

KUNTHEA PLONG BACCALAUREATE 1991

Mr. Mannion, Pastor Betker, parents, friends, members of the Board, faculty, welcome to the class of 1991 Baccalaureate service. As parents, I am sure all of you are very proud of your son or daughter this afternoon. And you should be, because we are graduating after four years of grueling academic studies. We thank our parents for giving us the opportunity to attend this wonderful school.

For years we attended Lutheran High, we have no regrets. This school is the foundation of which we are today and all we are to become. Lutheran High has provided us all the necessities that we needed as we were growing up: especially love and support. Most of us see our teachers and our friends at school more than we see our parents. So you've played a very important part in our lives.

Lutheran High School has given every single one of us the opportunity to grow spiritually and academically. We may have complained now and then of the quantity of work we were expected to complete, but with our teachers' love and understanding we have gained a respect for our abilities as well as what it takes to succeed in life. I mean, who would ever have thought that a child who ran away from a cruel and violent world thousands of miles away, half of whose childhood was spent in a concentration camp because of the Khmer Rouge atrocities, would be given the opportunity to become editor-in-chief of her school's newspaper?

At Lutheran High, the faculty has taught us, just like the way Christ teaches us, that every one of us is unique and special. We are given different gifts just as we are given different fathers and mothers. How we use these gifts are who we are, who we will be. This is the school which should be imitated by the other schools because with just under two hundred students, we are the under dogs. But we proved everyone wrong. Just a moth ago, four young men with different backgrounds came together and used the gifts which God has given them, those of speed and endurance, and came in third in the state in the track division.

At Lutheran high school, teachers don't look at us as only students, but as another one of God's wonderful creations who wish to learn and be guided. They want to get to know us personally. Many get-togethers planned throughout the school year were for teachers and students to get to know each other: track and field, beach day, the Christmas show, spaghetti dinner, and spring fling. As we leave for College and go our separate ways, we will confidently face a bigger world; a world that sometimes won't be kind to us when we make mistakes. But we will never give up because you've taught us endurance and perseverance in everything we do.

I hope that when we all have families of our own, that we may be able to send them to a school that well give them as much as we have been given.

Traveling from Cambodia ten years ago, I would never imagine that I would graduate with honors when all I wanted to do was learn how to speak English. I'm thankful for Pastor Roller and my sponsors Mary and Dana Lundquist. These are the people who have never given up on me and for putting me in this school. I will never be able to repay them.

Thank you for giving us so many wonderful memories. Although there will be more memories to be made in the future, we will always cherish the ones here at Lutheran High School. We will never forget the

times of joy and happiness we spent here or the kindness and understanding you've shown throughout the years.

As we travel the paths that constitute our lives, we will hold all these memories in our hearts.

KWAGHFAN IGBER BACCALAUREATE 1991

Mr. Mannion, Rev. Betker, members of the Board, Faculty, parents, and friends: Eccls. 3:1-4 says, "There is a right time for everything: A time to be born, A time to die; A time to plant, A time to harvest; A time to cry, A time to laugh; a time to grief, and a time to dance...". We came to this school as young people. For the past four years we have matured not only as young adults but also as Christian adults. As it was then a time to start, it is now a time to finish.

As I reflect back on the past four years, I find only happy memories of eating lunch with friends, and special school events like beach day and field day. It seems like only yesterday I was a freshman struggling to locate my classes. I am sure I speak for the entire senior class when I say that Lutheran High School has been more than just a place for learning; it has also been sort of a second family and a source of eternal friendships. The faculty of Lutheran high school has gone out of its way to reach out to the students and show that they care whether it is by extra help sessions after class or just being a friend during a time of need.

Lutheran High School is a place where not only young minds are developed but also moral values and Christian beliefs. This is what separates Lutheran High from other schools. Despite the small size of our school, we have repeatedly proven ourselves to be able to match with other bigger schools in curricular activities including athletics.

In my four years here at Lutheran High, I have learned two important things. They are faith and love. We have been told in Matt. 17:20, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to a mountain, 'move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing is impossible." I would like to relate this to our dreams of becoming what we would like to be. With God on our side, there is nothing that can stop us.

I have also learned much about love from Lutheran High School. In John 3:16 we are reminded that God demonstrates his extreme love for us by giving his only son to die for our sins. Today more than ever the world needs love. There are ethnic tensions all over Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia. There are also wars within and between nations, the most recent in our memories is the Gulf War. If everybody were to follow God's example for unconditional love, there would be no wars. If there is anything that I am always going to remember and cherish from Lutheran High it is the tightness, love and caring that exist here.

Let's all go out with determination and zeal and act as points of light to the rest of the world, reflecting the ideals and values of Lutheran High School as a Christian institution. Don't let this fire be quenched for I know with the help of God we can do it.

I would like to extend our profound gratitude to the board, which has been instrumental in making this occasion possible and for the excellent Christian education that has made this school stand out from all other high schools in Hawaii. It's also important not to forget our parents

as they have shown love, encouragement and desire to see us succeed. They have been our greatest source of support.

I would also like to thank our teachers and faculty as they have given us that which only God will be able to repay. They have been patient with us during difficult times, and have shown love instead of hate. Our teachers have contributed significantly in the molding of our beliefs and values in a positive way. To me they will always be our teachers and friends. May God bless all as we part to meet again.

LAURA ANDERSON VALEDICTORIAN 1993

Good evening and welcome Mr. Stockman, Pastor Meyer, faculty, members of the Board, parents, and friends. I'd like to thank the Board of Directors for their involvement in our education leading to this graduation ceremony. Thank you Mr. Bentz for those words of inspiration. And most importantly thank you parents and teachers for your encouragement and support during our high school years.

Tonight, I leave Lutheran High with mixed emotions—great joy and ecstasy. No, seriously I leave here with just as much apprehension as well as joy for what may lie ahead. As I look back on my years at this school, I'd like to remember all that I've been taught in the ways of academics—from how to graph a parabola to the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215. As much as I'd like to think, it is quite certain I will forget some of what I've been taught. But rest assured teachers your hard work hasn't been in vain, because what I've learned for and about life hasn't always occurred in the formal classroom setting. These are just a few words about you and what we've learned through you that we won't forget.

Mr. Bentz, you were always so cheerful and had a positive attitude in everything you did; thanks for your willingness to give us extra help when we needed it. Mrs. Barton, you had us work hard, but you opened our eyes to the importance of the English language. Mr. Clausen, your stories captivated us, you've given us something to look forward to in life. Mrs. Crockett, I know sometimes it seemed as if your suggestions and kind threats of turning in overdue books and college applications fell on deaf ears, but we really did appreciate all of your assistance. Mrs. Eckhoff, we're glad you shared your love of music with us. Dr. Lutz, we probably won't forget those unsuccessful chemistry and physics demonstrations, but we will always remember your faith and belief in our ability to excel. Miss McCreary, I know, "We learn from our mistake," your favorite one-liner for success in life will stay in our minds for a long time. Pastor Meyer, thank you for helping this school by accepting the call to become our interim principal. Mr. Pelletier, we won't forget your eagerness and zeal to share your love of math with us. Mrs. Penzo, you've been there for us when we needed someone to talk to. Mrs. Reginelli, I admit I wasn't too thrilled about the first day of required basic art, but you were more concerned with our work ethic and how well we followed directions than our ability or, in my case, lack of ability in art.

Miss Streich, thank you for your easygoing manner and ability to relate with us. Miss Utsumi, we appreciate you taking time out for us and to hear about our problems. Mr. Utsumi, I know I didn't take Japanese, but I still had the opportunity to learn of your philosophies about life by having you as a basketball coach. Mrs. Villaverde, you've given us a true appreciation for literature, and we all know the truth; Honors English is really a special ed class.

As we leave Lutheran High, I think about how our education and experience will serve as firm foundations for whatever we may face. Although we will no longer be attending LHS, we, as individuals, will carry a part of this school—the teachers, the education, the friends, and our faith in Christ with us wherever we go. We passed a stage in our lives where those who were a part of it have made an impact on who we are today, and we thank you for it.

Thank you.

ARCHIE CHEN SALUTATORIAN 1993

Mr. Stockman, Reverend Meyer, faculty, parents and family members, friends, thank you for attending our high school graduation ceremony. Members of the board, thank you for providing us this wonderful and meaningful evening.

I feel honored to be able to speak here tonight. I would not have dreamed of this six years ago when I first set foot on this beautiful island. I have learned so much during the past four years in Lutheran High School. Those years were not merely memorable; they were unforgettable. From an entering freshman to today's graduating senior, I have grown and matured in Lutheran High School.

Lutheran is a small school. We don't have a large faculty or a large student body. However I believe that it is the quality instead of quantity that counts and we certainly have a great faculty. Teachers always try their best to help us, to explain the lessons to us, to help us understand, and to help us learn. They do this not only during classes but all the time.

I am fortunate to have chosen to come to this loving school four years ago. I am also fortunate to be taken care of by some of the finest teachers in the world. When I go to college, I am going to miss this school and miss the faculty members who are always at their best to bring out the best in me, in all of us.

Archimedes once said, "Give me where to stand, and I will move the Earth." The years of education we received at Lutheran High has given us that place to stand, and because of that, one day, we will move the Earth.

Thank you all. Thank you.

MR. TODD BENTZ GRADUATION ADDRESS 1993

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen and Seniors. It feels rather strange for me to be addressing the Senior Class in this way. I am a math teacher, so I am use to talking about variables and equations. I could go on and on about these subjects for hours, but somehow I don't think that is why I was asked to come here this evening. Normally I also

have the seniors in homeroom. For those of you who do not know, homeroom is where we have a daily devotion, all class business is taken care of, and the daily bulletin is read. They don't pay too much attention to me when I read these announcements, but who can blame them, Daily Bulletin announcements are usually not very exciting. Tonight is different however; you are all excited about your graduation. You are attentively listening to hear the moment your name will be called and you will walk across the stage to receive your diploma. Since that is not scheduled to happen for another 30 minutes, thought I'd have one last chance to read a daily bulletin of announcements—and tonight you MUST LISTEN. All right class, please sit up and pay attention. The announcements today are VERY important.

The Lutheran High School Daily Bulletin
June 4, 1993 Graduation Day

Item number one. Happy Birthday to Brandon Takahashi. for those of you not in homeroom 12 B, which is most of you, Brandon has often claimed to have many birthdays. His real birthday still remains a mystery. Birthdays are a time to celebrate the beginning of life and as Seniors you are celebrating the beginning of a different phase of life. Many doors are waiting to be opened. Some have pitfalls and others hold joy. The door that opened to high school may have been difficult and even scary to open, but you opened it and found many wonderful things waiting for you. I would guess that that door is now difficult for you to close. Remember though that God never closes a door with out at least opening a window. Yes, your door to high school is closing this evening, but God has prepared many new doors of opportunity for your lives. Don't be afraid to open those new doors.

Item number two. Remember that during life there is no parking on campus without permission. But why can't we park on campus if there aren't any cars? How many times have I heard that question? Listen Graduates, rules are rules. Sometimes in life rules seem to make no sense at all. As you were growing up I am sure most of you had rules to follow, and you probably asked why then also. Many of the rules that your parents, teachers and school have set up are meant to protect you.

An excellent example of this comes from the beginning of the Bible. Adam and Eve had broken the only rule God set up for them, and as part of their punishment they were forced to leave the Garden of Eden, never to return. This may seem harsh at first, but you must remember one thing. In the Garden was a special tree called the Tree of Life. After you ate of this tree, you would live forever. God had forced them from the garden to protect them. He did not want them to live forever in a sinful world. Most rules are set up for your protection, but you have become intelligent citizens. You should not follow rules blindly. Do not be aid to question authority and find the reasons behind the rules.

Item number 3. Tomorrow at 10:00 in the Library, a representative from the University of Somewhere will share information about its programs of study. Most of you will be continuing your education by attending college. Get EXCITED -- VERY EXCITED. College is fun, scary, difficult, and much more all rolled into one. But just as you survived and even flourished in high school, you will do the same in college. Have fun and enjoy your next four years. Enjoy learning. Yes you heard me -- enjoy learning. So many things are waiting to fill your mind. See how many you can gather in. A story is told of Teddy Roosevelt as a child. He was scared to enter a church alone. This

caused his mother concern. As his mother talked with him about it, she found out that he was terrified of something called the zeal. He said the zeal was crouched in the dark corners of the church ready to jump out at him. When she asked what a zeal might be, he said he was not sure, but he thought it was probably a large animal like an alligator or a dragon. He had heard the minister read about it from the bible. So his mother took a concordance and read him all the passages containing the word zeal, until, suddenly, very excitedly, he told her to stop. The line was from John 2:27 "And his disciples remembered that it was written, 'The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.'" Young Teddy wanted nothing to do with this zeal that could eat people up. Do not be afraid of zeal. In fact live life with zeal. What would music be if it was all monotone? What would color be if everything was gray? We need zeal in our lives.

The final announcement is that Jesus loves you. A great theologian named Karl Barth was once asked by a young seminary student what the most important theological statement was. After only a short pause he responded with "Jesus loves me." Believe it or not, in all the pages of scripture, the most important thing you can learn is that Jesus Loves you. This simple message is a life changing thing. Once Jesus enters your life you are never the same. It has been a great privilege to share the love of Jesus with you for three years. The affects of sharing Jesus reminds me of something I did when I was a child. Now there aren't many ponds around here, but in Minnesota, where I grew up, you couldn't go anywhere without seeing a pond. And as a kid I used to love throwing rocks into a pond. An interesting thing happens when you throw that rock. It affects the entire pond -- not just one spot. It sends ripples out to the very edges of the pond. As I was growing up, I had many teachers that greatly affected my life because of the message of Christ. They threw a rock into my pond and put ripples of Jesus love into my life. After God prepared me, he threw me into a pond called Hawaii. I pray that God has used me to make some ripples in your lives. I also pray that you make your own ripples in the lives of others. God has put us all into this world for a reason. We may not know how or when God will use us. So you must always be prepared. Never pass up your chance to throw a rock and make a ripple. Those are all the announcements for tonight.

In conclusion I have something special to share with you. Seniors I would like you to think back three years, to the first chapel service. That memory is quite vivid to me. As you all know I enjoy singing very much, and hymns are special favorites. When we began singing the first hymn that day, I remember nearly every head in chapel turned to look at me. I would like to think it was because you all thought I had such a beautiful voice, but instead I realized I was singing just a little louder than most of the students. I feel it is fitting that the final thing I leave the Seniors with, is a song. I ask that you please pay particular attention to the words; they have a very special meaning.

Graduating Seniors -- May God Richly Bless you in all you do. As you move on, never forget what you learned at Lutheran High School and never pass up a chance to make a ripple for the Lord.

ERIC MOODY

VALEDICTORIAN

1994

Good evening to all in Christ on this, the last official function of our high school careers, and the first day of what could conceivably be, 42 tremendous lives.

About a week and a half ago, a friend of mine came up to me in tears, hugged me and said, "I'll miss you."

A can hardly tell you how that made me feel.

At the same time I felt thrilled and loved because of the gesture, but there was also a stagnant fear and anxiety about what has been coming for the last 18 years and is now here.

That hug was like a bullhorn in my ear, screaming " Guess what Bub! You are graduating and moving out so get ready for a surprise!"

And what a surprise this whole event has turned out to be.

4 years ago, when we were all Freshmen, wetter behind the ears than now, I always knew that one day I would walk this stage and receive my diploma, but it literally seemed to be an inconceivable amount of time to wait.

But it was conceivable and here we are and what a surprise this has all turned out to be.

From what I can tell; however, the more grandiose surprise is yet to come as we (and pardon my triteness) embark on a new journey that we have been looking forward to for at least 4 years.

And now we are faced with everything we could be.

I know some of us want to be chefs, engineers, marine biologists, psychologists, entrepreneurs, artists, and I think there is a potential doctor among us.

It's funny that I learned most of this information by asking that age-old question, "what do you want to be when you grow up," with the "when you grow up" dropped for the sake of teenage pride and dignity.

But, as for myself, I'm looking most forward to being a college student for the simple reason that there is nothing definitive about this occupation.

We get a chance to taste a variety of flavors and experience hundreds of exotic fragrances before we are told by our parents, teachers, society and in rare occasions, our friends, that it is time to do something with our lives.

So for the next few years, whether it is college or not, we will be eliminating those portions of life that don't quite suit us in the hopes that what's left over is what we will want to do for the next 40 or so years.

It all sounds very dramatic, and it is.

When else in life can you actually play, have fun, avoid the "real world" like the plague, be completely stressed by the situation and still be admired for broadening your horizons.

This is definitely not a time to squander and with the help of our parents, schools and countless other sources of inspiration, I'm sure that we won't.

Good evening.

DAVID BROWNING

SALUTATORIAN

1994

Mr. Leckband, Pastor Ebel, Mr. Stockman, members of the Board, Faculty, parents and friends, Good Evening.

For the past four years we have endured the heartache and the suffering necessary to attain any goal. We have pushed ourselves through thick and thin alike. We have striven for the day when we would be free of this burden. Well, the day has come.

Although the past four years have been tough, they have not been entirely bad. There were many good points. The first Prom, the first steady girlfriend/boyfriend, the first time driving, and the first real job. Through these firsts there has been joy. The joy of making our own money, of planning our own future, and being with friends.

There has been a driving force behind us, a force which demanded only one thing, graduate. We have worked and worked and worked and now we have succeeded. We have reached the point of graduation. We've made it.

Ever since our first orientation to Lutheran High we have been working toward this day. A day when four years of survival and success would end on graduation.

And now, as we reach this day, we look to the future. Our future we create, to manipulate, as we will. We have been given our lives back from our parents. Our parents who lead us to this point. But now, now the time is ours. We must shuffle off this guiding coil and break away. And whether we succeed or fail, the choice is ours. We have been given the tools to go either way. The faculty and our parents have endowed us with the knowledge to succeed. Now, we are at the point where the roads diverge, and we choose a path. The choice is ours. The future is ours. Thank you.

JEREMIAH HELLER VALEDICTORIAN 1995

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, Reverend Ebel, Mr. Leckband, Mr. Stockman, Chaplain Heller. Indeed tonight is a good evening, a great evening actually. This high school graduation marks the end of a four year journey. It seems that these last years have passed us by like the swiftly flowing waters of a great river, and as we think back to where this adventure began we realize how much has changed, now that we've chanced these rapids and prepare to sail on to the open waters of the real world. We're no longer the inexperienced group of kids who stepped uncertainly onto campus for the first time. We've grown over these years into responsible young adults. And while we enjoy this moment in time, harbored here in this auditorium, we're seemingly unconcerned about the rough waters that dance just beyond our shores. But soon, we'll have to pull anchor and charge full speed ahead into this sea of troubles. Into all the crime, pollution, drugs, disease, violence... the list goes on and on.

Many people consider these disturbances, these bad times, as a foreshadowing of a much worse future. And at times it does seem as if the whole world is falling apart around us. Nations are in constant turmoil and conflict. Diseases and criminals parade victorious through all our streets. It's hard to imagine what tomorrow will bring, if tomorrow ever comes.

While I was reading the paper this morning, I came across a small section written by the Reverend Paul Osumi, and I want to read this to you. He writes, "When misfortune after misfortune had come upon her, a young woman wrote, 'I avoid looking forward or backward and try to keep looking upward.' No one can see the future. If we try to see it we become confused. Why look backward and become depressed? We must look upward and get our help and strength from God." We, the class of 1995, have learned that all things happen for a specific purpose. And throughout these years we've learned the importance of one word, a single word that promises to bring an end to all the pain and suffering, a word that promises to clear up gray skies, one single word that will calm those rough waters. That one word is hope. A small word, yet a powerful word. Without hope, we will always be living in the shadow of doubt, never realizing that just maybe the sun will break through the clouds and shine a revealing light on distant shores. Every one of us up here tonight knows what hope is. We've all hoped that our first teacher gets stuck in heavy morning traffic, hoped that a tsunami warning will cancel a school day, hoped that enough was written for a major essay, hoped that sick friend would return the next day healthy and in good spirits. Yes, we must always hold on to hope, a hope that comes from faith in Jesus Christ, who promised that he will carry us through difficult times and bring us to the solace of heaven someday. I'd like to share with you a Bible verse this evening, and those of you who know me will have heard me repeat this verse over and over again. Philippians 1:6 "Be confident of this that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ." With these words we can go forth in confidence, having hope, and know that Jesus is going to hold us steady forever. When waves of life toss us around, when the tide of society shifts unexpectedly, or the current of our peers pulls us out a little too far, He promises to be there to rescue us, to keep us safe, and to give us hope. Now I can guarantee that as we move out into open waters tonight, sooner or later each and every one of us will drift into hard times. And when this happens, when it feels like the world has gotten the best of us, we must never lose hope. With the wind of faith in our sails and the good Lord at the helm, we will be able to ride the waves. We'll be able to fight the current, to challenge the tide.

Ladies and gentlemen, once again, on behalf of the graduating class of 1995, I offer my sincere thanks for taking time out of your busy schedules to support us, not only tonight, but for the past four years. I pray that God in his wisdom will keep you safe as you journey home tonight, continue to watch over each one of you, and keep you in good faith all the days of your lives.

Good night and God bless.

GREG YONG

SALUTATORIAN

1996

Good evening.

Mr. Stockman, Mr. Leckband, Pastor Gowen, members of the board, faculty, parents, and friends. Today is the day the class of 1900 and 96 graduates. Graduation is our gateway to a world of new horizons. It is a time to break the bonds of childhood and enter a world which we can recreate or destroy. As the class of 1900 and 96 we have a duty to ourselves and to the world. We must recreate our world so that there is the happiness and fellowship that the class of 1996 shares.

As a class we have shared many memories. The times we fundraised for the prom, presented our "class cheers" on field day and the other class events that led to our companionships in high school. Our advisors, Mr. Gaudi and Mr. Utsumi have been a major force for our growth in spirit as a unified class. We feel that they are more than just teachers, they are people we can talk to. We would also like to thank all of our parents, who took the time to drive us to basketball games, paid our tuition, and shared God's love with us for the past four years.

From the time we were freshman we started clawing our way to the top, as our class shirt and cheer showed. Without any ideas where we were heading, we ventured forth into a new domain. A domain filled with tests, stress, but most importantly friends. As seniors now, we have reached one of our goals; a goal of creating lifelong friendships and memories.

So I ask everyone to think of tonight as a bridge to a new future full of laughter, tears, and heartache; the way God intended it to be. Some of our friendships will wander, yet others will grow closer; but even after graduation we will remain as one; one class as a whole. The future memories we'll share will bring us back as one. Whether it be 5, 10, or 50 years. When we meet again we will feel as if we've been unaffected by time, as brothers and sisters in Christ. So long as God travels with us wherever we go we will always be the class of 1996!

Thank you.

ANDREW MA

SALUTATORIAN

1997

Mr. Stockman and members of the board, Dr. Lutz, Pastor Windsor, Mr. Onosai, faculty, parents and friends,

Tonight I feel very honored to represent the class of 1997 by giving a speech. On behalf of the senior class, I want to thank the parents and teachers who dedicate their time and efforts to providing the best education for us.

Our high school years passed quickly unawares. We are very happy that we can gather together in this graduation today. We feel very fortunate to have the privilege of receiving our education, as we know that there are millions of children in the world who have no schooling. We are also blessed to study in a Christian school. Here, we are not only learning for examinations, but our education goes a step further. It helps students to reflect to ask how facts or information affect our own

lives; affect our world, our relationships, our feelings, and our hearts. This, I would say, is what schooling here is about.

