

Good afternoon. I am David Edelson, the Chair of the Board of Governors of HUC-JIR.

What a wonderful moment in the life of the College-Institute. And, of course, what a momentous day for each of you, our worthy ordinees!

We thank Rabbi Josh Davidson and all at Temple Emanu-el for hosting us in the remarkable sanctuary.

As the College completes its 149<sup>th</sup> academic year, we gather during difficult days. We feel upset, isolated, and deeply concerned.

Yet, as we celebrate your choice to devote your lives to helping the Jewish community confront and overcome such difficulties, we are comforted and inspired.

I am honored to be here representing the Board of Governors, all of whom join me in congratulating you, the newly ordained Rabbis and Cantors of the Class of 2024 / 5784.

We also honor and thank your families and friends, who have supported you throughout your five-year journey.

We applaud you for navigating so many challenges, including the COVID pandemic, and the horrors of October 7<sup>th</sup> and its aftermath.

Your achievements fill us with pride. Your energy fills us with hope.

Count us among your biggest supporters as you prepare to make your imprints on the world.

You are poised to build vibrant Jewish communities. You will become leaders whose actions and ideals strengthen Jewish identity and engagement for generations to come.

You will literally change lives as you change communities and change the world.

You join our more than 2,500 active cantorial and rabbinical alumni who are transforming Jewish life in a world marked by continual change.

We look to you to maintain and strengthen the bonds connecting North American Jews, the State of Israel, and the Jewish people worldwide.

## ***Edelson 2024 Ordination Remarks***

And we rely on you to uphold Judaism's ethical values as an enduring source of wisdom and inspiration, as collectively we strive for social justice, human rights, empathy and kindness, and peace for all humankind.

The world can be a scary place – it certainly feels that way these days. As leaders, you will work with others to help bend the arc back towards understanding, tolerance, and compassion. We are grateful to you for taking on this task.

May your journeys be blessed, and may you be guided by the teachings of your professors, the camaraderie of your classmates, the love of your families and friends, and the esteem of all those whose lives you will touch through your holy work.

On behalf of the Board of Governors, I wish you continued fulfillment, success, and joy as you carry forward your ideals and realize your hopes and dreams.

*Congratulations.*