

Rabbi Barry M. Lutz, RJE, to Receive Doctor of Jewish Religious Education at HUC-JIR Graduation Ceremony in Los Angeles

Rabbi Barry M. Lutz, RJE, rabbi at **Temple Ahavat Shalom (TAS)**, Northridge, California, will receive a Doctor of Jewish Religious Education, *honoris causa*, from the **Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR)**. The degree will be granted at HUC-JIR's Los Angeles Graduation ceremony on Monday, May 18, 2009. HUC-JIR is the nation's oldest institution of higher Jewish education and the academic, spiritual, and professional leadership development center of Reform Judaism.

Communal leaders, relatives, and friends will gather at the Los Angeles Campus, 3077 University Avenue, for the HUC-JIR Graduation Ceremonies of the 134th academic year.

Rabbi David Ellenson, Ph.D., announced HUC-JIR alumni recipients who will be awarded honorary Doctorates of Divinity, Music, Jewish Religious Education, and Jewish Communal Service, as well as the Founders' Medallion, in recognition of their 25 years of distinguished professional service.

Rabbi Lutz joined Temple Ahavat Shalom in 1984 as Director of Education, having received his MA in Jewish Education from the Rhea Hirsch School of Education at HUC-JIR and a MS in Educational Psychology from USC. Over the next two decades, Rabbi Lutz built the successful and respected educational program that is a hallmark of the TAS community today. At the core of his success is an unflagging commitment to creating a meaningful educational experience for all students. Barry is especially proud that TAS can boast of one of the highest retention rates in the nation of students towards Confirmation at the conclusion of the 11th grade.

His skill as an educator has been nationally recognized leading to a position on the executive board of the National Association of Temple Educators, as the assistant chair of the Conference for Alternatives in Jewish Education held at the U.S.C. in 1992; and twice as co-chair of the Los Angeles Bureau of Jewish Education's Principals' Council.

In 1994 Barry returned to HUC-JIR and was ordained rabbi in 1999. He served TAS as Rabbi/Educator until 2005, continuing to oversee the evolution of the educational program, while bringing his innovation, passion and commitment for Jewish life and learning to the larger community, before being named Senior Rabbi.

Rabbi Ellenson said, "Rabbi Lutz has successfully combined his skills as an educator with that of his rabbinic training to create a meaningful educational experience as well as a warm and welcoming environment to his congregants. He has been nationally recognized as an educator by leading boards and councils earning him the respect and admiration of his colleagues. His bonds of loyalty to his alma mater has found expression as a member of the clinical faculty of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education, and his personal passion for Torah, connection to God and *Kedusha* has enriched his life."

For more information on the HUC-JIR Graduation, Investiture, and Ordination ceremonies in New York, Los Angeles, and Cincinnati, please visit <http://www.huc.edu/newspubs/pressroom/article.php?pressroomid=271>.

*Founded in 1875, **Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion** is the nation's oldest institution of higher Jewish education and the academic, spiritual, and professional leadership development center of Reform Judaism. HUC-JIR educates men and women for service to American and world Jewry as rabbis, cantors, educators, and communal service professionals, and offers graduate and post-graduate programs to scholars of all faiths. With centers of learning in Cincinnati, Jerusalem, Los Angeles, and New York, HUC-JIR's scholarly resources comprise renowned library and museum collections, the American Jewish Archives, biblical archaeology excavations, research institutes and centers, and academic publications. HUC-JIR invites the community to an array of cultural and educational programs which illuminate Jewish history, identity, and contemporary creativity and which foster interfaith and multiethnic understanding. Visit us at www.huc.edu.*

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