

Find the Blessing!

Changing Hearts, Transforming Lives, Impacting the World

Kairos of Georgia



June 2021

Letter from Kairos of Georgia State Chair

Hello Georgia!

Spring is behind us and summer is here! It's hard to believe we're halfway through 2021! As I sat pondering this, a line from a song by the Rolling Stones came to mind – time waits for no one! Yes, time is moving quickly, and it poses a good question – what are we doing with our time? I know many of you have spent time training with your Advisory Council. Some have spent time looking for opportunities to continue supporting our incarcerated brothers and sisters and the staff at the facilities. Others have spent time caring for loved ones. Some have started reconnecting with family and friends as we take more liberties during the still-prevailing pandemic.

No matter how you are spending your time, I pray you have been very intentional in your times of prayer and meditation for one another and the Kairos ministry.

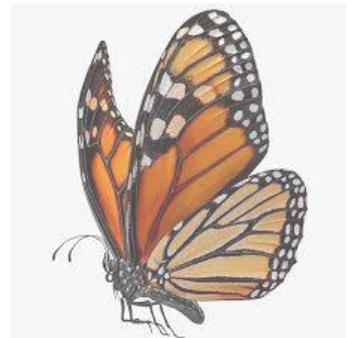
We are still anxiously awaiting the time when we're allowed to return to serving behind the walls and meeting with one another. But in the meantime and in this between-time, may we make the best of the time we have been given. May we not be so focused on the time ahead when things return to 'normal' that we miss what is taking place in the here and now. Let's celebrate the gift of life. Let's celebrate one another. Let's celebrate every moment our Good, Good Father gives us. And let us remember that

"in His time, in His time, He makes all things beautiful in His time!"
(Ecclesiastes 3:11)

I am still enjoying this journey!

Blessings!

Beverly



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Fish Stew and Fellowship

David Carvin, Autry SP

Autry State Prison was closed to Kairos at the end of 2019 due to staffing shortages and then COVID, which greatly impacted the 1700 residents there.

Over the past 19 months, 800 residents have been transferred out, leaving just over 900.



There is good news! According to **Chaplain Simmons**, nine inmate graduates of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary have been leading worship services and Kairos weekly Prayer and Share since May 7th, and all of them are Kairos graduates! Because of staff shortages religious services are held on weekdays only, from 7:30 am to 3:45 pm. The plan is to begin admitting outside volunteers in September, but until they are staffed, it seems unlikely they will permit a Kairos weekend.

Not to be deterred, the Kairos Autry volunteer community got together on Saturday, June 5th. Jamie Salter prepared a meal of fish stew, and 17 Kairos men enjoyed fellowship and prayer. We were reminded of the last chapter of John's gospel. We identified with the apostles who spent the night casting nets but catching nothing. But in the morning, a man on shore called out to cast the net on the other side of the boat, and the net was filled with fish.

Jesus was alive! "Feed my sheep." "Follow me." Jesus was alive! "Feed my sheep." "Follow me."

We are all in uncertain circumstances. We have been sitting in our boat through this long night with empty nets. We have been isolated from each other. Some of us have been sick; others have died.

For 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 invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

Matthew 25: 31-36

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GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

The **GDOC** opened for modified family visitation (appointment-only) in April. All is going well although they have been surprised with the small number of family visits which may be due to the fact that children are not allowed in at this time. The GDOC described the reopening as a 'trickle' rather than the 'flood' they were expecting!

On a positive note, volunteer re-entry may happen in the middle or late summer, and Kairos ministry is one of the volunteer groups being considered for this re-entry. Kairos has been commended for the positive way we have conducted ourselves in the past, and the instrumental ministry we have provided! PRAISE GOD!

In light of this latest development, we must ask ourselves – are we ready? Are we prepared? Are our badges up-to-date? Have we familiarized ourselves with the Kairos Reopening Criteria? Do we know the health requirements? Are we having crucial conversations so we will know who is ready to re-enter our facilities?

