

# Kairos of Georgia

Changing Hearts, Transforming Lives  
Impacting the World



September, 2023



## Hello Georgia!

Fall is upon us and our ever-changing seasons, as well as unpredictable weather, are vivid reminders that we are not in control! But as always, there is good news! The birds are still singing! The flowers are still blooming! Fruits and vegetables are still growing! Kairos is still surviving and thriving! And above all else, our God reigns, and He is still in control! That should give us encouragement and comfort.

This reminds me of the Kairos theme shared during our Annual Conference, **OVERCOME**.

First John 5:4-5 tells us, "...for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."

We are world overcomers! No matter how much change we continually see in our world, no matter how much things have changed in how we do ministry, no matter how many situations and circumstances come our way, we can overcome! Because of our faith, we have the victory! There is power in knowing that because He overcame, we can overcome!!!

My challenge to each of you is that as we approach the last quarter of the year 2023, may this powerful word, **OVERCOME**, be the driving force, or the 'wind beneath our wings' as we purpose to finish strong! If you're fully back in your facility, may your light and presence **OVERCOME** the darkness that's there. If you're only partly back in your facility through Prayer and Share or Reunions, may your light and presence **OVERCOME** the disappointment of not having Weekends at this point. If you have not been allowed back in your facility, may your light and presence **OVERCOME** the discouragement some volunteers may have. May this one word, **OVERCOME**, be your testimony no matter what!

Standing on the promises of God!

Beverly Upperman, Georgia State Chair

*Beverly*





## What Being Real Looks Like to Inmates....and to Kairos Volunteers– A Chaplain’s View



Kairos teaches that our participants will quickly sense whether a volunteer is genuine in his compassion and concern for the state of their souls. The man whose witness they revere the most is **Rev. Charles Tolbert**, chaplain at Metro Re-entry Facility in Atlanta.

He’s also one of the few people who could and does present a combination devotional and refresher security briefing every morning as the Kairos team checks into prison.

“I think of him as my grandfather,” said a Metro Kairos #3 participant. In any face-to-face encounter, Charles Tolbert puts across the love of Jesus. Tolbert’s congregation at Metro also realizes their chaplain can’t be conned. After 19 years as a clinical chaplain with Atlanta PD, 27 years as a private investigator, and 31 years in the GDC chaplaincy, Charles Tolbert has heard it all before.

Georgia’s newest Kairos team serves Metro, now meeting in preparation for its fourth post-COVID weekend. The initiative to form a team for Metro grew out of longstanding relationships between Chaplain Tolbert and volunteers, mainly from Phillips SP where he was chaplain for 11 years. The team also comprises volunteer veterans of Hayes, Hancock, Walker and Washington State Prisons.

Kairos went into Metro in 2022 when most of GDC and most Georgia Kairos programs were still finding their way out of the COVID shutdown. Tolbert’s influence factored heavily in letting Kairos into Metro. The warden could be sure a Tolbert-chaperoned Kairos weekend would not make any new problems for the institution.



## Chaplain Charles Tolbert (cont'd)

Providentially, Kairos activities have led to no new outbreaks of COVID, either among inmates or volunteers. In practice, Tolbert's commitment to the Kairos ministry proves to be as deep as any volunteer's. He tells the volunteers he loves them and he's grateful for their ministry. And his actions speak louder than words. The chaplain is in the prison, mostly with the team, for the entire 3 ½ days of the program.

A licensed preacher since 1982, ordained in 1989, Tolbert was an active disciple when the Holy Spirit led him onto the chaplaincy scene. He was leading ministries for the incarcerated, the newly released, and the homeless. A policeman in his congregation told him about a need for police chaplains. He applied and soon found himself at the police academy getting trained. During his 19 years with the Atlanta PD, he earned Chaplain of the Year honors from the Atlanta force and from the DeKalb NAACP.

The move into state corrections chaplaincy was a natural step for Tolbert. He served at Rockdale, Helms, A.L. Burruss, Phillips and Metro Re-entry, and at the GDC central office.

