



## Wednesday Prayer

13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – We've been given choices

**See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses.**

**Deuteronomy 30:15-19**

We have been given choices. Sometimes it doesn't feel that way as we slip into cycles of negative thinking, reeling over problems large and small. We are led astray, we turn away. Sometimes it doesn't seem that way as we face cruel injustices that harm people. This past Sunday my church had a guest preacher, Bethany Ringdal, who found her calling while on maternity leave, tenderly nursing her new baby. This all-encompassing love contrasted with the horrific news of mothers separated from their children after crossing a border to seek refuge for their family. Bethany's work is now *"building sacred community between asylum seekers and those God calls to love them"* through the [International Association for Refugees](#).

In her sermon, Bethany shared how she receives stories of incredible resilience and hope from those she serves, seeing the absolute best in people. They have chosen life and prosperity even given the severe adversity and torture some have experienced at the hands of those who chose the ways of death. I too, have been uplifted by stories of resilience, hope and love in this work to prevent sexual violence. A speaker at this year's National Sexual Assault Conference, Jac Patrissi, stated that the work of their organization [Growing A New Heart](#),

*"Creates conditions so that joy can return."*

She and her colleagues work with both survivors *and* those who cause the harm, moving towards healing and compassionate accountability. When confronted by someone not ready or willing to accept the wrongs they have done to another, she says in her mind,

*"I will meet you in the field of peace."*

She is choosing life, walking in the ways of the Spirit, so as not to be led astray. May our choices lead us toward the life we have been given through Christ.

**Life-giving God, we are oftentimes so broken we choose paths of destruction over love. Today we pray for your all-encompassing love to embrace us and send us out into the world to share your blessings and live fully into the gifts you have provided. Amen.**

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Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.