These and other questions must be answered so that when we get the green-light, we will BE PREPARED! **So again, ARE WE READY?**



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Learn More About Kairos in Georgia

Vision

A community spiritually freed from the effects of imprisonment reaching all impacted by incarceration, through the love, Hope, and faith found in Jesus Christ.

Mission

The mission of the Kairos Prison Ministry is to share the transforming love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ to impact the hearts and lives of incarcerated men, women and youth, as well as their families, to become loving and productive citizens of their communities.

To learn about our ministry, training availability, on-line resources, and statewide programs and events, go to:

www.kairosgeorgia.org

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Kairos Participant Testimony

To Kairos Brothers and sisters on the outside,

I just read the latest batch of letters from you and wanted you to know they produced tears. What kind of tears? Joy? Not really. Deeper than that. Sincere tears of gratitude. Thankfulness. Relief. A deep gut reaction of relief to find that someone cares. It's a reaction I've felt only rarely, so I wanted you to know, your letters that tell us you care are still there and are willing to take a moment to let us know. It strikes me to the core.

Thank you.

In personal news, I just finished my third semester of Ashland University. One class in particular was really working me over, but thanks to a little grace from the professor who knew how hard I was trying, and let me make up some missing work, I managed to get an A. I think I got another four A's this semester to go with the three from the last one. God is blessing my college attempt!

I'm still praying, reading and looking to the sky to our Father with prayer, supplications and thanks. I even tell my friends: "The Kingdom of God is at hand!" Just ask Him, and you can join us in the Kingdom we make manifest every day by worshipping him with our lives, by loving others and always in all things, trying to be like Him." I had this great Christian Ethics course as part of my studies this semester. It was extremely cool to be *assigned* the Gospel of Mark as part of a college course. I also got to write several papers on the subject! It was an excellent course and I learned a lot. It focused heavily on the Kingdom of God and what Jesus meant by it, as that was the Gospel message He and the Apostles preached. Truly edifying.



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Kairos participant testimony, cont'd.

Last year saw Covid-19 sweep through our dorm, and all the people near me suffered the classic, rather unusual symptoms, including the loss of taste and smell that lasted about 5 days. Most other symptoms were very unusual as well. They did not feel like the ordinary flu and cold symptoms to me. This was back in September 2020. I had it for four weeks. I'm diabetic, so that made it harder. But I've been fully vaccinated for more than a month now with the Moderna vaccine, so I count myself blessed mightily.

I pray for you and your health out there. Please pray for us in here. Security is getting looser and looser and looser as officers continue to quit. It's getting more and more scary. People around us are using terrifying substances as "drugs", stuff that makes them act completely insane sometimes. The Parole Board has notified me that they plan to keep me an additional two years beyond my 2027 parole date, taking me to 2029. What will circumstances be like then? I can't imagine. But faith, hope and love, they will get us through. The greatest of those three, BTW, is love.

But there is one thing greater: Knowing God. This is the deep, abiding privilege we share.

Amen. Love,

S.

Table of Luke

***"...But let the one who boasts
boast about this:
That they have the
understanding to know me,
That I am Lord,
Who exercises kindness,
justice and righteousness
on earth,
For in these I delight,"
Declares the Lord.***

Jeremiah 9:24



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The Prevailing Power of Prayer!

Chaplain Jim Smith, Georgia State Prison

PRAISE GOD for another successful prayer vigil!

If I was betting man; I'd wager my next social security check that no one out there has ever plowed with a team of mules. I have watched my dad plow the garden with a mule and when he had a bigger piece of ground to work, he would hook up the second mule and they sure could get the job accomplished. When I read in 1st Kings 19:19 Elisha was working with not one, not two, but twelve yokes of oxen, it makes me wonder what was in front of him that was going to take so much time and energy to get the result he wanted.

