

Kairos of Georgia

Changing Hearts, Transforming Lives, Impacting the World

September 2025



Greetings Kairos of Georgia Volunteers!

During our Annual Conference in July of this year, our theme was shared, *A Heart to Serve*.

The theme immediately challenged me to examine my heart and the motivations behind my service.

- ❖ Am I serving out of obligation?
- ❖ Am I serving because someone asked me to serve?
- ❖ Am I serving because it makes me feel good on the inside?
- ❖ These and many other questions confronted me...



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Greetings Kairos of Georgia Volunteers! (cont'd)

Last quarter I penned an article titled, *Are We There Yet?*, and I thank God for the responses I received that let me know I wasn't the only one asking that question. Included in this newsletter is one such response.

This quarter, with our theme in mind, I want to ask another question - Are YOU There?

I recently read a story by Max Lucado where he recaps a time when he discovered his young daughter in front of a full-length mirror with her mouth wide open, asking God, are You there? Some of us may be in a season where we're wondering, if not openly asking God, like Max's daughter, are You there?

We've had yet another community to be placed inactive due to declining volunteers. And I'm going to go out on a limb and say they may have been wondering, God, are You there? And for those that are still struggling with being able to return inside the facilities, declining volunteers, or whatever your Kairos challenge may be, you too, may be pondering this same question, God, are You there?

Often, this question is prompted by the fact that we can't or don't see Him moving. We don't see Him opening the doors we want opened. We don't see Him sending the volunteers we need. We don't see Him operating like He's operated in the past as far as our ministry is concerned. And because of this, we may be challenged with having a heart to serve. But I am so grateful and thankful that even in the times where we wonder if God is really there, at the end of the day, the answer is always the same!

The answer is a resounding, YES! Not because I said it and I believe it, but because He said it!

In scripture He said I will never leave nor forsake you. In scripture, He says I will always be with you even until the end of the world. In scripture, He told Moses His Name is I am that I am. Translation, I will always be there. So, Kairos of Georgia, I want to challenge you to remember that no matter how it looks, God is always there, and may this jumpstart our heart to serve! Let's keep moving! Let's keep marching! Let's keep pressing toward the mark! Because 'there' is where He will always be, and there is where I want to be with a heart that is ready, willing and able to serve!

Enjoying this journey, one day at a time!

Beverly

Beverly Upperman, State Chair



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Thoughts Worth Sharing from a Reader

Good afternoon, Sister Beverly,

Thank you for your article *Are We There Yet?* in the newsletter! I always find blessings in the newsletters, but this one was of particular interest to me.

I serve as clergy at Phillips and formerly at Hays. My wife and I traveled to Hays the Sunday afternoon before my first Weekend and God just confirmed this was where He was calling me. Brother Ed Mitchell was the leader and gave me so much insight into the Kairos program. When Hays went on the extended lockdown, I was lost at sea.

Before long, we were invited to join with the Phillips group and what a blessing it has been! After Hays, I almost lost the concept of where there is. But God opened a new door. Now that we have had all the problems with Phillips since COVID, it would be easy for some to forget that our journey is part of there.

We have lost some men, mostly new ones, who have become discouraged because we haven't had a weekend for a couple of years, or they have experienced issues getting badged, but we have to remember that God has a plan and neither the DOC nor Satan can thwart that plan! In God's Special Time, He will provide what is needed both for the prison and for our team!

We need not question, just believe that we are still on this journey with Hiim and one another. We need not be anxious as the work is always there, the workmen need to be ready, and God's purpose will be served and accomplished in His time, His way, and His will. You reminded me of this in your article, so thank you once again, and may God continue to use and bless you. You are a great encourager!! Blessings,

Steve, Steve Armstrong, **Clergy, Phillips**



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2025 Kairos Annual Conference

Augusta, Georgia
July 23-26, 2025



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Hearts That Served!

A clarion call went out for willing workers to serve as volunteers for the Kairos Annual Conference and the response was amazing!

More than 41 responded to the call and in the end, 26 amazing volunteers with a Heart to Serve were chosen based on the needs of the ministry. From early Wednesday morning to mid-afternoon Saturday, these willing workers showed up with helping hands and smiles that truly made the Conference experience a blessing for those in attendance.

They came as individual Christian servants from different Programs, areas of the State, and backgrounds but united and molded into one heart that served well and faithful!

Job well done!



