

Israel Discourse Advisory Committee

Report to Board of Trustees

December 18, 2018

The Israel Discourse Advisory Committee (IDAC) did not meet on November 29 as originally scheduled, in order to accommodate scheduling of a congregational “meet and greet” for the second of the candidates for the senior rabbi position. IDAC will meet instead on Wednesday, December 19. Members of the committee did meet a number of times in late November and early December with candidates for the rabbi position in order to exchange views with them on the subject of discourse about Israel-Palestine and related issues.

Through its chair, IDAC was heavily involved in planning, support and conduct of an event on November 18, previously approved by the committee and hosted by Rabbi Franken to foster constructive dialogue about Israel, Palestine and the peace process. That event featured Duke professor and congregant Bruce Jentleson speaking on the subject of “Why no Israeli-Palestinian? An Insider's Perspective on the Issues” followed by structured discussion among congregants guided by congregant Peg Carlson, a professional facilitator. Rabbi Franken also made remarks at several points during the event. Approximately 80 congregants attended. The occasion was notable in that it was centered around IDAC's core purpose of encouraging informed, civil discussion among congregants of varying points of view, and from that standpoint it was heartening to receive uniformly positive assessments of the event from participants. Among the outcomes were lists of questions and ideas for additional activities generated by participants that are expected to be useful in planning further Israel-related events going forward.

As noted, IDAC will next meet on December 19. At that time, at the request of JRC President Ziva Raney, the committee will discuss the status and role of IDAC following the first 18 months of its existence, as was intended at the time the committee was created.

Submitted by Norm Loewenthal, Committee Chair