

God Makes Everything New!

Changing Hearts, Transforming Lives, Impacting the World

Kairos of Georgia



March 2021

Greetings Georgia!

Beverly Upperman, Kairos of Georgia State Chair

Our Kairos theme for this year is “Find the Blessing”, focusing on **Psalm 105:1**. As we’re coming out of a cold, dismal and dreary winter and entering into the joy and newness that comes with springtime, I have found a blessing!

God has kept us through many dangers, toils and snares, as He promised! Over the past months, I have spoken with several volunteers and leaders in our ministry and learned that many have been diagnosed with COVID-19. While this news was a bit unsettling, I found a blessing!

They are still here to tell about God’s faithfulness in renewing and restoring them as He brought them through! As we held the first State Chapter Committee and AC Chair meetings for the year, I was excited to see that practically all of our leaders returned for another year to serve! I found a blessing!

The fact that despite being suspended from going into the prisons in 2020, we had a strong finish in 2020 as we served behind the scenes and were still able to support our facilities. For me that was a found blessing!

And the fact that we have our first newsletter of 2021 that is filled with such profound and exciting renderings of what God is using His people to do in this ministry, I thought to myself, I found a blessing!

As you can see, you don’t have to look very far to find a blessing!

The hand of God is moving everywhere we look! Brothers and sisters, as we journey into 2021 be very intentional, look for and *Find the Blessing!*

“Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done.”

Still, I remain in service to the One Who is able to keep me from falling!

Blessings!

Beverly



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Kairos of Georgia Prayer Vigil

Praise God for the fervent, effectual prayers of His saints! Once again, the Body of Christ willingly responded to the call to unite in prayer for our first quarter prayer vigil, March 19th through March 21st.

How blessed to see that on the first day of the prayer vigil, every single slot was taken! What a mighty God we serve, and what an awesome people of faith we have in this ministry!

Mark your calendars for June when we will do it again!!! . Remember, SOMEBODY (Jesus) is praying for you! Let's do it for the least of these!

"Praying for the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ to be with all those working and attending Kairos weekends!"

"Hallelujah! The power of corporate prayer!"

"So happy to pray for this!"

Greater is His grace than our sins

"Thank you for the privilege of joining our Kairos Community in prayer."

"Praying for our inside Kairos community to be the church, the hands and feet of Jesus, ready to share God's love and forgiveness to all who live in their dorms and for the Holy Spirit to open the ears of those that are around them to hear the truth."

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April Showers Bring May Flowers

Chaplain Jim Smith, Georgia State Prison

April showers bring May flowers. That is a saying used by folk raised north of the Mason-Dixon line. Remembering back to my mother's flower beds, that saying was spot on. If there was no rain in April the bulbs in May would produce weak and sparse blossoms. The potential was there, but the bulbs needed an outpouring of rain to become what they were created to be.

As the time for us to be able to minister face-to-face with the incarcerated men and women of this State draws close (prayerfully), we need to be ready to bring the rain. We need to be prayed up, trained up, filled up, and any other "up" that you can think of for the season before us.

If we are not ready to bring the "April Showers" with all the power, grace, mercy and love to the calling and opportunity God has put before us, the "May Flowers" will not blossom to their full potential.

Let us not to be found lacking. KAIROS of Georgia, there is rain on the horizon. May is coming.

Prayers and blessings to each and everyone.

Chaplain Jim



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Celebrating a Servant

At age 86, **James A. (“Jim”) Dirr** is retiring from the Kairos ministry. Jim has had health issues that have caused him to step away from this ministry that he so loved. He has served the Kairos of Georgia organization for 35 years.

Jim was a member of the very first Kairos of Georgia team which was formed in 1985 and served the men at Augusta State Prison. When there was a need to develop a Kairos team which would serve the newly opened Hancock State Prison (1992/1993) in Sparta, Georgia, Jim transferred to the Hancock team. He has been a member of almost every four-day weekend team since then. He attended almost every reunion, as well. Jim has been blessed with a great sense of humor, as well as being a high energy person. Jim brought these gifts to each Kairos event. He always went out of his way to warmly welcome each new team member.

