



Invocation

**Rabbi David Adelson '99, D. Min. '16, Dean of the New York campus
and Interim Director of the Rabbinical Program**

Hebrew Union College, Graduation, May 1, 2025

Welcome! Welcome on this Yom Ha'Atzmaut to our graduation ceremony. Welcome to our students who have earned masters degrees in Hebrew Literature and in Sacred Music, doctor of ministry degrees, and Executive masters in education; welcome to our, one recipient of a doctor of Hebrew letters. Welcome to our faculty, administration, students, leaders of our board of Advisors and Board of Governors, in particular Rabbi Josh Davidson of Temple Emanu-El, which hosts our ceremony every year. Welcome to Rabbi Rick Jacobs of the URJ and other leaders of our Reform movement institutions. Welcome to President Linda Mills of NYU and Rabbi Dan Frelander and Cantor Jeff Klepper. Welcome to family and friends of today's degree recipients. Welcome to all those joining on livestream. And welcome especially to our dear alumni: cantors and rabbis and one educator celebrating 25 years since ordination or graduation. It is a delight for me personally to welcome so many of you with whom I studied on the New York campus in the 1990s. Beloved alumni, you may have heard that we are moving our NY campus to the upper west side in 2027. I know that those of you who studied in NY have many fond memories of the Torah you learned and community you were a part of on campus. You will be relieved to know that the metal classroom chairs, oh yes, the same ones you sat in 25 years ago, will not be coming with us.

What all of our students know well, and our alumni will surely attest, is that what it takes to be a member of the clergy, or a Jewish educator, or a provider of pastoral care, is a lot more than a body of knowledge or



a set of skills. It requires an offering of self as an act of service. Master educator Parker Palmer says that in any professional training we must ask these questions: “How do we help form professionals who not only have the knowledge and skill to qualify for excellence in their fields of practice, but who also know what it means to live from the inside out? How do we educate professionals who understand that the personal identity and integrity they bring to work are at least as important as the skills and knowledge needed to do that work?”

The degrees we award today reflect not just all you have learned, but also the persons, and leaders, you have become—and continue to become. We delight in your learning. We thank you for the continued service you will offer. We celebrate the gift of who you are.

Welcome!

President Rehfeld, it brings me great pleasure to call forward the candidates for the degrees of Doctor of Divinity, Doctor of Jewish Religious Education, and Doctor of Music, honoris causa. When I announce their names, they will come to receive their degree.

Please hold applause until all have been called.