Our Volunteer Team

From top center clockwise:

Beverly Upperman * Jeanenne Brewton * Teresa Deaton * Steve Deaton * Woody Sanderson * Mike Zoellick * Mini Mathew * Pat Cooper * Vanessa Velez-Cruz * Ladson Golden * Dawson Long * Tammy Calhoun * Joyce Moore * Ted Stellern * **Walter Straham, Volunteer Coordinator** * Nita Hodges * Octavia Everett * Julie Brannen * Craig Stone * Robert Carter * Theresa Craft * John Zook * Roxann Davis * Steve Byrd * Lucille Clark * Gayle Roberts * Maria Bailey * Ann Straham

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My First Annual Conference Experience



Blessings Kairos! My experience (1st time) attending the Annual 2025 Kairos Conference was amazing! Attending this conference left me revived, renewed and energized to continue to serve God in any capacity possible. The conference was and is a place of people melding together in the Spirit in Christ Jesus; like-minded believers who come together to exercise the goal of ministering together in the name of Jesus, for Jesus, to the glory of God. **Deborah Wing, Clergy, Pulaski State Women's Prison**

I totally enjoyed my first Kairos Annual Conference. From the theme "A Heart to Serve", to the registration, worship services, speakers, workshops, meals and hotel accommodations everything was great. It was enjoyable to meet Kairos partners from all over the country and learn about their Kairos experiences. I enjoyed speaking with current and prior board members and the Georgia Kairos Officers. **Calvin Denson, Atlanta Metro Re-Entry**



The 2025 Annual Conference was amazing and very informative. The theme of the conference, "A Heart to Serve", reflects the very heart of Christ who came not to be served, but to serve. We were encouraged to listen for God's voice, to speak words of encouragement to one another, and press deeper into His presence. The workshops proved to be helpful, interesting, and fun. **Deb Smith, Pulaski State Prison**

Serving as a volunteer at this year's Kairos Prison Ministry International annual conference was an incredibly rewarding experience. I had the opportunity to contribute to the success of our annual conference serving alongside some of the most caring and selfless people on earth. It was a true blessing to serve on the Georgia volunteer team! My heart is overflowing. **Maria Bailey, Kairos Outside of GA**



The Annual 2025 Kairos Conference was outstanding! It was really enlightening, hearing and talking with other KAIROS locations and their experiences was refreshing. Thank you for the opportunity to attend. **Joseph (Josh) Wilson, Atlanta Metro Re-Entry**



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Georgia Annual Conference Speakers



Thursday Morning Speaker,
Dr. Tim McClendon



Thursday Evening
Memorial Service Speaker,
Chaplain Emily Kelly,
Georgia DJJ



Thursday Evening Speaker,
Tammi McMullen,
Former Kairos Inside Women Resident



Thursday Evening Speaker,
Vanessa Velez-Cruz,
Former Kairos Inside Women Resident
and current State IC Rep

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Georgia Annual Conference Speakers (cont'd)



Friday Morning Speaker,
Rev. Cynseria Jenkins,
Chaplain Whitworth Women's Facility



Friday Evening Speaker,
Dr. Ken Ellis,
Georgia Dept. of Corrections



Friday Evening Speaker,
Aynahis Baldwin,
Former Kairos Torch Resident



Friday Evening Speaker,
Jerry Smiley,
Former Kairos Inside Men Resident



Saturday Morning Speaker,
Rev. Tony Lowden

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Reflections from Kairos 2025 Music Team

We were honored to have been selected to be the music team for the 2025 Kairos Annual Conference. To say that God worked a miracle and quickly knit the music team members hearts together would be an understatement. Only God could have linked five people that had never met or been in worship or fellowship together. Then after only one initial practice session Wednesday night, He somehow made it work!

There are so many dynamics to be considered when preparing for worship. Going into the practice session on Wednesday night, there was no way of knowing in advance if different musicians and vocalists could “gel” quickly and be in unity, harmony, and timing with each other. Each musician/vocalist had their own style/pattern of playing/singing.

We truly saw a “BUT GOD” moment occur when all five of the team were face to face, instruments and microphones in hand, and joined our efforts in praise and worship to our one true King. God united us in one accord (and one chord, bless God!) and bonded us together “for such a time as this.” May the Lord be praised, and we are forever grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this amazing Conference. What a privilege!

