

NOVEMBER 18, 2018: THANKSGIVING SUNDAY

Pastoral Prayer

There is a beautiful Hebrew word that seems particularly appropriate for Thanksgiving. It is one that we have no real equivalent for in the English language. Some of you might be familiar with that word – but for those who are not, let me share it with you: **Dayenu**.

It is a word that is used after a litany recounting some of the amazing blessings God has given – the Torah, the Exodus, and the Sabbath. **Dayenu** – in its simplest sense, has come to mean: “It would have been enough.” **Dayenu** is my one word reminder that if God had only given me a single blessing – that would have been enough for me to remember and to give thanks.

O God of all moments in time, our restless thoughts are hushed as we pause in gratitude. We take these moments to enter your courts with thanksgiving and your sanctuary with praise. When we remember all the blessings of the land, the mountain ranges that crown the plains with majesty and the windswept expanses of ocean blue, we turn to you. Dayenu. When wavelike bursts of joy well up when we least expect it, we see your hand, and whisper Dayenu. When an unexpected kindness breaks into our emptiness, your graciousness takes us by surprise. Dayenu. Even in the deepest challenges of our lives, we can look back and see your presence giving strength and comfort. Dayenu. When fear threatens to envelope our world, we turn to you, trusting in your faithfulness to every generation. Dayenu. When we are tempted to think we may be entitled to our blessings, remind us again that everything is a gift from you. Dayenu.

In this time of prayer, names and faces flow through our thoughts, reminding us of lives that need your comfort and strength. . . for those for whom every step is a painful decision, for those who waver over which path to take, for those who are carrying a cloak of fear or sadness, for those around the world who know desperate need. Today, especially, we lift up those who have special needs for your touch:

We lift to you whatever concern we have carried into this place . . .give us the courage to release them to you, trusting that you are already at work offering healing and wholeness. O God of peace, grant us the vision to glimpse you in the people and situations that we encounter today. Though we may not recognize your presence in our world, help us to still be present, offering acts of mercy and grace. Empower us to live this day attentive and ready to be your joyful message -- blessing those we meet with your grace. For all these things we stand eternally grateful and we praise you for it all—Dayenu. Amen.