward to my continued ministry here at Friedens!

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Ron

For more information about Lifeworks, visit their website at www.lifeworksweb.org

Bible Study: Pastor Ron would like to lead another Bible Study, which will start soon although day and time have not yet been decided. The Bible Study will probably be on one of the Gospels. Look for more information coming out soon!

www.friedenschurch.com
P.O. Box 306 • Washington, Texas 77880-0306
Phone: (936)878-2523 • Parsonage: (936)878-2155
Email: pastor@friedenschurch.com