In His Service



Front Left to right, Teresa Deaton, Mini Mathew, Bob Carter
Back Left to right, Mike Zoellick, Steve Deaton

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Annual Conference Candids



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Annual Conference Candid



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aHearttoServe

Annual Conference Candid



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Annual Conference Workshops Presented by Georgia Volunteers
and Department of Juvenile Justice
(full list available online [KPMI – Conference](#))

[A Heart to Serve](#), Beverly Upperman & Mike Springer

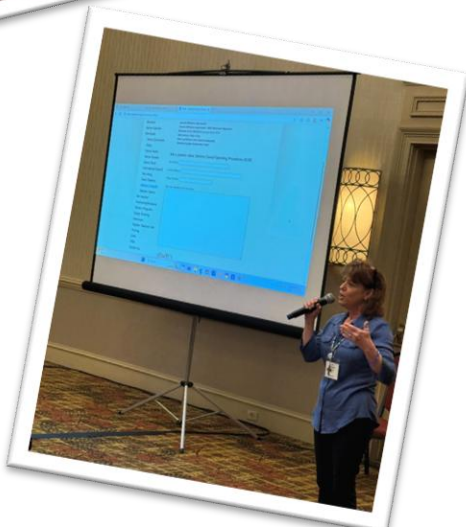
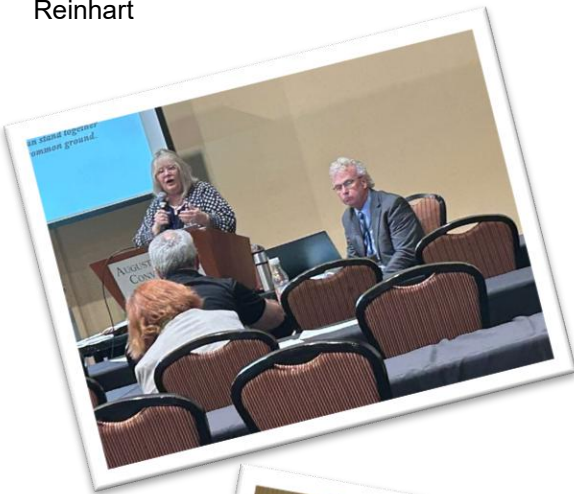
[Breaking In: Presenting the New Facility and New Personnel](#), Margaret Cawood & Emily Kelly (GA DJJ)

[Navigating our Kairos Tools](#), Gary Shelley & Maria Bailey

[The Men of Kairos Outside](#), Marc Stern, Kenneth Henley, & Rosa Fossett-Gilbert

[The Role of Clergy in Kairos](#), Tonia Broadnax & Comforted Keen

[Unity of Faith: Common Ground](#), Ann Mann & Adam Reinhart

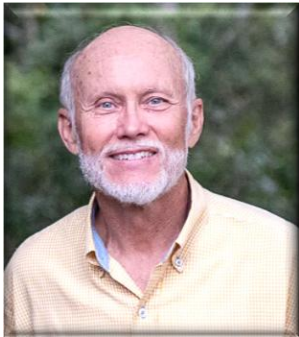


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Welcome Home, Good and Faithful Servants



Gerald Spell, June 23, 2025

A devoted husband, father, and friend, Gerald leaves behind a legacy of unwavering faith, love for the outdoors, and a heart that was always ready to serve others.

Gerald was a man who lived his life in service to God, his family, and had a profound impact on the community.

He was employed by Georgia Power Company for 30 years as a senior tech in the IT department. He was also a volunteer with prison ministries, a mentor, and a friend to many, always seeking ways to serve and uplift others. Above all, Gerald was a devoted husband a loving father and grandfather, and leaves behind a legacy of love, faith, and devotion..



Ruth F. Patton, July 6, 2025

Mrs. Ruth F Patton, 95, of Roswell, GA passed on Sunday, July 6, 2025. Celebration of Life will be held on Friday, July 11, 2025 at 11:00am at Zion Missionary Baptist Church, 888 Zion Cir, Roswell, GA 30075.

The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness to me. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me. I shall give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand.

John 10: 27-28

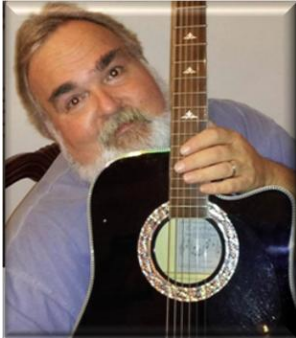


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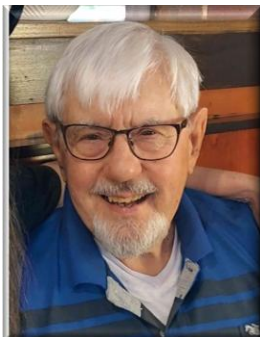
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Welcome Home, Good and Faithful Servants



Timothy Joseph Zoellick, July 29, 2025

Born on June 18, 1954, in Albany, Mr. Zoellick was the son of the late Robert Lee Zoellick and Delores Luther Zoellick. He was a talented singer, guitarist, and absolutely loved music. In his later years he found much joy in playing church music at his place of worship. He loved his family and will be greatly missed.



