

All our choices (Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25)

We are faced with many decisions each day.

by [Dorothy Sanders Wells](#)

November 10, 2023

To receive these posts by email each Monday, [sign up](#).

For more commentary on this week's readings, see the [Reflections on the Lectionary](#) page. For full-text access to all articles, [subscribe](#) to the Century.

Our daily choices and decisions may range from the ordinary (food, exercise, clothing, transportation) to the far-reaching (education, housing, employment, time with family and loved ones, self-care). Some experts say that our choices and decisions define us.

Roberta Bell, a corrections officer at the Louisiana Transition Center for Women made a choice: When a pregnant incarcerated woman, Katie Bourgeois, asked Bell to take custody of her son after his birth so that he would not be lost to the foster care system until Katie was released, Bell agreed.

The price of Bell's choice? Her job: She was terminated on the spot after confirming to the corrections facility that she planned to care for the child after birth and share her contact information with Bourgeois so that the hospital could reach her when the child was born.

With her job ended, Bell made another choice: to give Bourgeois a home, too, after her release, so that she and her child had a safe place to live while Bourgeois looks for employment and tries to get on her feet.

Bell chose a young mother and her child.

Richard Richter, pastor of Knoxville's Cedar Lane United Methodist Church, made a choice: When a young couple pulled into the church parking lot in a broken-down car that had become their home, Richter chose to help them rather than turning them away. Their infant had already been placed in foster care after the couple lost their last apartment and began living in their car. Their low-wage jobs simply didn't allow them to afford housing.

Richter and the Cedar Lane congregation chose to allow the couple to stay—while securing places for them to shower and do laundry, accompanying them on visits to the foster family to see their daughter, and helping them sign up for housing and food aid and parenting classes.

A church congregation chose a young couple, who with their help moved into an apartment and began a journey to stability.

We are faced with many choices and decisions each day. Some of our choices will be holy and reflect a love of God and neighbor. Some of our choices will bring harm to ourselves or others.

Of all of the choices and decisions we make each day, choosing to serve God might come with a warning: uncharted paths ahead.