We have just completed another time of united prayer. We had a lot of work to get done. Now, we all could have said, "I will pray when I get a chance", but that is just like plowing with one mule when two are needed or using six yokes of oxen when twelve are needed.

When the archangel Gabriel was bringing an answer to Daniel, he needed the intervention of Michael so that he could continue. All of us need the rest of us. Ecclesiastes 4:12 says "Two can defend themselves, a cord of three is not easily broken." We had a lot more than three. Thank you.

Kairos is powered by prayer. This past weekend we just filled it up with high test.

Praise be to HIS holy name and thank God for every prayer warrior!

Jim Smith



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Sunset Remembrance



William Thomas Gentry Crankshaw, Sr.
May 1, 1935 – June 1, 2021
Smith State Prison



Marguerite Ziegler-Buchan
1949 – April 5, 2021
Kairos Outside Georgia



Douglas Cozart McAfee
May 20, 1941 – June 1, 2021
Washington State Prison



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Lemon Key Lime Pie Bars

Ingredients

- 2 sleeves Ritz crackers
- 2 tablespoons light or dark brown sugar
- 1 stick (8 tablespoons) salted butter, melted
- 3 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 5 large egg yolks
- 1 3/4 cups sweetened condensed milk
- 1 tablespoon lime zest, plus 2/3 cup lime juice
- 3 tablespoons lemon or pink lemon juice (or additional lime juice)
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1-2 tablespoons honey

Lime Salt

- zest from 1 lime
- flaky sea salt

Instructions

- 1. Preheat the oven to 350° F. Line a 9-inch square pan with parchment paper.
- 2. In a food processor, pulse the crackers and brown sugar into crumbs. Add the butter and 2 teaspoons vanilla, pulse to combine. Press the mix into the prepared pan. Bake until golden, about 18 minutes.
- 3. Meanwhile, whisk the egg yolks in a medium bowl until smooth. Add the sweetened condensed milk, lime zest, lime juice, lemon juice, and salt. Whisk to combine. Carefully pour the mix into the baked crust.
- 4. Bake for 15 minutes, until just set on top. Let cool slightly, then cover and chill in the fridge until set, at least 1-2 hours.
- 5. Before serving, using an electric mixer to whip the cream until soft peaks form. Add the honey and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Whip to combine. Swirl the cream onto the bars. In a bowl, mix the lime zest and a pinch of flaky salt. Sprinkle over the bars. Slice and enjoy! The bars will keep chilled in the fridge for up to 5 days.





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Benediction

Ann Mann, Whitworth Clergy

My first Kairos weekend (Whitworth #1) changed me forever.

All the walls came down, and we were one with Christ, with each other, and in ministry to the world. There was no more shame or guilt – washed away by the love of Christ.

God invites us to follow in His footsteps. One of the passages that makes this clear is Matthew 25: 31-46. We are joining Jesus at the tail end of a story. It begins in Chapter 24 when Jesus tells the disciples about the coming destruction of the temple. So, the disciples want to know, “When will this be? How will we know that the end of the age has arrived?”

This is a question people still ask today. Jesus says there will be wars and rumors of wars. There will be famines and earthquakes. There will be persecution, and many will fall away. False prophets will arise and lead many astray.

“But,” Jesus says, “the one who endures to the end will be saved.”

So, we must endure. We must remain faithful as we wait to return to the prisons. And while we wait, we pray. I am using this as a time to find those willing to join us when we return. Our volunteer group has also planned a Kairos prayer vigil via Zoom at the end of June – a great way to pray that God will send us more willing hearts. And most important, an opportunity to pray that God will soften the hearts of the women inside to receive the message of Christ’s love and forgiveness.

We are called to serve “the least of these.” And as we serve, my prayer is that we always see Jesus in the face of the one who is hungry, thirsty, a stranger who is naked and sick and in prison. The waiting is hard, but the reward will be worth it.

I can’t wait to see what God is doing in this season of fallow fields. May we be ready for planting season when the time comes.