Robert Stephen Astalos, April 6, 2025

Robert spent his professional life working in human relations for various companies, before starting his own company, Team Communications.

He was also a very talented musician, playing piano, saxophone, clarinet, flute, guitar, bass, and almost any other instrument that crossed his path.

He was very active in his various churches and enjoyed being a part of Via de Cristo, Cursillo, Kairos, Stephen Ministry, and Lion's Club. Bob always had a chuckle, a hug, and a loving attitude. He will be missed by many.

*“Because of our God’s deep compassion,
the dawn from heaven will break
upon us, to give light to those
who are sitting in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide us on the path of peace.
Luke 1:78-79*



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Delicious Choco-Chip Pumpkin Cookies

- 1/2 cup oil (vegetable or canola oil) (120 ml)
- 1 teaspoon milk (5 ml)
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup granulated sugar (200 g)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (5 ml)
- 1 cup canned pumpkin (or homemade pumpkin puree) (245 g)
- 2 cups all-purpose flour (250 g)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon (3 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (3 g)
- 2 teaspoons baking powder (8 g)
- 1 teaspoon baking soda (5 g)
- 1 1/2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips or milk chocolate (260 g)



- Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper or spray very lightly with non-stick cooking spray.
- Add sugar and oil to a mixing bowl and stir well to combine.
- Add egg, milk, pumpkin and vanilla and mix until smooth. In a separate bowl, stir together the dry ingredients.
- Add the dry ingredients and chocolate chips to the wet ingredients then stir just until incorporated.
- Drop by large spoonfuls onto prepared cookie sheet.
- Bake at 375 degrees F for 10-12 minutes, or longer (depending on size), until no longer glossy looking on top.



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A Heart to Serve

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5 (NIV)

The work of Kairos is rooted in abiding connection, first to Christ, and then to one another. Our Kairos Annual Conference theme “A Heart to Serve” invites us to reflect on what it means to serve not out of obligation, but out of the overflow of a heart surrendered to Jesus.

It is in Him, and through Him, that our service bears fruit. Those of us who have walked behind prison walls, or hosted families of the incarcerated, know the miracle of that fruit. We’ve seen hardened hearts softened by grace. We’ve watched guests light up with the realization that they are seen, known, and loved by God. And we’ve felt the unexplainable joy of serving meals, writing letters, or simply listening, because when we serve with His heart, we become part of His redeeming work.

A heart to serve isn’t something we generate on our own. It’s formed in prayer, shaped by Scripture, and nurtured in community. As branches of the true vine, our strength comes not from striving, but from abiding. Let us come with humble hearts, ready to listen, to learn, and to love. May this season be a time of renewal, where our hearts are once again set on fire to serve, not for our glory, but for the glory of the One who calls us.

Ann Ann Mann, State Clergy



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Tending to our Spiritual Health: Taming the Tongue



As Christians, we are challenged to examine ourselves and look at ways we might learn and grow. Too often, we are bombarded with headlines of bloodshed in America. School shootings that shatter families and communities. Deadly attacks on political leaders. Each act of violence leaves us stunned, grieving, and asking the same question:

When will it stop? And what can we do?

If we are honest, we know the answer is not simple. Tighter security, more laws, more blame-shifting, none of these will heal the brokenness at the root of such violence. The only true remedy is the transformation of the human heart. Holiness is not just about personal piety. It's about the love of God poured out through us into the world. Only when every heart turns to Christ will the love and peace of Christ reign in this land. This is my constant prayer. I pray it is yours, as well. Scripture reminds us of the power of words to either bless or destroy. James warns,

“No one can tame the tongue, a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse people, made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth comes a blessing and a curse. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so.”
(James 3:8-10).

He goes on to urge us not to “speak evil against one another” (James 4:11).

We cannot overlook the connection between violent speech and violent action. Words spoken in anger, carelessly flung into the world, whether from a podium, a pulpit, or a social media post, can ignite fires of division, hatred, and violence. This is not the way to settle disagreements. This is not the way of Christ. We must be outraged by all senseless violence, no matter who is the target. But outrage alone is not enough. Outrage must be coupled with repentance, a turning away from the ways of the world and toward the ways of Christ. So, Kairos friends, may we always examine the words we speak, the posts we make, the conversations we fuel. Are they healing? Or are they harming? Are they planting peace? Or are they sowing division? As Paul reminds us, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts” (Colossians 3:15). Violence will not end overnight. But if we are willing to take a hard look at ourselves, if we will allow Christ to tame our tongues and soften our hearts, then we can begin to heal. Let us be people who speak words of life, not death. Words of blessing, not curse. Words of peace, not violence.