Jim got involved with Kairos following the tragic death of his daughter, Kathleen, who died in a car crash during her sophomore year at the University of Georgia. A friend of Jim was joining that first team at Augusta State. He informed Jim of the new ministry. Jim needed a diversion from the grief he was dealing with and decided to join. Jim has told everyone he has met that Kairos changed his life because it brought him out of that grief and gave him so many joyous spiritual moments. The many team volunteers, prison staff and inmates that have inspired Jim over the years are too many to count. He has witnessed the works of the Holy Spirit and is so grateful that he was led to be a part of this very special ministry.



Hancock Volunteers
(from left to right)
P. Miller,
B. Goodman,
J. Noland,
Jim Dirr,
J. Kirby

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Willing Volunteers at Walker State

Kairos volunteers from Walker State Prison raised approx. \$2500 to provide personal hygiene bags to show their love and support to their brothers behind the walls and to bring a little holiday cheer.



"God is always fair. He will remember how you helped His people in the past and how you are still helping them. You belong to God, and He won't forget the love you have shown His people." - Hebrews 6:10 (CEV)



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Brian Kemp
Governor

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

*Washington State Prison
P.O. Box 206
Davisboro, Georgia 31018-0206
478/348-5814*

Timothy C. Ward
Commissioner

Chaplain Calvin Wilt, Georgia State Prison

Thank you from the guys in GSP who received your letters!

Several of them have stopped me or spoken to me when I'm in the dorms and they have enjoyed reading the letters and passing them along to other Kairos members. Please encourage others on the team to write a letter or two and even the ladies and I will keep passing them out.

I do not know when the restrictions will let up so keep writing and keep praying. I hope you all are still planning the weekend because I have a big list of guys I need to dump on you, Ha. Blessing and again thank you so much.

Always a blessing to serve,

Chaplain Wilt

Chaplain Warren Harris, Washington State Prison

Greetings to you again. This time I personally want to thank you and let you know how much I appreciate you for helping us with our Christmas Project at Washington State Prison. Because of you every inmate at the prison was able to receive a gift package for Christmas. The inmates were told that the gifts come from good caring and loving Christian people like you. I want you to know that our Christmas Project was a success. Thank God, you made it happen and we could NOT have done it without you. Again, thank you very much and may God continue to bless you.

Yours in Christ,
Warren Harris, Chaplain

Warren Harris

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Calhoun State Prison Santa Sock Drop

Doug Porter, CSP Advisory Council State Chapter Rep.

Most of us on the Calhoun State Prison Kairos Inside Team were feeling down and discouraged when we began our Zoom meetings in the spring. If we can't even be with each other, how can we support our brothers on the inside? After a long summer of prayer and thought, our Institutional Liaison, Mark Peak, talked with the prison chaplain and they suggested we write a personalized letter to each Kairos brother inside. These would be similar to the letters we write for the weekend—a kind of agape outreach. We wanted our brothers to know we were thinking of them, praying for them, and looking forward to seeing them again. Most importantly, in the midst of the COVID-induced silence and lack of communication, we have not forgotten or given up on them. Chaplain Jordan had 260 names and requested ten extra letters. In October, we delivered 270 handwritten, personal letters of love and encouragement to the prison chaplain for our Kairos residents.

For Christmas, we wanted to reach out again and, with the support of the chaplain, send Christmas cards to the men. We wanted the cards to be of a religious theme that focused on the birth of Jesus rather than dancing snowmen or jolly Santas. We would include a short message to remind them of God's love and the birth of our Savior and how God can be present in our lives even in times of darkness and uncertainty. **(continued, next page)**



Christmas cards and crew socks for residents at Georgia State Prison

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Calhoun State Prison Santa Sock Drop (cont'd)

This time, the chaplain's list only included 209 names (we're not sure why the drop in numbers) and this time, they were not generic. We had names and we were able to personalize our cards. The Lord blessed us with twice as many cards as we had names for, so we sent well over 120 extra cards with messages of Christ's love to be placed in a Christmas package for other inmates.

