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*The campaign for*  
**BRENT  
HOUSE**

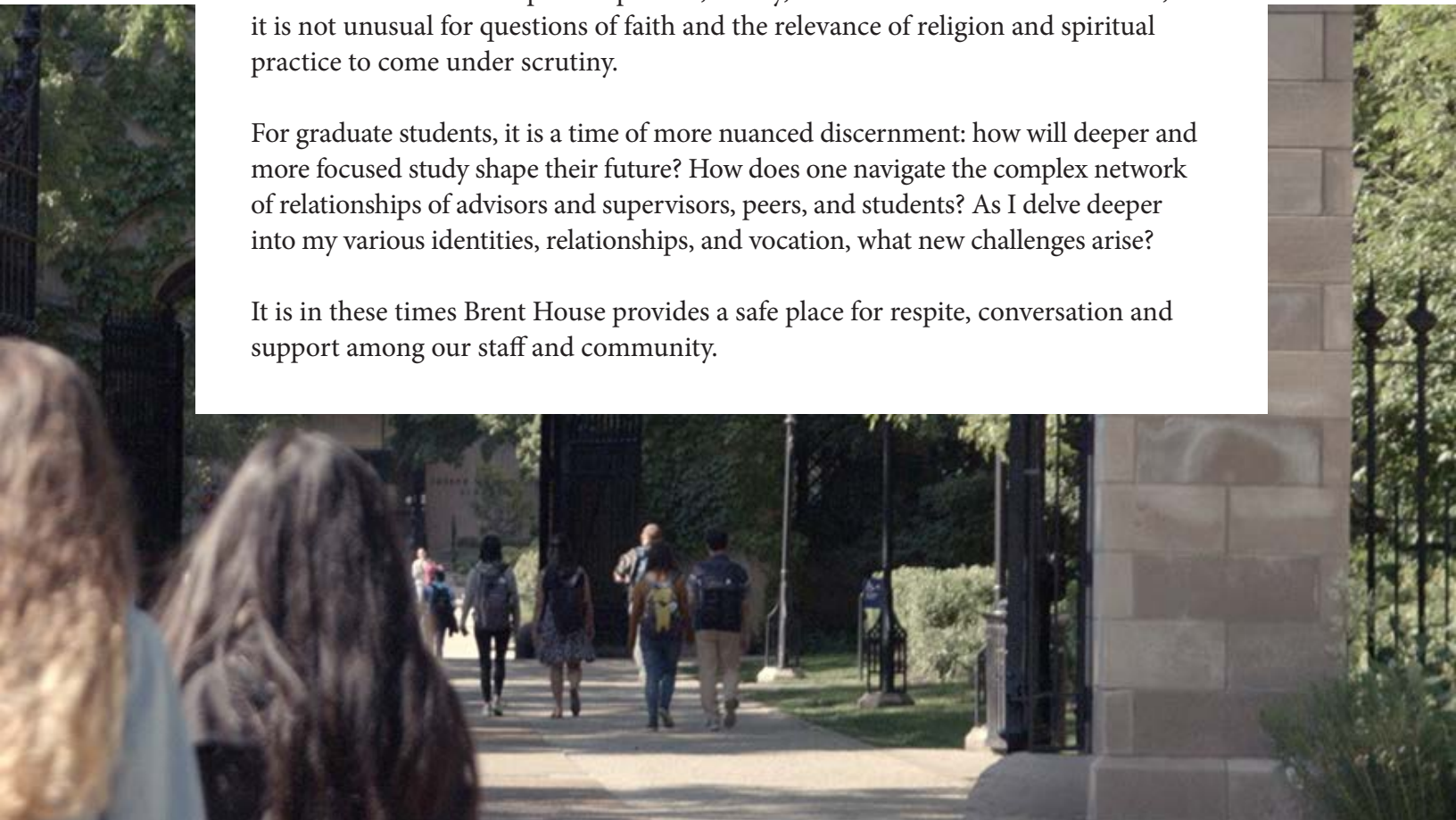
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The University of Chicago (UChicago) is one of the top universities in the world, known for its rigorous academic standards and practices in both research and undergraduate education.

For undergraduates, university life will introduce new experiences and unexpected challenges. The transition to adulthood brings with it new freedoms. It can also bring the swirling pressures of academic expectations, increased workloads, lapses of discipline, fear of failure and self-doubt (ex. imposter syndrome: everyone here is smarter, more accomplished, and belongs more than I). For some career aspirations and lifestyle choices may require reevaluation. Personal identity and values may be unclear. For others issues of gender identity and sexual orientation may give rise to confusion, insecurity and feelings of isolation. Students may also experience tensions in their relationships with parents, family, and friends. Within this turmoil, it is not unusual for questions of faith and the relevance of religion and spiritual practice to come under scrutiny.

For graduate students, it is a time of more nuanced discernment: how will deeper and more focused study shape their future? How does one navigate the complex network of relationships of advisors and supervisors, peers, and students? As I delve deeper into my various identities, relationships, and vocation, what new challenges arise?

