



## Temple Israel

908 HIGHLAND AVENUE • NEW CASTLE, PA 16101

### MERGER UPDATE

In late 1993, the Temple's merger exploration committee had two meetings just to discuss the issues among ourselves. At the second of those two meetings, a representative from the UAHC joined us to give us the benefit of her experience. At her suggestion, we prepared and mailed the survey that you received in December.

Our first joint meeting with the Tifereth Israel committee was held on January 12th. At this meeting, we reviewed a long list of issues including buildings, worship services, prayer books, kosher kitchens, patrilineal descent, membership in national organizations and requirements for Bar and Bat Mitzvot. The discussions were frank but friendly. Many different points of view were exchanged. Everyone seems to genuinely want the best for the New Castle Jewish community however a lot of compromises will be needed before a merger can be negotiated.

From our first meeting, it seems that patrilineal descent and mixed marriages will be the two most difficult issues to discuss. The kosher kitchen appears like it will be the third biggest problem. The officers and board members of the Temple want you to know that no decision will be made in haste and no compromise will be made if it does not appear to be in the best interest of our members. Your responses to our survey are very helpful and will be used to guide our discussions with Tifereth Israel. Please don't hesitate to call or write with your suggestions.

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Treasurer's Analysis  
Temple Membership Survey  
January 1994

1. Why do our members choose to belong to Temple Israel?

Two reasons stand out with overwhelming majorities. First, 27 out of 37 first place selections were for supporting Judaism in our community. Second, 23 out of 37 second place selections were to have a place to celebrate major Jewish holidays. Interestingly, no other alternatives were popular first or second choices.

2. What do our members like best?

Our members overwhelmingly identify the form and content of services as the aspect of our Temple that they prefer the most. (The questionnaire had separate choices for the form and content of Sabbath services and the form and content of Holiday services. After reviewing the responses, I combined them.) On a combined basis, service form and content was the first preference given by 22 out of 37 respondents. On a combined basis, service form and content was the second preference given by 22 out of 36 respondents. No other preferences were popular choices.

3. What do our members like the least?

We cannot see strong patterns in these choices. The responses are well distributed. Building, Rabbi, education and high dues are all fairly unpopular.

4. What changes are the most important to our members?

Again, we cannot see strong patterns in these choices. The responses are well distributed. A full time Rabbi, improvements to our building and more education seem to be the leading candidates for change. Note that the answers to this question are very consistent with the answers to question 3.

5. What are the two most significant barriers to change?

Lack of cooperation between the two New Castle Jewish congregations tops the list with 16 out of 37 first place selections. Apathy among our members is also a strongly favored response with 6 first place selections and 15 out of



33 second place selections.

6. Do our members favor a merger?

Yes they most certainly do. Only 2 out of 38 said no. HOWEVER, 23 out of 38 only favor a merger if a Reform approach can be preserved. This response is very consistent with the responses to question two.

7. If we do not merge, what do our members want to do to reduce the deficit?

Our strongest responses were for eliminating music with our services. The highest response was 19 in favor of eliminating the organist and the soloist at Sabbath services. Our second highest response was 14 in favor of eliminating the Cantor at High Holiday services. Only 7 were in favor of cutting back on the presence of a Rabbi. Cutting back on the use of a Rabbi is even less popular than raising dues.

Notes:

1. The survey results are more ambiguous than shown in my reports. For example, some respondents had more than one first choice. I interpreted some responses.
2. The survey results are not audited. I did not double check the count.
3. No survey received after January 8th was included in this report.



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# Temple Israel Membership Survey

number of times selected as preference

1 2 3

27	6	1
2	23	10
0	3	10
4	4	3
0	0	8
0	0	0
4	1	2
4	2	4
1	2	0
1	2	3
3	2	8
11	9	2
11	13	5
3	2	1
0	1	0
0	2	2
3	1	6
5	5	1
4	2	6
1	3	2
0	2	0
3	0	1
0	0	0
5	1	1
3	6	1
5	3	0
2	1	2

- Please identify the three most important reasons why you belong to Temple Israel. Use a 1 for the most important, a 2 for the second most important and a 3 for the third most important.

- I want to belong to a Jewish organization to support Judaism in my community.
- To have a place to celebrate major Jewish holidays.
- For sabbath services.
- For the religious education of my children.
- For adult education in Judaism.
- Because the Temple has a full time Rabbi.
- Other:

- What are the three things that you like best about Temple Israel? Use a 1 for the most important, a 2 for the second most important and a 3 for the third most important.

- Our building.
- Our Rabbi.
- The frequency of our services.
- The community dinners.
- The form and content of Sabbath services.
- The form and content of Holiday services.
- The education for children.
- The education for adults.
- The low dues.
- Other:

- What are the three things that you like the least about Temple Israel? Use a 1 for the one that you dislike the most. Use a 2 for the second most disliked, and 3 for the third most disliked.

- Our building.
- Our Rabbi.
- The frequency of our services.
- The community dinners.
- The form and content of Sabbath services.
- The form and content of Holiday services.
- The education for children.
- The education for adults.
- The high dues.
- Other:



# Temple Israel Membership Survey

number of times selected as preference

1 2 3

3	2	2
4	3	1
5	4	6
5	6	2
2	8	1
8	5	3
3	3	2
3	2	8
1	0	2
0	0	0
7	5	2
0	1	1
5	3	1
2	2	2
6	15	0
0	2	1
16	4	4
1	1	0
13		
2		
23		
12		
19		
14		
7		
12		

4. What changes are the most important to you?

Please rank all of the following. Use a 1 for the most important and a 9 for the least important.

- More "traditional" form and content for services.
- More reform form and content for services.
- More social and community activities.
- More adult education.
- Improvements to our building.
- A full time Rabbi.
- More programming for mixed marriages.
- More programs for children.
- An expanded Temple bulletin.
- Other:

5. What do you think are the two most significant barriers to change? Use a 1 to note the most significant and a 2 to note the second most significant.

- Money.
- Current Temple leaders.
- The small size of our congregation.
- Insufficient spiritual leadership.
- Apathy among the members.
- Lack of cooperation among our members.
- Lack of cooperation between the two New Castle Jewish Congregations.
- Other:

6. Are you in favor of a merger with the Conservative congregation?

- Yes
- No
- Only if a Reform approach can be preserved.

7. If we do not merge, we will continue to operate at a serious deficit unless we make other changes. Are you in favor of:

- Raising dues?
- Eliminating the organist and the soloist at Sabbath services?
- Eliminating the Cantor at High Holiday's services?
- Only having a Rabbi for 5 or 6 holiday services each year?
- Dropping our affiliation with the Reform movement?