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Dear Tifereth Israel Members,

Congregation Tifereth Israel is at a pivotal and auspicious time in our long history. I want to take this opportunity to bring the membership up-to-date and to be sure that you have the facts.

As you are probably aware, Agudas Achim, the other egalitarian and traditional congregation in Columbus, is in the process of a Rabbi search. Since the news of the search became public (on the Sunday before Thanksgiving), conversations have been conducted concerning a possible joining-together of our congregations. These conversations have included lay leadership and clergy and have been most encouraging.

As part of this process and with the approval of the Tifereth Israel Executive Committee, Rabbi Skolnik and Rabbi Braver have formally reached out to the Agudas search committee concerning the selection of their spiritual leader. Of course, in no way does this mean that either rabbi is considering leaving Tifereth Israel; the ultimate goal is that our rabbis will lead a unified congregation.

For the record, these are very early-stage conversations and they come with no guarantee this will actually happen. We must, however, make the effort. At our meeting last evening, our Board considered and adopted a Preliminary Memorandum of Understanding to guide the next steps. A committee will be tasked with leading the process, with three members appointed by the each of the presidents of the shuls. The committee will be asked to report within 60 days of its formation. A copy of the Memorandum is included with this message. I have appointed Karl Rubin, Arnie Good, and Nancy Gurwin as our representatives.

Both congregations have long and proud histories and the act of bringing the two communities together may be complicated. Still, we believe that this is a rare moment in history to consider this possibility. Both of our congregations are in the same neighborhood and compete for the same members. We are both blessed with impressive resources, but those resources are not infinite as we well know. However, whatever potential challenges might exist, our feeling is that they are far outweighed by the possibility of the members of the egalitarian and traditional Jewish community of Columbus working together toward a better future for us all.

All members of the Congregation will have the chance to discuss this opportunity at meetings that will be scheduled for us to come together to address suggestions, questions, and concerns. We hope you will be able to attend one or more of these events.

We are looking forward together, and we will keep you fully advised as matters proceed.

Shalom,



Ronald Solove, President

## Preliminary Memorandum of Understanding Agreement

- 1) Columbus has been blessed with two nationally respected and admired Conservative Congregations.
  - A. Founded in 1881 Congregation Agudas Achim is the oldest traditional congregation Central Ohio. Agudas Achim's history is deeply rooted in the Columbus Jewish Community, and over the years, its members have played, and continue today to play, pivotal leadership roles in both Jewish and secular community development in Columbus, and indeed worldwide.
  - B. Tracing its founding to 1901, Congregation Tifereth Israel has made outstanding contributions to the growth and progress of the Columbus Jewish and Secular Community. Whether it is Zionism, philanthropy, communal leadership, social or educational efforts Columbus has benefited from the contribution and leadership of Tifereth Israel.
- 2) In recognition of the richness of their respective histories, shared goals and vision for the future leadership of both congregations are supportive of exploring the potential benefits that can accrue to both congregations and indeed the entire community by joining forces of these two institutions. This MOU proposes that the Boards of both Congregations vote in favor of appointing working leadership (three from each Congregation) which will explore the benefits and a potential process to unite the two shuls.
- 3) At this moment in time the leadership of both Congregations recognize that we have a unique opportunity to dream big, to create a stronger legacy for future generations while, at the same time, act in the best interest of both Congregations and the entire Jewish community.