At Phillips, Tolbert's assignment was mental health chaplain. It was at Phillips that he witnessed Kairos ministry in action. "We had these mental health cases in there, erratic or completely closed off to interaction. And we had some hard cases, too mean to talk to anybody. I watched the Kairos people reach out to those guys and show them the love of God. The Kairos volunteers changed those men's lives in four days. It wasn't just the food they were reacting to. It was the love of God," he said.

The Phillips Kairos Team would go on to bless their chaplain when he spent a year recuperating from surgery. They would check on him every day and offer to fetch anything he needed, he said. Once when he was to be recognized at a GDC meeting, the team showed up in force and packed the room, standing and applauding when his name was called.

Charles Tolbert was serving as coordinator of volunteer services at the GDC home office in the early 2000s, and it fell to him to present the volunteer training. Now mercifully streamlined to about three hours, in 2004 the volunteer training ran for six hours. Volunteers heard Tolbert present the whole program unassisted, without notes. His delivery was folksy, but his candor, credibility and command of the material were just unshakeable, still remembered by the volunteers Tolbert trained.

Written by Mark Nickelson, Metro Re-Entry Volunteer

Mark



## We All Make a Difference to Someone!

I am sure that many of you have established relationships with someone behind the walls. Imagine what it would be like if you were in their shoes. You get an opportunity to take part in a weekend that nobody wanted to tell you any details about. But you step out on faith. You are assigned to a table with people you may not even know, but you are told this is your new family. You are asked to be open to what the weekend has in store for you. And again, you go out on faith and give it a try. You open yourself up to a complete stranger and share some intimate things about your life, your faith with Christ, and even maybe your not-so-proud past. And nobody judges you for any of it. All you can remember is being vulnerable to a group of people from the outside that show you nothing but love and a listening ear. And you leave after almost 4 days of this feeling uplifted, brand new, and with a glimmer of hope that this group will help you cope with the fact of being incarcerated until your release date. What a great feeling to have.

Then weeks later, you hear that the group of guys from the outside are returning. You may not remember all of them, but you definitely remember the ones at your table. Your "family". So, you get all fired up to find that comforting time again at the reunion. Eager to get that uplifting to carry you another 30 or so days.

But when you get there, you don't see the people you thought would come back to spend time with you again. It looks like a completely different group of brothers. You are sure that they will bring the same listen, listen, love, love atmosphere, but your heart was set on seeing those familiar faces from the past.

Think of this as you decide about attending a monthly reunion. WE ALL MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO SOMEONE AT METRO! Make the time to come out and make a difference with the team. Only you can bring what the Holy Spirit places on your heart to share. It was given to you for that purpose.

Never underestimate the impact of your presence. God Bless!

Bro L.G. Harvey,  
Kairos Metro Re-Entry Volunteer



September, 2023



## *Farewell, Dear Friends, Until We Meet Again*



**John Archer Hughes**, 81, went to be with the Lord on June 23, 2023. He loved living, learning, traveling, and being a dentist. He was devoted to his family and to his faith.

John's generosity extended to his patients, colleagues, friends, and people in need. He served local churches, but one of the most transformative ministries for him was the Kairos Prison Ministry.



**Gordon P. Ramsey**, age 84, of Chattahoochee Hills, passed peacefully on April 21, 2023. He and his wife raised thoroughbreds, and he practiced law serving the National Agency of Government Employees.

Gordon was involved at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Newnan, volunteering with Kairos Prison Ministry and meeting with friends as part of the Men's Breakfast Group.



**Robert Wade Bailey Jr.**, age 90, of Macon, GA, passed away October 14, 2021. Mr. Bailey was a chemical engineer and retired from Robins Air Force Base.

Mr. Bailey enjoyed participating in productions in middle Georgia theaters. He was involved with Walk to Emmaus and Kairos prison ministry. Mr. Bailey was a member of Mulberry Street United Methodist Church and was a teacher and member of Joy Sunday School Class.



**William F. "Bill" Norton**, 77, loving husband of 53 years to Virginia Chiapella Norton, passed away peacefully at his home on Wednesday, December 21, 2022. He served in Vietnam as a first lieutenant and was awarded the Bronze Star.

Bill's character was marked by authentic humility; he lived to serve others and loved to learn. He was a gifted writer and editor with a vast store of knowledge, but was always gentle when sharing that knowledge with others. His years of serving as a Boy Scout leader, a Kairos Prison Ministry team member, a church lector and lector organizer, and a member of Augusta's Alleluia Community blessed his family, friends and others.

