

Karen Episcopal Ministry Formation program

For the past two years three members of St. Peter's in Louisville, Peh Lu, John Hsar Kaw, and Mu Eh, have been part of an exciting program called "Karen Episcopal Ministry Formation." Please join us in congratulating them on their completion of this exciting program.



Peh Lu, Mu Eh, and John Hsar Kaw immigrated to the USA from Myanmar after spending many years in refugee camps in Thailand. They are members of the Karen ethnic group which has been persecuted by the government of Myanmar since 1948. Both in Myanmar and in Thailand, the Karen community have been part of an Anglican community that functions with circuit-rider priests, where lay members of the community see to most of the day-to-day pastoral needs of the congregation. Having an active and involved lay order of ministry is at the heart of what it means to be a Karen Anglican.

The Karen Episcopal Ministry Formation (KEMF) program has connected Karen Episcopalians around the country and around the world and has offered training on how to serve their communities as lay pastors. KEMF was developed with the active participation of the Asiamerica Ministries of the Episcopal Church and has involved Karen people in Kentucky, Tennessee, New York, Minnesota, and other parts of the country. This program has involved training in lay visitation of the sick, leading prayers at community celebrations, reading the scriptures in Karen at Sunday services, and working with the clergy to tend to the unique spiritual needs of a community in diaspora. The program has also included training in needs specific to the USA, such as safe church and anti-racism training.



On January 16 this program held its graduation service online. The service was held at Messiah Episcopal Church in Minnesota on

Zoom, with participation from around the country. At this bilingual service we celebrated their ministries and we all renewed our own baptismal vows. We were honored to have

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry address us via a pre-recorded video which is available on YouTube (link provided below.)

We plan to have a public celebration of the completion of this program once the pandemic subsides and we are able to gather (and eat) in person. When we have scheduled the event we will invite the entire Diocese to join us at St. Peter's.



If you would like to view the Presiding Bishop's address and benediction to the KEMF graduation, you may view it [here](#). If you would like to read the bilingual order of service from the graduation service you may view it [here](#).

Faithfully yours,

The Rev. Robert Hill, Rector
St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Louisville