In addition to the Christmas cards, the prison allowed us to offer a small gift—a pair of white crew socks. On December 16th, our Continuing Ministry Coordinator, Randy Bishoff delivered the cards and 274 pairs of socks to the chaplain at Calhoun State Prison.

As always, God blessed us as much as he did our inside brothers. Writing Christmas cards to men we have not been able to see for the better part of a year was cathartic. It reminded us of why we do Kairos and how God can be present in our lives even in times of darkness and uncertainty.

Doug



But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 1 John 3:17

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Metro State Prison Re-entry Facility First Annual Turkey Drive

Our Kairos team supporting the Metro State prison re-entry facility in Atlanta conducted their First Annual Turkey Drive. The goal was to furnish 40 turkeys for the returning men that are housed at Metro Re-entry.

However, the Lord is so Graceful with his love and kindness! The Kairos members were able to supply Metro with ninety (90!) 18-pound turkeys, enough for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New years!

"Won't He do it?"

The volunteers also supplied toiletries; something they do every 2nd Saturday of the month. The following names below are men that meet at Metro Re-entry and supply toiletries, turkeys, and their time and love for the returning citizens at Metro every month. Our volunteers are:

Jimmy Smith, Kelvin Thompson, James McKinney, Paul Bolden, Tom Davis, Pastor Stantione, Dwight William Sr., Rev. Michael Creighton, Rev. Richard Fowler, Dennis Redic, Bill Hardison, Samuel Aikin, John Dubose, and Greg Washington.

Let your gentleness be known to all men. The lord is at hand; Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer, and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God. Philippians 4: 5-6b.

Thanks for helping and supporting this event; each member and business and Chaplin Charles Tolbert.

"Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, my Father has blessed you! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger, and you took me into your home. I needed clothes, and you gave me something to wear. I was sick, and you took care of me. I was in prison, and you visited me.' Matthew 25:34-40

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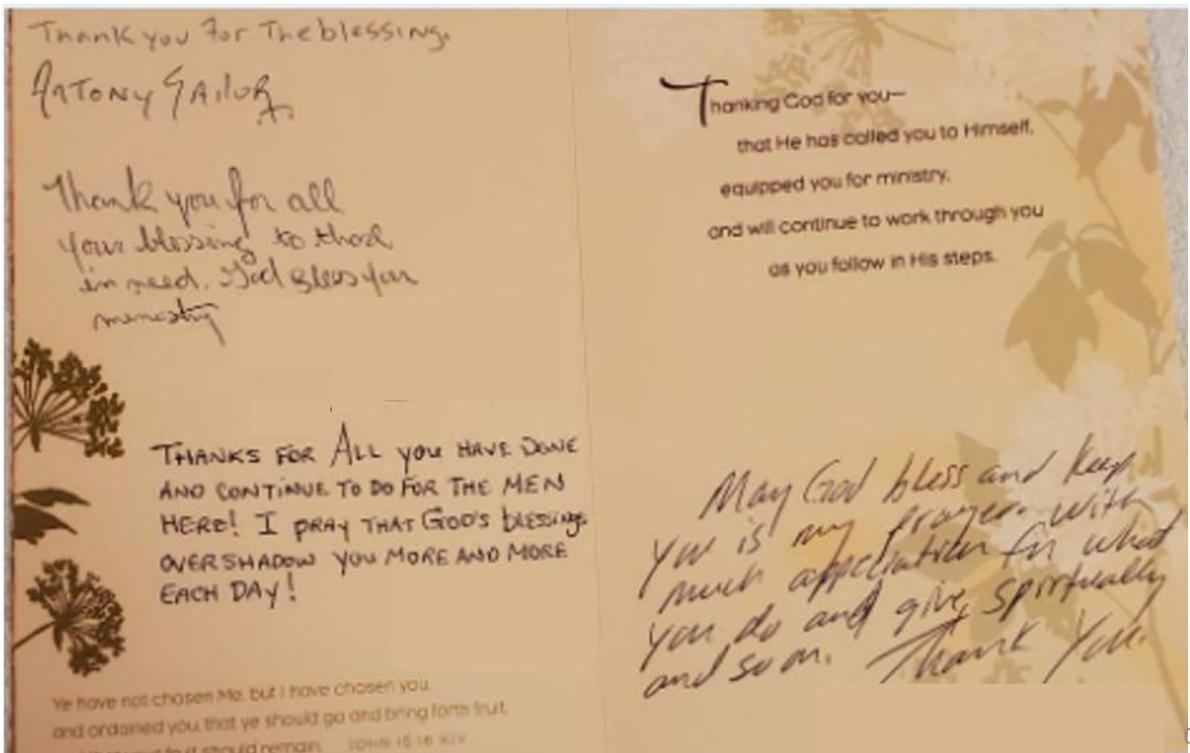
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Residents of Ware State Prison say THANKS!