*"No eye has seen, No ear has heard, No mind has conceived  
what God has prepared for those who love him."  
1 Corinthians 4:6*



## Weekend Leader Comments: Spring/Summer 2023

### Washington #25 (5/10/23)

Our weekend team had a three year pause between weekend 24 and 25. We did what we could to keep our team together and ready. We met several times together for meals during the pandemic. After we were graciously allowed inside by the Warden, we began with reunions and retreats. After seven inside the prison gatherings, we were allowed to have a weekend. I must say while we were not allowed in for the three years, we were so pleased to find our resident Kairos brothers in great shape spiritually as well as physically. The readiness of our inside resident brothers was a major reason for our successful weekend. We were only able to do six families because of the number of volunteers. I know that all of the training sessions and the weekend was blessed with the gracious presence of the Holy Spirit. Of the 36 participant spots, we were able to graduate 35. All but three of these were able to participate in the Instructional session. I was personally blessed by the gift of being picked and allowed to be a servant leader.

We all are looking forward to WSP Kairos weekend #26. **(Jim Blount)**

### Atlanta Torch #5 (9/22/2023)

We had a few setbacks, but the team pulled together, and we had an awesome weekend. All the boys participated and were all engaged. It went flawless. **(David Feree)**



It's handled.  
-God



September, 2023



## Weekend Leader Comments: Spring/Summer 2023, contd.

**Phillips #27 – (6/22/23)** - After four years, Kairos was finally able to go back into Phillips! We had eighteen inside candidates and twenty volunteer outside team members. The following comments were heard during open mic on Saturday evening:

“With the letters, I didn’t think I was going to make it through the rest of the day.”

“20 years ago I met Jesus and He changed my life....

.I have learned this weekend not to let the pain of my past ruin my future.”

“Forgiveness is the most important thing – and we all need it.”

### **In what spiritual condition did I arrive for the Weekend?**

Slightly depleted battery, thirsty, needed some spiritual repairs, having a spiritual battle, spiritually drained, lost and angry, in spiritual disarray, with questions for God, searching for a connection, spiritually unbalanced, with an open mind and no expectations, came with my guard up.

### **What did I receive while here?**

Physical and spiritual refreshment, a little taste of heaven, energy, power, love, unconditional love from strangers, comfort, strength, rejuvenation and release, compassion, forgiveness, brotherly love, fellowship, food, knowing that I have to give myself over to the spirit of God in order for Him to be able to work in me, realization that I had become very hardened in these ten years.

### **What am I taking away with me?**

Renewal and confirmation, love, the glow of the presence of Christ, communication of love to share with all people, humility, a sense of brotherhood, a spiritual glow, compassion, guidance, the love of Christ has been shown to us and it is our job to show that to others, joy, happiness, wisdom, ability to forgive, true unadulterated agape needs to be shared, a bag of letters.

If you wait until you get out to start loving, by then it is too late,

I feel as if we are flying 1st class at 30,000 feet.

God ain’t saved nobody by grace to leave us in disgrace.

I got my battery recharged. Our fourth day speaker presented a strong message of deliverance noting that the greater the goodness of the goal, the greater the struggle to achieve it.

Our Kairos Outside representative Bonita Chesney's presentation clearly touched the hearts of our 18 Weekend participants as many of them requested applications for family members.

It has been a joy and privilege for our team to serve on this Weekend and we look forward to seeing these participants once again at the Instructional as well as at upcoming monthly reunions.

**(Michael Bohannon)**



September, 2023



## Toffee Apricot Oat Cookies

### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter (4 ounces), softened
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup packed light muscovado sugar or light brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup all-purpose flour (about 4 1/4 ounces)
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2/3 cup uncooked old-fashioned regular rolled oats (about 2 ounces)
- 1/2 cup chopped milk chocolate
- 1/3 cup finely chopped toffee
- 1/3 cup dried apricots (about 2 ounces), finely chopped



Preheat oven to 325°F with oven racks in top third and lower third of oven.