Ann Mann

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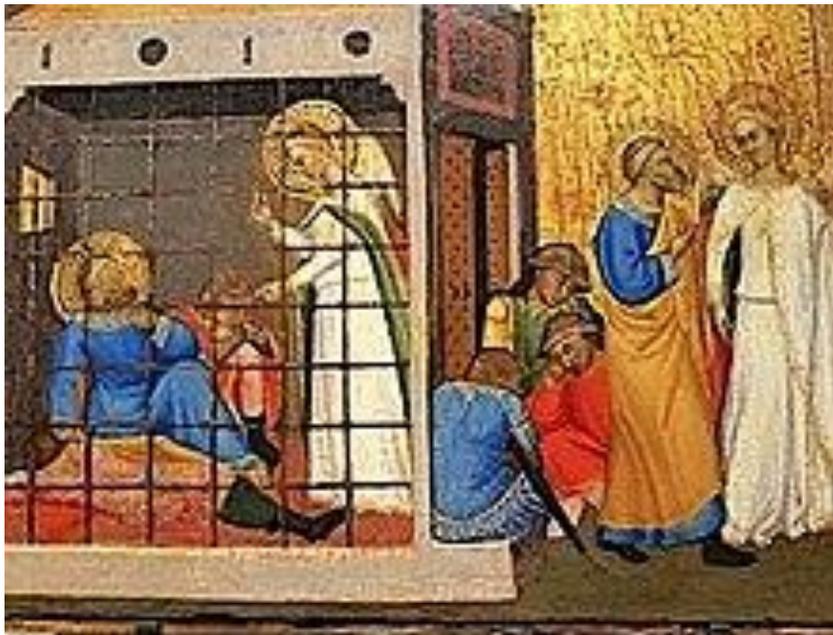
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Special 4th of July Addendum

We continue to applaud the efforts of our volunteers to stay connected with and encourage those behind the walls. The following pages is an encouragement letter put together for the residents at Wilcox State Prison. The letter focuses on the 4th of July and, more importantly, the God-centered focus of our founding fathers. This is the seventh encouragement letter written by the Wilcox volunteers in the past 14 months, and each one has had a specific theme. This letter, along with the others, will be posted throughout the dorms at Wilcox. As we celebrate with picnics, fireworks, and enjoying a day off, may we be reminded of the God-aspect of this celebration that many Americans forget about, or simply don't know.

"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)





Blessings to our Kairos brothers at Wilcox State Prison, and to anyone else who may happen to read this letter! Also, happy 4th of July! We hope this letter finds you in good health and spirits as we celebrate our country's 245th birthday this July 4th!

As all of you already know, this special day is a national holiday commemorating when our Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776. The Declaration was a formal announcement by the thirteen American colonies that they were independent of England and that country's king. The Declaration was one of the first steps toward forming the United States of America. So, you are probably thinking to yourself, if I am incarcerated at Wilcox State Prison, what is there to celebrate about? Those on the outside might be having a picnic, or a barbeque. They might be gathering with family, friends, and others. Since these kinds of activities are not possible for those who are incarcerated, the question of "What is there to celebrate?" is only natural.

This letter offers an answer to that question and another perspective.

John Adams, who was one of our country's founding fathers, a signatory of the Declaration, and who would go on, a few years later, to become the second President of the United States, wrote of this special day, "...it ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty." Why, you might ask, should there be solemn acts of devotion to God? Why should this be considered a day of deliverance? Because our country was founded based on a belief in God, and it has been built for the last 245 years based on God-given values and principles. Did you know the authors of the Declaration inserted four direct references to God? Without going into a lot of detail, the Declaration cites "laws of nature and of nature's God." It goes on to say that "all men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." The document later appeals to "the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our actions." Lastly, the Declaration was made "with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence." All of these references are to a supreme, almighty God.

