Hillel

The University of Chicago
Johanna and Herman H.
Newberger Hillel Center



From the Director's Desk



Dear UChicago Hillel Alumni, Parents, and Friends,

Thank you for your support in having launched an incredible start to the 2026-2027 school year here on campus!

As you know, UChicago Hillel is a connection point for 800 Jewish undergraduates and over 1,000 Jewish graduate students. Our mission is to create the conditions for Jewish joy, Jewish confidence, and Jewish safety for all who seek it.

Sukkot is the season to express our Jewish identity right in the public square. The UChicago Hillel sukkah was bursting with life this year!

In October, it is our joy to invite you, our alumni and parents, to join the celebration!

On Thursday, October 15th, at 2:30 pm CT, UChicago Parents are invited to join me along with Dean of Students Mike Hayes and Dean of Students in the College Phil Venticinque for a conversation about Student Life on Campus for Jewish undergraduates. I hope you will join us! **Zoom RSVP link**

On Friday, October 16th, Family Weekend begins here at UChicago. If you are here on campus, you can join us for a talk about what it means to be Jewish on UChicago campus at 3:00 pm at Ida Noyes Hall. Most importantly: please sign up for a 7:00 pm family-style BBQ dinner at Hutch! **RSVP here**

And in November, UChicago Hillel is on the road! I may be coming to a city near you... Philadelphia (Nov 15-18), New York (Nov 19), and Los Angeles (Nov 22-29). As I step into this new leadership role, I am looking to meet as many alumni, parents, and friends as possible! Please reach out to me (**rabbicg@uchicagohillel.org**) to schedule a coffee chat: I can't wait to hear your dreams for the future of UChicago Hillel.

As October rolls in and the holidays subside, I wish all of you a season of peace, health, and strength.

With gratitude for your continued partnership,

Rabbi D'ror Chankin-Gould

Click here to support UChicago Hillel!

Family Weekend:

Friday 10/16: Egal and Yavneh Kabbalat Shabbat Services
&
UChicago Hillel Family Style BBQ Shabbat Dinner
RSVP HERE for Dinner

Saturday 10/17: Yavneh Saturday Morning Services
&
Family Weekend Reception



YOU ARE INVITED to join us 10/15 at 2:30pm CT for a Zoom conversation about Jewish life on UChicago campus with our new Executive Director, Dean of Students, and Dean of Students in the College

REGISTRATION LINK

Alumni Dvar Torah



"With Wandering steps and slow"
By Rabbi Lisa Edwards (AM'77)

These nearly last words of *Paradise Lost*, the epic poem by John Milton (1608 - 1674), describe not only the walk of Adam and Eve out of the Garden at the end of the poem, but could also be a title of my path to the rabbinate. Part of those "wandering steps and slow" took me through the University of Chicago in four quarters to a Masters in English in the mid 1970s. While there, I found myself

electrified by the ending of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, describing a key moment in this week's *Parashat Bereshit*:

> *Whereat*
> *In either hand the hastening Angel caught*
> *Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate*
> *Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast*
> *To the subjected plain; then disappeared.*
> *They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld*
> *Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,*
> *Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate*
> *With dreadful faces thronged, and fiery arms:*
> *Some natural tears they dropt, but wiped them soon;*
> *The world was all before them, where to choose*
> *Their place of rest, and Providence their guide:*
> *They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,*
> *Through Eden took their solitary way.*
>
> – Last few lines of *Paradise Lost* by John Milton

Though obviously not a Jewish text, many years ago, through this short passage, I began to understand what midrash [biblical commentary often in story form] could do, realizing that it could be found in many places, not just in the volumes of Midrash Rabbah (in truth, I had not yet discovered *Midrash Rabbah*). *Paradise Lost* wasn't the first literary, not Jewish, midrash, of course, it just happened to be the one that brought into focus for me how biblical references enlighten a literary work, and likewise how those Biblical references bring insight into the sacred texts they reference. I used that focus years later in my PhD dissertation which in turn led me in another year or so "with wandering steps and slow" to rabbinical school.

