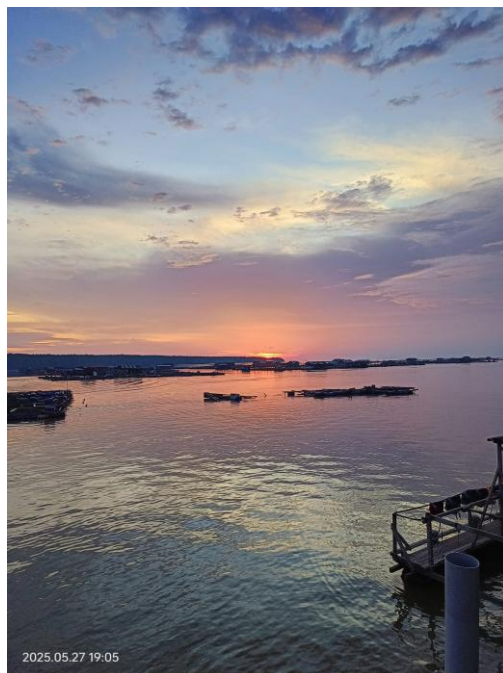


## Personal Reflection on Lutheran Reading Retreat (26–28 May 2025)

*By Steven Tan*

The Lutheran Reading Retreat at Hello Resort, Kukup, was a deeply enriching and spiritually nourishing experience. Over the course of three days, the tranquil fishing environment and slower pace of life created the perfect setting to step away from the busyness of daily responsibilities and be fully present with God, Scripture, and the community.

**Psalm 19:1** The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.



A profound aspect of the retreat was reading *The Care of Souls* by Harold Senkbeil (Chapters 1–5). His reminder that pastoral ministry is not merely about programmes or productivity, but about soul care—being rooted in Christ and tending to the hearts of others—resonated deeply with me. The author emphasizes presence over performance, something I think we often forget in the rush of daily life. The time of individual reflection helped me internalize these truths, while our group sharing created a sacred space to process, learn, and be encouraged by one another’s insights and vulnerabilities.

In addition, engaging with John Powell’s *Why Am I Afraid To Tell You Who I Am?* challenged me to reflect on my own patterns of communication. Pastor Eric’s sharing on the five levels of communication exposed how easily we remain at

surface-level conversations, and how vital it is to risk deeper, more honest sharing to build authentic relationships.

The rhythm of morning and evening Lutheran prayers gave structure to our days and grounded our reflections in worship. Our assigned roles as liturgist, cantor and lector added a sense of personal service towards corporate worship. Mealtimes and casual conversations became moments of grace, as we shared our stories—past, present, and future—and grew closer as a community in Christ.

#### **The Lutheran Band of Brothers**



I left the retreat not only refreshed and spiritually renewed, but also with a clearer sense of my calling to serve with attentiveness, authenticity, and Christlike care. This retreat was truly a sacred pause, and a timely reminder of who I am and who I am called to be.