

KOGUDUS RENEWAL MINISTRY (2021 Annual Report to the Synod)

The Board of Directors of K.R.M. and I thank the Montana Synod and all who have supported this retreat ministry in 2021 and 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 Kogudus retreats in 1969 while he was a pastor of First Lutheran Church in Glasgow, Montana. The Estonian word, Kogudus, means “Christian fellowship”. Olaf chose that word to convey the **message of Christ, fellowship in Christ, and service for Christ** to describe this ministry. Kogudus retreats have been held throughout the U.S. and in other countries. In recent years, however, there are three states that continue to offer retreats on a regular basis: Montana, North Dakota, and Illinois.

The original retreat called “Faith and Life” is a study of the Apostles’ Creed and the New Testament Greek words for various kinds of servants. It encourages those who attend to discern 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 and rising in Christ (daily baptism) is experienced at this retreat and encouraged as a daily spiritual practice.

“Contrast Community” was introduced in 2014. It is a retreat inspired by Dr. James L. Bailey’s book by that name and is a study of the Sermon on the Mount. “Pilgrims in Recovery” is a retreat developed in 2003 and was first offered at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp for those recovering from addiction and/or co-addiction. It connects the 12 Steps of A.A. and other recovery programs with their Biblical basis to offer spiritual support and guidance to Christians and others who seek serenity. The name was recently changed to “**SOJOURNERS in Recovery**” out of empathy for our native sisters and brothers and in keeping with the Biblical name for those continuing their spiritual journeys.

Only 2 retreats were held in 2021 due to the restrictions of the pandemic. Illinois hosted a “Faith and Life” retreat which was held on July 23 for young adults. Nine candidates and ten team members took part. John Cross is the IL representative on the K.R.M. board. The other retreat was a “Lament and Laughter” event held at Montana Women’s Prison in Billings September 24-26. Twenty-two inmates attended led by nine team members. The women expressed deep appreciation to be able to take part in this event and to have Christians from various parts of Montana share the experience.

Paul Hendrickson represents N.D. on the K.R.M. board. The K.R.M. board of directors met via Zoom in the spring and fall to share ideas on how best to navigate Covid-19’s restrictions. Members of the board are Tamara Bushnell, Arlene Kaurin, Craig Ekegren, Lee Christianson, and Pastor Bob Nagy. Jenny Kunka serves as the K.R.M. Administrative Assistant and David Deffinbaugh as the Financial Manager. Given the challenges that are still before us, we trust in the wisdom, power, and guidance of the Holy Spirit to continue this spiritual renewing ministry!

More information may be found at www.kogudus.org or by calling Rev. Greg Karlsgodt (406-544-1699). The K.R.M. motto prayer is appropriate for all of us as followers of Jesus Christ: **“COME, HOLY SPIRIT! REVIVE YOUR CHURCH! BEGIN WITH ME!”**