

# KAIROS NECX INSIDE NEWSLETTER



Northeast Correctional Complex (NECX)  
Mountain City, Tennessee



## K 42 - Is Full Steam Ahead

**K42 is set for**

**October 19-October 22, 2023**

Brad Wilson will be the leader for this weekend and he has assembled a team through much prayer and meditation and has allowed God to take the lead.

The Leadership Team for K42 is as follows:

Weekend Leader: Brad Wilson

Advising Leader: Scott Hale

Observing Leader: Scott Stodola

Coordinators: Dean Yates/Elgin Gonce

Head Clergy: Randy Lantz

Chapel Coordinator: Glenn Rannick

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## Walk 41: 4th Day Speech

By Matthew E.

I hope everyone has had a great weekend full of laughter, spiritual growth, and of course, great food and lots of cookies. I know that when I participated in Walk 38 a few years ago, that was one of the best parts. In fact, one day I ate so many cookies that I ended up throwing up in the bathroom. I then took the only logical course of action: I loosened my belt, sat back down, and ate more cookies. I would like to say that I paced myself, that I acted with some kind of self-control; but to be honest, I seemed more like a demented, redheaded cookie monster than anything else. It certainly didn't help matters that one of the volunteers at our table kept giving me his food and putting even more cookies on my plate.

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## Preparations for K43 Have Also Begun

**K43 is scheduled for**

**April 25 - April 28, 2024**

Scott Stodola will be the leader for this weekend and he has recently gone through and completed the Advanced Kairos Training (AKT).

Scott went through training July 14 - 16, 2023 at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel in Durham, North Carolina.

Scott went through the 2 1/2 day training to better understand how Kairos works and how to successfully lead a weekend.

This training went through 6 Steps:

1. Kairos History and Foundations
2. Gathering a Team
3. How to Create a Family from a Team

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## 4th Day continued

When all was said and done, when that walk came to a close, I probably gained close to twenty pounds, and I definitely had to go up a pants size. And so went my diet. That being said, only about half that weight gained was from the food. Yes, I did stick to eating the food, but I left that walk with so much more than just a full belly; I left with a filled heart and spirit.

My journey with Kairos began back in 2018 when a buddy of mine secretly signed me up for every service with food. He didn't tell me at the time, but every now and then I would get a pass for some service with some kind of goodies. Needless to say, one of those little "surprises" came in way of a Kairos pass. At first I was undecided, not sure if I wanted to go. I had no idea what Kairos was, and wasn't exactly interested in their ministry. But, after he told me about the most important part of the walk - the food - I decided to attend. Like many of you, I was lured into my weekend with the promise of food, only to find out that it was a trap. The moment that we all stepped foot inside the chapel and then into the gym, the doors swung shut, and we were trapped with these crazy, hug-craved volunteers who seemed to enjoy the fact that they were locked in a gym with a bunch of felons.

At first, I was a little apprehensive about these men from the outside, with their outstretched arms, always searching for their next hug victim, their bright, persistent smile, and their always saying how much they love us. Obviously, this is night and day compared to what we normally experience in prison. It can be a little awkward at first, but that's OK.

When these guys say the love you, that they're praying for you, they actually mean it. They really do care. These are truly men of God that honestly care about each and every one of you, and this is something that can be seen from the moment they walk in to set this walk up, to the time that they leave: the very atmosphere in this room changes. It turns from a dark, dismal prison into something beautiful: a room filled with love and godly compassion, all stemming from men with true, loving intentions. They are not here to judge you or put you down. Lord knows we get plenty of that from society. No, these men are here to

men, however, didn't do any of these things. They *chose* to come to prison to spend time with us. Think about that for a moment; of all the things that these volunteers could have done this weekend, they decided to come inside a prison and spend time with *us*, the most despised in society. That says a lot. But these aren't the only ones doing this. There are even more volunteers sacrificing their time and weekend to serve *us*. It is those that we *don't* see that prepare and cook the food we eat, that donate their time and money to this weekend, that pray continuously as this walk goes on, and the families that pray for and support this ministry and weekend.



They are *all* making a sacrifice for each and every one of us. If nothing, this alone should show the true love that they have for us and our souls.