Combine butter, granulated sugar, and muscovado sugar in bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment; beat on medium speed until light and creamy, 3 to 4 minutes. Add egg and beat until combined. With mixer running on low speed, gradually add flour, vanilla extract, baking soda, and salt, beating until just combined, about 30 seconds. Stir in oats, chocolate, toffee, and apricots just until combined.

Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper. Using a 1 3/4-inch scoop, drop mounds of dough (about 2 tablespoons each) onto prepared baking sheets, spacing dough mounds 1 1/2 inches apart.

Bake in preheated oven until cookies are lightly browned, 12 to 16 minutes, rotating pans top to bottom after 8 minutes. Let cookies cool on baking sheets 5 minutes.

Transfer cookies to a wire rack, and let cool completely, about 30 minutes.



*"These are amazing. Trying them next with figs, and can't wait. Great recipe, nice versatility, super flavor pairings!"*





September, 2023



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT *of* CORRECTIONS

## Volunteer Renewal Process



Follow these easy steps to renew your volunteer badge:

1. Go to [gdc.ga.gov](http://gdc.ga.gov)
2. Scroll down to "Volunteer Opportunities" and click "Get Involved"
3. On the left side of the page, click "Volunteer Renewal Application"
4. Scroll down and click "FILL OUT THE RENEWAL FORM"
5. When this page opens, note that the page is for **renewals** only. If you are a new applicant, click the link on this page that says "NEW APPLICATION PROCESS"
6. Complete the info with your name, badge number, and expiration date, click that you are not a robot, then click "Submit." This will take you to the correct screen.
7. Watch the videos (these are the same videos you saw at your training session). This will take at least 30-40 minutes.
8. Once the videos have finished, follow the remaining instructions to complete the app renewal.
9. When this part of the process is completed, look for the email notification that your renewal has been received.



## Words of Encouragement For All Kairos Volunteers

**ISAIAH 6:8-9 - *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "whom shall I send? And who will go for us? And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"***

Greetings my Brothers and Sisters!

More prisons are re-opening and Isaiah 6:8 reminds us that sharing the Gospel is an honor. We have been sent by God to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So, God help us to be faithful and realize that no matter what we say, apart from the power of the Spirit of God to open eyes and open hearts, we cannot bring people to a relationship with God.

Our joy is to participate because God is no respecter of persons! All He wants is a willing heart. Isaiah was the same one that cried out "woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips." But just like Isaiah, God can use you to change a prison as well as change a nation.

Around 150 years ago, there was a great revival in Wales England, and many of the missionaries went from England to the northeast part of India to spread the Gospel to a tribal community that was very primitive and aggressive. These tribesmen were called head-hunters. One day a Welsh missionary spreading the message of Jesus Christ succeeded in converting a man, his wife, and two children.

The man's faith became so contagious that many of the villagers began to accept Christianity. The village chief got so angry about what was happening that he summoned all the villagers and the family who was first converted to renounce their faith in public or face execution. Being moved by the Holy Spirit, the man sang his reply, "**I have decided to follow Jesus. No turning back.**"

Enraged at the refusal of the man, the chief ordered his archers to shoot the children. Then the chief asked, "Will you deny your faith? If not, you will lose your wife too." But the man replied again singing, "**Though none go with me, still I will follow. No turning back.**" This chief was so angry with the man's defiance, he ordered the killing of the man's wife also. He then said, "I will give you one more opportunity to deny your faith and live." But in the face of death, the man sang, "**The cross before me, the world behind me. No turning back.**" He was executed for his faith along with his family.



## Words of Encouragement For All Kairos Volunteers, contd.

But a miracle took place. The chief who had ordered the killings was moved by the faith of the man. He wondered why this man, his wife, and two children died for a Man who lived 2,000 years ago? He thought, there had to be some type of supernatural power behind the family, and he wanted that same supernatural power.

In a spontaneous confession of faith, he declared, "I too belong to Jesus Christ!". When the crowd heard this, the whole village accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior.

This is the story behind the song "**I have decided to follow Jesus**". But because this hymn is cited as a prime example of decision theology, this song is excluded from many of the hymnals. But nothing can stop the gospel from going forth no matter how harsh the environment. "Go and Tell", even though none go with you.

Brother Ron Jones  
State Clergy

Ron