In the past fifteen years, I have experienced two different systems of education. Before I came to the United States, I studied in Hong Kong where every student acted like an individual. There were no teacher assistants or any discussion groups. Everyone was expected to learn at the same rate no matter the student could manage or not. We gained knowledge mainly from the teachers and the textbooks. On the other hand, the educational system in the United States is built on communication. We have teacher assistants to help us with our homework; we have group discussions to share our experience; we have field trips to develop the students' interests on the subjects. The knowledge we gained is well beyond what textbook can provide.

I would say that the educational system in the U.S. is very fascinating. I have improved my understanding on many subjects after studying in Hawaii for three years. Tonight, I would like to share with you my experience on one subject. I have been teacher assistant for Algebra II and Advanced Math. Many students would be scared when they hear the subject "Mathematics." They are often confused by the symbols and language of Mathematics. I wouldn't say math is an easy subject. It has a certain difficulty. But it is different from other subjects because it doesn't require anything be memorized. It can also develop your thinking, analytical skills, and logical approach. I have some achievements in mathematics, not because I am smarter than the others. As some of my friends know, I didn't do well on math when I was in Hong Kong. I remember my math professor in University of Hawaii once said, "You can succeed in mathematics even though you have a very low IQ." He wasn't joking when he said that. People succeed in math because they are not afraid to try the problems out. Of the problems of education today is that students are too passive to learn. They are exercising their inertia. They give up too easily on a simple math problem. I cannot guarantee that you can get the right answer if you have tried the problem, but I can promise you that you can never get the right answer if you have never tried it. This does not apply only to mathematics study but every aspect of our lives. Anything you want, you have to earn it. I didn't say all this to build-up your interest in mathematics, but I want you to know that nothing will just sit there and wait for you to get it. Finally, I hope every body will treasure the educational system we have today, set up his or her goal and begin to fight for it. May God bless you all now and forever.

Thank you.

MR. JOE ONOSAI COMMENCEMENT SPEECH 1997

Thank you very much Acting Principal Dr. Lutz, Faculty and staff, parents, family and friends—the Lutheran High School class of 1997. It is indeed a great and awesome feeling to have been chosen to be your commencement speaker this year. I count it a great privilege that you would want me to take part in this very special day in your life. By God's grace and God's anointing, I hope that I will be able to inspire and encourage you to go from this moment of your life and into the next moment of your life. I hope that my message will echo and reinforce the values and principles that your parents and teachers and Lutheran High School have already imparted into you.

Seniors, class of 1997 – As you sit on this stage, many eyes are on you right now. But although they appear to be looking at you, the truth is that they are probably looking right through you. Because you see, it just seem like yesterday...

--that I was holding this little girl/that I was holding this little boy.

--that I was taking her to her first dentist appointment.

--that I was teaching him how to throw a football.

--that I was showing her how to put on make up.

--that I was teaching you how to drive a car.

**Look at you now; you're all grown up and despite my imperfections and shortcomings as a parent or guardian, you have still blossomed into a beautiful young woman and a handsome young man.

As you sit here on stage ready to receive your diploma, I can only imagine the awesome journey that you've had to get here. Some of you have arrived here with no problem—you passed with flying colors. Some of you had to really work. I mean, you had to really get down and dirty to get here. Hey, but you're here. And then, there are a few of you—you're still tripping somewhere in la la land. I mean you're saying to yourself wow, I'm actually here man. Hey, but you're here.

The truth is that the fact of your being here shows me that you had enough guts to hang in there. I'll tell you why I'm so proud of you. You are growing up in the most difficult times that this world has ever seen. In history you will not find any other generation that has had a higher rate of drug use amongst young people. In history you will not find any other generation that has had a higher abuse rate (emotional, verbal, physical and yes even sexual) amongst young people. In history, you will not find any other generation that has had higher suicide rates than this generation. (Violence-- cold blooded killing, poor self-image/ self-esteem).

There are more negative influences today than ever before. I think my grandmother said it best when she said, "Son, when I was young there weren't any sins to commit." My grandmother was right—when they were sent to the office it was for chewing gum. When I was in school, a boy having long hair or ponytail became acceptable. Well, today ponytails are no longer in the back of the head—they're in the front of the head. What's up with that? It is obvious that values and standards are no longer a virtue in the eyes of many in this generation.

But despite all the negativity, you've broken through and you've come out victorious.

I believe the reason is that God wants to show you that he has a purpose for your life. -young people he has a purpose for your life.

God has called you out and has brought you forth for such a time as this. God has appointed you as leaders to the nations. God almighty is looking for heroes that would stand up for Him and His purpose even though they're living in a crooked and perverse generation. Although many will say that there's no hope and no future for you, I want to let you know that God says in the book of Jeremiah in the 29th chapter of the 11th verse that "I know the plans I have for you. Plans for good and not of evil to give you a future and a hope." A.W. Tozer once said, "that God is preparing His heroes and the time will come when they will appear and the world will wonder where they came from."

Testimony

Principle of leaving & entering

Don't leave-take on the challenge

A) Love for God

B) Prepared

C) Incentives

MINDY TERUYA

VALEDICTORIAN

1997

Mr. Stockman, members of the board, Dr. Lutz, Pastor Windsor, Mr. Onosai, faculty, parents, and friends: well, we've finally made it! We're all up on the stage in our caps and gowns, full of excitement and sadness, eager, yet unsure of what is to come in the future. Our parents and relatives are sitting proudly in their seats, perhaps with tears in their eyes, wondering how we could've grown up so fast, and marveling at how far we have come.

We would all agree that the past four years have just swept by. For us, high school is already a whirlwind of memories. It seems like just yesterday we were freshmen, shuffling along to our classes, eating lunch in the school auditorium, and just getting acquainted with each other. That year, the freshmen class of 1997 stood on Cooke Field at UH during our annual school field day and yelled with all their might, "United we stand, divided we fall, class of '97, we will conquer all!"

It sounded pretty corny then, but during these four years, the class of 1997 has formed a strong sense of unity. Together, we can do anything. We all pulled together to win Homecoming week four years in a row. We planned and did fund raisers together to put on a promenade, and slaved away at car washes to raise money for grad night.

When fall arrives, some of us will be boarding planes to various parts of the country, pursuing careers in Law, Medicine, Art, and other areas. Although we may be far apart, we can still depend on each other for advice and support. We will remember all that we have learned and experienced here in school for many years to come.

As our class enters the twenty-first century, who knows what will we be doing? There will be many challenges for us to face as we draw nearer to the year 2001. It will be a fast moving, exciting world of advanced technology. Even the information superhighway might be outdated. We will soon be out there, making fascinating discoveries about the world. As time whirls past, we will also find ourselves, and create new goals and dreams to fulfill.

On behalf of the class of 1997, I would like to thank our parents and friends for giving us love and support, and the board and faculty of Lutheran High School for providing us with the knowledge we will need to survive in the "real world." I also thank the Lord for always being by our side, and giving us each other.

Our class verse, 1 Peter 3:8, states, "Finally all of you, live in unity and harmony with one another, be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble." We will always be united as one, the graduating class of nineteen hundred ninety-seven.

**REV. MITCHELL GOWEN BACCALAUREATE SERMON
1999**

To walk as children of the light – an admirable goal in this world of spiritual confusion and darkness.

You are about to plunge into a time in your life when everything you know and everything you are will change. The problem is you won't necessarily be aware of it. The forces of this world are far more subtle and powerful than we imagine.

On opening night we were there standing in line at *Phantom Menace*. They let us in the theater an hour early. The smell of popcorn and soda was everywhere. The light dimmed - a cheer went up and then everyone held their breath. When the next scene was filled with previews, the boos sounded loudly and continued until the moment when the screen lit up with the words "And now our feature presentation."

Were the years of waiting worth it. Could it possibly be as good. And remember - I was your age when I saw the first one - Jake (my son) was only two and you weren't even born yet.

I will not spoil the plot for those of you who have not seen it yet but I will pull one of the major themes out to talk about.

How could little Ani - sweet little, smart little, precious little Anikan Skywalker - how could he turn into Darth Vader. He is intelligent, he is talented, he has more of those things that make you a Jedi than any other person. He has the force. He has Obiwan Kenobi to mentor him. How could he turn away from the light and turn towards the darkness?

And of course we will find out when episode 2 is unveiled in the year 2002. In the mean time we will speculate and conjure.

As a Christian I may not know what the plot and storyline will be but I can tell you I know how it can happen.

I have friends who were once dedicated and faithful Christians and now they are at best apathetic. I have seen the most faithful of Christians pastors lured into a life that the Bible very clearly warns against. I have personally seen the precious little Anikan Skywalker's remove the white robes of righteousness and don the dark mask of the underworld.

To walk as children of the light is not as easy as it may seem. Chief of your worries is one who disguises himself as an angel of light. Even in truth he is a black hole sucking all the light and holiness out of those who will trust and follow him.

Satan is not the red pointy tailed demon you see in the cartoons. If he were such a laughable character our salvation would never be in peril. But comes disguised as a warrior who advocates the kind of life you want to lead. He screams of freedom and rights and a host of other words that make sense to you. You are feeling confined. You are feeling misunderstood. You are feeling a thousand things and Satan is there to tell you he understands you - he knows what you want - he knows how you feel and more than anything he wants you to get what you deserve. And for the mere pride of your soul he can and will give you some of those things that are your heart's desire.

And there is the problem. It is not as though Satan was standing in the darkness shouting loudly that hell's eternal pain and unending anguish will be yours if you will just mess up your life enough. No - Satan is far more convincing, far more conniving. For he comes as an angel of light.

Last Monday I flew into McCarran airport in Las Vegas to meet with a church that asked me to be their pastor. As we flew in at 6am the sun was just beginning to rise brightly and the thousands upon thousands of people were still wandering the streets of an elusive payoff. It is always amazing that people willing and knowingly spend billions of dollars a year on the machines and tables even though they know the statistics are so far against them that they are more likely to be hit by lightning than win a big jackpot. And yet they come to Vegas by the millions. Lured by the lights and sounds and promises.

You leave this place this week with two promises. One from Satan who says he will give you the desires of your heart. He will make you happy. He will shine a flashlight or two on your path. There will be a few laughs and a few good times as the payoff for the loss of your soul. In the end you will get 30 or 50 or 80 years of fun- but is it really worth an eternity of nothingness.

The other promise comes from God. He knows what you're going through. He is aware of the pain and suffering around you and sometimes in your own life. He knows things don't always make sense. He knows some of you are carrying around hurt and loss and problems that don't have easy answers.

The light he gives is the same one that shone forth almost two thousand years ago from an empty tomb on the outskirts of Jerusalem. It was light that broke through the darkness of that afternoon called good when his son died on the cross. The darkness caused by the sins of billions of people being gathered together in one place at one time so that the Son of God could pay the price of those sins once and for all.

In the light of Christ you will always know what is right and what is wrong. There are no gray areas with God. You will have the fire of his Holy Spirit burning within you. You will have the power of his word to surround you. This is a holy and righteous light that cuts through all darkness slicing it like a light saber. And this light leaves nothing hidden.

The Bible says Jesus' sword both cuts and heals. No Jedi Knight can do that. In the days ahead as you strive to walk as children of the light- the darkness will occasionally lick at your life like flames from a fire. On those days when you fail, when you walk willingly or unwillingly into the darkness- please hear this.

No matter the who or what or where or why- there is always forgiveness with God. Jesus' sword will heal and strengthen you. There is never any place or any time or any thing that can keep you away from God except hell.

We believe there is only one unforgivable sin- and that is to die without faith. It is never too late to know Jesus as your savior- but you can never be guaranteed that Christ will pass your way again. It is easy to say- next year or the year after I'll get my spiritual act together- but those days and chances may never come. Walk as children of the light. Know that when the darkness consumes there is forgiveness. Know that even the most precious of little children can be lured by the darkness. Know that there is a battle far greater than Star Wars going on over your eternal soul. Know there is a light that is artificial and one that is real and there really is a difference between them.

One of the great things about walking in the light is – you just have to stay out of God's way. It's not your light that's shining – it's his. You are just a reflection of his glory. So spend some time polishing your mirror, try to stay out of the shade and know the force of God's love and light will always be there for you.

In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

JOHN MABRY A GRADUATION SONG 1999

The year comes to an end
Memories of my friends
Linger on in my mind
What happened to the time?

Days of class and night of fun
Seems like it all has just begun
The year goes by so quick
All we want is just one last kick

(Chorus) And now were' standing on the stage
Ready for our lives to change
And as we go into the world unknown
We pray that our light will show

The lessons learned, the friendships made
Give us the power to change
But the most important lesson of all
Is Jesus Christ, and sacrifice (Chorus)

End: As a beacon so all will see
That it's Christ who lives in me.

BROOKE SEELY SALUTATORIAN 1999

Mr. Fong and the board of directors of Lutheran High School, Mr. Gundell, Mr. Silva, Pastor Gowen, teachers and faculty of Lutheran High School, Parents, and friends.

I. This evening, the class of 1999, stands at the doorway. Not just a new beginning, not even a new century, but on the eve of a new millennium! For the past four years, the faculty and staff has literally put their heart and soul into the education and learning process that makes this evening possible. Their influence has shaped our lives since the beginning of our Freshman year. This evening is truly the end result of that process. These dedicated teachers have inspired and challenged us to learn, reason, and reflect upon our community, our nation, and our world. Additionally, we have been encouraged to develop within the context of our Christian faith. We leave Lutheran High School well equipped to meet the many challenges of the 21st Century. For everything you have done for this class, we offer you heartfelt thanks.

II. Although we are young, relatively speaking, our generation has seen the end of the Cold War, watched the War with Iraq unfold before our eyes on CNN, followed the AIDS epidemic, heard warnings about the Ozone layer, global warming, pollution, and over population. Much has happened in our short lifetime. In this age of mass communication, we have learned a lot about our world. Some would suggest that it is a world that is in trouble. And yet, this senior class is prepared and ready, to meet the real challenges that face us, to make a difference in our world, your world. I am an optimist, I believe that 30 graduates can and will make a difference.

III. You have provided us with the tools to build a better world. Our tool kit is full. It is a tool box that has what you would expect,

the ability to reason, analyze, calculate, but in this box is also the tools to deepen our faith and strengthen our spiritual life. Our class verse says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;" in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your path straight." You see, that is why we are not afraid of the future, why in spite of the many nay sayers, we believe it is a great day to be alive, we can see God at work in our midst. We are excited and ready to go to work. Saint Paul, in writing to the Church at Corinth, talks a lot about faith and hope and love. We are hopeful about our future. We have great faith, personal faith in our Lord, faith in each other, and faith in you. Above all else we have love. Love for each other that will last forever. Love for our parents, families, and friends that got us to this moment, and finally love for our school. Though small in number, the Lutheran High School class of 1999, pledges to each of you our very best effort. Thank you and God bless.

DEBORAH STOCKMAN VALEDICTORIAN 1999

Mr. Fong, Mr. Gundell, Members of the Board, Faculty, Family, and Friends.
How Everything Happens(based on the study of a wave) by May Swenson
When Nothing is happening Something is stacking up to happen.
When it happens something pulls back NOT to happen.
When Pulling back happens Stacking up has happened.
When it has happened something pulls back while Nothing stacks up.
Then Nothing is Happening.
Then something Stacks up Pushes forward and Happens.
(Pause)
When nothing is happening something is stacking up to happen.
We came in August of 1995 as lowly freshmen.
We were at the bottom just starting to get to know each other.
When it happens something pulls back not to happen.
We became friends.
We learned new things but were still hesitant towards one another.
When pulling back happens stacking up has happened.
As we learned to trust our friends We slowly learned to be united as a class.
We built each other up to be ready for the challenges ahead.
When it has happened something pulls back while nothing stacks up.
As Juniors we are making our way to the top.
We're not quite there, but close enough that we can befriend the Seniors and lead the underclassmen.
Then Nothing is happening.
We finally made it to the top.
We rejoice as we look at all we have accomplished.
Then something Stacks up Pushes forward and HAPPENS!
Our last school year....We're now Seniors, but we have a year to get through still.

As the year progresses We gradually achieve our goals and it is now OUR time.....OUR time to be united LIKE that freshmen class one last time.

Instead of our insecurities and doubts we can take the confidence we've built up and our friendships we've made to go out into the world. But remember-----1 Corinthians 10:13

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."

So we leave as children of Light.

We leave as the mighty class of 1999!

Thank you.

Ethan Chiang Valedictorian 2000

Good evening Mr. Gundell, Mr. Kealoha, faculty, parents, and friends. Welcome and thank you for being here to share in this very special ceremony tonight.

For the last four years, I thought that tonight would be the most important day of my life. However, tonight's ceremony doesn't seem quite so important anymore. The memories and good times that our class has shared together mean so much more.

Four years ago, the freshmen Class of 2000 gathered outside the school office on the first day of school. With high expectations of us on our shoulders, we began our high school careers. As the years progressed, we weren't sure of exactly what we were supposed to do. We found strength in the bonds we made with each other, clinging to one another for support and encouraging each other to go on.

In high school, I learned that in time, all things will change. The Class of 2000 is no exception to this rule. The faces and minds of the young men and women sitting before you are not the same as they were four years ago. Besides getting better looking, of course, we have matured intellectually as well as spiritually. We have strong opinions, ideas, and beliefs that are the results of our experiences in high school. Not only have we learned more about ourselves, but we have a better sense of who we are.

Our road to self-discovery has, in many ways, been like a real road. At every twist, turn, and bump, we held onto our family, friends, and teachers for support to keep us from falling. When we ran out of fuel, we didn't quit, but motivated each other to keep going. When we got off schedule and all of us weren't going at the same pace, we didn't leave people behind. Instead, we slowed down to pick them up or sped up to close the gap.

Along the road, we have passed many traffic lights. When our light is green, everything in our life seems to be running smoothly. Everyone also has periods in their life when their light is red... times when it seems as if your life has come to a complete standstill and you're

not going anywhere or making any progress. Lucky for us, that red light is only red for a little while and then always turns green.

The road to our future is not a straight and narrow path. There are many branches and dead ends along the way. Without a map to guide our way, we make the best decisions that we can. However, when we do make mistakes and go down the wrong path, we learn from those mistakes and through God's help, find that it is possible to turn the negative into the positive.

We are nowhere near our final destination. I don't even know if any of us will ever know where we're supposed to end up. Although our journey through high school is coming to an end, our journey through life has just begun. Up to this point in our lives, the majority of us have depended on others to take care of us and have people to fall back on. After tonight, though, most of us will be on our own for the first time in our life.

When you leave the familiar and comfortable behind and venture into the unknown, you lose the sense of security and stability that you once had. After tonight, the members of the Class of 2000 will all go their separate ways. One of my favorite poems reads, "knowing you're behind me gives me the strength to go on, walking in the shadow of your love." We can draw strength from the support that others give us. Although our friends may not physically be with us, we can go forward, firm in the knowledge that the prayers and love of others will be carried with us no matter where we are.

We could not have accomplished our goals without the help of our family, teachers, and friends. Without our parents, where would we be? My parents have given me the world, and given me every opportunity that they never had. As much as they say that they are proud of me, I could never be more proud of them. Teachers, you have touched all of our lives day in and day out for the last four years. There aren't enough thank yous for all of the wisdom, advice, stress, and friendship that you have given to us. Friends, without you, life would be sad, lonely, and empty. You fill the voids in our lives and make us smile when we're happy and when we're sad. To a special group of people: for making this the best time in my life, for the laughs, for the rides, for being my best friends, I'll always remember you.

If our time in high school were to be written in a book, what impression would its reader get of the Class of 2000? What will we remember ten years from now? As we read through the pages of our high school memoirs, there are times where we want to skip to the last page and find out how everything ends... and there are times when we wish we could tear out certain chapters. From start to finish, we have laughed, cried, and experienced every single emotion in between. The theme song from our 1999 Jr./Sr. Prom says it best. "There's no regrets, only good times"; it is these times that we will treasure forever.

Thank you.

Mr. R. David Gaudi Commencement Speech 2000

Good Evening... Board of Directors, faculty, family, friends, and, of course the Graduates.

If you will, please imagine for a moment a beautiful snow-capped mountain on a brisk, crystal clear December afternoon. It is a couple of days before Christmas in the year 1989, and you are on a sky

trip in Lake Tahoe with a couple of your college buddies. You are freshman at the University of California- Santa Cruse and are, at this very moment, looking down the extremely shear slopes of Lake Tahoe's most treacherous ski run. You're a very experienced skier, yet your stomach is dancing, you are taking short/rapid breaths, and your heart is pounding so feverishly that it feels as if it will leap out of your chest at any moment. In fact, your heart is pumping so fast that every contraction feels like a rapid explosion detonated right at the base of your throat. You can feel the blood coursing through your every vein. And although the air temperature at the top of the mountain is below freezing, you are sweating profusely. Your head is spinning and you're having trouble focusing on your surroundings. Nevertheless, you glance at your friends, give them a nod and just as you turn and begin your decent down the mountain, everything fades to black.

The next time you open your eyes, you see several people looking down at you. You hear nothing more than the rhythmic rotation of helicopter blades beating above your head. You try to speak, but you have a tube stuck in your throat. You try to move but are strapped down to a board. You start to panic, but right then, everything once again fades to black. The next time you awake, you are lying in a hospital bed with your family surrounding you. You turn to your father and ask, "What happened Dad?" He then looks back at you and says, "Son, you've been given a second chance at life, don't blow it."

This is a true story of a friend of mine who in the winter of 1989 decided that he would snort an eight ball of cocaine to bolster his confidence right before he skied down the Black Diamond Mountain in Lake Tahoe. (For those who don't know, I believe an eight ball is equal to a 1/8 of an ounce or 3.5 grams.) The point is that he snorted so much cocaine that it caused his heart to stop beating. If it were not for the presence of the ski resort's defibrillator and fast-acting medical staff that used it to restart his heart, he'd most certainly be dead right now. But fortunately he's not! In fact, this man, who 11 years ago was clinically dead on top of a snow-capped mountain is now alive, happy, and healthy.

When he first told me his story a couple of months after it happened, I was utterly shocked! I told him how sorry I was that this had happened to him and how lucky I thought he was to still be alive. His response was one that I will never forget. He told me that it was his choice and his choice alone to stick that stuff up his nose and that there was absolutely no reason for me or anyone else to feel sorry for him. He went on to explain that luck had nothing to do with him surviving such an idiotic act. He was certain that it was simply not his time to go and that God obviously had other plans for him. I am very happy to say that he went on to get clean, complete his education and is now a successful doctor who uses his talents and experiences to help others.

Okay, so what's the big deal? You ask. We've all heard motivational stories of drug dealers kicking their habit. So, why is this story so special?

Well, what I like most about this story is not that my friend kicked his drug habit, albeit that was great, but rather that from day one, this 19-year-old accepted sole responsibility for his actions and clearly conveyed to me and everyone else around him that it was his choice to do what he did. And that no else was to blame. This story brings not only a message of survival and perseverance but also, more importantly, one of responsibility and accountability.

The way I see it, life really is nothing more than a series of choices. From our so called “terrible two’s” when we’re running around deciding what to break until the day we die, we are constantly called upon to make choices. And it’s these choices we make along the path we call life that define who we are. I would like nothing more than to see each and every one of you go out there and make the world a better place in which to live, but I’m not in control of that... you are!

