

Jewish Spiritual Leaders Institute Rabbi RuthE breaks ground in Smoky Mountains North Carolina

Rabbi RuthE Levy installed as the first rabbi to lead Mountain Synagogue during the High Holidays 5786.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, October 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The start of the Jewish New Year brought both renewal and celebration to Mountain Synagogue in Franklin, North Carolina, as the congregation officially welcomed Rabbi RuthE Levy as its new rabbi and spiritual leader during the High Holidays.



For her first Shabbat this past weekend she offered a “Blessing of the Animals” inspired by the Torah portion Genesis, inviting congregants to bring their beloved pets for blessings of gratitude and compassion.

“

Joy and spirituality belong together,” Rabbi RuthE said with a smile. “When people are smiling, singing, and connecting — that’s sacred.”

Rabbi RuthE Levy

For a number of years Rabbi RuthE served as a Jewish lay leader for military families at the Goldsboro Air Force Base, ensuring that Jewish personnel had access to ritual life and pastoral care. She was ordained in 2022 through the [Jewish Spiritual Leaders’ Institute](#) (JSLI), an innovative online seminary that prepares modern rabbis and cantors to serve diverse communities across the globe.

“JSLI empowered me to bring Judaism to places where it might not otherwise flourish,” Rabbi RuthE said. “Mountain Synagogue has an incredible warmth and openness — the moment I met them, I felt at home.” She continues to lead biweekly Ma’ariv services for Sim Shalom Online Synagogue. You can find her there on every other Thursday evening.

Rabbi RuthE's connection with the congregation began when she led an uplifting service during her visit — complete with tambourines and the joyous rhythms of Mi Chamocha. Her mix of music, humor, and heartfelt spirituality resonated deeply with the members, leading to her appointment as the congregation's new rabbi. Based in Atlanta, she will travel to Franklin monthly to lead Shabbat services and High Holiday worship. Her plans include community-building projects such as creating care packages for local seniors, organizing interfaith holiday events, and leading social-action initiatives that bring Jewish values to life.



About the Jewish Spiritual Leaders' Institute (JSLI)

Founded by Rabbi Steven Blane, JSLI is an accredited online seminary that trains rabbis and cantors to lead with creativity, inclusion, and heart. Its graduates serve communities around the world — revitalizing synagogues, creating new models of worship, and bringing Jewish learning to people wherever they are.

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