



KOGUDUS RENEWAL MINISTRY

2015 Annual Report to the Synod

The Board of Directors of Kogodus Renewal Ministry and I thank the Montana Synod for the support given in 2015 and in all the previous years. As a partner in ministry K.R.M. continues to promote and equip lay leadership in the Church and community. This partnership began in 1976 under the leadership of Rev. Olaf Magis who began Kogodus retreats in 1969 while he was pastor of First Lutheran Church in Glasgow, Montana. The Estonian word, Kogodus, means “Christian fellowship”. Olaf chose that word to define this retreat ministry which emphasizes the **message of Christ, fellowship in Christ, and service for Christ**. Kogodus retreats have been held throughout the U.S. and in countries throughout the world. In recent years, however, there are three states that continue to offer retreats: Montana, North Dakota, and Illinois.

The original retreat called “Faith and Life” is a study of the Apostles’ Creed and the Greek words for servant in the New Testament. It encourages those who attend to discover their God-given gifts and consider how the Holy Spirit calls them to put those gifts to use for the common good of Christ’s Church and the world. Another retreat, “Lament and Laughter”, was introduced in 2011. It connects our losses to the cross and our joys to the resurrection. Dying in Christ and rising in Christ (daily baptism) is experienced at this retreat and encouraged for the participants to continue throughout their spiritual journeys.

The most recent retreat, “Contrast Community”, was introduced in 2014. It is based on Dr. James L. Bailey’s book by that name and is a study of the Sermon on the Mount. This retreat so far has been held at Montana Women’s Prison in Billings, the North Dakota Women’s Correctional Center in New England, and the men’s prison in Jamestown, N.D. At all three prisons it was received with gratitude and appreciation. An inmate at M.W.P. responded by saying, “Thank you for coming and introducing me to Christ. It’s been a blessing.”

There were a total of 7 retreats held in 2015. Montana hosted a “Faith and Life” retreat at M.W.P. in Billings. North Dakota hosted “Contrast Community” at the two prisons listed above and “Lament and Laughter” at the state prison in Bismarck, the men’s prison in Jamestown, and the women’s prison in New England. Illinois hosted “Faith and Life” one retreat at Camp Greisheim for men and also one for post-high youth. A total of 283 people attended these retreats. A “Contrast Community” retreat was scheduled for Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge but was cancelled for lack of sponsors (staff members who act as chaperones).

Kogodus Renewal Ministry continues to support Freedom in Christ at M.S.P. Pastor Rob Nedbalek has also taken part in several Kogodus retreats at both the women’s and men’s prisons in Montana. We encourage adults in Montana, North Dakota, Illinois, and adjoining states to take part in prison ministry. It has proven to be a transformational experience for many who have (both inmates and team members alike)!

We give God thanks for all of the laity and pastors who participate in our retreats and one-day seminars. For more information visit our website: www.kogodus.org or call Rev. Greg Karlsgodt (406-544-1699). Kogodus has proven to be an effective way to foster individual and congregational spiritual renewal. We offer our motto prayer: “Come, Holy Spirit! Revive your Church! Begin with me!”

A Partner in Christ,

Rev. Greg Karlsgodt, Executive Director