No matter what choices you face in life, whether it be:

To stick cocaine up your nose or stay clean
To build someone up or break them down
To cheat on your spouse or remain faithful
To be a loving parent or an abusive one
To make the most of your life or sell yourself short
To accept Jesus Christ or some other god

Just remember that the choice is yours. It’s not mine, your parents, your friends, your lovers, or anyone else’s. It’s yours!!!! You own your choices. Celebrate the good ones and learn from the bad ones.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross (a Swiss psychiatrist & author of several books) once said, “I believe that we are solely responsible for our choices, and we have to accept the consequences of every deed, word, and thought throughout our lifetimes.”

I challenge you tonight to take responsibility for your choices and keep-in-mind that we don’t usually choose when or how we’re going to die; we choose only how we’re going to live.

There’s a great line that I love from the Academy Award winning film “Brave Heart.” It comes from Mel Gibson’s character, William Wallace, right before he is about to be brutally tortured & killed for fighting for the freedom of his country. He utters the simple yet profound words, “Every man dies, not every man really lives.” Enjoy life and live it to the fullest, Class of 2000, but I caution you not to be too hasty when it comes to making the tough choices. Take your time and make them carefully.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:12 it says, “... from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the spirit and through belief in the truth.” This is quite clearly saying that God chose you, me, and everyone else to be saved. So, as you close this important chapter of your lives and embark on your next exciting voyage, I ask you to remember that most of the choices you make in life are yours and yours alone. And if you choose to accept Jesus Christ the way he chose you, you will receive the ultimate and most spectacular gift of all – the gift of everlasting peace and happiness. The choice is yours!

I would like to leave you tonight with a few of the words that my father left with me on the night I graduated from high school and I quote, “Go with God... and may you be blessed with good health, long life, wisdom, success, happiness and (perhaps the most important of all) the love of others.”

I profoundly thank you, the Class of 2000, for inviting me to be a part of your very special evening. It has been a real pleasure and honor teaching you, advising you, and learning from you. I will miss you all dearly. Congratulations & Good Luck!

Good evening, Mr. Kealoha, Mr. Gundell, faculty, parents, and friends. Thank you for providing this special occasion, the graduation ceremonies of the class of 2000.

Well, we made it! Finals are over, summer jobs and college arrangements are set, and the best years of our life, our high school years, are coming to a close. These past four years have gone by so fast- it seems like yesterday that we were timid little freshmen. When I was a freshman, a senior told me that I, along with my fellow freshmen, was the scum of the earth. I suppose it's true-scum of the earth don't know its scum of the earth, and we didn't know how to act or who we were either.

Then, gradually, we got to know each other and came together as a class, creating memories and bonds of friendships that will never fade nor be broken. Mr. Gaudi's jump serve, the chapel we organized for the Class of '99, and Jared's "I'm a little teapot" song will bring fond memories, and each and every one of these memories has a story behind them. We bravely waved our banner, learning to wake the nation – our feet running on the waters, our hearts blazing through the fire, ever-becoming sons and daughters of our Lord Jesus Christ. Together, we laughed and cried, worked and played, studied (sometimes), then played some more. We cheered each other on as our strong, buff men won the tug-of-war four years running. We spent a weekend together camping at Bellows, walking on the beach at night and watching our friends and advisors wake up in the morning with no make-up and messy hair. We washed cars and made breakfasts so that we could put together an unforgettable prom. We did our best to act in a way that there would be no regrets, but only good times. And now, we sit before you, the mighty seniors, the class of 2000, ready to spread our wings and find not only what the world has to offer, but also what we can offer the world.

Our hearts become quiet as we realize that after this summer, we'll all be going our separate ways. Many of us are still unsure of what the future holds. I'd like to share a verse with you – Jeremiah 29:11. It says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Isn't that great? As long as we know Christ as our Lord and Savior, we need not worry about the future because He already has it all planned out, for each and every one of us. God is all-knowing and all-powerful; He fashions the hearts of men and each of our days... down to the very last detail in each unique situation. Every so-called "coincidence" or "unexpected" event – all these are planned with care and with our best interests in mind.

God has blessed us with wonderful parents and teachers who desire their children to know the message of the Lord Jesus Christ. They have taught us concepts that can't be learned from a textbook – concepts such as "one team," loyalty, togetherness, and to always think of the needs of others before ourselves. They have taught us that Christ is the bond that holds our friendships and everything else in our lives together.

Time and distance may separate us, but in Christ, we are never really apart. We are one with Him. Remember always that He has a plan for you – "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." And it's because of our Lord that we can say... "As we go on, we remember all the times we had together. And as our lives change, come whatever, we will still be friends forever."

Melissa Chan

Salutatorian

2001

Good evening Mrs. Fox, Mr. Gundell, Mr. Kealoha, Faculty, Family, and Friends.

James Dean once said, "Dream as if you'll live forever, live as if you'll die today."

We are all dreamers. No matter what age we are, no matter what ethnic background we come from, we all have dreams. For example, a five-year-old child has the dream of becoming something great when he or she grows up. It could be something simple, it could be something grand. It could be realistic, it could seem impossible. However impossible the dream may seem, Matthew 19:26 states, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Each member of the class of 2001 has a dream. This dream is what makes up the diversity of our class. Some may dream to be famous pop stars. Like 'N Sync maybe?! Some may dream to be racecar drivers. Some may dream to be great cooks or own the sandwich shop. And others may dream to find that one special someone to love and be loved by. As different as our dreams are, we all have one thing in common: each of us dreams of being something great and changing the lives of God's people for the better.

In closing, a good friend once told me something that I would like to leave my classmates with:

You can live your whole life dreaming of great things and never achieve them. You can strive for great things but never achieve your dreams. Therefore, live your lives striving for the dreams that God has instilled in your hearts. If you live your life honoring God's will, you will be rewarded with great things.

Thanks to the Board, Mr. Gundell, and the faculty for making this day possible. Without you, none of us would be where we are today. Thanks to my family and friends for always supporting me. I love you guys. And the greatest thanks goes to the Lord for making all my dreams come true.

To the Class of 2001, best wishes in the future. We made it! Congratulations!

Sean Tomlinson

Valedictorian

2001

The ST Speech

Mrs. Fox, Mr. Gundell, Mr. Kealoha, faculty, parents, family, and friends. I would like to thank all of you for coming to honor the class of 2001. It gives me great honor to say that I am part of such an elite group of Lutheran High Seniors; actually the only group of seniors. Anyway, I am happy to see my fellow classmates eager to graduate because I have the power to make them wait even longer by extending this speech. I remember how little pride our class had as freshmen. If you asked our class about freshmen pride we'd reply freshmen (Freshmen). Sophomore pride was also extremely high (Sophomores). Junior pride was a little more upbeat (Juniors yeah). Today, I am happy to report that the class of 2001 has a spirit surplus and even a senior yell. The Senior yell sounds like this (Seniors). No, honestly the senior class is really tight, joyful, and high spirited.

If I could be serious for a minute, just one, I'd like to thank the Board of Directors for providing this occasion as well as an excellent education for this senior class. I'd also like to recognize my parents for

financing that excellent education. My parents have supported me through thick and thin so I thank them with all my heart. My sisters have tested my patience on many occasions so I thank them for making me a more patient individual. The faculty has been friendly and caring. It's not everyday that you can joke around with teachers and not get severely punished. I'm not saying to always joke around with teachers but every once in a while, they deserve to laugh too. They're people too. Teachers have been an important aspect of my life. I ask that all the faculty members please stand up. These are the hardworking individuals who put our needs in front of their own. They could be making hefty amounts of cash at other places but have decided to dedicate their lives to God and Lutheran High Students. Please give them a round of applause. I would especially like to thank our Senior class advisers, Mr. Schriefer and Mrs. Reginelli. All you parents out there think that one child is more than enough to deal with. Our class advisers had to deal with 35 big kids so give them credit.

I really want to thank my fellow classmates for the memories. I could never imagine high school without the sounds of sooped up cars provided by Marcus and T.J. I also can't forget the 'Nsync antics of Tyler and Nick. These are just a few memories but the list goes on and on. Senior class, I urge you to cherish your high school memories. Confucius say life is like a book with many chapters. Well, Confucius didn't say that but realize this is not the end, but the beginning of a new chapter in the book of life. Life will be harder in the real world because life is a cruel game. Remember this though, don't hate the player, hate the game. If you persevere and remember my words, I can't guarantee you'll be successful but you'll have fun in the process.

We should all be thankful to graduate from Lutheran High School. God has blessed me and my peers as well as kept watch over us. Let us thank God for his blessings and remember we can do everything through our Lord who gives us strength.

Classmates, as you enter a new chapter of life, I wish you all the best. Not the best of luck because I know you all don't need luck to succeed. On that sentimental note, let me end by saying thanks for the memories and the five minutes of your life you will never get back. We made it

REV. ARNOLD G. STEINBECK BACCALAUREATE 2002 INIC

"I've loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love. If you keep my commands, you'll remain intimately at home in my love. That's what I've done--kept my Father's commands and made myself at home in his love.

"I've told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking and planning. No,

I've named you friends because I've let you in on everything I've heard from the Father.

"You didn't choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won't spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you.

"But remember the root command: Love one another." **John 15:9-17**
The Message NT, by Eugene Peterson

Friends, For the Rest of Your Life

Dear Lord, I humbly ask you to bless these moments, for this Class of 2002, their faculty, friends and loved ones, and for me. I need your blessing because I'm scared stiff. High school students are smarter than they've ever been, and I know they can see right through phoniness. So help me be real and honest right from the start. And help them have at least a little opening in their ears, with a channel that leads to their hearts, so that your Spirit can bless any useful stuff that gets through. I ask this, Lord, because what I want to share is based on your Word, and you have promised that it can make a difference in our lives. In fact, it can actually mean life for us forever. So I ask this, dear Father, for the sake of your Son, Jesus, our Friend. Amen.

Class of 2002, faculty, family and friends:

When I left Hawaii in 1979 to begin a new pastoral call in California, I would never have dreamed that I would have the privilege and honor of addressing you today. My son, Tim, graduated from here in 1976 and Kristin followed with the Class of 1978. A third son, Steve, got uprooted during his junior year when we had to move. Lutheran High made an important impact on the life of my family even before you were born. And I pray that it has prepared you for life as well as it did for my children.

Times change, but the need for friends doesn't. When Kristin was a senior here, Elton John's music and Bernie Taupin's lyrics often topped the charts, and their song, "Friends," was her favorite.

I hope the day will be a lighter highway
For friends are found on every road
Can you ever think of any better way
For the lost and weary travelers to go

Making friends for the world to see
Let the people know you got what you need
With a friend at hand you will see the light
If your friends are there then everything's all right.

Friends are still high on the priority list, not just for young people, but adults, too. Back in 1983 (again, before you were born), Michael W. Smith recorded his song about "Friends." Now it has come back again with a beautiful arrangement by Na Leo Pilimehana, and some of you have told me that you find it meaningful, especially near your graduation time, when friends will go their different ways. So you're listening to Ne Leo and maybe singing along:

Packing up the dreams God planted
In the fertile soil of you;
Can't believe the hopes He's granted
Means a chapter in your life is through

But we'll keep you close as always;
It won't even seem you've gone,
'Cause our hearts in big and small ways
Will keep the love that keeps us strong.

And then there is the refrain that expresses hopes that are dear to you, as they sing:

And friends are friends forever
If the Lord's the Lord of them;
And a friend will not say "never,"
'Cause the welcome will not end.
Though it's hard to let you go,
In the Father's hands we know
That a lifetime's not too long to live as friends.

I know you want to believe that last line. It's a wonderful ideal. A lifetime isn't too long to live as friends. That's what you want and in the sentimental moments of your last days together as the Class of 2002, you hope it will happen. But some of you are already experiencing how fragile friendships can be. Somebody who has been close to you may have become distant and detached, and you worry that your friendship will never be the same. There may be hurt, even anger and animosity, where once there was a bond of tenderness and caring. Some of those friendships can be rebuilt. Maybe you have some friendship repairing to do before you bail out of here next week. But friendships change, and as we mature we have to face the fact.

Most schools experience some stress in the way groups of students relate to one another, or have difficulty in relating to one another, and I imagine that Lutheran High is not totally different. Cliques can form, weaving tight boundaries which keep a certain group "in" while keeping others "out." Lines of negativity can be drawn. We're cool, you're not. We're right, you're wrong. We're with it, you don't have a clue. That tight small group mentality can harm the integrity of the larger class community. And the "clique syndrome" can even shrink into a sick syndrome where selfish individualism infects some so they exalt themselves above others and live with bloated egos. True friendship has to be really strong to survive in such a climate.

A forgettable 1997 song called "Mmm Bop" (now that's a cool creative title, eh?) had at least one memorable line: "You have so many relationships in this life, only one or two will last." That's not true. It's an overstatement. But it comes close to reality, because friendships fade by distance, though the bond may not be broken. Some day when you get a chance to attend your 20 year class reunion, see how many of your old "best" friends seem different. They will then be circled with spouses and children who weren't part of your memory, and a history of new life experiences you haven't shared. You may still love them dearly, but the intimacy, the bond of friendship won't be quite the same. That's the way life is. I can't promise you it will be different, at least with the kind of friendships we humans experience among ourselves.

Love is the basis for a good friendship, yet there are different types of love, too. There is a kind of love you experience in families, and among peers and friends. There is another kind of love that grows into physical attraction and can grow into a romantic relationship. And there is a love which can make those first two kinds of love more complete, and can exalt inter-personal friendships to a new level. It is a love that

doesn't just take emotion or gifts from one another, but is a self-giving love which enfolds the other person with dignity and concern for that person's welfare. It is the love which cares more honestly and deeply than most people could ever imagine, and it is the love upon which the truest, most mature and lasting friendships are built. The Greeks called it *agape*, and it is the kind of love which God had for the world of humans when he sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to befriend and redeem our human race. It's the kind of love that Jesus expressed to his first followers, and it's the kind of love that you heard earlier described in the reading from John chapter 15. He invites us to be at home in this kind of love.

"I've loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain intimately at home in my love. That's what I have done--kept my Father's commands and made myself at home in his love."

There is a respect and integrity which makes this so pure that it can bind together even those of unequal position, and make them one, able to live in joy and unity. That's what Jesus wanted us to know when he went on to say: "I've told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I have loved you. This is the best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I've named you friends because I have let you in on everything I have heard from the Father.

Can you catch the magnitude of what Jesus is saying here? The God who created the whole universe-- the Lord of all creation--chose to renew a loving relationship with us humans. When God brought the first humans into being, they were perfect, and perfectly equipped to relate intimately with their loving Creator. But rebellion entered the world, and the relationship between God and his beloved children was shattered. This Creator God filled with divine love for us, chose to win us back into the circle of his beloved ones. He sent his Son in human flesh into our world, to live among us and be a part of us. He brought God's perfect love into our imperfect lives. He took our alienation upon himself, and gave his own life as a sacrifice. He suffered the death that was sin's sentence. He conquered its power by rising as death's defeater. It is this Jesus Christ who invited you to enter his new life and his new lifestyle.

When your relationship with God is renewed, when you believe in him and follow him, he invites you to a whole new world of joy—joy based on love and friendship which begins with him and radiates to people around you. He invites you, "Love one another the way I have loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends." He doesn't ask us to do for others what he hasn't already done for us. In fact, he established his love and friendship for us while we were *alienated* from God, and brought us back into the perfect *'ohana* of the Father's family.

Look at the amazing way he now describes his friendship with us. "You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I've named you friends because I've let you in on everything I've heard from the Father." He's not talking about some new Christian clique where we've got a secret nobody else gets in on. He's talking about love and acceptance for all. Jesus is inviting you to receive the love he gives. I believe self-giving love is the

true spirit of *aloha*. When I'm driving around town I usually have K I N E radio 105 blasting in the background. Sometime during the day I know I'll start tapping my foot to the beat of that happy song proclaiming, "A-L-O-H-A," spread a little *aloha* today!"

I believe Jesus would smile with that song. He'd ignore all the ways *aloha* is cheapened and commercialized and he'd celebrate the dignity it deserves. He'd choose us to join him in bearing the fruit of healing friendships. He promises to be our *hoaloha*, our true and loving friend, and invites us to spread more than a little of that kind of *aloha* today. He said, "Remember the root command: Love one another." *E aloha kua!*

A strange thing happened as I prepared for this message today. Some of you folks told me how to find the lyrics to the "Friends" song revived by *Na Leo Pilimehana*. *Mahalo!* It worked. But it worked even better than you may have imagined because it also led me to another Na Leo song. Lehua Kalima wrote it and they included it in their *Colours* album and in the new collection, *Anthology II*. It's obviously meant to be sung by lovers to one another. But when I heard what Jesus said about loving us and loving one another and that holy friendship that he wants to give us, and then saw the words to this song, I got "chicken skin!" As I share these words, imagine that *Jesus* is singing them to you—singing the song called, "*The Rest of Your Life*."

What are you doing for the rest of your life?
We could watch the stars at night, twinkling high above,
'Cause I promise you, for the rest of your life
I will be there by your side, I will be your love.

What are you doing for the rest of your life?
If you believe in destiny, then how can you not see
That I'll be with you, for the rest of your life.
Someday you will realize, we were meant to be.

Time flies on gilded wings,
And faith in my heart, it sings,
But I've just got to know one thing...

What are you doing for the rest of your life?
Could I be the only one to know this part of you?
And you will find, for the rest of your life.
That I will love you for the rest of mine.

The rest of Jesus' life is forever. He chooses you to be his ***friends, for the rest of your life***. It's the greatest gift that can be given. Will you receive it?

Aloha kakou! A hui hou aku. Amene.

WES KAWACHI

SALUTATORIAN

2002

Good evening Mrs. Fox, Board of Directors, Mr. Gundell, Mrs Villaverde, faculty, family, and friends.

At last year's baccalaureate, Pastor Windsor recited an anecdote concerning a man and a cocoon.

Once upon a time, a man found the cocoon of a butterfly. One day, a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress.

It appeared as though it had gotten as far as it could, and it could go no further. So the man delighted to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining part of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily but it had a swollen body and small shriveled wings.

The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time. Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never got to fly.

One year after I heard Pastor's short story, my sister drove me home from my own baccalaureate. In the car, I had dropped her cellphone, dismantling the housing of the phone. Never owning a cellphone myself, I didn't know how to repair it. I fiddled, inspected and experimented with both the phone and the faceplate the entire drive home. Finally I succeeded, but only after half an hour of continuous failures.

B.C. Forbes once said, "History has demonstrated that the most notable winners usually encountered heartbreaking obstacles before they triumphed. They won because they refused to become discouraged by their defeats." Had I succumbed to defeat by the curious design of the cellphone housing, I would to this day not know how to put on a cellphone faceplate. I had succeeded not because of mechanical talent, but simply because I refused defeat.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "Life is a succession of lessons which must be lived to be understood." Those "lessons" confront us in various forms, sometimes as a difficult task or situation.

The man who cut open the cocoon, in his kindness and haste, did not understand the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

If God allowed us to go through our lives without any obstacles, it would cripple us. Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our lives.

As we, the Class of 2002, continue on an extraordinary journey through life, we pause to reflect on the obstacles we have overcome and defeated. It becomes imperative to thank our families, our teachers, our friends, who walked with us through our difficulties, who encouraged us to break through the various cocoons of high school. For the time has now come to spread our wings like a butterfly and beautify the world for others.

MRS. NANCY VILLAVERDE COMMENCEMENT 2002

Good evening everyone, and a specially grand evening to you graduates of the class of 2002!

At just this very time one year ago, I was sitting out there in the first row with the faculty of Lutheran High School, realizing that it was the last of twenty graduations I had attended as a teacher there. I had been your advisor for three of your four years of high school, and it must have

seemed as if I deserted you with only one more year to go. I hope that your invitation to me to speak tonight means you have forgiven me, but can't help wondering if there is just a tiny bit of "payback" in the invitation, revenge for all those essays and research papers I assigned.

I must admit I considered basing my little talk tonight in what I know about our graduates, for they are an interesting bunch of individuals maybe even a motley crew. But I remember my Shakespeare, as I think they expected. In *The Merchant of Venice* Portia, the lady lawyer says, "The quality of mercy is not strain'd; it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven." So it is with mercy that I pass over this wonderful opportunity.

I would like to begin by borrowing a general idea from a graduation speech I read in book titled, [A Touch of Wonder, A Book to Help People Stay in Love with Life](#), by Arthur Gordon. Please notice the credit given, graduates, and remember those lessons on plagiarism. Gordon relates that when he was asked to give a commencement address, a friend said, "It's easy. All you have to do is give 'em a foolproof formula for success!" He meant it as a joke, but Gordon became convinced, as he thought about it, that there *is* a foolproof formula for success for anyone wise enough to recognize it and put it to work. His answer was in one word: *integrity*. And he has some very persuasive reasons to support his choice. The word *integrity* means wholeness, just as in Mathematics, an integer is a whole number. A man of integrity isn't divided against himself; he is not in conflict with his own principles. Gordon tells the story you may have heard about a young nurse on her first day of full responsibility in an operating room. When the doctor gave the order to close the incision at the end of surgery, the young nurse said, "You've removed 11 sponges, doctor, and we used 12." The doctor said "I've removed them all. We'll close now." "No," the nurse objected. "We used 12." "I'll take responsibility," the doctor said. "Close." "You can't do that!" blazed the nurse. "Think of the patient!" The doctor smiled, lifted his foot, and showed the 12th sponge. "You'll do," he said to the nurse. He had been testing her for integrity.

Integrity, Gordon goes on to point out, means honor, conscience, courage of your convictions, and even obedience to the unenforceable. All these qualities are difficult, rare, but ultimately worth the effort and give the rewards that let a person believe his life has been a success. People of integrity have a serenity and a built in shock absorber. When Abe Lincoln was warned by friends that a certain speech he was preparing to give would be his undoing, he replied, "If it is decreed that I should go down because of this speech, then let me go down linked to the truth." He did lose his election to the U.S. Senate in 1858, but two years later he was elected President.

Gordon's point, if I fully grasp it, is that if you follow a path that lets you believe you have been true to your principles, you are a success, regardless of fame, fortune, power, or any of the conventional measures of success. True success should make you feel at home in your own skin, pleased with the life you have lived, perhaps with the unavoidable regrets for mistakes made, but overall able to say "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith."

I think all of this is a wonderful formula for success, but I have another one to offer tonight, and it too is a one-word answer. Former students may be surprised to hear me suggest I can be a woman of few words. But I think my formula for success is the word I just used—*faith*.

1. Faith in God

Your faith in your God, sometimes a blind, desperate faith against all odds, will be your best lifeline in times of greatest need. Paul said to the Corinthians "We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." The gently delivered message of the Thornton Wilder play, Our Town, is in the words of the stage manager:

"Now there are some things we all know, but we don't take 'em out and look at 'em very often. We all know that *something* is eternal. And it ain't houses and it ain't names, and it ain't earth, and it ain't even the stars... everybody knows in their bones that *something* is eternal, and that something has to do with human beings. All the greatest people ever lived have been telling us that for five thousand years and yet you'd be surprised how people are always losing hold of it. There's something way down deep that's eternal about every human being."