Volunteers in the Ware State Prison community collected nearly \$1,000 to purchase soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, moisturizing lotion, solid deodorant, t-shirts and Christmas Cards which was delivered just in time to be a Christmas blessing to the men of Ware State. The Chaplain was extremely excited and grateful to receive everything, especially for what he considered to be high quality "good stuff" items. The gifts demonstrated the love and concern of the community for their brothers behind the walls. Said one volunteer, "it was very important to us that the men of Kairos inside the institution know that we are concerned for them and that they are not forgotten".

The Chaplain made a special effort to go back inside and bring the Christmas Card the Kairos guys wanted their brothers in the free world to have, as shown below.

Just know that this expression of love in the form of meeting their needs has had a most positive, loving impact.



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We Remember...



Rev. Percy Skinner
Sunset – December 31, 2020
Wilcox State Prison



Terry Alan Landreth
Sunset – January 29, 2021
Wilcox State Prison



Joe Caldwell
Sunset – January 15, 2021
Wilcox State Prison



Kairos Team for Wilcox State Prison
with Percy, Terry and Joe

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We Remember...



James Edward McAleer, Jr.

Sunset – February 20, 2021
Rogers State Prison

Ruby Elizabeth Griffith

Sunset – January 17, 2021
Kairos Outside Georgia

Archie Hughes

Sunset – March 13, 2021
Kairos Outside GA,
Burruss, Baldwin State Prison



Wm. “Bill” S. Dixon, Jr.

Sunset – December 25, 2020
Calhoun State Prison



Brenda M. Vail

Sunset – March 4, 2021
Whitworth State Prison

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Cookie Recipe for the Quarter

Shelley Ross, Whitworth

UnBelievable Brownies

Believe it! You can doctor a good brownie mix to create the best brownies you've ever had!

Ingredients:

1 box GOOD brownie mix – I prefer the one that has the packet of liquid chocolate inside.
How can you go wrong?

Follow the directions with these substitutions:

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup water = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup oil = $\frac{1}{3}$ cup melted butter
1 egg = 1 egg plus 1 egg yolk

Set the oven at recommended temperature and pour your batter into an 8" x 8" pan (pan size is critical!) Put it in the oven, set the timer for an initial 15 minutes.

Cut 12 – sixteen mini chocolate bars in half. When the timer goes off at 15 minutes, drop them onto the brownies and push them under the top of the batter. DON'T stir. Gently semi-smooth the top of the brownies and put them in for the rest of the cook time.

They will be deliciously fudgy with luscious centers and lots of chewy crunchy edge pieces. Your friends will think you are a chocolate genius. And, they'll be right.



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Find the Blessing

"Find the Blessing". That is the Kairos theme for 2021. With everything shut down and social distancing, this theme has a prophetic ring to it. We know how to "do" team meetings and weekends, and they are always a source of blessings. But COVID has "moved our cheese" (<https://www.amazon.com/Moved-Cheese-Spencer-Johnson-M-D/dp/0743582853>)!

So where are the blessings of Kairos outside of our usual places?