I still own (it's sitting beside me right now) the 1,059 page volume of *John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose* 16th printing (1975) of the 1957 first edition, edited by Merritt Y. Hughes, complete with the little cartoon I drew on p.468 of Adam and Eve and the Angel making their way hand in hand "with wandering steps and slow." Indeed, I think of these lines, especially the last five, nearly every time I read/study *Parashat Bereshit* [Genesis 3:24]. I am still moved by the future-facing optimism emphasized in Milton's version of the story – the lives and world open to possibilities. If it's true that each rabbi only has one message that they give over and over in different forms, then mine is something akin to that one I felt fifty years ago as I finished reading the poem and made my way - with wandering steps and slow - from Harper Library, *Paradise Lost* in my left hand, a *Tanakh* in my right.

Rabbi Lisa Edwards (she/her) has been a Jewish lesbian activist from the pulpit, on the page and on the Web, in the classroom, and in the streets of Los Angeles for over three decades. From 1994 until 2019, Rabbi Edwards served as Rabbi (now Rabbi Emerita) of Beth Chayim Chadashim (BCC), "House of New Life," the world's original queer synagogue (founded in Los Angeles in 1972), still an LGBTQIS+ inclusive, progressive, diverse community. Her wife, activist and archivist Lezbtzn Tracy Moore, and Lisa have been together since 1985, and are both widely published on queer and Jewish topics.

UChicago Hillel is...

Meet our Board of Directors

"A welcoming place for our students to gather, celebrate, and enjoy great food together."
Eteri Zaslavsky (President & Current Parent)

"A source of continuity, support and celebration of Jewish life."
Jason Sussman (Community Member)

"A home to explore what your Jewish identity means to you."
Max Grad (Class of '07)

"A place where connection allows you to discover your Judaism."
Rachel Scheinfeld (Current Parent)

"Where I found lifelong friends and a deeper connection to my Jewish identity."
Charlotte Franklin (Class of '16)

"A place for community."
Sara Buchdahl Levine (Current Parent)

"A Jewish home away from home."
Dr. Linda Wagner-Weiner (UChicago Medicine)

Mensches of the Month



At the beginning of September, 12 students (9 non-Jewish and 3 Jewish) traveled to Israel for a 10-day trip which offered a multifaceted view of Israel from a wide variety of perspectives. We began in the north, along the Syrian and Lebanese borders, continued to Jerusalem and the Gaza envelope, and finished in Tel Aviv. Along the way, we met fascinating speakers from across the political and social spectrum, including Jews and Palestinians, Muslims and Christians, young and old. We heard personal stories and explored the diversity of people living in this small country in the Middle East.

Takeaways from Three Students:

- "My takeaway was that allyship means asking hard questions and being honest, all from a place of love."

Sadie Suskind (Class of 2029)

- "I saw firsthand how, even the most tense circumstances, Israelis and Palestinians alike, tirelessly strive to keep positivity and hope in their lives; I feel I gained a lot of perspective through hearing their inspiring stories of perseverance."

Tali Goldkorn (Class of 2029)

- "Perhaps the most humbling insight I learned was in realizing the sheer immensity of what I didn't know. Only then was I able to properly bear witness to the land and its history."

Emanuel Rapaport (Class of 2029)

Since we last spoke...

It's been a wonderful start to the quarter at Hillel, with lots of opportunities to welcome new and returning students into our community! Fifty first-year students joined us for our Move-In Bagel Brunch, and we carried that momentum into our O-Week Shabbat, which coincided with Sukkot. Our Welcome Back Falafel Fest drew 60 students, who met new people and enjoyed good food. We kept the food theme going with a doubleheader this past week: Sushi in the Sukkah for lunch, followed by Shakshuka in the Sukkah for dinner. Both events filled the sukkah with students who share a love of food, connection, and Jewish tradition.

Eva Rosenthal
Director of Engagement









Upcoming Events

10/5-10/7: October 7 Exhibit opens

10/15: Zoom Conversation with our Executive Director, Dean of Students, and Dean of Undergraduate Students in the College

10/16: Family Weekend Shabbat BBQ Dinner

RSVP HERE

10/17: Family Weekend Reception from 2:30-4:30pm

10/21: Woman of Valor Lunch and Learn series w/ Dr. Erin Walsh

10/27: Hyde Pickle Deli

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Click here to fuel Jewish life on campus!

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