Paul continued, "We live by faith, not by sight." This is one of the hardest lessons in life to hold on to, and yet that deeply felt sense that God is there is not to be denied.

2. Faith that goodness wins over evil.

Tightly bound to our faith in God is the faith that good will ultimately win over evil. This faith has been sorely tried in all ages, but maybe never more so than in our recent history. The face of evil in the attacks upon America on Sept. 11 was appalling in its inhumanity and senseless rage. The images presented to us by the falling towers, as well as the echoes we have seen in films projecting other imagined terrorist attacks upon our country, seem almost overwhelming. And yet, slowly building over the weeks and months, we have recognized the selfless courage of the police and firefighters, the passengers aboard the plane that failed to reach its destructive target, the bystanders who rushed into the inferno rather than running to save themselves. Their stories have emerged one by one, assuring us of the good in the human spirit. President Bush spoke well when he said, "Grief and tragedy and hatred are only for a time. Goodness, remembrance and love have no end."

3. Faith in the American way of life.

As the months have passed into 2002, pride and faith in America and our American way of life have grown, perhaps stronger than at any time since World War II.

4. Faith in those who care for you

On a more personal note, here tonight as you graduate, you see in front of you many people who care very much about you. In your lives so far you have been surrounded by family, friends, teachers, pastors, who care about your welfare and have been faithful in supporting you. As you step out into the wider world, some of you leaving home for the first time, and leaving it at a great distance, you may feel separated from this source of love and support. You will need faith in the love of those who care for you, even as you step out on your own. They will not stop loving and caring for you, and love and friendship can transcend miles and years.

5. Faith in yourself

Yet, there is a final faith which you need to develop now more than ever before, faith in yourself. When you have asked divine guidance, used your best moral sense of right over wrong, and considered the advice of those who care about your welfare, ultimately you must make your own decisions. You may remember the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson in an essay titled "Self Reliance", which I made you read and write about in your American literature class—"Trust thyself, every heart vibrates to that iron string."

A little less literary than Emerson, but easier for our modern minds to grasp, are these remarks from the comedian Bill Cosby in a commencement speech in New York City. He said, "You'll have dreams and you'll go to someone and you'll say, 'This is a great idea.' And that person will say, 'No, it isn't.' And you have to go back to your cubicle. Now the question is, who do you believe?"

It seems that I have reached the same conclusion that the speaker I spoke of in the beginning reached—if you have personal integrity, you are true to your own principles, and if you have faith in yourself, that's what you do, too. Now this doesn't mean following any whim that strikes you, or following the path of selfish desires. It means something harder—seeking your own truth and your own destiny until you believe you have found it, and then holding to it with the tenacity of a bulldog.

Trust yourself. That's my message graduates. For years you have been told "listen to me, young man or young lady!" Now you have to listen well to that still, small voice that is yourself. Go tonight with faith in God, in good which will prevail, in your country, in those who love you, and in yourselves.

ROSS AKIYAMA VALEDICTORIAN 2002

Good evening Mrs. Fox, Mr Gundell, Mrs. Villaverde, Mr. Willweber, Mrs. Vasquez, members of the Board of Directors, faculty, family and friends. I am very honored to address you on this special occasion.

On behalf of Lutheran High School's graduating class of 2002, I extend my gratitude to the Board of Directors who has made this evening possible. Our appreciation also goes out to the teachers, our families and friends, who have provided for and supported us throughout our high school years.

William Durant, a historian once said, "Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance." As I look back on our four years at Lutheran High, I think of all the hard work and hours of homework piled on us by our loving teachers. But, we finally overcame the obstacles that stood before us and have grown both academically and spiritually. We have been blessed with the guidance and preparation needed to succeed in life.

Although our high school career has come to an end, I hope that every senior will continue to work hard and put forth his or her best efforts. We must learn to take chances and be bold enough to face failure to become stronger, resilient individuals, and allow ourselves to follow our dreams as we begin this new chapter in our lives. Isaiah 43:2-3 "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burnt; the flames will not set you a blaze. For I am the Lord, your God the Holy One of Israel, your Savior." God will provide where ever he leads us. He will not bestow on us a challenge we cannot endure or overcome.

Strong friendships have developed over these last four years and my hopes are that many of us will continue to keep in touch although many miles separate us. The many memories we have will hold a special place in our hearts.

I once again thank the Board of Directors. To the faculty, a quote by Henry B. Adams, "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where

his influence stops." You have all been very supportive of our spiritual and academic education. Lutheran High is blessed with dedicated and caring educators. To our friends, you have all made the ride worthwhile. To our families who have always been there for us, thank you, from the bottom of our hearts. To my mom, who has always encouraged me to do my best and has taken care of me for 18 long, grueling years. To my dad, thank you for all of life's maxims like "sit before you fall," the great food, and the hours of sitting in traffic taking me to and from school. To my sister, I cannot believe you put up with me for so long and still love me. And I know you do. Thank you. Grandma and Grandpa, thank you for your love, for always being there and supporting me. I love you all. And most importantly, to our lord Jesus Christ, without whom this would not be possible. Mahalo nui loa and God bless.

CHRISTINA TOYAMA SALUTATORIAN 2003

Good evening, Mr. Uhlig, Mr. Gundell, Mr. Schriever, Pastor Gowan, Board of Directors, Faculty and staff, family, and friends. First of all, I give praise and thanks to Our Lord and Savior for the honor and privilege for being part of this graduating class. I also thank my parents, who are my encouragers, supporters, and guides.

As we graduate tonight, we will turn the page to the next chapter of our lives. Through these four years many of us have gone through boyfriends, girlfriends, internal conflicts, conflicts with peers, stress from tests and even tension with teachers. But let us take the gems the lessons learned, from these situations. As John Powell profoundly stated, "The only real mistake is from which we learn nothing."

Sometimes God uses discipline as coarse wrapping that scrapes off all our impurities and immaturities, and with each scratch, he sculpts us to be more and more like Him. We can either let those times cause us to become bitter, angry, defensive, OR we can let those times train us. Through that training process, we can acquire the gems of perseverance, patience, and forgiveness. Not only does adversity strengthen us, but it is essential for our survival. An example of this is found in a book called Living Life Above The Rubble by Pastor Wayne Cordeiro. Mr. A. Bailey was an apple farmer, one of the best. It was during a season of prolonged drought that all the orchards in the valley were drying up from lack of moisture. The apple crop seemed destined to doom. Mr. A. Bailey was called in by the other farmers and asked why his orchard was so green while everyone else's was so dry.

He replied, "My trees can go another two weeks without a drop of water."

"Well, how'd you do that?" the other curious farmers prodded.

"When my trees were young, I frequently withheld water from them. Because of that, they had to send their roots deeper into the soil to find water. Now, while the other trees are drying, mine are drinking moisture at a much greater depth."

God set us apart just like Mr. A. Bailey's apple crops were set apart from the other apple crops. Even though adversity may hurt us, and we say, "OWW God, Why?" It is essential for our survival.

All of us have gone through many struggles, and we know that we have yet to live through so much more. Some of us may encounter financial problems. Losses of loved ones, or marital problems, but through these problems we will look to God and overcome. Roman 5:3-5 reads, "Not only so, but we rejoice in our suffering, because we know that sufferings produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." It is crucial to have hope amidst adversity, because hope acts as the light through the tunnel. A man who fully understood this once said, "I don't know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future... and that's good enough for me."

There once was a man who held firmly to hope in God in times of extreme adversity. He was arrested thirty times for his participation in civil rights activities. He and his fellow African American were confined to positions of second class citizenship by restrictive laws and customs. He broke these laws and was subjugated and humiliated by police and the legal system. His supporters were beaten, imprisoned, and sometimes killed because they defiled the System. He was then shot on April 4, 1968, by an assassin while he was on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. His name- Dr. Martin Luther king Jr. His death was not in vain; it inspired many, and today Black Americans have federal legislation which provides access and legal protection in the area of public accommodations, housing, voting rights, schools, and transportation. These rights were not easily won, nor readily accepted, but then again worthwhile, come easily. I leave you with a quote from this courageous man, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and adversity." Thank you.

AMANDA FRAZIER VALEDICTORIAN CLASS OF 2003

Good evening Mr. Uhlig, Mr. Gundell, Mr. Schriefer, Pastor Gowan, members of the Board, faculty, and staff. Good evening parents, family, and friends. On behalf of my senior class, I thank the Board for the education they have provided for us, and the teaching staff of Lutheran High School for the countless hours of dedication and hard work they have given in order for us to have an exceptional education. Thank you parents for everything you have taught us at home, helping to prepare us for our soon to come confrontation of the world. Thank you also for the discipline you gave us. . . We probably needed it. Thank you family for keeping everyday interesting and meaningful. Thank you friends for helping us through all of our hardships, and for providing us with countless smiles, laughs, and memories.

Graduation is a day that most people will remember even when they grow old. Well, actually, the only thing we will probably remember about graduation is grad night, and my spectacular speech, but that's beside the point. We are here tonight because we have made it. We have made it through elementary, junior high, and the longest four years of our lives. Actually, the four years didn't seem that long; not with all of our friends to help pass the time. High school is a hard journey, no matter what anyone else might think or say. High school is challenging. We are bombarded with homework, tests, and reports, due dates, and the pressure of earning good grades. It is time consuming, and stressful.

However, it is also rewarding, because it is full of life experiences and life lessons. Because of this, we have all come out high school at least a tiny bit more mature than when we first started. Well, most of us anyway.

There are many paths one may choose to follow in life. There are many important choices to be made. The ways and paths of this world may seem the easiest ways at times, but they are many times, not the wisest paths to choose. Theodore Hesburgh, former president of the University of Notre Dame once said, "My basic principle is that you don't make decisions because they are easy; you don't make them because they are cheap; you don't make them because they're popular; you make them because they're right." The world may persuade a person to rebel by going to parties, drinking alcohol, or doing drugs; it might seem that many people choose these paths, and therefore they are the ones that we should follow. However, as Robert Frost, a great poet, wrote, "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I – I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." A person must choose a path that they know is right, not just the path that is used and seemingly easy. The path chosen, and the choices made are the backbone of one's future. God tells us in Exodus chapter 23, verse 2, "Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong," and in 1 Corinthians chapter 14, verse 1, "Follow the way of love." If we trust in the Lord and base our decisions on love, we will easily be able to make the right choices. The key is not to follow the path that seems to be the right one, but to follow the path that God laid forth for you. As our class motto states, "Walk with him, and you will never walk alone."

Most of us will be attending college after this summer. We will either stay here, at home, or in a dorm, or we'll be flown away to college somewhere else, very far away. Some of us might even take a different approach to life, like maybe travel around the world, or fly to Australia. We are looking toward a new type of life; a life of independence and adulthood. The reality of being on our own might be scary at first, but it's probably supposed to be that way. The kinds of choices that we make will definitely contribute to the life we will live after high school. The world outside of our already huge school is a big place. We will all go our separate ways soon. However, one common ground that we can share is the memories we've enjoyed together at Lutheran High. I wish all of you good luck in whatever you choose to do on life. I pray that you will never give up on your dreams and aspirations, and that you will enjoy life, and remember to be thankful and grateful for all that you have. Thank you for all the memories, and thank you everyone else here, for your contributions in each one of our lives. None of us could have made it this far without you. Thank you.

REV. MITCHELL GOWEN BACCALAUREATE 2004

It's not graduation yet, but this is the warmup event. A test of whether or not you can sit still for almost an hour. The anticipation isn't quite as high today. The only thing you're missing out on is the 2-4 foot swells at Sandy's or maybe the sales at Ala Moana. On graduation as you sit quietly it will not be easy, for you know the moment you receive your diploma there is the illusion of freedom.

I say illusion because you are simply trading one thing for another. Unless one of you won the California state lottery – the day after graduation you will have to get a job, go to college or a combination of both.

Now you may be truly free – what you are going to do the day after graduation may be the very thing you have been living for and waiting patiently, or not so patiently, for.

And that is the kind of life God had planned for you. God wants you to have the kind of life where you aren't so much leaving something behind as you are going to something else.

I'm not leaving high school – I'm going to college. I'm not graduating, I'm going to work. It is the theme of Ecclesiastes 3 where King Solomon writes, "there is a season for everything..." And true life recognizes such seasons and celebrates them. Instead of chasing the wind, you chase your future and when a moment passes – you celebrate it and embrace the new one. I have a big green friend who is a pretty good theologian. His name is Shrek and he is able to illustrate this point better than I – so let me turn it over to Him.

SHREK – going on a quest scene

Okay, quick quiz.

Why did Shrek agree to go on the quest? (get his swamp back)

Did he even think he might find something else? (no)

Are all his enemies really enemies? (no – the dragon winds up a pretty good ally)

Even though he is tired of donkey always talking to him – could he have found what he found and done what he did without him? (no)

I don't know what you are questing for – what it is you are trying to find.

I do know what God has prepared for you. It's a place called heaven. Heaven is perfect and it's waiting just for you. But only perfect people can get in. And that pretty much leaves all of us out – unless we get some help from God. Not God thought it was so important for you to spend eternity in heaven that He paid the entrance fee Himself – and it wasn't cheap. The only way for us to get in was for His Son to take the blame for all of our sins, all of our failures, all of the junk in our life. It all took place 2,000 years ago on a cross just outside Jerusalem. I don't need to go into many more details – you've been hearing this same story for at least the past four years at LHS and most of you probably saw The Passion of the Christ.

What I want to make sure of is this – I know heaven isn't on your mind right now- graduation is. The freedom to leave one thing behind so you can get to whatever it is you're going to.

Like Shrek, you might only be interested in getting your swamp back – slimy toadstools and all. And so your quest – for a job, a college, an education, someone to spend the rest of your life with – is all to fulfill whatever your dream is.

I don't doubt you'll head out under full steam – but do me a favor. As you get further and further into the quest, as you begin checking ToDo items off your list and get closer and closer to getting your swamp back – don't forget to look around and make sure you aren't missing out on something even better. Don't get so locked into the swamp thing that you miss what you're really looking for and what you really need.

Freedom doesn't mean much if all you're doing is running from one thing to another, fighting dragons, rescuing princesses, surviving collapsing bridges over lava only to discover you really don't have anywhere to go. If you don't have anywhere to go – than anyplace at all will do – and life is too precious to waste that way. Your life and everything you are is too important to try and fit into just 70 or 80 years – especially when there are so many things you'll never get to do.

Why settle for those few years when you can have an eternity and those years in Jesus?

LYNN DEJONG VALEDICTORIAN 2004

Welcome, Mr. Uhling, Mr. Gundell, Mr. Lehmann, Pastor Betker, members of the board, faculty and staff, parents, family, and friends. On behalf of our class, I thank each of you for your continued support and prayers throughout our education. Without you love and guidance, we seniors would not be where we are today. Many of you have prayed and sacrificed, cheerfully and unselfishly, for this school, to make this day possible for us. Our Christian supporters have one thing in common: they all wish for us to know Jesus personally.

Soon we will be saying goodbye. Did you know the word, "goodbye," originally meant "God be with you?" "Good" is a form of "God," and "bye" is short for "be with you." As we say our goodbyes to each other, to our school, to our teachers, and to our friends, we can find peace knowing that God will be with each and every one of us. God assures us throughout the Bible that He will be with us. He doesn't guarantee that we will never suffer, or never have hardships; He never promises that we will be rich and famous and all our dreams will come true, but He does promise us, over and over throughout the Bible, that He will always be with us and that we will spend eternity with Him in heaven. So every time you say goodbye to someone tonight or tomorrow, you are actually giving them a great blessing: God be with you, now and forever.

Graduation is one of the significant milestones in our lives. This commencement ceremony gives us the time and opportunity to celebrate this event with the community of supporters that have made it possible. Tonight is one of those times in our lives where it is worth pausing to remember our past and what we have learned, accomplished, and experienced. In four short years of high school, we have grown and matured from children to adults, we have learned book lessons and life lessons, we have made mistakes and learned from them, and we have built friendships and memories that we can treasure throughout our lives. But, graduation brings an end to this current high school phase of our lives, and this commencement ceremony also gives us the opportunity to look forward to our futures, and the changes, opportunities, and new experiences that lie ahead of us. Whether we are ready or not, graduation means that we will be making more decisions in our lives and taking more responsibility for ourselves. We all now face choices in our lives...what college we're going to, what classes we will enroll in, what career we will choose, who we will marry, and many others. These are all important decisions, but the most important decision we will ever make in our life is whether we will follow Christ and live according to his

commands. It is your choice, your decision. Will you follow Christ and be his witness wherever God leads you?

Facing an uncertain future is exciting, like preparing for a new adventure, but it is also frightening, like sailing in uncharted waters where you don't know where the reefs and sandbars are. God tells us, however, that we do not face our adventure of uncharted waters alone, without a light or compass to find our way. Jeremiah 29 verse 11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." This verse gives us encouragement. We can rely on God who has wonderful plans for us. We should graduate with confidence as our Lord, Jesus Christ, not only provides light and a compass for our new adventure, but also promises to sail with us.

I also find hope and encouragement from God's words to us in our class verse, Joshua 1 verse 9, which says, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." We can choose to face our uncertain futures with boldness and enthusiasm as we follow God's example and model our lives after Jesus. With God leading us, life is like playing a tennis match where God is your coach, and He says, "We've already won, just enjoy the game and play your best." I would respond to such an opportunity with boldness and enthusiasm, wouldn't you?

Reverend Schuler told a story about an elderly woman in his congregation. Knowing that she did not have long to live, she asked Reverend Shuler, who was going to lead her funeral, to have her buried with her Bible in one hand and a plastic fork in the other. He told her that he could understand the Bible, but why did she want the plastic fork? She told him she had been attending the church suppers they had been proving for some time now, and when it was time for dessert, the people would clear her plate and say, "Now hold onto your fork, because the best is yet to come."

I don't know what is going to come for us graduates or for any of us here tonight. I don't know what your life holds for you. You may have a chocolate cake sort of life, or maybe it will seem that you received a plate of spinach, or maybe it will seem as though you received no dessert at all. But I do know this: if you call out to Jesus for help, for you, the best is yet to come.

In closing, I ask everyone in this auditorium to hold out their hands like this while I pray a blessing.

Loving God, you have given us these hands. Some of these hands have tenderly held these graduates when they were newborn babies, walked with them hands in hand, made their lunches, drove them to school, snapped endless pictures, and wrapped countless gifts. Some of these hands have graded mountains of papers and tests and given pats of encouragement. All of these hands have cared for these students in innumerable ways. And with these hands many have prayed, and prayed, and prayed for graduates.

With these hands, we graduates have written countless essays, done chores and homework, washed hundreds of cars, trained and competed in athletics, and hugged parents, friends, and classmates.

Loving God, direct us so these hands will mirror what you, God, would have us do with our time, talents, and treasures. Make these hands like Jesus' hands. Thank you, Lord, for blessing us with these hands and the opportunities to use them for you and to show your love and care. We dedicate our hands for Your glory and Your service. May

all these hands be blessed so that they may be a blessing to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Goodbye. God be with you.

AMANI EVENSON SALUTATORIAN 2004

Good evening Mr. Uhlig, Mr. Gundell, this year's speaker, Mr. Lehmann, Pastor Betker, members of the board, faculty and staff, parents, family, and friends.

This is a very special evening. It is a night to recognize achievement, a night to thank those who have helped us thus far, and a night to thank our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for his many, many blessings that have brought us here. Tonight we recognize the four years of work and perseverance of those before you. For us, the class of 2004, it has been four years of triumphs and disappointments, trials and errors, and four years of growing in knowledge and maturity. We have been taught how to learn, how to question, how to decide and act, how to appreciate challenges, and how to overcome them. We have been given the tools necessary to excel in this world, and to do so with a foundation in Christ. On behalf of the class of 2004, I say thank you to all of you who have been involved in our continuing education from administration and teaching, to the smallest word of encouragement. The work done before us, and our gifts from Christ have culminated to this point, and will launch us further into the future. We thank the Board of Education for their commitment to Lutheran High and its students, and for their vision in the continued mission of this school to educate not only in worldly teaching, but also in the teaching of our Savior Jesus Christ. We thank the staff and teachers for their drive and commitment to our education. We thank them for tolerating us and for guiding us with loving hands. We thank our parents who have made the commitment to our education and for their support from day one. We thank them for making those sacrifices to make our education possible and for setting the example of what we can achieve. We thank friends and family for their encouragement and time spent to help us grow. Finally, we thank God for our gifts and talents, and for His saving grace which gives us hope in things unseen and assurance of things to come.

For the class of 2004, tonight may very well be the last time that we are all together at the same time and place. From tonight on, we will each be pursuing our goals and going where our Lord leads us. Our four-year experience at Lutheran High School is ending, but many new experiences are just beginning. We can look back on our brief moments of mischief with laughter, our moments of defeat with understanding, our moments of triumph with pride and joy, and do it knowing it was together as a class. We have sacrificed time and countless hours of sleep to help each other in schoolwork. We have left blood, sweat, and tears on the fields and courts of athletics. We have taken on the load of extracurricular activities together. We have relaxed and played together. Yes, new experiences wait, but it is the old experiences that have made us ready for the future. That will be the legacy of the class of 2004. It will not be a plaque, a record, or any other public achievement, but it will be

how we have learned and worked together and what we mean to each other. This legacy is possible only because of Jesus and what he has done for us. Our legacy of togetherness is also a celebration of being together as one in Christ. In order for this to carry on through good times and bad times, we must include the ultimate legacy of Christ Jesus. We must remember that he has carried us this far and will not forsake us. We have been taught well enough to know that the easy part is over, and that hard times will undoubtedly happen. But we have the foundation to weather it all. Jesus has promised us, and scripture clearly tells us that this foundation will always be there. Romans 8:38: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Our unlimited futures are before us, and we will make the best of this opportunity.

REV. BRUCE R. BETKER BACCALAUREATE 2005

Star Wars Theme plays...

I can't believe it all started 28 years ago with Star Wars 4. Ten years before you were born we were all watching Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader duke it out on screen with light sabers. Today it's finished...in the middle...with Star Wars 3, The Revenge of the Sith! How strange is that?

Today you are more or less finished but also in the middle or even more at the beginning. You might be here tonight only because we still have your diploma and this is required for you to get it.

Maybe it is because this year is my fortieth high school reunion. Little did I guess 40 years ago at my Lutheran High Bacculaureate in Detroit that I would be speaking for an LHS bacculaureate in Honolulu, Hawaii. Maybe because I am the same age as Dan Quayle, Hillary Clinton, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Karim Abdul Jabar, Elton John, Nolan Ryan, Tom Clancy, Billy Crystal, and David Letterman. But lately, mortality is much on my mind. Finitude. Term limits.

Some say you don't think much about the subject. You are young. You are beginning, rather than ending which is why we call the coming event of next week "Commencement."

It's with some fear and trepidation that I am standing here in front of all you young, young people because you are probably thinking to yourselves, "God don't let me look like that forty years from now at fifty-seven."

You have already started to have a few of your own famous contemporaries. You are the same age as Hillary Duff, Tom Felton, Aaron Carter, Maria Sharapova, and Bow Wow.

My sense is that you are all older than your years though, for you are the class of 9/11. Less than two weeks after you began your freshman year the World Trade Center was destroyed, the pentagon was attacked, and the plan to attack the white house was foiled. And we discovered to our own dismay that we are not invincible and that people

like Darth Sidious really do exist. That people really do give in and go over to the “dark side.”