*That* is what makes this weekend special. Yes, the food is great, but that is *not* what this weekend was about. Looking back at my walk, I couldn't tell you that much

love, listen, offer guidance, and encourage; and unlike so many other ministries on this compound, these men can actually relate and understand what we as prisoners are going through. In fact, some of them have even been in prison themselves, and others have walked down the darkest of life's many paths. They have felt despair, loneliness, isolation, and betrayal. They know both life's joys and sorrows. The point is that they get us; they love us. They wouldn't be here if they didn't.

Let me ask you something; if you weren't in prison today, what would you be doing? Would you be watching TV, spending time with your families, watching some game or race, or fishing? Most of us would say yes to at least one of these. These

about the food; I couldn't tell you how many cookies I ate - honestly, I don't even think I could count that high.

But, what I do remember, is these men around you. I remember the love and compassion shown by them. How for the first time in years, someone outside my family was *genuinely* concerned with my well being. I found that these were men that I didn't need to put on a proverbial mask for; they were men I could trust. We *all* know how hard that is to find in prison. To find someone to trust, someone you can truly consider a friend, is nearly impossible, but you can find that here if you only let them in. I promise you will not regret it.

*Continued on page 3, 4th Day*



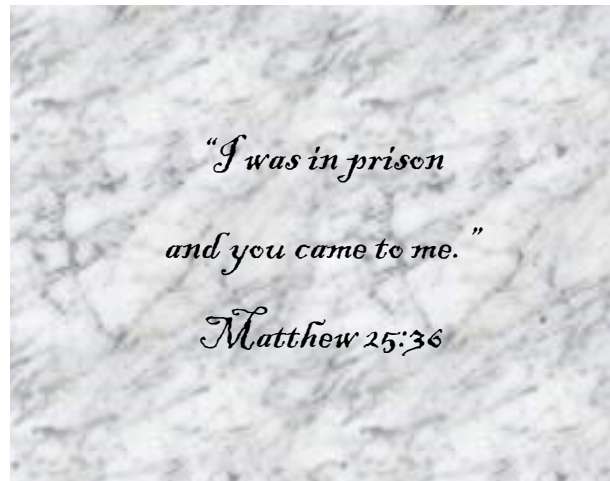
## 4th Day continued

Men, this weekend is special, whether you realize it or not. My walk changed my life. That is not to say that I am perfect. Anyone who knows me knows that I am far from it; but through the encouragement and compassion offered by these volunteers, they have helped to mold me into a better man than I was before my walk began; and they have given me and many others the strength to endure the many challenges that we have faced over the last few years. From COVID-19, the 6-month guard shortage lockdown, the increased violence and deaths, the administration changes, and the various other challenges and changes throughout the last few years, their constant prayers and encouragement have given me the strength to go on, to grow. They can do the same for you. This weekend, and the men here today, can launch you into a new era of spiritual growth, and change. Use this weekend as a platform for the foundation of the rest of your life. Do not let this weekend go to waste. Let it bring change. Let it bring hope and love. Let it bring God. Your Journey does not, however, end here. There is another element to Kairos that is absolutely crucial to maintaining the momentum of this weekend: the Kairos Tuesday Journey.

When I first attended the Tuesday meeting in the VG (visitors gallery), I really didn't know what to expect; but, shortly after walking in and finding a group of guys that I knew, I sat down and began my new journey. Once inside, I found fellowship, love, and compassion like I hadn't known in prison before. These outside volunteers show up every week, with a smile on their face, with hugs and love to give. Much like this weekend, we sit in our circles and talk and pray together, as well as encouraging one another. We listen to each others problems and struggles and uplift one

another. We pray for each other. We enjoy fellowship. We become brothers.

Men, that is what this weekend, the Tuesday meetings, and this ministry are all about: Fellowship. *This* is what you will find from the outsiders sitting among you. *This* is what they have to offer. If you give them a chance and come to the Tuesday meetings, I can guarantee you will not regret your choice. For what this weekend has to offer, the same can be found every week. Look around you, look who is there. These men have devoted so much time and energy to you without even knowing anything about you. Give them a chance. If you do, you will find a lifelong friend, a trustworthy confidant, and



abundant strength and love to get you through any of life's and prison's many challenges. Don't let this weekend be the end of your journey. Come on Tuesday and let this weekend be the beginning of something new, something beautiful. Let this weekend be the foundation to your walk with God.

