

April 8

On Wednesday and Thursday of this week, I had an experience that I suspect that many of you had as well. One, frankly, that we have had for generations. It's a tradition that literally recounts our blessings, even the smallest of ones. It left me feeling grateful, peaceful, humble. We know it as *Dayenu*.

As I considered Temple Beth-El through this lens, I thought I'd share with you some of the things that alone, would have been enough for this almost 149-year-old institution of ours.

Had Palmetto Cemetery been established, but Temple Beth-El not been formally chartered; *Dayenu*

Had Temple Beth-El been formally chartered, but a building not been established on Travis Street; *Dayenu*

Had a building been established on Travis Street, but our Red Dome not grown on Ashby and Belknap; *Dayenu*

Had our Red Dome grown on Ashby and Belknap, but faithful clergy not forged religious, communal, and social justice pathways; *Dayenu*

Had faithful clergy forged religious, communal, and social pathways, but philanthropic congregants not invested in our financial legacy; *Dayenu*

Had philanthropic congregants invested in our financial legacy, but loyal staff and volunteers not been the arms, legs and heartbeat of the organization; *Dayenu*

Had loyal staff and volunteers been the arms, legs and heartbeat of the organization, but the elders not provided wisdom and leadership; *Dayenu*

And had the elders provided wisdom and leadership, but the children not provided songs and beautiful stained glass windows to our next 150 year; *Dayenu*

Each one of these things in and of itself is so wonderful, and alone, it would have been enough. And together we say, *Dayenu*.

Announcements – 4.28.2023

Let's be honest: there are countless other places you could be on a Sunday afternoon – specifically on Sunday, May 7th at 4:30 PM. You could be doing laundry, watching a favorite sporting event, prepping for the workweek, or my favorite -- napping. Instead, I hope you'll join me, my fellow Trustees, and other congregants for our Annual Meeting followed by a congregational dinner graciously sponsored by Brotherhood.

As I've been told iteratively, very few people like the Annual Meeting. The work of the congregation is apparently boring. But what if this work isn't actually about budgets and bylaws

or trustees and transitions. What if the work of the congregation, and this gathering by extension, is about building community? What if the work and this meeting is about the perpetuation of the Jewish people?

This is not to trivialize our agenda. Quite the opposite: it's to put our work in context and help us understand the importance of it, the sacredness of it, the holiness of why we are gathered. Thru this lens, perhaps the Annual Meeting can feel just as holy as Shabbat or Rosh Hashanah because we are gathered as a community to carry out the sacred work of our congregation.

I was reminded last weekend of a story that Rabbi Nathan has actually told us before. Here's the very abridged version:

Three workmen were clearing away debris at the site where a synagogue would be built. A passerby asked, "What are you doing?" The first said, "I'm clearing away rubble." The second said, "I'm earning a living." The third said, "I'm building a house of God." Each of them was right, but each one expressed a very different reality.

From this perspective, we are not simply attending some transactional business meeting; we are literally building a house of God, our House of God, Beth-El. In the same way that HaMotzi sanctifies a simple piece of bread, participating as a community in the Annual Meeting elevates it from the mundane to the holy. And if not us, then who? And if not now, when?

I encourage you be part of our sacred community – for today and tomorrow. Access to information and registration can be found on the front page of the Temple website.