You have already faced the likes of Darth Sidious, and I've got news for you. You have not seen the last of him. He will rear his ugly head and come after you for the rest of your life at the most unexpected and unwelcome times.

Are any of you familiar with the name of Russell Schweikert? One of our astronauts. He flew on Apollo 9 in 1968. After he returned to earth from his magnificent space adventure, he wrote, “[You see] the earth not as something big [but] as a small thing out there.. And the contrast between that blue and white Christmas tree ornament and the black sky, that infinite universe, really comes through, and the size of it, the significance of it. It is so small and fragile and such a precious little spot in that universe that you can block it out with your thumb, and you realize that on that small spot, that little blue and white thing, is everything that means anything to you- all of history, and music and poetry and art and death and birth and love, all the tears, joy, games, all of it on that little spot out there that you can cover with your thumb. (1) It is all a matter of perspective, is it not?

Psalm 8 : 4-5, 6-7, 8-9 – It's All in the Perspective

“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?”

Truth be told, our lives are lived on the basis of our perspectives. The senior gathered here today have a perspective that can no doubt be described as on top of the world. And why not? They are celebrating a significant accomplishment. But soon that perspective will change, and life will be seen through the nervous eyes of a college freshman or from the bottom rung on the job ladder. We all see different things at different times – it is all in the perspective.

Since college I've loved the poems of Housman. Housman was a superior student at St. John's Oxford. Yet recently, when I read the poet's biography, Housman was quoted as saying, “Oxford had not much effect upon me, except there I did make my dearest and oldest friend.”

And I thought, not much to show from five plus years as the greatest of the world's universities, rather small potatoes after so grand an undergraduate education.

Or perhaps, in the long run, if you have made a friend of Jesus at Lutheran High and He becomes your oldest and dearest friend, then that would suffice.

Professor Dallas Willard of USC: Be encouraged, and encouraging about the fact that Jesus is present on the college campuses. Jesus is the smartest mind in any and every field, and in him are contained all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Jesus, despite any voices to the contrary, is the “Big Man On Campus!” A student sitting in a philosophy class listening to the teacher rant on about the absurdity of the Christian faith may be encouraged by an anecdote such as this: Walter Martin tells the story of Sydney Hook lecturing against Jesus in a class at New York University. With a moment's reflection, answer the question: “How many people have died for the sake of their dedication to Sydney Hook?”

Hebrews 13: ⁵Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, “I will never leave you or forsake you.” ⁶So we can say with confidence,

“The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.

What can man do to me?"

⁷ Remember your leaders, those who spoke the Word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

JILLIAN NAKAMURA SALUTATORIAN 2005

Good evening Pastor Shimkus, Pastor Cordeiro, Mr. Uhlig, members of the board, Mr. Gundell, faculty and staff, parents, family, and friends.

I wanted to begin this speech by saying "we made it," but what really have we made? As students we only made a dent in our future. To put the situation in perspective, we spent about 18 years of learning and schooling so far to prepare for the rest of our lives. We have not made it yet class, but we are definitely on the right path in being here tonight. Students look out into the audience, at the people who love us, and came here solely for the reason of watching our graduation. It is amazing how a group of 23 teenage adults can provoke a crowd of hundreds of people to gather in celebration. The people watching us now came here tonight because they are proud of our accomplishments. However, we have only made the beginning class, there is much more we can accomplish.

Parents, look at your children. How could you not be proud of their numerous accomplishments? From their first walk or word to receiving athletic awards and/or acing tests and papers they took time to prepare.

Family members, look at your relatives. Some of you can recall when we were small, though you can no longer hold us in your arms you still hold us in your hearts. There are family members here who grew with us patting our backs and giving us hugs and kisses when we became the quintessence of recital performers or acted in a play. Teachers and those who provided the education for us, look at your students. You accepted us into your care when we had just begun our teenage lives. You taught us, though we tried any form of escaping an assignment, we always persevered, and that is why we sit here today.

Friends, look at those people you chose to be proud to know and accept, the people who approached you when they had problems, and who you approached in the same. We have experienced so much together: growing, learning, and taking each others' advice.

Students, look upon each other, who else could recall something funny in class, would understand a difficulty in a homework assignment, would work in groups to finish an assignment, or would side with you when you complained. Some of us were blessed to find best friends in high school, the people we will remember for the rest of our lives.

The verb "to make" reminds me of a verse Mr. Gundell told me to prepare for the Baccalaureate service. Mathew 7:24-27 reads:

"Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." This is the word of the Lord. The

reason why the house on the rock did not fall is because faith in God shall never fail. Hearing God's word, however, does not mean anything if you do not understand it and live for His word proclaiming it to everyone. Foundation in God will always keep you firm and safe in all types of dangers. The education we received throughout our life is like the tools needed to build a house on this foundation. Each level of schooling we encounter is a test on the warranty of the tool each of us picks up. The harder we work at school and maintain our knowledge the longer the warranty and more preferable the tool we earn compared to similar tools of lesser strength. The degree we receive upon graduating from college is like a book of official directions to the construction of our homes. Once graduating from college has occurred all we as students have to do is build. So the verb "to make," in the sense we speak of tonight, is the word we shall use to describe the hard work we have dedicated to the tools we have so far claimed. Everything that we have done so far is the base for which we can start the rest of our lives. We should do everything we can to provide the best protection in wind, rain, and storm. To reach the fulfillment of being made after college when the final building of our houses are complete and we are satisfied.

Please bow your heads in prayer. Lord, we have learned time cannot be stopped or turned around and we feel as if we are not ready for this world. We are sorry for thinking we could make it on our own. Thank you for blessing us with the Faculty and staff, parents, family, and friends who have helped us along the way. Thank you for our parents who raised us when we were helpless and shaped the mold to which we strive to model each day. Thank you for our families, who through constant "I'm proud of you" and "congratulations" we have received the confidence and strength to pursue any goal. To friends, who have been the peers with shoulders to cry on and hands to pat our backs. Thank you for providing us with those people responsible for our education, who have taught us exactly what we need to continue the next volume in our lives. We thank you, Lord, for providing us with such wonderful influences in our lives and the chance to sit here today understanding the fact that we have surpassed the beginning of our lives. Help us, Lord, as we enter into the college life, most of us to not-Christian schools, that we may resist temptation of any kind and do what is according to Your will. We have accepted the tools the educational staff and you have handed on to us, help us use them in building a new foundation and a home. Amen.

"Do is the first part of done." We have made it this far class, we are all capable of building our castles on a mountain. THANK YOU!

JYSSICA WESTPHAL VALEDICTORIAN 2005

Good evening Pastor Shimkus, Pastor Cordeiro, Mr, Uhlig, members of the board, Mr. Gundell, faculty and staff, family, and friends. First of all, I thank our wonderful teachers who filled our dusty minds with knowledge, even if most of us don't know when we will use trigonometry again. I thank all of our parents that have supported us in all our endeavors. Thank you to all of our friends who have supported us through all of our ups and downs throughout high school.

Today, we are all at a fork in the road. We can take the road less traveled, or we can take the safe, worn, tired, well-traveled road. Each road has its own merits, but if you want to lead "you must make the most

of yourself” as Ralph Waldo Emerson said and create your own road through life. Remember, it is your life; no one can make your decisions for you unless you allow them to. Your future is what you make of it. It is not your job to live the lives of others who may regret the decisions they made when they were young; all you can do is learn from their mistakes and pray not to repeat them. If you build your own path through life you are bound to make mistakes, but they will be your mistakes not just a repetition of other people’s mistakes. Always remember that a wrong path is not the most tragic problem ever, as long as you are honest with yourself and those around you about your mistakes. Euripides once said, “There is just one life for each of us, our own.” Choosing the path through life that is best for you is only possible if you are honest with yourself.

It does not matter if you were the brightest, most athletic, most popular or most nerdy kid in school as long as you have remained honest with yourself. People who pretend to be something they are not are not respected by the people around them, but the people who act true to themselves earn the respect of those around them even if the people around them do not always agree with them. Dr. Seuss put it this way, “Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don’t matter and those who matter don’t mind.” People should never be afraid to speak their feelings or ask the difficult questions because the people that really care for them and respect them will appreciate their honesty and their opinion.

The temptation to lose oneself and conform to the norm of society surrounds us all. Paul told the Romans in Romans chapter twelve verse two: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” It is expected that all of us will stumble at some point, but remember to learn from your own mistakes and the past mistakes of others. The mistakes you make will only make you stronger and make it easier to be your own person regardless of the pressures around you. Sometimes the mistakes you make will lead to changes in your life, some for the better, some for the worse.

John F. Kennedy once said, “Change is the law of life.” People are not able to stay three years old forever, even if some act it. Time and experience change our perspectives on life but they do not change the essence of who we are. As time goes by we will experience a full spectrum of emotions; from anxiety or grief to anticipation or elation, but our faith in God will never allow the ups and downs of life to dampen our self confidence or our spirits.

After tonight we will scatter, some of us opting to go to the mainland for college and others opting to stay closer to home. The opportunity to choose your destiny is before you today, you can choose the easy stress-free way or you can choose the grueling journey through the unknown. As long as you have full confidence in yourself through your faith in God, then you will be able to overcome any obstacle in your path.

REV. SHAWN HAZEL BACCALAUREATE 2006

The Power of Renewal: Ephesians 1

Who's in charge?

Intro: Croesus, King of Lydia, is dupped by the oracle of Delphi to attack the Persians and destroy an empire, his own.

Graduates—you are the leaders, this is your day, you are the ones in the know.

That's about to change—Who's in charge, where you go, what do you do about this or that problem...

Jesus is in charge—past, present and future; rules from the throne at the right hand.

How do you lead?

Three types of leadership—in front, behind, in charge of yourself.

Story: LOST TV program—a battle for leadership between Jack and Locke, and the aloneness of leadership.

You will find yourself alone AND find out what's in charge of you.

Without parents, without friends, what's in charge of you?

Jesus leads alone and went where we could not—to the cross.

Jesus leads from in front by going ahead of us to prepare a place for us.

Jesus leads from inside through His Word.

Pack your bags and lead the way!

When you find yourself alone and not in control use the tool of confession—not just for forgiveness but recognition that you don't have all the power, that your sin has isolated you and that God is the only one that can do something about it.

Jesus leads by going ahead? Question of the seventh graders—why was Jesus tempted?—beginning of His ministry, who would Jesus be? Jesus had his eyes on the goal of the cross knowing that His Father was preparing another throne next to Him—Ascension today. Who will you be? Find out by knowing who's in charge—Jesus.

Jesus leads from within. There is no grade for morality, there is no parent watching you, there is no final test except in heaven. How will you act now as future leaders? How will you lead now for the future?

CHELSEA de la CRUZ SALUTATORIAN 2006

Good evening Pastor Pooch, Mr. Mendiola, Mr. Helgeson, members of the board, faculty and staff, family, and friends.

Isaac Newton once said that the only reason he could see farther than others was because he stood on the shoulders of giants. On no other day than today do these words ring more true. The only reason we

have the potential to be great is because we've stood on each other's shoulders. We've helped each other work through problems, meet deadlines, study for tests – we've helped each other survive life these past few years. And by doing so, we've helped one another work towards greatness.

Psalm 145 verse 3 reads: "Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom." We must model ourselves after Christ. If He has a greatness that no one can comprehend, then how amazing is our Lord? I know that I will never be able to achieve His greatness, but striving for my own will be much easier knowing God is by my side, always willing to carry me on His shoulders so I am that much closer to my goal. Greatness, however, is more than just the aspirations of any one individual. Greatness is built upon a foundation, cemented with experiences and relationships.

Those individuals who have helped us students reach this lofty goal of graduation high school must be recognized and honored. Our parents and mentors who have nurtured and guided us have allowed us to stumble so that we could learn. They were always close enough to help us up and dust us off, when without them, we would have surely fallen and not been able to get back up. They've allowed us the opportunity to receive a good education provided by dedicated teachers and faculty.

Thank you to our homeroom teachers: Mr. Willweber, Mrs. Vasquez, Mrs. Woolery, and Mr. Woolery who have encouraged us endlessly, have celebrated with us during Spirit Week victories, read countless announcements, and who are also accomplishing something today as we, their students, graduate. Personally, I thank Mr. And Ms. Utsumi for all that they have done for me throughout my years of athletics and academics. They have helped me to be where I am today. Most importantly, I need to acknowledge my parents, Mom and Papa. They have supported me throughout all of my years of education, sports, clubs, and activities. I know I speak on behalf of my class when I say thank you to our parents. You taught us our ABC's and 123's, watched us as we went to school on our first day of kindergarten, woke up early to take us to school, supported us in our endeavors, watched out games, whether on a hot field or in a stifling gym, woke up on Saturday mornings to take us to car washed, bought the "after-game snacks," offered educational expertise on homework and tests, although we more than often didn't ask for it, and lent an ear when we wanted to share the astounding, life-changing drama and gossip we heard at school. Finally thank you parents, for letting us go. You have helped us to where we are today and now it's our time to take the next step on our own. Don't worry; we know you'll always support us when we need someone in our corner.

To quote Brian Wilson:

There's a time for joy,
A time for tears,
A time we'll treasure through the years.
We'll remember always
Graduation Day.

My fellow classmates, today is the time for joy and tears when we can remember all that we've experienced together and cherish these memories. Remember our first class experience together – our freshman excursion at Kualoa Park and the wide variety of peculiar bonding activities? And of course, what Lutheran High School student

could ever forget his/her car wash? Whether it was mega, athletic, class, or Yu'ukikai, it was definitely memorable. Plus, our Spirit Week victories, let's count them: one as freshmen and both of our senior year spirit weeks! In addition to those, we have our Quiz Bowl victories! We have some amazingly talented people in our class who have demonstrated their abilities throughout their time at Lutheran. We overcame all of the drama and stumbling moments and have succeeded, united as a class, and have found greatness by working with one another.

True happiness comes from a healthy sense of self-approval, work and achievement. Get out there and take hold. There are no second chances, so grab on to the ladder and climb until you reach your happiness and your greatness. And if that ladder isn't high enough, then stand on the shoulders of your friends, your experience, your giants, and get there. I know you will, because I am definitely climbing towards my greatness. For the graduating seniors of Lutheran High School's Class of 2006, give yourself the encouragement you need to follow your bliss. Listen more than you speak. Respect your Lord and your elders. Mind your manners, say your prayers, and above all, live a life that brings true happiness to you and God. Thank you to everyone and congratulations to the class of 2006!

CHELSEA OKAMOTO VALEDICTORIAN 2006

Good Evening Pastor Pooch, Mr. Mediola, Mr. Helgeson, members of the Board, Mr. Gundell, faculty and staff, family and friends.

On behalf of the senior class, thank you to the Board for arming us with the education needed to move forward in life. Thank you to our teachers for not only filling our minds with knowledge, but enriching us with life-long wisdom and irreplaceable memories. Also, thank you to our family and friends for the laughter and tears we've shared and for their guidance, prayers, and support through the best and the worst of times.

The past four years have been quite a hike. We started at the base of the mountain as freshmen. Unknown territory lay before us, yet we ventured into the terrain, experiencing the "jungle" of high school. We discovered the "High School Unwritten Code". We learned to avoid the upperclassmen. We had difficulty with the block schedule, and learned which classes we could and could not fall asleep in. As time passed, and our trek continued, we quickly grew more comfortable with our surroundings; however, we also suffered setbacks and disappointments along the way. Tonight marks the summit of our ascent. It commemorates the pinnacle of our high school career. However, this great feat would not have been made possible without cast amounts of help. Our parents and relatives, classmates and friends, teachers, church members, pastors, and other have all played a part in our successful journey. They've all helped us towards our goal, and sometimes even carried us when our legs have forgotten how to walk. For this, we are truly grateful. Yet, the most vital source of strength received is from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Second Chronicles 16:9 reads, "For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him." As we continue to have faith in Christ, our setbacks and disappointments can be overcome. We must persevere through all the trials for they are placed for a purpose: to strengthen our testimonies

and faith and to build character. With Christ, we can rise above these trials and tribulations.

As we look to the future, there will be many more mountains, some bigger than others, yet all mountains we must climb. Most of us will be attending college after this summer. This is another mountain we will face. We are again starting at the base of the mountain as freshmen, but this time we are armed with knowledge and enduing memories gained from high school. A quote I found, the author unknown, reads, "Everyone has their own private Mount Everest they were placed on earth to climb." As we look toward the long journey ahead, we know there is opposition in all things; adversity will be encountered as we continue on our journey. Helen Keller stated, "All the world is full of suffering. It is also full of overcoming." While we are again climbing, we will stumble upon sharp rocks, meet freezing winds, and be eye to eye with danger. But we know that we will once again have vast amounts of help. The guidance, prayers, support, and the strength of Christ will carry us through our times of need.

Graduates, our time together is drawing to a close. We may stay near and dear to each other as we are now. For some of us, these are our final moments together. Whatever the case, we've overcome a mountain together, arm in arm with each other. And while we blaze our different paths to the future, we always have a similar mountain to our backs. To the class of 2006, you've made these four years the best of times. I am forever grateful for the memories we've shared. I wish all of you the best of luck as we move forward on our journeys, whatever path you may choose. I pray that Christ will give us continued strength and renewal. Our class verse, Isaiah 40:31, states, "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." To the graduating class, take a look at your feet. In a lifetime, the average human walks the equivalent of twice around the earth. We have a long road ahead, and I pray that you will have the necessary hope and power to walk and climb over any adversity you encounter. And I hope that you will have the motivation to walk around the earth more than five times. I wish you will have a wonderful life and remember to enjoy every moment of it. Once again, thank you everyone for your assistance on our climb. None of us would have reached the top without you. Thank you.

BRADY EVANS VALEDICTORIAN 2007

Good evening Pastor Hazel, Mrs. Keen, Mr. Uhlig, members of the board, Mr. Gundell, faculty and staff, family, and friends; thank you for all you have done for us. Without you our high school education would've probably consisted of us being taught by a hobo with one eye named Larry. But seriously, thank you! I look around out at our graduating class of 2007 in full cap and gown regalia, and it's kind of shocking. I mean, it seems not too long ago that we had all just met each other the first day of our freshmen year. Some of us were excited, some of us were nervous and some of us were dreading all the homework that we were going to get! Well, we all got through that first

day, and soon before we knew it, we had gotten past our first semester, then our first year,, then our second and our third, and soon senior year had arrived, and now it's time to graduate! Soon we'll be out and about in the world; how scary is that?! For the moment, let's remember the good ole' times from the past four years.

If you've been with our class through our high school career you've probably noticed a distinct aura of apathy. We pride ourselves on it actually. I think it's because it gives us a sort of "cool" or "different" identify than the rest of the classes. But where does this attitude come from? Over the years we we've realized that it comes from a "lack" of things. Like a lack of Spirit Week victories, or a foreign exchange student in our junior year, a class T-shirt, or just a lack of classmates! But what we DO have is class unity. We're apathetic together, we win and fail together, we won Spirit Week last fall (that was pretty cool) as a class, we hang out together as one big group of friends! We're probably the largest non-exclusive clique in the school! Other schools may have a graduating class of 400 but we have a class of 22 well-connected, and very close seniors!

God teaches us to love each other, but to love each other it is important that we must first love ourselves. Mark Twain wrote, "The worst loneliness is not to be comfortable with yourself." Yourself, your being, is the only person, besides God, who will definitely be with you for the rest of your life. If you can't live with yourself your whole life will collapse. Self-esteem, love for others, and love for God fall along with it. God made each and every one of you, personally, it wasn't just nature, or a scientist in a lab that made you but God Himself. To hate yourself is to hate God and what He has given you. And don't think God hasn't given you anything. If you ever need reminding, just look at yourselves. You're living and existing aren't you? Every human can be thankful for the gift of life, the most basic and most important of gifts. God has given you a multitude of other gifts as well and over the past four years I've seen amazing gifts given to each and every one of my classmates: a witty personality, having a confident understanding in AP Calculus, creative problem solving, writing thorough and rather harsh movie reviews, the ability to solve a rubix cube in under a minute, coming up with ingenious methods to annoy Mr. Pelletier, or yes, even fashion sense. I just hope that you will realize just who gave you these gifts and that you'll use them, even just slightly, towards the being who gave them to you.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men." Hopefully someday we'll all be able to appreciate God's gifts fully.

Again, thank you to everyone who made our education possible: the board of directors, parents, friends, and of course the faculty and staff of LHS who stuck with us and put up with us for the past four years. If I were in one of your shoes I would've probably gone crazy and ran away to the mountains to just get away from children! You deserve a seven-figure salary for what you do! Just think, next year we'll be out of your hair and you'll have a new batch of kids to teach. You'll inform them on the correct method of synthetic division in Algebra II, explain the significance of all those toys in the hollowed out section of the tree in To Kill a Mockingbird in English 10, show how to properly care for self-caught (or bought) sea creatures in Marine Biology, and of course teach the way of the Lord in Christian Life.

Thank you.

REV. WILLIAM SHIMKUS BACCALAUREATE 2008

Follow Christ Mathew 20:28

Graduating Seniors of Lutheran High School; family and friends.

It's an exciting couple of weeks that lay ahead of you—very busy weeks with lots of things going on. It's exciting because you're about to pass an important milestone in life; one that you've been aiming at for a number of years. It's hectic because there's so much to do as you gather together with friends and loved ones to celebrate this event.

Whatever you're planning for the future; whatever you've accomplished in the past; graduation from high school has traditionally marked the boundary to adulthood. The future with all its possibilities lies ahead of you. And so it's traditional at bacculaureate and commencement addresses to focus on the future. And that's as it should be. There will be plenty of time in the years ahead to wax nostalgic over your years at Lutheran High. Now is the time to be excited about college and careers and all that lies ahead; to dream dreams.

With that in mind, I would like to turn your attention this afternoon to something said years ago by Golda Meir, the former prime minister of Israel. In her memoirs she wrote, It isn't really important to decide when you are very young and just exactly what you want to become when you grow up; it's much more important to decide on **the way you want to live**. If you are going to be honest with yourself and honest with your friends; if you are going to get involved in causes that are good for others not only for yourself. It seems to me that **that** is sufficient and maybe what you will be is only a matter of change." In other words, I would like to challenge you this afternoon, not to think of the future in terms of what kind of job you'll have or how much money you'll be making. Rather ask yourself, "What sort of person will I be?"

Now there are all sorts of clichés or platitudes that I could share with you at this point, but as a Christian pastor, the very best thing that I can do is point you to the example of Jesus Christ. Speaking to his disciples, he says in Matthew 20, verse 28: "Just as the Son of man did not come to **be served**, but to **serve**, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

At first glance, that doesn't sound very appealing - - being a servant, even to the point of willingly giving one's life for someone else. With so much of life ahead of you, it's hardly the sort of thing to which you graduates might be expected to aspire. Yet what Jesus was speaking of here is a style of living – a style of living that he exemplifies – which focused on the needs of others.

That way of thinking is not terribly popular today, to say the least. Our modern society at times seems to have raised selfishness to an art form. We demand our own rights, rather than care about those of other

people. We're urged to look out for "number one," to take care of ourselves before anyone or anything else. And as you prepare to enter society; as you settle-in to an occupation, into a community, you will face the same pressures; the same temptations.