They are there to be found: In the experiences of the Kairos community as we continue in our 4th Day, as we pray for our institutions, residents and chaplains, and as we seek to overcome obstacles by God's direction.

We need to be encouraged, to seek out and to get out the good news. Jesus is so much greater than these temporary circumstances.

So your Georgia Kairos newsletter team is asking you to get the word out, and testify to God's blessings in your community. Let us know, and we will let everyone know,

"The word that goes forth from my mouth shall not return to me void, but shall do my will and achieve the end for which I sent it" (Is 55:11)

"Jesus is counting on you... and I am counting on Jesus"



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Special Easter Addendum

The following four-page article was written by a resident of Walker State Prison.

This article doesn't contain "news", per say, but it provides us with a great deal of insight into what the Kairos weekend means to those Kairos volunteers inside the prison.



We know how important they are to us as we prepare for, and execute the weekend activities. This short story by Garrett allows us to experience the excitement and emotion our friends inside feel when they are selected to be our "angels".

Please enjoy!

**Are not all angels ministering
spirits sent to serve those who
will inherit salvation?**

Hebrews 1:14



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From a Walker State Prison Kairos Graduate My First and My Last in 2020

After recently writing an article on how music has impacted my life, I came to the realization that there are many experiences that I've had that have been memorable. One that comes to mind is from March of 2020, just shy of the world changing pandemic.

Kairos Walk #22, Walker State Prison, Table of.....Well, we had yet to hear the remainder of that sentence. This would be the first weekend I would have the opportunity to work since going through Walk #17 back in 2017. I was excited to be given the opportunity to serve the guys who were about to get a glimpse of what Kairos was all about. I was scheduled for Thursday. They call those who work on that day the "setup crew." Now, to be completely transparent, I was really hoping to work one of the weekend days so I could see the looks on the new faces who were experiencing the walk. I would be lying if I said I wasn't a little bummed to be missing those moments. But I was! And it was ok, because finding the silver lining in everything is a talent God gave me.

So, Thursday comes. With an early alarm set, granules of instant Folger's coffee already sitting in my cup awaiting to be gulped down, I awake with excitement a good 30 minutes before my alarm is supposed to go off. Little did I know, that day would bring an opportunity to me like I've never experienced and would never forget.

The set up crew meets up early that Thursday morning eager to start busting butt out in the Walker gym where thanks to God and to Kairos, life changing moments occur. PVC pipes were laying out everywhere like a maze awaiting to ascend. Hand painted murals of Jesus, Peter, Paul, and the others were anxiously awaiting to be hung. I realized quickly that the setup crew consisted of a bunch of motivated, task-oriented, tenacious individuals and that maybe that's why I was picked to work as part of the setup crew. I thought, "Well, makes sense I guess, they wouldn't bring out the couch potatoes to set this all up in a few hours." Still, I was bummed I wouldn't see the look on the faces of those going through the walk.
(continued, next page)

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From a Walker State Prison Kairos Graduate My First and My Last in 2020, cont'd

After the muraled walls were raised and everything is set up, lo and behold, look who walks in. The magnificent musicians. The guys from the outside. The free world folks. Richard and Jeff. To me, they come walking in that gym door with a heavenly glow that surrounds them. As much as I've been impacted by music, (see other article) I naturally gravitate to the door and look in awe at the instruments and amps they are bringing in. Being that most of the instruments I've ever paid attention to have been here in prison, I'm anxious to see what these guys have in their arsenal. I help tote the mystical pieces of equipment over to the stage and wait like a kid on Christmas as the guys venture in to set up for their gig. As they come in and start opening their guitar cases, I notice it. The beauty that radiates out of this particular guitar case is surreal. I envision the sound of angels singing Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! A 5 string bass glares back at me like I've never seen before. I'm instantly entranced. Small talk ensues and some questions about equipment were answered. I was in awe at these majestic pieces of equipment they were setting up. I mentioned that I learned how to play music in prison and that the bass guitar was what I enjoyed playing most. At that point, I am completely enthralled at their setup. Magical colors of the guitars glisten like the glitter looking specs in a freshly buffed car. The arrangement of guitar pedals at a toes reach has me flabbergasted. Most of what I'm seeing in front of me I only see in music magazines. After they get tuned up and dialed in, their sound check begins. As I look around, I'm the only one out in front. One man audience. Richard on the bass guitar, and Jeff bouncing back and forth from the acoustic guitar to the keyboard. These guys are extremely talented! I'm pretty much at a live concert by myself having a ball. Apparently, they see the amusement in my eyes and remembered I said earlier that I've learned to play bass since being in prison.

