

# Wilshire Boulevard Temple Selects Next Senior Rabbi at Landmark Los Angeles Congregation

*Wilshire Boulevard Temple Selects Rabbi Joel Nickerson to Succeed Rabbi Steve Leder as Next Senior Rabbi at Landmark Los Angeles Congregation*

LOS ANGELES, CA, USA, October 5, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Rabbi Joel Nickerson, a member of the clergy of Wilshire Boulevard Temple since 2019, has been selected and unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees to become the next Senior Rabbi of Wilshire Boulevard Temple effective September 1, 2024, succeeding Rabbi Steve Leder after his 37 years of visionary leadership and distinguished service, it was announced today by Scott Edelman, Temple President.

Rabbi Nickerson will become the tenth Senior Rabbi to lead the congregation since its founding as Congregation B'nai Brith in 1862; a beacon of Jewish life in Los Angeles throughout its storied 161-year history of spiritual, civic, and cultural leadership. He was selected following a robust national search that identified a dozen prospective candidates. Four were interviewed and considered by a search committee - led by Board Vice-President Deborah Dragon - comprising a cross section of the congregation.

"Finding a successor to Rabbi Leder has been a critical effort. His impact on the Temple and the broader community are extraordinary and will be felt for generations to come," said Temple President Scott Edelman. "The appointment of Rabbi Nickerson signals the beginning of an exciting new chapter in the evolution of Wilshire Boulevard Temple. I cannot think of a more fitting time to announce this very important leadership change than Simchat Torah, during which we celebrate the conclusion of the annual cycle of Torah readings, and begin anew"

To establish the most seamless transition possible, Rabbi Leder and Rabbi Nickerson will work together during the next year and during an additional two years while Rabbi Leder continues as a part-time member of the clergy team. The congregation will celebrate Rabbi Leder's leadership and legacy at a gala planned for May 19, 2024.

"From this day forward, the most important mission in my rabinnate is the success of Rabbi Nickerson," Rabbi Leder said.

In addition to distinguishing himself on the pulpit, Rabbi Nickerson is a compassionate and personable leader whose innovative approach to prayer, programming, and community building

have been powerful additions to the Temple's offerings.

He inspires and engages college students, families, and adults of all ages and stages of life and Jewish experience. Upon joining Wilshire Boulevard Temple four years ago as Associate Rabbi, Rabbi Nickerson collaborated with Cantor Lisa Peicott, recently elevated to the role of Senior Cantor, to establish a new series of Koleinu services - beautiful, meaningful, musical and energetic celebrations for Shabbat and High Holy Days which have attracted a loyal and growing following.

"There is a warmth and joy among the people who call Wilshire Boulevard Temple home. Despite our size, we are a place of intimacy, the most welcoming of Jewish communities," said Rabbi Nickerson. "From our three Los Angeles campuses, multiple schools, summer camps, and growing online presence, we bring Jewish life and learning in new and exciting ways to a large and multifaceted community in Los Angeles."

Rabbi Nickerson joined Wilshire Boulevard Temple on July 1, 2019, from Temple Isaiah in Los Angeles, where he was Co-Senior Rabbi. Upon ordination, Rabbi Nickerson served as the Senior Jewish Educator at the University of Pennsylvania Hillel. During his tenure at Penn Hillel, he was responsible for running and expanding the impact of the Jewish Renaissance Project (JRP), a program dedicated to making Jewish learning relevant for students who were peripherally involved in Jewish life on campus. His work with JRP at Penn was featured in Rabbi Mike Uram's book, "Next Generation Judaism: How College Students and Hillel Can Help Reinvent Jewish Organizations," and referenced in Ron Wolfson's book, "Relational Judaism: Using the Power of Relationships to Transform the Jewish Community." Rabbi Nickerson has a fascinating background that includes an undergraduate degree in Neuroscience and Behavioral Biology from Emory University, research about monogamous bonding at the Emory National Primate Research Center, and work in the CDC's Rabies Lab.

Outside his work at Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Rabbi Nickerson serves on the Steering Committee of the Los Angeles Board of Rabbis and as a member of the Windward School DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging) Steering Committee. He cherishes spending time with his wife, Julia, and their three daughters.

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