



PRESS RELEASE

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RABBI CHAVA E. KOSTER, ONE OF 18 RABBIS, SELECTED BY STAR “FROM GOOD TO GREAT”

May 15, 2008, New York NY – Beginning in June, Rabbi Chava E. Koster, spiritual leader of The Village Temple in Greenwich Village, will be embarking on a “journey toward greatness” as one of only 18 rabbis throughout the country participating in the third year of a new program: *STAR Rabbis: From Good to Great*. *STAR Rabbis: From Good to Great* is the first initiative to explore excellence in leadership with rabbis who have at least 10 years experience.

Experienced rabbis have many opportunities to attend conferences and meet with colleagues. But, *From Good to Great* provides them with a very different experience. The program offers rabbis at mid-career a unique way to re-energize their dreams and lead their communities with greater impact, along with a select group of colleagues from across the denominational spectrum.

“Rabbis need ways to re-connect with their ideals that called them into the congregation and develop new strategies for bringing those ideals to life,” said Rabbi Hayim Herring, STAR’s Executive Director. Inspired by the best-selling book, *Good to Great*, by business consultant Jim Collins, the program uses trusted principles of leadership to energize, inspire, and support rabbis who compare their current achievements to their future aspirations.

Through participation in two leadership retreats, several “webinars” (learning sessions over the Internet) and mentored project work, rabbis practice the art of leadership and change management within their congregation. The program places special emphasis on building a more vibrant congregation through partnership with lay leadership.

Faculty and guest teachers for *From Good to Great* include some of the leading rabbis and experts from the Jewish world and corporate leaders who also understand synagogues and the Jewish community.

“Participation in the STAR Rabbis program will give me an extended opportunity to review how far the congregation of The Village Temple and I have traveled together and how we can get to our ultimate destination: joyful and meaningful participation in Jewish worship and the embodiment of Jewish values in our daily lives,” said Rabbi Chava E. Koster. “I’m looking forward to sharing with the other participants and learning from the speakers in the year ahead,” she added.

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Rabbi Chava E. Koster, the first woman from the Netherlands to be ordained a rabbi, is The Village Temple's rabbi. Prior to this, she was Associate Rabbi at Temple B'nai Abraham in Livingston, New Jersey. Rabbi Koster studied at the Academy for Jewish Religion and was ordained in 1997. She was awarded her *Doctoraal* degree in English Historical Linguistics by the University of Amsterdam in 1986 and a Masters Degree in Jewish Studies and Jewish Education from the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1993. She also earned a fellowship at the Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education in New York that same year.

Commitment to community outreach and Jewish education have been the dominant themes in Rabbi Koster's work. As a spiritual leader, Rabbi Koster believes that for a congregation to become a truly spiritual community, the emphasis needs to be on learning, spiritual growth and social action, coupled with warmth and caring, because the vibrancy, excitement and ownership of these elements will enable all members, regardless of their knowledge and observance, to be inspired to find even greater depths of meaning within Judaism.

As past Director of Columbia University's Uriel Weinreich Program in Yiddish Language, Literature and Culture, Rabbi Koster is a leading voice in the promulgation of Eastern European Culture. She was a representative to the United Nations International Clergy Committee and the American Jewish Committee.

About STAR

STAR (Synagogues: Transformation and Renewal) is a philanthropic partnership of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation and The Samuel Bronfman Foundation. STAR Rabbis: From Good to Great is funded by the Lasko Family Foundation of Philadelphia.

STAR (Synagogues: Transformation and Renewal) promotes renewal of the American Jewish community through congregational innovation and leadership development. Learn more at www.starsynagogue.org

About The Village Temple

The Village Temple, led by Rabbi Chava Koster and Cantorial soloist Daniel Leanse, has served the Reform Jewish community in Greenwich Village and Lower Manhattan for 60 years. It blends the beauty of tradition with the creative expression of modern Judaism, providing community and worship experiences that are participatory and joyful. The Congregation is inclusive, progressive and diverse, reflecting the community it serves. The Village Temple is committed to social justice, supporting many community outreach activities. It has operated a Soup Kitchen for 20 years serving hot meals to 200 guests each week. The Temple sponsors a vibrant religious school for students in grades Pre-K through high school, exciting adult education programs, and many enjoyable social events. For further information on this or other Village Temple programs, please contact Marina Gorbunova, 212-674-2340, or visit the Village Temple website, www.villagetemple.org.