There was a time during the Revolutionary War when victory looked very bleak for the rebellious colonies. The Continental Army, made up mostly of volunteers, citizen soldiers, was facing the greatest military power in the world, a professional British fighting force that vastly outnumbered and vastly outgunned the "rag-tag" colonials. If the English had won, all of those who signed the Declaration might have been hanged as traitors, or at least been thrown into prison. There is a famous painting of General George Washington, as commander of the Continental Army, on one knee in the snow, next to his horse, praying during the terrible winter of 1777-78 at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. His troops had little food, were ravaged by sickness and disease, and were struggling just to make it through the winter. It is widely recorded that Washington regularly read the Bible and prayed, as did many of this country's founding fathers. This painting of Washington, kneeling in prayer during one of the darkest moments of America's fight for independence, illustrates the closeness to God of many of the leaders of that time.



Why should there be solemn acts of devotion to God? Why should this be considered a day of deliverance?

Because, despite the impossible odds against the revolutionaries, it was through God's Providence that the colonies went on to win America's war of independence and the United States of America came into existence. I think everyone would agree, we have not been a perfect nation in the last 245 years. There is still much room for improvement. Recent events over the past year, combined with our nation's past, demonstrate there is still strong reason to continue to turn to God for guidance and direction in our lives, and in our government. However, no other nation in the world has been founded on the rock-solid faith in, acknowledgement of, and dependence on the God of all Creation. Due to that position, He granted many miracles, including the defeat of the seemingly undefeatable British Army and this country's birth as an independent nation.

Since that time, other miracles have abounded, in war, in peace, in economic development, in scientific and technological development, in industrialization, in medicine, and in human rights...all with God's Providence.

This Independence Day, let each and every one of us give thanks to God for our country, and for our good fortune to live in this country, no matter what our circumstances. Let us also pray for God's continued divine Providence, that we might make progress on improving those things that need improvement ... there is no shortage of those, as we continue our faith-based journey, which our forefathers began many generations ago! That same God that Washington prayed to at Valley Forge, and at so many other times, will not turn His back on us, His people, as long as we do not turn our backs on Him. That same God will open the doors of Wilcox State Prison one day, on His timeline, not on ours, so that Kairos activities may once again commence.

Until then, we encourage you to honor Him, and to pray to Him, and to continue your efforts to grow closer to Him in your daily walk. Do this using all the tools you learned about during your 4-day Kairos weekend. Remember the talk, "You Are Not Alone"? One of the objectives of this talk was to convey to you the community that God has created, no matter where you might be and no matter what your circumstances are. This is the same "community" mentioned in the Kairos Community Prayer in your Freedom Guide. Make every effort to meet in Prayer and Share groups, using the outline on page 1 of your Freedom Guide ... we practiced this during your Kairos weekend. Matthew 18:20 says, "Wherever two or more are gathered together in my name, I will be there with you." There were many great talks during your Kairos weekend, such as "Discovery" and "Christian Action". Think back to these talks, and refer to the notes you took if you need memory joggers. They all offered great tools to help you on your spiritual journey.

As we eagerly await our next in-person meeting together with all of you, we share these thoughts and words: May the Lord bless you and keep you, may He make His face shine down upon you, and be gracious unto you. May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.

The Wilcox S.P. Kairos "Outside Volunteers"

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Jesus awaits us on the beach

The disciples were working very hard to succeed at their mission – to catch enough fish to provide for their families.

They were frustrated beyond words.

But Jesus waited patiently for them, and when the time came, he not only provided the fish they needed to survive, but his companionship, his love, his commission, and his forgiveness and compassion.

Hang in there!

This season will not last forever, and meantime we can pray together, we can pray for our friends in prison, we can encourage one another and our friends in prison.

Though we don't know God's will in this time, we must have faith and remember that "All things work together for good." Romans 8:28

Please send us the stories of your ministry in this time: What are you doing? What are you saying? What are you thinking? What provides you with encouragement? We'd love to share your story with our Georgia Kairos volunteers.

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