This afternoon, having asked you to consider the sort of person you will choose to be, I would point you to the example of Jesus. The New Testament teaches that, though he had all the power and majesty of God himself, he set aside his divine prerogatives to become a real human being, born of poor parents. He spent the three years of his public ministry caring for the needs of others – healing the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting the troubled. Finally, we are told, he went all the way to death on the cross for us; that we might receive divine forgiveness. Jesus' life was **a life lived for others**.

And in so doing, he re-defined what it means to be truly successful. It has been said that life is like a pyramid, with the successful person moving toward the top, where there are more people below them and fewer equals and superiors above them. Yet Jesus takes the pyramid and turns it upside down. In his eyes the truly successful person is still at the point, but the point is at the bottom. The closer you get to it, the heavier the burden and the more people must be carried in love. Jesus calls us to climb – not up to the advantages of rule – but down to the responsibilities of service.

To do that, you'll need some help. So let me encourage you to continue on a journey that you may have begun at home when you were very young; or which may have begun as recently as your first class here at Lutheran High. Continue the journey of faith. Continue to grow in your knowledge of God's Word. Continue to learn more of Jesus Christ. As you travel on your journey through life he promises to travel with you, right by your side every step of the way. You can always depend upon his support, his forgiveness, his love for you.

Back when I was in high school, our generation was challenged by the words of President John F. Kennedy's first inaugural address: "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

That challenge is just as relevant today. And this afternoon I address it to you. What sort of people will you choose to be? Will you live only for yourself or will you be concerned about the needs of others? Will you make your life's goal the accumulation of things or will you use the resources and talent at your disposal to help those who are in need? Will your compassion extend only to your immediate family and friends or will it reach to others?

True greatness is to be found in service. You may not be able to change the world. But you can change things in that corner of the world in which you live. What sort of person will **you** be?

Amen.

Good evening Pastor Mueller, Mr. Lehmann, Mr. Evensen, members of the Board, Mr. Gundell, faculty and staff, family, and friends.

At this enormous turning point in our lives, we find ourselves looking back on some of our greatest achievements and regrets. We wish we could turn back the clock and right our wrongs, take the opportunities that were turned down, or appreciate what we had before it was lost. We suddenly wonder if there was more we could have done to change where we are in life for the better and consider what other victories we may have achieved, had we simply done our best instead of having aimed for nothing more than the minimum requirements. But tonight is not a night of reflection on all of our "what ifs." Tonight, let us celebrate what we have achieved, and let us look forward to the bright futures that await us all.

To our parents, who have helped to bring us this far, tonight marks our release from the security of high school and, in due time for some of us, the comforts of living under your wing. You have spent the past eighteen years of our lives raising us to be ready to enter this new phase: the phase of adulthood. Take a look at us, whom you have raised to become fine men or women sitting here upon this stage, and think back to when you first brought us home and prepared for the long haul. The time you spent reading to us, teaching us to write our names, showing us how to tie our shoelaces, demonstrating the proper way to ride a bike, or even share with our playmate, have paid off; the immeasurable love and guidance you have given us throughout your lives have helped us become who we are today. You have stood by us, even when we were not so easy to love. And above all, you have given us a wonderful gift, the gift of being able to earn an invaluable secondary education from a Christian school. As you watch us cross this stage to receive our diplomas, be proud of yourselves.

To our teachers, who second to our parents have dealt with our disobedience and apathy, tonight marks our release from the comforts of your instruction and guidance. You have spent the past four years encouraging us to think critically, speak with confidence, and grow in our faith. And while there were moments when we frustrated you to no end, such as when we severely botched a Chemistry experiment, royally butchered an English essay, or constantly failed to use the backboard in a basketball scrimmage in P.E., you never gave up on us. Instead, you worked harder, in order to ensure our understanding of the material and concepts presented to us. What you have taught us about the world will be put to the test as we apply each lesson in our lives. When there is a question to be asked, we will speak up; when there are answers to be found, we will search for them. You have shown us Christ's love through your kindness, patience, and concern. For all that you have done and continue to do, we are and will forever remain very grateful. As it hits you that this class is FINALLY leaving Lutheran High, take a moment to be happy with all twenty-nine of your finished projects.

To our friends joining us, who have accepted us as we are, tonight we look forward to strengthening the friendships we have established as we grow and mature in our relationships with one another, as our priorities change, and as we begin to live as the grown-ups we never imagined we'd so soon become. You have laughed with us, seen us at our worst and did not turn away, and blessed us with your presence over the years. Though we may go our separate ways in a couple months, the priceless moments we have together will always be

cherished. Look back on all of the fond memories, and remember that this night does not mark the end of an era; rather, tonight marks the start of new beginnings.

And finally, here's to each other, Class of 2008. Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 9:24, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize." We ran to this goal at full speed and now we're here, at the finish line and about to receive our prize for our academic efforts. Remember as freshmen, how we wondered when this day would come? At the time, our graduation seemed so far off. And now, we find ourselves looking at the calendars, wondering where all of that time went. In the blink of an eye, we have survived countless classes together, won nearly every Spirit Week over the past four years, dominated Homecoming Week with our unbeatable cheers, and, as much as some of us hate to admit it, grown to love being the company of one another. Wherever you go, continue to run toward the goals you have set for yourselves, and, evermore important, keep your minds focused on God. He brought you this far and never let you fall; trust Him as you tackle the challenges life will undoubtedly bring you. And as we walk out of those doors with our diplomas in hand, remember to be proud of your achievements, appreciative of loved ones, and ready to move on to all that lies ahead.

At this enormous turning point in our lives, let us move past our regrets, and instead strive to accomplish nothing but the best in all we do. Let nothing hold you back from achieving what you want most. We can do anything through Him who gives us strength.

Thank you.

MELISSA ANDRES VALEDICTORIAN 2008

Good evening Pastor Mueller, Mr. Lehmann, Mr. Evensen, members of the Board, Mr. Gundell, faculty and staff, family and friends. On behalf of the class of 2008, I thank the Board for the opportunities and education made available to us while at Lutheran High School. Thank you teachers, for your time and dedication in preparing us for life outside of the classroom. The countless hours you have spent on our behalf over the past four years are a testimony of your commitment to education. Thank you for encouraging us to pursue our goals. Thank you parents, for treating us to an education and for the values you have instilled in us. Although we are moving out into the big world, you will always remain close to us wherever we go. Thank you for inspiring us and challenging us to better ourselves, and thank you for the support and the correction along the way. Your selflessness is truly a blessing. Family and friends, thank you for the countless memories that make life all the more enjoyable.

Fellow seniors, here we are. We're up on the stage with bright lights toasting us and a bunch of eyes peering at us. Those eyes are the eyes of the people who care for us and wish to celebrate this epic moment with us. There is only one Lutheran High School of Hawaii Class of 2008, and we're it. Soak it up. Breathe it in. We are finally here. We've navigated our way through the little world known as high school and accumulated oodles of memories over the past four years, such as the boys being undefeated all four years in the tug-o-war. Nice job, guys. Then there are memories from proms, talent shows, and homecomings.

Each of these and more has helped us grow as individuals and as a class.

While mixed feelings churn, we are taking another step forward in life whether we're ready for it or not. This fall, many, if not all of us, will be continuing our education in college either here in Hawaii or on the mainland. Proverbs 16:9 says that we can plan a course for ourselves, but the Lord determines our steps. Knowing this, be reassured and take comfort in knowing that God has a sure-fire plan for your future. Strive to make a difference and remember those who have impacted your life and helped shape who you have become. Robert Kennedy said, "Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation." So step out and leave a lasting impression as forthcoming leaders and role models. Don't give up and don't give in, because you can do anything you set out to do. Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Nothing is impossible with God, and through Him we can do anything. When we realized that God has no limits, we can achieve greater goals for God. In doing so, also remember this school year's theme from Joshua chapter 1; Be strong and courageous!

Class of 2008, President Kennedy so wisely said, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." Make sure you show those who you care for and who have helped you this far, that you are grateful, because none of us would be where we are now without them. As we go our separate ways and experience life, and as you head out into the real world to pursue your dreams, keep God at the head of your decisions. Stay safe as you travel, embrace those around you, and look to God in every aspect of your life. Thank you.

JAMES OKADA CO-VALEDICTORY 2009

Good evening, Pastor Gowen, Mr. Estorgio, Mr. Uhlig, members of the board, Mr. Gundell, faculty and staff, family and friends. On behalf of the class of 2009, I thank everyone who is here tonight for sharing this very special evening with us.

Many are quite amazed when they hear that our principal knows every student at our school, but the look of disbelief intensifies when I tell them that he even knows all the parents. Yes, indeed, Lutheran High is a small, private school. We do not have a large campus and luxurious facilities, but we do have the luxury of academic excellence and Christian teachings, the more significant richness that nurtures us. We have seen you, Mr. Gundell, teachers, and staff members, cleaning the campus, recycling the bottles and cans, driving the bus, washing cars, on the cross country fields, at the school functions, planning and organizing events, not only during school hours, but long after school and during weekends. You were always available when we needed help. No matter how busy you were, you always put us first. Titles and degrees do not stop our principal and teachers from doing the most menial tasks to

serve the school and students. Your selfless commitment we have seen over the years has truly been a spiritual inspiration, and it has taught us the importance of living our lives with passion and devotion, a value that no textbooks can teach us. We consider this a privilege given to the students of Lutheran High, and we thank you sincerely for this precious gift of guidance.

To my fellow graduates and valuable friends, it has been an honor to get to know each and every one of you. Although we are known at school as sleepers, noise makers, and day dreamers, our class has a broad range of skills and abilities. God gave special gifts and talents to each one of my classmates. Some are truly bright with visions to see things through, some can lead the pack, some have extraordinary artistic, musical and acting skills, some are great athletes, listeners and motivators, and some can make people happy by just being who they are. What makes them remarkable is that they know to use their gifts from God, not only for themselves, but for others. It was great having you all as my classmates and I thank you for the fond memories we made together, which I will hold close to my heart and cherish forever. Tonight, as our chapter of our high school concludes, our next chapter begins. We do not know what our next phase will bring, but let's not be afraid to fail as failure often can teach as valuable lessons. REMEMBER Psalm 23:4, WHICH READS: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." OUR LIVES MAY BE CHALLENGING AND ARDUOUS, but as long as we believe in God and His words, we know that He will guide and protect us.

To our parents, family members and friends who have mentored and supported us over the years, we are very grateful for all you have done for us. Without you, we will not be here receiving our diplomas tonight. Thank you for your love and for believing in us.

Class of 2009, this is the moment we all waited for, but it is also a start of another new journey IN our lives. We will be moving on to different paths, but let's grasp our future firmly with integrity and faith in God and his teachings. Congratulations, Class of 2009. Thank you.

REED SHINSATO CO-VALEDICTORY 2009

Good evening, Pastor Gowen, Mr. Estorgio, Mr. Uhlig, members of the board, Mr. Gundell, faculty and staff, family and friends. On behalf of the senior class, thank you for the commitment you have given to our educational experience; we have learned the value of hard work and dedication through your efforts. We especially owe a lot of gratitude to all the teachers who had dedicated their time to our development throughout high school. Thank you for helping us arrive at this incredible point in our lives.

Graduation marks the time of change for all: for the seniors, the teachers, and the parents.

Our freshman year, we started a new adventure. Whether meeting new friends or learning about Christianity, we were all excited and nervous about how we as individuals would develop in this unknown land we know as high school. We settled into a place that seemed strange and mysterious, and we gained valuable knowledge and

experience as our development advanced. And as we grew together, we became closer together.

As many of you already know, Lutheran High School is not the largest school in the state. The size of our school and the amount of students is usually less than a fourth of larger schools. Our size, however, has contributed to something else, which I feel gives Lutheran High School one of its best qualities. That is family. Family is defined in the dictionary as a group of people closely related by blood; it can, however, also be defined as a group of people who are generally not blood relations but who share common attitudes, interests, or goals and frequently, live together. Our class is a family. This may not have been true our freshman year, but through our struggles throughout high school, we have grown into a small family. We have lived together in our classes for four years now, and we have all strived to pass those classes. We often look to each other for help and support. Also like a family, each member contributes something of his or her own to the table. Whether it be sports, games, reading, music or art, all of us have an individual talent that adds to the uniqueness of the family. We have experienced our ups and downs as a family, and we know each other almost like brothers or sisters.

There is also another major contributing factor to family, and that is the parents. Without our parents constantly encouraging us and guiding us, many of us would have given up long ago. Sure, we all have faced our struggles with our parents, and the parents know it too. We have fought and argued, but only because they care; through the scolding we have grown and matured to the people we are today. Remember Exodus 20 verse 5, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you" because our parents are very important to us. Parents deserve respect for all the trouble we put them through. Parents, Thank you for your never ending support.

Now this is the hardest part for every family, the time when the children become adults. It's time for us to move on to a new part in our lives. This next step will determine the future that will set the stage for the rest of the long years we live on this planet. Some of the seniors are planning on leaving the island, and many of us are staying. Those leaving will face greater challenges than those staying, but they will be able to endure because they all are very hard working, and with faith in the Lord to be their guide through the struggles each will hopefully enjoy the upcoming years. For those staying on the island, we will probably see each other every so, often so don't be a stranger. But, regardless of where we are going, let's do what Proverbs 4 verse 26 says, "Make level paths for [our] feet and take only ways that are firm." Let us focus on our goals and follow the path that God has laid out for us because this will be the best path to our future. May the Lord continue to watch over us and guide us. "For this is God, our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even to death" (Pslam 48 yerse 14). We need to work hard and pay back our parents and teachers for all the trouble we caused them. Let's make them proud.

To all the seniors and my friends of the 2009 Graduating Class,
Thank you.

And to all those that came tonight,

May the Lord be with you and protect you forever and ever.
Thank you.

RON ESTORGIO COMMENCEMENT 2009

It's an honor to be with you this evening. Thank you for the invitation. Class of 2009, you were my first students when I taught biology at this school. I want to thank you for being such a good and perfect class. You were all such angels. (Yeah, right!)

Thank you for never talking while I taught. (Austin, Ronald)
Thank you for never turning the classroom into a WWF wrestling ring. (Kent, Alex)
Thank you for not sleeping through my lectures. (Max, Joey)
Thank you for not gagging and nearly throwing up during our frog and pig dissections. (Crystal, Kana)

But seriously, I want to thank each and every one of you graduating. Thank you for enriching my life with yours. In the two years I was with you, the memories and the stories you shared with me have truly been a blessing. I've even used some of your classroom antics as illustrations for my sermons at church. (Don't worry I used different names.)

Allow me to share one more story with you...

Growing up as a little boy, I've always been somewhat adventurous... I guess you could say dangerous. But mostly, just dumb.

As a kid, I used to climb to the tops of trees on the smallest of branches or hang off our 4th floor balcony railing, pretending to be Spiderman. We eventually had to move to a 1st floor apartment because of it. Once I even jumped from a three-story wall into snow. Unfortunately, I underestimate how much snow there really was, and today I still have a chipped tooth to remind me to never do that again.

When my family first came to the U.S., we lived with a family who owned a dairy farm. We helped them on the farm, like milking the cows, planting corn, and baling hay. Baling hay is when you harvest and shovel it into a machine, which compacts the hay into box-shaped bales.

In the fall, we would harvest and then stack all the bales of hay in the barn so the cows would have something to eat in the winter. These bales of hay would be stacked at different heights in the barn – 5ft, 10 ft, sometimes even as high as 40 ft!

The family had a little boy, who was also my age, named Conrad. He and I would go into the barn, gather up the loose hay on the floor, and make a big pile of hay. Then, we would climb up on the stacks and jump into the pile. Being kids, we dared each other to jump from higher and higher stacks.

So, I'd climb up one of the stacks and stand at the edge. Suddenly, that big soft pile of hay at the bottom wasn't so big anymore and it wasn't looking too soft either.

In my head there was a battle, a conflict of thoughts... jump? Don't jump? Jump? Don't jump? The longer I stood at the edge the more fear and doubt would slowly creep into my mind. I'd start to rationalize as to whether this was a good idea (which it wasn't!). But then for some reason (and don't really know why), I would jump. After my heart stopped leaping out my chest, I realized that I was still alive. *"Hmm, that wasn't so bad!"* and then I'd climb up the stacks again.

I tell you this story, because I want you remind of a very important truth – **Nothing happens if you don't risk.** What I mean by that is if you don't risk, then you never really live.

There was a man who saw people love each other, and he saw that love made strenuous demands on the lovers. He

saw that love required sacrifice. He saw that love produced arguments, jealousy, and sorrow. He decided that love cost too much. He decided not to diminish his life with love. He wouldn't risk it.

He saw people strive for goals. He saw men strive for success and women strive for high ideals. He saw that the striving was sometimes mixed with disappointment. He saw strong and committed men fail, and he saw weak, undeserving men succeed. He decided that it cost too much. He decided not to soil his life with striving. He wouldn't risk it.

He saw people serving others. He saw men give money to the poor and helpless. He saw that the more they served, the need grew. It didn't seem to end. He saw ungrateful receivers turn on their serving friends. He decided not to soil his life with serving. He wouldn't risk it.

When he died, he walked up to God and presented his life to him – undiminished, unmarred, unsoiled. The man was clean and untouched by the world and needs of others. He presented himself to God proudly saying, "Here is my life!"

And God said, "Life? What life?"

Many of you know that at one point in my life, I was this close to meeting God our maker. I once had a tumor wrapping around my heart, slowly squeezing life away. But, God saw it fit to heal me from cancer. He gave me another chance.

Mark Twain once said, "When you die, you'll be more disappointed in the things you didn't do, than the things you did do."

That statement is so true and I want to spare you the disappointment.

Now, I'm NOT telling you to do something crazy, like base jumping – where you jump off cliffs with only a few seconds to release your parachute. I'm NOT telling you to bungee jump off bridges with the hope that the bungee cord doesn't snap. I'm NOT saying that you should swim with Great White sharks without a cage around them. I'm NOT even telling you to jump from hay stacks.

But, I am telling you NOT to waste your life... don't waste your potential.

Ephesians 2:10 says, "We are God's handiwork [his master pieces], created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared *in advance* for us to do."

You see, this is not a call to risk in crazy things. It's a call to risk in areas that God has *already...in advance...* assigned for you to do. In His grace, he has equipped you with talents and gifts to take that risk. And in many cases, God does all prep work before you even risk. To risk for God is to have faith.

The world would be a different place if Noah never built an ark... if David didn't pick up stones and stand up to Goliath... if Peter never got out of the boat...if Harriet Tubman never escaped to the north...or if Rosa Park never got on the bus.

Sometimes people don't risk, because they need to know everything in advance. But, life doesn't work that way. Parents don't know all the costs and sacrifices before bringing children into the world. If they did, someone you may not have been here tonight.

God only requires that we take the first step. Take the first step into the Red Sea and see what the power of God does. Take the first

step of presenting your loaves of bread and fish to the Lord and watch Him multiply it.

Do you know what true failure is? It's not the end result of trying something new. The result could be bad or good. True failure is never trying.

Again, I'm not saying that you have to jump off haystacks or out of airplanes...drive race cars, or dive with man-eating sharks. But, I'm saying that...

There is life in our oceans yet to be studied...There are stars in space yet to be reached...There are ignorant minds that need someone to teach them.

There are disease that still need cures...There are starving nations that need food...Villages that need clean water...and children who need medicine to be flown in by plane.

There are victims crying out for justice...Freedom to be protected... and peace to be negotiated.

There are gadgets, gizmos, and watch-ma-call-its to be invented to save lives and our environment... There are meaningful stories that need to be written, acted, and directed to inspire others.

And, yes...there are still souls that need to hear the gospel of Christ, which brings salvation.

All of these require people who will live intentional lives...people who don't settle for the status quo, but reach higher. They need people who don't waste their time, but make the most of every opportunity. People who look beyond themselves, see past their own reflection, and see God's great potential for their life.

Class of 2009, I see great potential in you. The question is...do you see it in yourselves? Lutheran High School – its teachers, staff, and administrators have given you a great foundation to build upon...tools you need to succeed. You came to this school as little cubs and now you have grown into lions.

As your former teacher, let me just give you one more biology lesson – Lions are not meant to be caged. And as cheesy as it sounds, I pray that as you continue through life, whether in college or otherwise, may your roar be so loud that it's heard around the world. May God bless you all.

REV. MITCHELL GOWEN BACCALAUREATE 2010

(Opening lines might be missing.)

Kris Davis pushing match... Strength/power or intelligence – which wins?

I know you've heard a lot about sacrifice lately. My favorite kind of sacrifice is in baseball. There's a runner on 1st and no outs. You are up to a bat and your best hitter is on deck. The coach touches his nose, scratches his zipper, winks three times and brushes his arm- Which means you are to bunt. You know they will throw you out at first. You may not even try to run that fast. But your runner on 1st will get into scoring position- and it is your sacrifice that will enable that to happen. And best of all- it won't count against your batting average. It's a freebie.

And even though you won't get credit for winning the game- that honor will go to the guy who crosses homeplate- you know you made it happen. And let's face it- in a game where good players get a hit 2 out of 10 times- the bunt is a safe bet. But baseball may be the only place where sacrifice doesn't cost you anything. Everywhere else- if you make a sacrifice- it hurts.

A long time ago on an island not too far away, a great king sought to consolidate his power. His name was Kamehameha. On the Big Island, at the urging of his kahu-he built a giant heiau. One that would assure his success. But for it to work- one thing was still needed: a sacrifice. A human sacrifice. And the greater the sacrifice, the more power he believed he would gain.

There are two stories- both are almost identical- until the end. They are both about Kamehameha's cousin Keoua. Kamehameha invited his cousin to the heiau to discuss peace-0 but a battle ensued and Keoua and his men were killed. That part of the story is always the same. What differs is whether Keoua fought to the end with hopes of defeating Kamehameha or whether he allowed himself to be sacrificed for the sake of the kingdom.

You chose a great class verse: *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."*

But you ended one verse too soon- and I think I know why. The next verse says, *"Be not wise in your own eyes: fear the LORD, and turn away from evil."*

It's that part about "turning away from evil" that helped you decide to cut your verse off where you did. I know you weren't planning on anything cataclysmal- no Bonnie and Clyde style bank heists- but there are quite a few things high school and college students enjoy that do not fit into the category of evil- but are definitely on the "mom doesn't want me doing this list." And when you turn away from such things- you get labeled as someone who isn't very fun. Someone who doesn't know how to have a good time.

If you could of, you might have chosen Solomon's words as your class motto, *"eat, drink and be merry!"* And you would have chosen the passage from Ecclesiastes over Isaiah because Isaiah adds the words, *"for tomorrow we may die"*- and let's face it- that's a real downer.

Most if not all of you have chosen to go straight to college. You aren't going to pass go, collect \$200 and hope for a year filled with gaming, hanging at the beach and taking a break from 13+ years of non stop schooling. Being gluttons for punishment- you applied to and were accepted at colleges and universities all across America.

If you were smart- at least according to the economical prognosticators- you would have failed your senior year. That way you could stay in high school a few more years until the economic crisis passes. But it's probably too late for you to fail now- after all your parents have already rented out your room and your younger siblings have a going away party planned- all of which requires you to actually leave.

But it's not too late to put a plan together. One that accepts the reality of what is- but also makes sure your future- both short and long term- is a life worth living.

For the past 18 or 19 years, the world, your parents, your friends, the media and even your teachers have attempted- and in some cases succeeded – in shaping your world view. You may like to think you've made your own decisions, been captain of your own ship, master of your own destiny – but it's not true.

