



PRESS RELEASE

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THE TEMPLE-TIFEREETH ISRAEL TAKES STEPS TO HIRE NEW SENIOR RABBI

Board of Trustees, Rabbi Jonathan Cohen close to agreement to lead Cleveland's largest Reform congregation

CLEVELAND – December 21, 2017 – The Temple-Tifereth Israel announced today that it is close to an agreement to name Rabbi Jonathan Cohen, Ph.D., its new Senior Rabbi.

The Temple Board of Trustees met on December 19 and voted in favor of naming Rabbi Cohen the new Senior Rabbi. Board of Trustees President Donald Scherzer is now authorized to discuss with Rabbi Cohen the terms of an agreement.

Rabbi Cohen currently is Dean of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) in Cincinnati. He would replace Rabbi Richard Block, who will retire after 17 years as Senior Rabbi.

"We are heartened that The Temple has been able to identify a religious teacher of Rabbi Cohen's caliber who could lead our Reform synagogue into a bright future," Scherzer said. "We undertook a thorough, diligent and thoughtful national search process, led by a committee of 25 congregants who worked together with integrity on behalf of The Temple. They have my gratitude." Rabbi Cohen would lead a synagogue with a long tradition of commitment to faith, community and the state of Israel.

"The Temple-Tifereth Israel is a vibrant synagogue with a history rooted in the traditions and values of Reform Judaism," Rabbi Cohen said. "I am excited at the prospect of meeting with the clergy, the lay leadership and the congregation of this incredible institution."

Rabbi Cohen has served as Dean of HUC-JIR since September 2011. Previously he had been director of HUC's University of Cincinnati Ethics Center.

Rabbi Cohen was born in Israel and served in an armored corps unit of the Israeli Defense Forces from 1987-90. He has a law degree from the University of Liverpool and was ordained as a rabbi in June 2012 from HUC-JIR. Rabbi Cohen was chair of the Central Conference of American Rabbis Responsa Committee in 2017.

His grandfather, Chaim Cohn, was an Israeli Supreme Court Justice and his father was a prominent diplomat who served the state of Israel at critical junctures for a period spanning approximately four decades.

Rabbi Cohen is married and has three young children. His wife, Yael Senamaud, is a concert violist. She was a tenured member of the Chamber Orchestra of Paris as well as the Palau De Les Artes Reina Sofia Opera in Valencia, Spain. She also has played in orchestras in the United States.

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Rabbi Richard A. Block

Rabbi Rosette Barron Haim

Rabbi Roger C. Klein

Rabbi Stacy Schlein

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“Rabbi Cohen is a giant of the Reform movement, yet he is both humble and compassionate,” Search Committee co-chairs Howard Epstein and Jane Joseph said in a statement. “He connects extremely well with people and embodies the sense of community and faith The Temple values.”

The Temple’s new Senior Rabbi will begin serving the congregation on July 1, 2018. Rabbi Richard Block will retire on June 30, 2018, after serving The Temple since May 1, 2001.

“We prepare for Rabbi Block’s retirement with mixed emotions,” Scherzer said. “We are eternally grateful for his leadership. He has supported us, guided us and taught us as a true Senior Rabbi and friend. We celebrate the opportunities that await him.”

ABOUT THE TEMPLE-TIFERETH ISRAEL

The Temple is a Reform Jewish synagogue with a main facility in Beachwood, Ohio, whose growing congregation includes 1,500 households. It was founded in 1850 as Tifereth Israel (Glory of Israel) and was a founding member of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now the Union for Reform Judaism). The congregation’s former home is known as The Temple in University Circle in downtown Cleveland. That facility is still used for special events and life cycle celebrations. For 46 years (1917-1963) the congregation was led by the renowned Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver. Today, The Temple cherishes its rich history and traditions and fosters a dynamic culture of imagination and innovation. Members of all ages find meaning and inspiration by developing enduring personal connections with each other, Torah, God, the State of Israel and the Jewish People, and through acts of justice and compassion. For more information, go to <http://www.ttti.org/>

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