It is in these times Brent House provides a safe place for respite, conversation and support among our staff and community.



## WHERE WE CAME FROM

From our inception in 1930, Brent House has been the metaphorical and literal home of students, faculty, and other members of the University's community who seek to explore and grow in their lives with God. Regardless of religious or spiritual affiliation, we have welcomed and continue to welcome a great variety of people - from those who have found a spiritual home with us, to those who simply come in search of our famous ministry of hospitality and food, to those who seek a safe space to ask challenging questions and wrestle with answers without judgment. Many times it's as simple as a cup of tea, a prayer, a listening ear, and a broader perspective.

In all aspects of our time together, we are constantly aware of the presence and strength of this affirming and nurturing way of being. One of our community members called Brent House a "stake in the ground to sanity", a place where no one is evaluated or measured, where being in process is not only OK, but expected, and where not only questions and doubts, but joy and passion, are welcomed.

## WHO WE ARE

With its roots deep in the Anglican tradition, students, faculty, staff, and members of the University community have come to see Brent House as an essential resource within the life of the campus. The Anglican/Episcopal tradition comfortably affirms the intellect as a God-given gift and as one of the ways we discern God's work in the world and in our communities. Even as we affirm what motivates and even gives joy to a UChicago student, our tradition also offers reminders that even as we value the "life of the mind," human flourishing is incomplete without nourishing body, heart, soul, and community. (e.g. Integration of the intangible and tangible - "making the case" or "no case")

Being at the University of Chicago, we value deeply the Life of the Mind and are committed to integrating the intellect with the heart, soul, and body. The Episcopal community at Brent House is just that, a group of students who are as committed to what inspires and/or frustrates them in their studies and in the world as they are to developing their own spiritual lives in relationship with others on similar journeys. In an environment where religion may be studied, but first-hand religious commitment and piety may be questioned.

## THE BUILDING AS KEY TO OUR MINISTRY

Brent House offers a space where questions of faith may be asked, doubts freely expressed, and religious practice can be, well, practiced. We show how faith can both be silent and introspective, communal and ritualized, debated fiercely, boisterous and full of food.

There aren't many religious spaces on campus where one can be Christian and LGBTQ, or unsure about one's inherited religious tradition, or hold different, even contradictory religious identities. Having our own building allows us to respond flexibly and creatively to the various and changing needs the UChicago community.

To that end, every aspect of Brent House is put to use for our ministry:

- The chapel is used for weekly Eucharist and Evening Prayer, as well as individual prayer and meditation. It is also used for meetings and gatherings of community groups where a sacred and more intimate space is preferred.
- The front room provides a larger and more neutral gathering place for conversations with prominent scholars and community leaders, to watch a movie together, to discuss a book, or be warmed by a fire in the fireplace.

- Our seven bedrooms offer full-time living accommodations for graduate students, which form our residential community.
- Our guest room accommodates visiting alumni/ae, friends and relatives of students, and visiting scholars.
- Like many homes, our kitchen serves as the heart of our resident community, worship and fellowship communities. You'll find rich conversations during meal preparation through the washing of dishes.
- Our dining room provides a more formal space for sharing a communal meals and engaging in fellowship.
- While our sunroom is a place of respite for busy students, eating a meal, or conducting a small group meeting.
- The chaplain's office offers safe space for pastoral care and premarital counseling. It is also the central place for conducting staff meetings and the administrative concerns of our ministry.
- Our front and back yards are used for fundraising events, weddings, barbecues, and other social gatherings.

And so visitors to Brent House can expect us to welcome them, to join us in community, and participate in whatever way they feel comfortable. We promise not to preach at you, we'll always answer your questions as honestly as we can, and we'll listen to your perspective, even—or especially—when it challenges ours.

This is how we as Episcopalians witness the Gospel.

### WHERE WE ARE GOING

- To be a leader in campus ministry for the Episcopal Church, providing formation for future campus ministers and other pastoral leaders.
- A place for seminarian field education.
- To provide more lay leadership opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.
- To move more deeply into programs for Ignation spirituality and discernment.
- To expand campus ministry at UChicago, offering more one-on-one and group programs in prayer, discernment, and support.
- To provide more resources and support for faculty and staff.
- To develop a stronger, more active network of Brent House and UChicago alums.

- Based on the needs of our constituents (alumni/constituents, non-alumni?)
- Discernment 1-on-1, local and regional cottage meetings, and video-conferences will provide increased clarity.
- Grounded in the stability, flexibility, and permanence that a physical building provides.
- Therefore, we require on-going building and grounds maintenance and capital improvements.
- We must increase administrative staff to support current and future ministry
  - This will provide more consistent and skilled attention to the stewardship of our buildings
  - Free the chaplain to engage in programming, provide more pastoral support, and stay connected with the current community and alums

### HOW WE WILL GET THERE

We will require financial support from religious and secular sources, alumni and non-alumni, parents.

**For more information or to share your ideas, visit [thecampaignforbrenthouse.com](http://thecampaignforbrenthouse.com) or contact Brent House's Chaplain, The Rev. Stacey Alen, at: 773-947-8744**