

Skirball Campus Ordination

My name is Joshua Garroway, Interim Dean of HUC's Skirball Campus here in Los Angeles.

Elana, Max, Hannah, Julia, Aria, Jade, Rebecca, Jerry, Frankie, Sam:

Today is the day. Today. You may remember a passage from the Talmud we learned together in your second year of study. You recall, we were all two-by-two inch two-dimensional images on a screen. (Elana and Julia, we met one another three-dimensionally before proceeding to Zoom.) This famous passage depicts the messiah as a leper sitting outside the gates of Rome. A rabbi visits him and asks, "Messiah, when will you emerge to redeem the world." The messiah responds with a verse from Psalm 95: Hayom im bekolo teeshma-u. I will come today, says the messiah, if the Jewish people would but collectively heed God's voice.

I doubt that today will be that day of redemption. But today is the day that you will hear the voice of God. No, not the voice of Rabbi Andrea Weiss, who will ordain you. She may be my boss, but she is not God. But on her shoulders as she whispers to you the blessing of ordination will be the weight of Jewish tradition, three thousand years of text, and history, and culture, and prayer, and longing, through which God has spoken to the Jewish people and to all the world. You have spent five

challenging years mastering that tradition, and today you will hear the call that sanctions you to be ambassadors of it, ordained to go out among the Jewish people and the world to share the voice of God. Today. And God willing, one day, all will indeed pay heed to that voice, and redemption will ensue. But, give it time. No pressure...

To celebrate this momentous “today”, we have invited your families and friends, along with honored guests from the community and faculty, staff, and leaders from HUC. To all of you, welcome to the 2024/5784 ordination ceremony of the Jack H. Skirball Campus of the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion.

Before we continue, I would like to offer special thanks to my colleagues whose planning and hard work have made possible today’s proceedings:

- Yvette Joffe, our operations manager and, as I put it, the czarina of ordination and graduation.
- Rabbi Dvora Weisberg, the director of our rabbinical school, and her assistant Lou Borenstein.
- Joshua Holo, Vice President of Academic Resources
- Ken Rosen, Director of Student Life and Campus Culture

Yvette, Dvora, Lou, Josh, and Ken: Thank you.

We are grateful also for the musical ensemble enriching today's ceremony, under the direction of Cantor Sara Hass and featuring:

- Cantor Lizzie Weiss
- Elizabeth Yaron
- Rabbi Ken Chasen

The captioning and video transmission of this ceremony is made possible by the hard work of Dan Tator from Get Launched, Lauren Schechter and Corvyn Dostie from Total Caption, and the members of their teams.

I would also like to extend a welcome to the many leaders of HUC who are joining us today:

- President Andrew Rehfeld, whom I will be calling forward in a moment, as well as several members from his executive team.
- The aforementioned Rabbi Andrea Weiss, our provost.
- Cary Davidson, a member of the Board of Governors and Chair of HUC's Western Region Board of Advisors, along with several other governors and advisors:
 - Paul Beck
 - Rabbi Stanley Davids
 - Rochelle Ginsburg
 - Bernie Goler
 - Sue Hochberg

- Matthew Louchheim
- Rabbi Amy Perlin
- Marcie Zelikow
- And, the co-first-vice-presidents of the Pacific District of Women of Reform Judaism, Flo Cohen and Lillian Silver.

And, we pause for a moment to recall the memory of beloved members of our community who can no longer join us, most notably Rabbi David Ellenson, the 11th president of HUC, who passed away in December. Zichrono livracha, may his memory be for a blessing.

Lastly, to everyone else here: family members, friends, professors, staff, community leaders, rabbis, sponsors—you have all supported these ordinands in one way or another on their path to the rabbinate, and we would not be here without you. Thank you for being here.

It is now my privilege to call upon our president, Andrew Rehfeld, to deliver a charge to our students and to introduce our ordination speaker.