Kairos, We at NECX would like to thank you for everything you do for us. You have no idea how much your love, prayers, hard work, and time mean to those of us who are incarcerated. Prison can be a dark, depressing world. It is designed to keep our thoughts on our worse moments, on the darkest times in our pasts. It is designed to snuff out any light that might possibly remain in

our hearts, leaving our little "society" in an everlasting state of evil, hatred, violence, and death. Many of us have no one on the outside. Many of us can't even remember what love and compassion feels like anymore. We are told we are nothing, treated as if we were less than human, emasculated at every turn. In short, we live in a world of constant darkness.

That all changes with you and your ministry. When you support or participate in volunteering for the Kairos Weekend, you aren't just visiting "the least of these;" you are changing lives. During our brief weekend together, our lives are flipped upside down. For the briefest of possible moments, we aren't inmates. We aren't criminals. We are not despised. We become human. We become men. We become loved. For the first time in years, we can forget the past, forget the fact that we are in prison, forget our isolation. We feel love and kindness of a kind that just doesn't exist in our world. To us, you are a light that outshines the brightest stars, lighting up our hearts, and giving us hope. In you, we see the goodness of this world. You restore our faith in humanity.

We come together as strangers, but we leave as brothers.

For all of you who support this ministry in any way, from those that pray for us, to those who bake the cookies, prepare and cook the food we eat, donate, and volunteer for this ministry, we all here at NECX want to extend our deepest gratitude. Your contributions, whatever they may be, are changing our hidden world. They are changing lives. *You* are changing lives. You may not know us, but our hearts are united, our lives connected. We love you, and we thank you. You have impacted our lives more than you could ever know.

Thank you.

## K42 continued

Prayer Team: Tom Egan/Jim Hawley  
Agape Coordinator: Hugh Johnson  
Music Leader: Bill Donaho  
Kitchen Lead: Hilda Shepherd

Brad has already sent out the training schedule and it is a mixture of Thursday evening and Saturday training days.

The first training day is Thursday, August 31st. We will conclude our training at Bethany Baptist Church on Wednesday, October 18th with a devotion/sermon/and dinner.

We will then begin our weekend on Thursday, October 19th.

We are asking everyone to keep this weekend in your prayers.

May the Almighty Father, lead, guide, and bless the leadership team and the entire K42 team, during our training and all the way up to and through the weekend inside. May You also bless the men that will be participating in the weekend as well as the inside team. We ask for nothing but Your best Father upon our Kairos Ministry. Amen+

Share your story!



Everyone has a story to tell. Your story can encourage others as well as lift someone up. We are always looking for Kairos stories.

Won't you share yours?

**Submit your story to  
Scott Stodola at  
scottmstodola@gmail.com.**

## K43 continued

4. How to Prepare the Family Spiritually
5. How to Train the Family Operationally
6. Continuing Ministry of Kairos

After spending the weekend with other Kairos leaders, Scott has a better understanding of the weekend events, but was also able to talk to other leaders about how they have done weekends in their facilities

Scott was 1 of 65 leaders that went through training on this weekend.

Scott is also prayerfully asking God to put a team together for this weekend.

It is still early and K43 is not until the last weekend of April 2024, but if you would like to be on Scott's team, or an upcoming team, email Scott at scottmstodola@gmail.com.



THANK YOU TO EACH ONE OF YOU. YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF MEN AND WOMEN WHOM SOCIETY HAS DEEMED UNWORTHY.

WE PLANT THE SEEDS OF HOPE, LOVE, MERCY, AND GRACE.

GOD WATERS THOSE SEEDS AND BEGINS THE TRANSFORMATION IN THOSE LIVES.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, THANK YOU TO YOUR FAMILIES WHO GIVE UP THEIR TIME SO THAT YOU CAN DO WHAT YOU DO. YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE.