

Beth Israel protesters have moral right

Some of you who have observed our weekly peaceful and silent vigils at Beth Israel Congregation appear to be caught between two claims: We vigillars certainly feel that, as a center for nationalist support for the state of Israel, Beth Israel is an appropriate venue for our vigil in support of Palestinians who are denied their rights by that same state. However, Rabbi Robert Dobrusin of Beth Israel claims in an Other Voices article (Jan. 14, 2007) that Beth Israel is strictly a "house of worship."

For observers who are slightly discomforted by our presence, we offer an insight. We note that Beth Israel displays a foreign flag (Israeli) from the altar in their sanctuary, and that they recite a "Prayer for the State of Israel" every Sabbath. We feel these two actions by Beth Israel demonstrate that, in fact, a political agenda is part of the service at Beth Israel.

Jewish Witnesses for Peace and Friends will end the vigils if Beth Israel satisfies our three previously stated requests or if equivalent goals are achieved through negotiations with Beth Israel: committing to work for the equal rights for the Palestinian citizens of Israel; committing to work for the end of the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem; and committing to work for the right of Palestinians to return to the homes from which they were forcibly removed in what was to become Israel.

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