Your decision on dating, marriage, career, where you are going to live, where you are going to school next year – were all influenced by the world around you. You may not even know how they influenced you – but they did. Remember the pushing game? And I'm not saying this is a bad thing. It may not be. But you need to be aware that every second of every day – someone is trying to sell you something. The only question is – are you buying?

Bill Bright – the guy who started Campus Crusade for Christ – developed something called the Four Spiritual Laws. Law #1 is “God loves you and offers you a wonderful plan for your life.” Over the years I've had people tell me that God needs to leave them alone – no one – and they really mean no one including God – has any right to try and plan their life.

I really worry about such people – because they are not connected to reality. If they think they are living a “tabula rasa” life – a completely blank slate or etch a sketch that only they write on – they are mistaken. Watch TV? You're being influenced. Have a friend? You're being influenced. Go to school, read a book, walk through a museum, listen to music, surf the Internet, breathe? You are being influenced.

Jesus once said, “*You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.*” The problem is – especially in today's world – sometimes it isn't so easy to know the truth. And if you never find the truth – you will never be free. You may not be unhappy. But you will never be free.

Back to sacrifice for a minute. Jesus said, “No greater love hath any one than this – that he would lay down his life for his friends.”

In order to understand His words, you have to know what the purpose of your life is. The evolutionist, the secularist and even humanist would say that life is about what you make it to be about. You determine your purpose and then set about making it happen. There is no goal line, no prize or award because everyone is on an independent track. Truth is subjective and no one can decide it for you – which of course is a contradiction because by saying such a thing they deciding something for you which they said no one could do which would mean they are either “no one” or they are wrong....

The amazing thing to me is – such people are the first to expect us to take care of one another, to think of the environment first, to be ecologically minded, to value peace above all things. But why would you. If life is what you make it – if life has no purpose other than what you decide – there is a good chance you will choose to live a life that is all about you – at the expense of others – because everyone is responsible only for themselves. Dog eat dog, winner take all.

The Bible teaches something very different – but the confusion may come because most Christians and churches tend to live like the above. They say one thing on Sunday but the rest of the week they don't think a lot about Jesus because they are thinking mostly of themselves.

To which Jesus says, “*If you hold on to your life - you will lose it, it is only giving your life away that you will find it.*”

Back to Kamehameha for a minute. What do you think about Keoua? Do you think he came to conquer Kamehameha and become king – or did he accept that his death would bring peace to his people? The great Hawaiian historians either don't know or won't tell the truth and so we are left to wonder. One is noble – the other a little reckless.

I do know about another King. One who was willing to pay the price – going so far as to sacrifice Himself – to bring you peace. St Paul – realizing this sacrifice not only gives us purpose – but creates a purpose – said this, “*Look not only to your own interests, but also to the*

interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

When we say, "God so loved the world," it sounds pretty trite at times. We've heard it or said so often it has become a little empty – until we remember how He loved us – and why He loved us. And that should change some things in the way we live.

Before you tell God to leave you alone – you should know it's not just God who has a plan for your life. Everyone in the world does. But most of the world doesn't really care about you. The plan they have for your life is really more about them than it is you. Look deep into your boyfriend or girlfriend or parents or teachers eyes. Listen carefully to the commercials and song lyrics. Read the books carefully. Then ask "why are they saying what they are saying?" And be ready for the answers and also to make some changes when you realize they might be taking you a different direction than you should go.

God's plan for you is a little different. There really isn't anything you can give God. He doesn't need your money or your talent or your passion. He owns the universe – what does He need with your stuff?

And so when He asks for something – when He asks you to make a sacrifice – it isn't for him. It's always for you or your family or your friends or maybe just the world in general.

God says the purpose of this life is just a warm up for the life to come. This life is so you're ready for heaven. That's why all the stuff you have will go away some day. The only thing that is eternal – the only thing that is really worth something – is you. You aren't going to hear that message much in college – but I hope you might think about now and then.

There is a father who had a son who couldn't wait to join the military as soon as he graduated from High School. The military realized he was a bright kid and sent him to officer's school where he pinned on some railroad tracks before heading off to Iraq. One day he was out on patrol when his group came under enemy fire. He led his men – just as he had been trained to do. They all lived – but he died.

A friend of the father, after hearing about the tragedy, called and said, "I'm so sorry your son didn't go to college like my son – because then he would still be alive and on the road to success." The father laughed – as only one who truly understands what is important can. He said he didn't even try to respond because the woman would never get it. Her son would be a success. He would make lots of money and probably live a long life – filled with sacrifices of a very different kind. But her son, like his mother, had chosen to live a life without Jesus. And unless that changes – it doesn't really matter how long he lives or how much money he makes – when he dies that's it. They might name a building after him – but that seems pretty cheap.

The young man – even though he died far too early – tragically – gave his life to make a difference. And whether you agree or not about the cause he gave his life for – he believed. He gave his life for his country, for his friends, for freedom. He also believed in Jesus. Which means he found his life – the real one – the one that will never end and can never be taken away – even though he lost it. He knew His purpose and he lived it.

You have the same choice. You get to decide who you are going to listen to. Everyone is going to try and shape your life. Make sure you know who really loves you – and who just wants to use you for their own purposes. If you seek the truth – Jesus says you’ll find it. But you gotta search – it’s the only way. I pray you will find it – that your life will be filled with meaning and purpose – something you believe in so much that you can’t imagine living with out it – because that’s the kind of life that goes on forever – In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

LORIEN PELLETTIER SALUTATORIAN 2010

Good evening, Pastor Mueller, Mr. Uhlig, Mr. Gundell, Mr. Akina, members of the board, faculty and staff, parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, siblings, cousins, and friends. On behalf of the Class of 2010, I thank all of you for not only coming tonight but for supporting us throughout our four years of high school. Without all of your love, care, and dedication, we would not be standing, well mostly sitting, on this stage tonight. Even though we probably don’t tell you this enough, you have inspired us all, and we are truly grateful for your time and effort.

I feel confident in speaking for the class when I say that the past four years have been absolutely amazing. We have not only grown older, more mature, and wiser, but we have grown in friendships. If you, class, can remember, and if you, audience, heard anything about our freshman year, we were not exactly the friendliest group of people. You could feel the tension among the so-called “cliques” of the class, and the drama was nonstop. But now you can see that we, as a class, are much more loving, welcoming, and accepting of each other. We look out for each other, give advice, and correct each other according to God’s Word. We helped each other through parents’ deaths, family members’ illnesses, and personal obstacles. We have developed friendships that will last long past high school.

In addition to growing closer to our classmates, we have also grown closer to our teachers. Our class advisors, Mrs. Vasquez and Mrs. Ashcraft, have refused to give up on us. They have worked incredibly hard to make sure that we have matured into knowledgeable, polite, and God-fearing individuals. They have both attended all of the spiritual growth retreats, assisting us in our faith and personal obstacles and spending extra time outside of school with our crazy class. Mrs. Vasquez has spent tireless hours before, during, and after school, helping us revise papers, practice music for band and choir, and develop effective communication skills. She has always been there to talk to when we are stressed out from what we think are our “busy” schedules. As my Faith-to-Faith leader, Mrs. Vasquez has shown me to always rely on God and go to Him at all times. And Mrs. Ashcraft- as your first graduating high school class, we would like to say that we are honored to have had you as our advisor. Your guidance, understanding, and endless support have never ceased to inspire us. Weekly morning Bible studies have helped us grow closer to God and stronger in our faith. Numerous hours building the spring drama production’s set, giving input for English projects, and preparing fun activities during class have consumed a lot of your time. But as remarkable advisors, we know that you have enjoyed contributing to our success. Thank you so very much

for all that you helped us with these past four years and know that we will never forget your inspiring work.

In our last year of Christian Life class, we watched the movie *Amazing Grace*, an incredible story about a young British Parliament member, William Wilberforce, who recently came to believe in God. He saw no possible way of incorporating God into government but later realized that with the help of his supporters and, of course, God, he could abolish the British transatlantic slave trade. While Wilberforce was talking to his friend, William Pitt, who wished to become the Prime Minister, Wilberforce protested, saying, "No one of our age has ever taken power." Pitt replied, "Which is why we're too young to realize certain things are impossible. Which is why we will do them anyway." With support from family and friends, trust in our Lord, and hard work and dedication, we really can accomplish anything.

Knowing that, choosing a college to attend should not seem so nerve-racking, yet the decision still scares some of us. Recently, we have been helping each other with this challenging college decision process. Coming from someone who is undecided about her major and career, I can honestly say that these last few months have been almost unbearably tough. The reason that we have been able to survive these months is because of the same support system that Wilberforce had-- family, friends, and our Lord. Our class verse, Proverbs 3:5-6, instructs, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." If we let God take over and if we give all our worries to Him, He will take care of us. He loves us like no one else can, and He will make sure that we are safe. Matthew 28:20 promises, "Surely I am with you, to the very end of the age." These two verses are extremely comforting. College will be hard, there may be more drama, and we will have countless more personal obstacles, but as long as we know and trust that God is always with us, He will guide us through all of our difficulties. And when times are unbelievably good, we should never cease to praise our Lord who has blessed and will continue to bless us immensely.

So, as we enjoy our last minutes as high school students, remember, we will succeed if we let God guide us down the twisted and curvy, scary and unknown paths. We do not know where we are headed, but God sure does, and He will never leave us alone to face the hardships by ourselves. We really are too young to know what is impossible and what is not, so let's try what we want, and do what we want, while living according to God's will and giving Him the glory. It is never too late to change the future, and as an amazing class, let's make a positive impact on society and demonstrate what it means to be a Lutheran High School of Hawaii graduate. Wherever we end up, our high school memories will always be with us, our family and friend will always be with us, and our Lord will always be with us.

Thank you attain to all who have influenced us to become the wonderful young adults we are. Our appreciation is greater than we can say in words.

Congratulations, Class of 2010. Thank you.

MARI GIBO VALEDICTORIAN 2010

Good evening, Reverend Mueller, Mr. Uhlig, Mr. Gundell, Mr. Akina, members of the board, faculty and staff, family, and friends.

From day one of our high school careers, our destination has been this graduation night. We have come a long way since that first day of school. We have grown from underclassmen walking into the wrong classes, to upperclassmen directing new students to their correct classrooms.

Over the past four years, we have overcome obstacles in our lives and have had many triumphs. We have also accomplished many goals and tonight, we have come together to share one of our greatest achievements. However, we would not be here tonight without the support of our teachers, family members, friends, and others. There have been times in each of our lives when each one of us could have strayed from our paths to a great future, but is it because of you that we have not done so. We appreciate all that you have done for us.

Because of the lessons we have learned in school and from experiences in our own lives, we have matured and have gained brains full of knowledge. Sometimes, God taught us lessons through obstacles. For example, many times we have tried to make decisions without the input of our friends, family members, teachers, and most importantly, God. In doing so, our plans often failed. From

KELI'I AKINA GRADUATION ADDRESS 2010

(President/CEO, Youth for Christ Hawaii)

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, principal Gundell, Lutheran High board member Mr. Uhlig, Pastor Jeff Mueller, faculty, staff members, parents of Lutheran High, and most of all, members of the class of 2010.

My time is limited so I will get straight to the point. More significant, your time is limited. Once you turn your tassels and leave the auditorium today, you will graduate into a world radically different from that of your parents. Social science researchers tell us that four trends will greet you.

1.)Continuous and rapid change.

Technology, culture, media and all of society will change by quantum leaps at a nano-second pace. Whereas your parents may have 3-5 different jobs in their lifetime, you may switch jobs 20-25 times and change career fields at least a dozen times.

2.)Astronomically high cost of living, scarcity and low quality of life.

Expect, in your generation to see the widest gap ever between the haves and the have nots. Yours is the first American generation that can count on not being able to afford to live as well or own as much or provide for your children as well as your parents have.

3.)The end of the United States as the dominant global power of the world.

Just one indicator of this trend is the fact that today the United States owes more money to the nation of China than we do to anyone else. Ironically, our safest protection from communism is not nuclear weapons but the fact that China must help keep the U.S. strong just so that we can pay the interest on the loans we owe them.

4.)The end of Christianity as the basis for the majority view of culture.

The rise of other religions and secular atheism will reduce Christianity to merely one of a growing plurality of faiths and philosophies.

Now forgive me if these trends sound rather pessimistic on the day set aside to celebrate the launching of your future paths. I have had the opportunity to read the wonderful plans each one of you has for college education, vocational training and career entry.

Doing so reminded me of what the ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Zi said about the paths we choose in life. In the book entitled *Dao de Jing*, Lao Zi wrote: "The name that can be named is not the true name. The path that can be mapped out is not the true path." This wisdom tells us that, the moment we think we have a definite blue print or path for our lives, we can be sure of one thing, we are wrong.

Another Chinese philosopher, the venerable Confucius, gave the solution to this dilemma. He wrote, "It is not the path that makes the successful person, it is the successful person that makes the path." Here Confucius tells it as it is. We make our own future pathways. There are no excuses. It is not our past, although we have benefitted from it, nor our present circumstances, although they may offer advantage, but it is one's own self- the very person I am, the very person you are, who determines the future path.

When it comes to understanding ourselves, we can turn to the great western philosopher Socrates, who said the most important place to begin is to "...know thy self." His disciple Plato went so far as to say, "The unexamined life is not worth living." Throughout history the role of cultivating and developing one's self has made the key difference in separating the successful from the failed. This is why Shakespeare provides this counsel through Hamlet's uncle: "Above all else, to thine own self be true."

When I was a college student began to take seriously the task of cultivating my own self, I came across the words of Sir Francis Bacon the once High Chancellor of the Realm of Great Britain. Lord Bacon gave a powerful maxim for cultivating one's self to be successful. He wrote, "Reading makes a person broad, writing makes a person precise, speech makes a person ready."

On this day, which is truly the beginning of the rest of your education, I want to encourage you to pursue Lord Bacon's advice. First, read broadly. Become curious about everything in the world and study books from the past and present. Read everything from ancient history through science fiction. In so doing you will make your mind broad and capable of creating new ideas.

Secondly, write regularly...And with increasing skill. Never let a day pass in which you have failed to produce one completely perfect paragraph, written with clarity, style and creativity. Such writing will become a very powerful tool in training your mind to be precise, focused and powerful. The words of Voltaire have never been more true than they are today: "The pen is mightier than the sword."

Speak and speak well at every opportunity you can, even if it's simply to read your daily paragraph to friends and companions. Learn to use good grammar, new vocabulary and creative forms of expression to share your emotions and capture the hearts and minds of those who hear you.

The ancient book of Daniel in the Old Testament tells a story of four young students who asked God to give them the kinds of abilities, such as reading, writing and speaking, as I have just described. We are told that God so answered the request of these students that the king of

the land found them to be more excellent than all others their age in the entire kingdom. As a consequence they were raised to the highest levels of influence and leadership in the nation. They were successful persons but not merely because of what they had accomplished in education, career and wealth. Rather they were successful because they became true servants of all people.

Do you remember when I told you that you will be graduating into a world vastly different from that of your parents'? Well, that was also true for these four young men. First, their world was changing rapidly. Second, they lived in a time where there was a huge economic gap between the haves and the have nots. Third, their own nation Israel which once was the greatest power on earth had fallen to another power by whom they were held captive. Fourth, their world experienced a cultural shift from a belief in God to a denial of God and belief in many paths.

Since their world is so much like yours, I want to leave you with the advice which was given to them by the prophet Jeremiah in the 29th Chapter of his book. This was when their people were captured by the Babylonians. Jeremiah could have told them to weep and give up because they are powerless. He could have told them to eat, drink and be merry and forget their troubles, but instead he told them that God had raised them up for such a time as this. It was a time in which young people named Daniel, Shedrack, Michack, and Abednego, and Esther became heroes like lights shining in the darkness. God sent them into society with a totally new conception of what it is to be successful.

To be successful is to serve humankind. He told them: "Go into this nation and city to which I am sending you in exile, build farms, plant vineyards, establish businesses, marry off your son and daughters, participate fully in the city, becoming influential so that you will work for the peace and prosperity of the world into which I have sent you. For in this you will find success." Listen to that part again:

"...participate fully in the city, becoming influential so that you will work for the peace and the prosperity of the world into which I have sent you. For in this you will find success."

Success, then, is not about building one's own happiness, education, career, family, or wealth. Success is about serving others, influencing society, and making a difference to mankind. It's about caring for others and solving the problems of the world.

This is precisely the notion of success understood by a man named Hank Rogers who was an ordinary and unknown student when he attended the University of Hawaii. His interest was in computers and he eventually found a way to sell and market games. He would go to computer shows and look for new games and get the Japanese to finance them. One game he found had been invented by a Russian. The name of the game is Tetris. And if you don't know Hank Rogers' name, you do know Tetris, the computer game now played by more people on the planet than any other. Well, eventually Hank sold his Tetris company and walked away with \$54 million dollars of profit just for himself. He thought to himself, "Now I'm successful." So he planned out to go out and buy a Maserati, one of the world's most expensive cars. As he prepared to do so, he had a sudden heart attack and was rushed to the hospital. In the back of the ambulance, he realized that he had spent his whole life becoming successful, but within a few moments he could be dead and he wouldn't have been able to spend the money he had just made. At that moment, Hank made a decision. He decided

he would put all of his energy and focus on surviving. He would focus himself on living, but not just to go out and spend his money, but to give back to the world- to serve humankind.

Well, Hank did survive, and he formulated a new set of goals, a new understanding of success. He set for himself the following four goals to accomplish before he dies:

- 1) Eliminate Hawaii's dependence on fossil fuels.
- 2) End war throughout the world.
- 3) Reproduce human civilization to survive on another planet to prevent our species from being wiped out by an asteroid.
- 4) Discover what will happen at the end of the universe.

Well, Hank is making good on these goals. He gave a huge fortune to Blue Planet Foundation for the purpose of making Hawaii self-sustainable in terms of energy and he is working hard on his other goals. And yes, he went out and bought a new car – not a Maserati, but a Honda Prius hybrid –which gets 55 mpg.

Now, that's success, pursuing goals to serve mankind. That's what will free you and me from selfishness and give us true significance in life.

I'm grateful I know Hank Rogers, but I'm even more grateful I know another person whom I consider the most successful of all – Jesus of Nazareth.

It was Jesus who said, "To whom much has been given, much will be expected." You, the class of 2010 of Lutheran High, have all been given much. Now expect much from yourselves by choosing to serve mankind, which so desperately needs leaders – leaders who will bring hope and solutions to every area of life.

And to do this with true impact, continue to develop yourselves through education and public service. Set new goals that go beyond selfish dreams but become dreams to make this world a better place.

Now if you are serious about this, you may need to take a hard look at the path you are on. Keeping in mind Confucius' words that the successful person makes his own path, you may need to rest your path even this summer or fall. Why? Because if you are serious about making a difference in this world, you need to be serious about acquiring the education and credentials that will enable you to do so. The next ten years of your life need to be devoted to acquiring your credentials.

Don't listen to older people who tell you college education doesn't matter. Even if they were successful without college, and even if they love you. Because their story is different from yours. Their world was different. You need college and much more.

If you have not yet decided to get a bachelor's degree then plan to do so. Bottom line, whatever you plan to do without a bachelor's degree, it will be far greater and have more impact with one.

If you have decided to get a bachelor's degree, then plan to get a Masters or law school, medical school, MBA, PhD, or other professional degree after that.

If you are going to college in Hawaii then plan to transfer or go to graduate school at a more competitive institution on the mainland or in one of the great cities such as New York, Washington, DC, Chicago or Los Angeles. Someone trained four years in one of the great cities of America has huge advantages over someone who stays at home on an island.

If you gave up dreams of going to a Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford or other schools of exceptional distinction, then spend your freshman and sophomore year getting close to 4.0, and apply to transfer.

If you don't get in then, reapply for graduate school. Never give up your dream to go to a top name-brand school. Yes, there are stories of people who succeed without top name academic credentials, but research statistics show that going to a top school does make a difference. Look at the contenders for Hawaii's next governor. Duke Aiona earned a law degree on the mainland after college. Mufi Hannemann earned a business degree from Harvard University. And Neal Abercrombie earned a Ph.D., the highest academic degree possible. They have been trying to change the world. And even these degrees aren't enough.

What really matters is your heart. Lutheran High stems from rich Christian heritage. You are part of that faith tradition. The late Christian songwriter Keith Green, before his death, looked upon a suffering world and wrote these convicting words:

The world is sleeping in the dark
That the church just can't fight
Because we're asleep in the light.

Your education at Lutheran High has shown you the light. It's time to wake up.

Come, help change the world!

REV. MATTHEW HILPERT BACCALAUREATE 2011

Goal: That the graduates seek to live God's plan in their lives.

Dear graduating seniors of 2011, family and friends, dedicated faculty and staff of Lutheran High School. It is a great privilege to celebrate with you in anticipation of graduation later this week. For today we gather together to hear God's Word, offer prayers for guidance, and to give thanks to our Lord Jesus for bringing you this point in your lives. The passage from God's Word I chose for you on this special occasion are the words of encouragement he spoke to His people through His prophet Jeremiah. ***"For I know the plans I have for you, " declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11)*** It is my prayer that these words mean as much to you in your life as they have for me. For you see, it is strange that I stand before you this evening.

It was 20 years ago that I sat in the same place as you sit. I was graduating from a small Roman Catholic high school in Northern California. It had been 4 tough years. Although I enjoyed high school, it was an accomplishment that I was ready to move on from. My father as well, since school was fairly expensive. Tonight is probably a relief for your parents' finances as well. Following my graduation, I continued my job as a lifeguard then onto college where I would study either Marine Biology or Biochemistry. I had plans and knew I wanted to spend my life doing. There were many in my family, my church, and in my school who supported my decisions. Everyone had advice for me and encouragements, but they also stood behind me as I walked into the next stage in my life.

That fall I began my career at the University of California at Santa Cruz, not the Christian environment my father desired but when I

chose to become a Marine Biologist, there was no better place for me to be and I saw my future all falling into place. Training sea lions and dolphins, teaching SCUBA, spending my life in the ocean and surrounded by ocean life. But life doesn't always go according to plan.

I met my wonderful wife and we were married and my life changed. I went from Marine Biology, to managing K-Mart stores, then onto Genentech where I became a biochemical engineer. It was in a stable great paying job that gave me lots of free time to spend with my wife and to serve my church. I saw my future and it all was falling into place. But life doesn't always go according to plan.

Four years later, we heard the Lord's call to ministry. After much prayer and counsel, six months later we moved as far away from the ocean. Since following the Lord's call I have been blessed to serve churches in Missouri, Texas, Nevada, and today here on the beautiful island of Oahu. If you were to ask me if this is where I thought I would be at my high school graduation, I would never have imagined it. If you told my classmates that I am now a pastor in Hawaii, they would never have imagined it. I thought I knew where I would be and how My life would turn out, but I realize that God had greater and better plans for me. My plans changed several times over the past 20 years but the Lord's plans for me were always moving forward.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11) God spoke these words to the people of Israel to assure them of His plan in their 70 years of captivity in Babylon. Now, hopefully you don't look back at your years here at Lutheran High as captivity. OK, maybe a few of you. But that is what makes these words from our God so powerfully reassuring for each of you.

