



Judah Cohen, Ph.D., Jack Joseph and Morton Mandel Provost

Ordination 2026 Welcome

Hebrew Union College, Ordination, May 3, 2026

Welcome! I am so pleased to be here with you on this beautiful, brisk, bicycle filled, and glorious day.

Welcome to the students who will soon climb these steps, receive the blessing of ordination, and descend as members of our clergy.

Welcome to your families, friends, fans, and followers, both here in this majestic sanctuary and on our livestream.

Welcome to our staff, faculty, administration, students, leaders of our boards of Advisors and Board of Governors,

To President Andrew Rehfeld, Interim Head of Seminary Cantor Jill Abramson, and Interim Rabbinical School Director Rabbi Dr. Laura Novak Winer, and Dean of Students Rabbi Rachel Gross-Prinz.

To our Board Chair David Edelson. Welcome.

To Rabbi Josh Davidson of Temple Emanu-El, which hosts our ceremony every year. Thank you.

Welcome to Cantor Josh Breitzer, our ordination speaker, who I understand has a soulful and whimsical address for us today.

And to the Joseph Family, represented here today by Roxane Leopold, Ellen Joseph, Linda Karshan, Roger Karshan, and Sarah Zampell

And to Linda Roth, representing the World Central Kitchen, recipient of the Joseph Prize.

Welcome also to Rabbi Dr. Michael Marmur, our beloved colleague from Israel who will perform today's sacred ordination ritual. Let us also take a moment to recognize the absence of Rabbi Dr. Andrea Weiss, who is present in the memory of all those who knew, respected, and loved her.

[Pause]



Today we celebrate the completion of a long journey and the beginning of another. Dear ordination candidates: From your first steps on our Jerusalem campus, to the first time you led your peers in prayer, through Torah readings, and sermons; through Kallah; through your classes in sacred text, song, philosophy, history, and professional development; through your many hours in our Petrie Chapel engaging in rehearsals, prayer, practica, recitals and gatherings; through sermon and practicum discussions in the CL; through mincha on the fifth floor; through student pulpits and Clinical Pastoral Education; through your work with mentors, sponsors, and spiritual guides; through many hours of study, debate, and contemplation, and through the private moments that only you can remember, yet have paved your path to this time. We who are your mentors, your teachers, your loved ones: today we will sing the song of your ascent and bring with you a ritual of transformation.

Here, now, we become a congregation, joining together in sacred time. Our feet are at the gates as they open, and we look to you, our ordinees, to lead us as, with each step, you become our guides, our leaders, our comforters, and the sages of our era.