Jeff says, "Man, you really look like you want to play. Why don't you come up here and jam with us?"

Between being unsure that I was capable of the challenge and also just enjoying hearing the music they were putting out, I declined and told them, "I'm good, I'm just watching and learning!" This was definitely true, but part of me didn't want to get up and make a fool of myself if I couldn't keep up. After all, they looked like music vets! And for some odd reason, I thought playing with free world guys would be different. After a song or two goes by, I'm still just in awe at what they are doing. They finally look over at me and completely halt during the middle of a song and say, "Look, come on up here and jam with us. You obviously want to." **(continued, next page)**

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From a Walker State Prison Kairos Graduate My First and My Last in 2020, cont'd

Without needing anymore convincing, I make my way to the stage. Richard begins to unstrap from his gorgeous 5-string bass guitar and, in what seems like slow motion, hands it to me. I slide it over my neck and shoulder and immediately feel like I'm holding a 3-4 foot piece of solid gold in my hands. Now don't get me wrong, the 4-string bass guitar I usually use in church services has taught me everything I know and more. But it's like going from a Ford Pinto to a Rolls Royce. The feeling this 5 String fanned fretted bass gave off was pure bliss. It fit like a tailored suit. I play a quick major scale run to get the feel for it and become thunderstruck. This is about to be unforgettable. Richard and Jeff arrange a copy of the music we are about to go over and the drummer, Walt, also an inmate here at Walker, clicks off a 1, 2, 3, 4. With Jeff tickling the ivory keys, Richard shredding the electric guitar like Van Halen, Walt laying a slick percussion, and me grooving with the sound of the kick drum, we are off and rockin'. After God knows how many songs we did, we take a few minutes for a break and some snacks. I'm absolutely elated. I head back to the snack room where the other inmate workers are and rant and rave to the guys about what just happened. This is one of the coolest experiences I've ever had with playing music.

After a quick 10-15 minute break, a trip to cloud 9, and lots of grinning going on, I am approached by the outside guys. They ask, "How would you feel about playing bass with us through the whole walk?" My jaw literally drops, and I feel it hit the tops of my feet. "Are you guys serious?!" I ask.

"Well, yes, of course. Do you have any plans for this weekend?" I laugh and quickly accept the invitation before somehow it gets retracted. I went from cloud 9 to cloud 999. What an amazing opportunity this was going to be. And to think I was just being used as part of the set up crew. Little did I know, God had a different plan for me that weekend when He brought these loving and accepting souls into my life. **(continued, next page)**

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From a Walker State Prison Kairos Graduate My First and My Last in 2020, cont'd

At that moment, I had little knowledge that would be the last time I would play bass and the last time I would see these guys in the year 2020. Due to the events that were beginning to transpire throughout the world, the normal that we once knew would begin to change. That night is when we found out the Kairos Walk #22, among many other events, would be cancelled due to the coronavirus. In saying all of this, I want to give great thanks to Richard, Jeff, and Walt for encouraging me, giving me the wonderful opportunity to not only jam with them that afternoon but also a chance to help lead worship during that Kairos weekend. Although the weekend never happened, I am forever thankful for the confidence that still radiates through me in playing music. I do believe God placed them and that very situation in my life for something greater when I finally get this appeals process taken care of. Kairos has truly been a blessing in my life and I look forward to helping lead worship with them given the opportunity when I can return home.

My name's Garrett, I attended Walk #17/Walker State Prison, at the table of Matthew!



Image pulled from Google Stock photography/images