

KOGUDUS RENEWAL MINISTRY
(2020 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 2020 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 2020 due to the restrictions of the pandemic. Illinois hosted 2 “Faith and Life” retreats. One was held on July 25th for young adults and the other for women on October 17. Both were one day events (called “Kogudus 0.5”). A total of 13 attended the young adult event and 9 women at the latter. On August 23 the Illinois Kogudus leaders met in Normal, IL at Our Saviour Lutheran Church to review these events and plan for the future. John Cross was chosen to be the IL representative on the K.R.M. board.

The Kogudus leaders in North Dakota met in January to discuss future possibilities given the limitations of the pandemic. Paul Hendrickson was chosen to represent 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. 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!”**

Rev. Greg Karlsgodt, Executive Director

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“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” retreats were offered at both the state prisons in Montana, at three in North Dakota and at Rocky Boy’s reservation in Montana in 2018. This retreat was held once at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp in 2003 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 in order to offer spiritual support and guidance to Christians and others who seek serenity.

There was a total of 10 retreats and one seminar held in 2019. Montana hosted 2 “Faith and Life” retreats at the men’s and women’s prisons along with a “Faith and Work” one day seminar at Malta Lutheran Church. North Dakota hosted a total of 2 “Pilgrims in Recovery” retreats and 3 “Lament and Laughter” prison events. Illinois hosted 3 “Faith and Life” retreats: one for men, one for women, and one for young adults. The Illinois retreats were held at Camp Griesheim. A total of 226 people attended K.R.M.’s retreats in 2019.

Kogudus Renewal Ministry is grateful for the support and cooperation of the state prisons in Montana and North Dakota as well as the hospitality of Rev. Rob Nedbalek at Freedom in Christ ministry. We also thank Annamae Siegfried-Derrick, Community Relations Manager at Montana Women’s Prison, for graciously accommodating K.R.M. retreats. Furthermore, the long-time support of the Montana Synod and ELCA continues to be appreciated!

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