

Kairos in Ohio

Kairos is a short course in Christianity structured similarly to other well-known Christian renewal programs, including Cursillo, Emmaus Walk, Cum Christo, Via de Christo and Tres Dias. The program is led by laymen, and draws its volunteers from clergy and laity of many Christian churches. The systematic, structured 3 1/2-day program is designed to draw inmates to the person of Jesus Christ, who then accept Him as Lord and Savior of their lives. Nearly all who participate experience a spiritual awakening; and, for many, it is a life-changing experience.

The purpose of Kairos is to help build and nurture strong Christian communities among the residents of correctional institutions. This is done through Prayer and Share groups in the prisons, and through follow-up Spiritual growth activities facilitated by Kairos volunteers and prison chaplains.

Kairos is active in seven men's and two women's institutions in Ohio, and many other prisons have asked for the program. Each institution has a minimum of two short courses and 12 reunions each year.

How can you Help

Kairos pays its own way. The State pays none of the expenses encountered on a weekend, not even the cost of food eaten by the inmates. A typical weekend costs \$6,500, utilizes 50-60 volunteers, and dispenses an unbelievable 10,000 dozen home-baked cookies throughout the institution. Volunteers are always looking for willing cookie-bakers, who will pray over each batch.

Name _____

Address _____

City/zip _____

Phone _____

I will keep Kairos in my prayers.

Contact me about volunteering.

I want to contribute to the Kairos ministry **at Marion**. (It costs \$150 to support one resident. \$_____*)

Ohio Kairos Prison Ministry

P. O. Box 14490

Columbus, OH 43214

* Kairos is a 501(c)(3) organization.

KAIROS

At the Marion Correctional Institution



"I was in prison and you visited me."

Matthew 15:36

The fascinating story of how God is using the Kairos Prison Ministry to change the environment and the people at the medium security prison in Marion, Ohio.

Kairos at Marion

In 1996, the state's Marion Correctional Institution was a dark, dangerous, foreboding, and un-Godly place. Although it is a medium-security prison, it was a place everyone – prisoner and professional alike – tried to avoid. The Arian Brotherhood, The Bloods, the Crips and a host of other gangs ran the inmate population. More prisoners filed lawsuits against the state than at any other institution. Labor-management relations were at an all-time low, with multiple grievances being filed nearly every day.

In response, Reginald Wilkinson, then Ohio Director of Rehabilitation and Correction, asked Christine Money, the Warden of the Ohio Reformatory for Women in Marysville, to transfer to Marion.

Mrs. Money thought about, and prayed about, the opportunity. Based on her faith, and her 3-year experience with Kairos at Marysville, she finally agreed to the transfer, but only if she could take Kairos with her.

The first ministry weekend was held in the Spring of 1997. Forty-two carefully selected residents were chosen to participate. They were ministered to by a team of 55 Christians from a variety of churches in Ohio. The weekend

went well, and the graduates formed the bulwark of a new Christian movement inside the walls of M.C.I.. Other practicing Christian inmates were encouraged in their faith walks, and additional weekends were scheduled.

Today, more than 800 men have completed a Kairos weekend at M.C.I.. Many of them have been released or transferred, but a core group remains and they are visible in everything that goes on in the prison. A large group of men spend hours preparing posters and letters of support for Christian Renewal programs held across the country and in some foreign lands. An intercessory prayer team prays for the needs of a wide variety of men and women everywhere. Protestant and Catholic chapel services are bulging at the seams, small Prayer and Share groups have taken the place of gangs, and Kairos volunteers return frequently for special programs and monthly Reunions.

The Marion Choir, their special Christmas and Easter pageants, and the Silent Choir (signing in unison) are popular programs enjoyed by insiders and outsiders alike. The Promise Keepers program was invited to visit Marion; and, after a thorough investigation, responded by holding their first-ever rally inside prison walls. The program was televised nationally.

Kairos Outside, a 3-day program specifically-designed for the wives, mothers and daughters of prisoners who are active in Kairos, began in 1999. The program actually moved into the Prison Chapel in 2001, becoming the first-ever Kairos Outside Inside. Kairos Torch, a program designed for inmates age 16 to 22, where young men are paired with older inmates who serve as mentors, was added in 2000.

Warden Money was moved in 2005 to the troubled Department of Youth Services, and Mrs. Margaret Beightler, another solid Christian who is dedicated to Kairos, took her place.

Marion Correctional Institution remains a prison today, to be sure; and bad guys are arriving every day. But it is no longer a dark, frightening and foreboding place. Most inmates are grateful, safe, mutually-supportive and as happy as they can be. The staff is relieved, and no longer must resort to grievances to express their frustration, and Christianity actually flows out the doors of M.C.I. and into the world of which Marion is a part.



God's Special Time