Each of you have accomplished an amazing feat, 13 years of focused academics. Your parents are proud. Your families are proud. Your teachers are proud. And I am sure that you have a good idea of where your life will lead next. My guess is that you've been receiving all kinds of advice. Whether to go to college or not to go to college. Whether to find a job or travel with family. Whether to stay on Oahu or move to the mainland. Everyone has your best interest at heart and wants to see you succeed in the path that seems best. But also remember that life doesn't always turn out the way we expect. Even if you are fairly certain about your life at this moment, you don't always know what tomorrow will bring. But there is someone who does. Someone who is in control of your future and mine. Someone who has plans for you. Plans for you to prosper and not fail, plans to give you hope and a future in His kingdom.

God has plans for each of you. Plans that began through your parents, then in Sunday school and preschool. Plans that continued through elementary and junior-high. Plans that have led you to this moment of graduation from Lutheran High School. And plans that will continue to unfold in your life through all of the redirections you will face. If there is one message that you can hear tonight is that God is in control and no matter how many directions your life might take, He has a plan for you.

Our Lord is a God of plans. God had a plan for Moses. He had a plan for Abraham. Our Lord had a plan for Isaac and Jacob. He had a plan for Noah, for Isaiah, for David, and for Jeremiah. He had plans for each of them as He does for you, that they would prosper and not be harmed, that they would have hope and a future. And His ultimate plan

for all of us was to send his Son Jesus. A plan that involved a miraculous birth, a perfect life, a death on a cross, and an empty tomb. It is all because of His plan for Jesus that each of us have been given a hope and a future of life in His kingdom that will never end.

Our Lord teaches us, ***“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? “Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” (Matthew 6:25-26)*** Life is more substantial than mere external things like food, drink, clothing, the college we’ve chosen, or the job that we have. These things are important but not the most important. Besides, our heavenly Father gives these things to us because of His great love for us. Are you not more valuable than birds whom the Father feeds? Are you not more precious to the Father than the flowers of the field, which He clothes in beautiful colors? Of course you are. Your Father will provide for all your needs so you can live out His plan for you.

So how do you know what God’s plans are for you? That’s a difficult question to answer when you’re young and still have much to learn about yourself. I have learned that often God’s plan is only perfectly clear as we look at events in hindsight. That’s why Jesus concludes this teaching by telling us to, ***“seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33)***

So wherever your future plans may take you, thrive to live according to God’s righteous. Strive to live by faith in His Son Jesus Christ. Strive to live with hope in His promise, ***“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)***

So where do you think you will be in 20 years? Maybe your life will be straight course to a single goal. But more than likely, your life will take a variety of twist and turns in different directions. Maybe you will be asked to give the baccalaureate to the graduating class of LHS 2031. I do know where your life will lead you on the various paths you will take, but I can assure you of the certainty of God’s promise for you and that He has a plan for you. He will bless you, He will prosper you, and He will give you hope and a future in Jesus name. Amen.

Now the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus unto life everlasting. Amen.

KYLE TSUBOTA SALUTATORIAN 2011

Good evening, Pastor Hazel, Mr. Evenesen, Mr. Gundell, Pastor Mackey, members of the board, faculty and staff, family and friends.

On behalf of the graduating class, thank you to the board, faculty, and staff of Lutheran High School for guiding us, supporting us, and even sometimes reprimanding us these past four years. Your leadership provided us with an environment that was inviting, educating and nurturing and we go forth this evening with the hope that we will make you proud of the young adults that you have molded us into.

To our parents, who sit here in Dillingham Hall, filled with pride, excitement and probably relief that we are graduating, thank you for your

unwavering patience as we grew to find out who we were and as we tested you with our fluctuating emotions and for not giving up hope on us when we spent endless nights on the phone chattering or on the computer playing games when we should have been studying for a test. Thank you for bringing us to this point of growth as the young adults that sit before you this evening.

Graduates of the Class of 2011, leading up to our journey here tonight, let us take a minute to reflect on the past four years with each other. When we came in freshman year as newly inaugurated teens with attitude, we tested the waters to see if we should be the cool kid, the class clown, the geeky intelligent one or just the "blend into the background kid". What we soon found out was that it didn't matter what kind of kid we chose to be, the school and the other students accepted us whatever way we wanted to be... provided that we were of good heart, intelligent mind and sound value. Our class was one of much diversity in personality, meaning we weren't really a very cohesive group. We differed so much in our likes and dislikes, but we always accepted each other and never fought over our differences. But once in a while, we would find a common goal as a class and work together as one to succeed. For example we pretty much never got a 100% participation on a Spirit Week day, we hardly won any Spirit Week events, but the one thing that did make us all pull together was the spirit week Tug of War! And as we pulled as one, we were successful. The fact that we could be so different and yet be so accepting of each other and overcome all our differences and pull together when we needed to, brings to mind 1John 5:5, which reads, "Who is that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God." This passage tells us that we can overcome any obstacle in our way because we have Jesus Christ with us, in our hearts, forever. So as we venture into our college lives and the years to come after, let us not forget that God is with us to guide us where ever we may go.

My fellow graduates, it is my hope that as we move forward, we will not forget each other... after all, remembering 18 names shouldn't be that hard. A few of us will stay home in Hawaii, some of us will travel to a neighbor island and some will venture as far as the mainland. When we do, I hope that we take with us a little bit of each other and that our memories of each other will be recalled by special moment or a special place. I thank all 18 of you for making these past four years great times filled with fun and laughter, and for your acceptance of each other's different personalities. I will miss walking through the hallways of Lutheran High, seeing every one of you as we headed to our classes for more education.

As we embark on our net new adventure, the one beyond the gates of Lutheran High School, we take with us all the lessons learned both in class and on the courtyard. Our teachers gave us the "book smarts" to build our educational foundations, which now lead us to seeking further knowledge in our new college careers. Our friendships gave us "street smarts" in building fellowship foundations, which we will build upon as we widen our circle of influences and friends. Our college experience will bring us newfound freedom and impending maturity to build our adult foundation upon. How exciting and scary it seems that we are getting older. May we continue to be the individuals that we are and may we continue to accept those with differences that will cross our paths along the way. May we understand that life is a tug of war and that we have to pull it all together sometimes to overcome, and we can

always overcome whatever obstacles stand in our way because we have Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, eternally in our hearts.

Thank you.

CALEB IGE VALEDICTORIAN 2011

Good evening, Pastor Hazel, Mr. Evensen, Mr. Gundell, Pastor Mackey, members of the board, faculty and staff, family, and friends. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to this graduating class of 2011. I realize that there have been challenges that students, faculty and administration have faced during these years, but through your patience, leadership, and God's grace you've helped us to stand together. Thank you for never giving up on us even though we gave you plenty of reasons to.

We have finally reached the end of high school and are ready to enter the world and experience what the future holds for us. Some of us have chosen to stay and others will leave this rock we call home. Even though some of us have chosen to leave we will always take a part of Lutheran High with us no matter where we are. A memory I will take with me is my first spirit wee as a freshman at Lutheran High. This was an especially memorable and embarrassing day because it is when I decided to climb a fence to retrieve a ball. I successfully recovered the ball but on the climb back over the fence I fell and broke my left arm. Four years have passed but this story still makes my classmates laugh. Another memory is of an indoor waterfall on the second floor during a torrential rainstorm. The school was flooding but our school was so dedicated to educating us that they decided to keep us prisoners instead of allowing us to go home early. Being held captive though has its benefits; it allowed us to create strong friendships and unforgettable memories. It will be sad to leave each other but we will always have the memories of the spirit weeks, the proms, winter balls, car washes, and intelligent conversations at lunch. Along with our memories we must also recollect what we have learned from all of our classes. The teachers have done what they can to prepare us for the future and now is the time when we show that their hard work was not in vain. All of the classes were important but we need to especially remember the lessons from Christian Life class. I know some of you thought that it was a painful class but the information we learned is invaluable.

Jeremiah 29:11 reads, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." In this verse God is encouraging the Israelites during a dark time in their lives. This is not a dark time for us but it is encouragement we need because many of us are probably still unsure about what we want to do with our lives. This verses ensures us that God is looking out for us and that He has a bright future planned for us. Dr. Seuss once wrote, "You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. You are the guy who'll decide where to go." It is our decision, but we are sinful, which means we don't always make the best decisions. We don't need to worry though because God will help lead us in the best direction and towards His goal for our lives. All we have to do is allow Him to guide us

and He will show us the way. God has great plans for our lives; He has given us the potential to do great things. Yes, we are known as being Listless and lethargic but each one of us possesses talents. Whether it is in sports, math, science, music, writing or being quick witted, we have been granted great gifts. We will soon be in the world, which means we cannot stay apathetic people we have come to be known as. So I encourage all of you to use the great talents and abilities God has blessed you with to honor Him and make a difference in this world. Also, do not be afraid of what the future may hold for God is with you and he will help guide you in life.

Thank you.

**PASTOR MACKAY HIRONAKA COMMENCEMENT
2011**

God is with You

Hebrews 13:5...never leave

Jer. 29:11 – PLANS

BIGGER (Is. 55)

God wants you to shine...

Parent vs. kid's...Illustration...My plans vs. Abby's plan

MORE DETAILED (Matt. 10:30)

Pluck eye brows...

John 16:33 – EXPECT HARDTIMES

Illustration...element of surprise

Psalms 46:1...HE IS STRENGTH AND ALWAYS THERE

Illustration...lifting at the Y 115 lbs... guy "I'm always here just ask"

REV. BILL CARNEY BACCALAUREATE 2012

Aloha to all...

I am so very blessed to be standing here this afternoon as the Baccalaureate Speaker. But here's the thing...

...Last week, Mr. Utsumi asked me if I would be the Speaker for the Graduation service...that the Seniors had voted me as their choice to speak. WOW! What an honor. I am so honored...and so humbled to be your Speaker. But here's the problem...everything I was going to say today..I need to say now at graduation.

SO...I thought about this 'problem'...And came up with a solution...I am not going to say ANOTHER WORD TODAY!

Now I know that many of you are probably ready to clap and say AMEN! But...I said I was not going to 'say another word'...but I didn't say I was not going to give you guys a message...

[...START MUSIC...SIT DOWN...AND SHOW SIGNS...]

CAMERON OKAMOTO SALUTATORIAN 2012

Good evening Pastor Carney, Ms. Utsumi, Mr. Rappeline, Ms. Adam, members of the board, faculty and staff, family and friends.

What brings us all together is the monumental accomplishment of 30 students. We know it as Graduation, a grand event at which we wear very fashionable clothing and hats and finally receive our long awaited diplomas. However, I think Wendy Priesnitz stated the truth when she said, "[...] there is no guarantee that the diploma signifies competence, knowledge or maturity." Obviously we worked hard through 4 years to receive it, but at the end of the day it is just another piece of paper. Right now, I would like to share some of the material we learned while in High School to prove we did not just waste our time here. We learned what an aqueduct is, what analogous colors are, countless properties, theorems and equations, what our rights and duties as a U.S. citizen are. We studied both evolution and creation and decided which one logically fits the data. We analyzed many books, possibly further than the original intent of the author, and many other concepts and facts. Yet compared to the next idea all of the previously mentioned are meaningless. We were taught appreciation. We studied the birth of America, what it meant to sign your name on that Declaration of Independence, and the ingenious government that was created for us. We studied the invasion of Normandy and were asked to imagine being a soldier, knowing our death was imminent, and yet fight for what we believe, for what we hold true, and lastly for people we do not even know; people like us. Mr. Rappeline, knowing we would be leaving very soon, told us, if there was just one thing he could help us learn, it would be appreciation, what it is, and how to better understand it. He told us it is not fancy words, but rather, a feeling. So I would like to follow in our pastor's footsteps by making the rest of this speech without words. Just kidding. Today, we have a lot to be grateful for and I will do my best to articulate, on behalf of the class of 2012, just what that is.

First, thank you Class for an awesome four years. We accomplished a lot together: winning four consecutive spirit weeks, throwing an awesome prom, making Mrs. Bland cry in our last homeroom, and slowing down to appreciate the elderly and sharing with them our loving spirits. None of these accomplishments would be possible without heeding to the teachings of our verse Ephesians 4:3, which reads, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bonds of peace." And through all these things, our class was unified, with one mind and one purpose.

Thank you friends, who, very well are part of our class, struggled with us, whether it be through 18 years or one day. Through your friendship, our lives were lit up and changed for the better.

Thank you teachers and faculty of Lutheran High School, for being patient and merciful. Thank you for always making time to help, whether it be reading our college essays, submitting a recommendation, easing our anxiety of what lies ahead, or staying after school so we can finish our papers that were due at 4 pm. Thank you for never giving up

on us, even when we procrastinated completing our homework or did not study for a test, and especially that one time we misplaced a gummy bear favor in the apple O's.

To our advisors, Mrs. Bland and Mr. Utsumi, thank you for all the advice, from the suggestion to "play in the freeway" to the never presented case that water starts wars. But all joking aside, thank you for your persistence in homeroom with a very difficult class and the tireless hours you spent on our class service days, prom, and today, our graduation, and everything else we do not know about; your work is much appreciated.

Parents, grandparents, siblings and family, thank you for your unending love, for washing our clothes, driving us everywhere, making or buying our lunches, supporting us in the things we do, and guiding us. Thank you for dealing with us for 17, 18, or 19 years and, in advance, the time to come.

Thank you for enabling us to receive an invaluable education, and, most of all, thank you for all you do despite the fact it remains unnoticed.

And finally we thank God we are here today, for surely, we would not be without his unconditional love and support. We thank Him for preserving our lives and for the path He set before us. We thank Him for sending His Son to die for us, as stated in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." We thank him for giving us a wonderful family, great teachers, awesome friends, and the best class ever.

Though it may be true that today we are receiving only a piece of paper, that does not prove competence, knowledge, or maturity, family and teachers I hope you are at ease knowing we did not totally zone out everything you said. To everybody here, we appreciate all you do for us and continue to do for us.

Thank you.

RANDON SERIKAWA VALEDICTORIAN 2012

Good evening, Pastor Carney, Ms. Utsumi, Mr. Rappelle, Ms. Adam, faculty, friends, and family. Thank you for being with us through every step of our lives. We owe you an unforgettable debt. Most of all we thank you for dealing with us throughout our journey and not giving up on us. We understand we can be a handful sometimes, with our teenage antics and what not, but you endured all of it. Your support, love, faithfulness, dedication, perseverance and teachings deserve a Nobel Prize. Most importantly thanks be to God, for the fact that we all are standing here tonight.

This year's senior class is like a puzzle. Each of its 30 pieces is unique and has its own shape. Yet at the same time the pieces are similar; for example, we each love God and we are all professional procrastinators. We are also distinct in our own ways: some of us reserved, others are outgoing, some are quirky, others are proper; we are athletes, artists, musicians, and so much more. Though some pieces may not fit perfectly, when combined into the puzzle, we are one, just like a family. We are the class of 2012. Our hard earned spirit week victories are a testament of that statement. Whenever spirit week would arrive nearly all of us would participate and encourage one another to do

so. Text message reminders would circulate every night. Each of us had our eyes on victory and as a result we have four spirit week victories under our belt. Our unity is shown in our support and concern for another, and heard when we sing happy birthday in homeroom. In an episode of Glee, Rachel Berry once said, "Being a part of something special makes you special." We are all a part of this puzzle not found anywhere else in the world.

It's amazing how God brought us together. Who would've thought that out of the seven billion people in the world he would select and guide the 30 of us to each other? That He would choose Lutheran High School to be where our paths would cross? Well, God works through people. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Through each other we have learned to trust, love, and without knowing it, have prepared one another for the future. For the past four years Lutheran High School has been home to countless unforgettable memories and trials, and under its roof we have watched each other's faith grow. It's been a difficult and enjoyable learning experience with one another. Everything we've been through, the memories we've made, the bonds we have had made this class special. So let us never forget the times we've shared together, and always hold in our hearts that we are the graduating class of 2012.

After tonight we will be taking our first few steps into the real world. But as we do so, we must remind ourselves that the same one who brought us together will always be with each of us and guide us throughout our lifelong journeys. Just as He planned for the 30 of us to come together, He has a plan for our future. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plan I have for you declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" As we begin our new paths, we must remember to hold our heads up high, faithful in the plan God has for us, never forgetting what has been done for us and that if not for everyone here, tonight may have not happened. Hopefully one day we will pay back what we owe everyone here. We will always remember what we've been through and the lessons we've learned. Though it seems like goodbye, it's not; instead it's until our paths cross again. It is not the end, but the start of a new beginning. Congratulations class of 2012. We did it!

TIEN NGUYEN SALUTATORIAN 2013

Good evening, Mr. Rappeline, Ms. Adam, Ms. Utsumi, Pastor Carney, members of the board, faculty, staff, family, and friends.

Why are we here?

What are the reasons for Graduation?

When I received the news that I was going to give a speech, I was terrified. I kept wondering what I should say? What do they want to hear? Then I went a little too far, to the point where I got stuck with one main idea: What is the purpose of life? I was in shock when I found out I had been listening to the answer for that question every day in homeroom. 1 Corinthians 10:31 reads, "So whether you eat or drink or

whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” We’ve been living, studying, and playing in the name of God for the past seventeen or eighteen years. Let’s look back at our high school career and see what have we done that glorifies His name.

Two years ago, I was the only international student in LHS. School was not my favorite place, because 90% of my classmates could not understand me. But now, when we look at each other, we all know what we’re laughing about. And that scares me sometimes. At first I couldn’t see what was so funny; still, I secretly formed a bond with these happiest people I know. That is you, all of you. His bond grew so strong that we were no longer afraid to express ourselves, and I was no longer ashamed of my weird accent. Those are the most important things in friendship: No fear and no fakeness. And because God is always around us, sometimes He challenged our friendship. We disagreed, we fought, and we didn’t talk; but we never broke up. We learned to accept and forgive each other. I will miss the time we shared lunches, and Dr. Lutz would walk by right after someone dropped their food on the floor. I remember procrastination was our habit, but we would always miraculously get the jobs done on time. I won’t forget how Pastor Carney held our attention in his class on those endless debates. And of course, FREE FOOD. I could go on about all these memories, but if I did I think I’d get some of us in trouble. I’ve learned from everyone in class that we are all special in our own ways. Some of us are talented artists. Some were born to play sports. Some are pastor wannabes. But all of us love math... by “all of us” I mean “I”. To all my fellow seniors, even though we’ve only been together for two years, even though we don’t speak the same language, nor share the same cultures, I will always remember you as my brothers and sisters in Christ.

I would not be giving a speech tonight if not for our wonderful teachers. They have taught us beyond what was in the text books. They have spent endless hours helping us when we were not in class. While everyone at school asked me “How did you get Honors English?”, there was always one person who never did, the teacher of that class, Mrs. Vasquez. You’re not only my English teacher, you also teach how to speak, how to sing, and how to present the speech that I am presenting right now. You have never given up on me and you make me feel better about myself. Thus, our teachers and staff are great examples of glorifying God’s name in whatever they do. And to all students, these teachers have become their parents because their work demonstrates their love for their students. Therefore, on behalf of the class of 2013, I send our great gratitude to our teachers; may God keep the teachers in his loving hands.

In an episode of M* A * S* H written by Dan Wilcox and Thad Mumford, a character states, “I don’t care how poor a man is; if he has family, he’s rich.” Based on this statement, I can claim the class of 2013 is very rich. The richness I’m talking about is the richness in love, in support, and in sacrifice. We’re here today thanks to our families. Family is a gift from God. In this life, there will be no one who will love you as much as family does, except for God. They have been excited for this graduation as much as the students have. Once again, thank you. I now ask for your permission to say thanks to my parents and all my Vietnamese relatives in our mother language. Con cam on ba me da sinh ra con, hai bac va cac anh chi da yeu thuong va day do con. Em cam on chi Uyen va anh Alex da tgay ba me cham soc cho em suot hai man qua. I love you guys with all my heart.

Lastly, let us give thanks to our Creator and Savior, He who loves us unconditionally and eternally. Why would someone take on the most humiliating punishment for someone else's sins? Only one explanation: LOVE. God has given us much to handle but He never asks for anything in return. Yet, we can always use his gifts to glorify him. Your lives are treasures from the Father so live them wisely, because whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, you're doing it under His name. From this day, in everything I do, I will remember this lesson as I remember the class of 2013, in which 23 people become one family, 23 minds share one spirit, and 23 lives glorify God. God bless you. Mahalo.

LYNSEY PELLETIER VALEDICTORIAN 2013

Good evening, Mr. Rappeline, Ms. Adam, Ms. Utsumi, Pastor Carney, members of the board, faculty and staff, family, and friends. Thank you for being here to celebrate the ending of a great, challenging, and monumental chapter of our lives. Your loving advice and unfailing support are essential contributors to our success these past four years. I am certain each one of us has caused difficulty along the way, but we appreciate your patience and consistent encouragement that have inspired us to persevere. Thank you, teachers, for your dedication to our education, especially when we were unmotivated or lethargic. At this time, I offer a special thank you to our former Business Office secretary, Mrs. Eddinger, or Miss Tinker to most of us, who has gone home to be with the Lord this past week. Let us not dwell on her passing but rejoice in her arrival in paradise, and remember her during this time of celebration.

One of my favorite quotes that I've memorized is "God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change... the Courage to change the things I can... and the Wisdom to know the difference." In our near futures, we will need to apply this quote to our lives, because I know it is something we lacked in our pasts. A great Bible verse that relates to "God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change..." is Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." We will experience trials of all sorts in the future whether they be with our grades or with personal relationships or persecution for our faith. God calls us to understand that **all** things will benefit us in some way, so we need to stay calm through times of hardship and remember he has a purpose for those hardships to shape us into stronger people. Another verse that applies to "the Courage to change the things I can..." portion of this quote is our class verse, Galatians 6:9: "Do not grow weary in doing good for at the proper time you will reap a harvest if you do not give up." We will need to be brave to continue to do what is good in God's sight, even when we may not enjoy the outcome. Although it will be incredibly difficult, and I can speak from personal experience with practicing patience, God promises that our diligence and courage will benefit our lives. When we see someone in need, someone who is lonely, or something unfair or unjust, God calls us to make a difference. We cannot sit back and choose to do nothing because that is the equivalent to promoting the problem. As Christians and children of God, we must proclaim what is right and serve others. Finally, through practicing these verses in our futures and learning from the mistakes in

our pasts, we will gain the wisdom necessary to differentiate between what we can and cannot change. Honestly, we will make mistakes, but it is imperative that we do not become discouraged by them. We must learn what we did wrong and accept that we cannot change what happened, but we also must find the courage to confront the consequences of our mistakes. By relying on God to grant us strength, we can gain the experience from which wisdom derives.

Whenever we feel an emptiness in our lives, we must turn to God. He will care for us, provide for us, and will love us no matter the mess we've made. God has blessed us in varying ways and will continue to bless us as long as we seek Him in all we do; so my prayer for each of you is that you do everything for the glory of God, because he deserves our praise and thanks. He is the reason we've made it through high school and are graduating, and anyone who can do that deserves all the praise in the world. So in all you do, glorify God and he will continue to richly bless your lives.

VENUSTO (JORDAN) ABELLARA 2014

Yuukikai Chapel Friday, May 16, 2014

Heeyy, wanna hear a joke? So two pretzels were walking down the street and one was assaulted.

Yeah, I'm supposed to have the funny-ish speech. But I really don't know how to be funny in a speech.

So, hello Lutherville of 2014, I am senior Venusto Abellera. It's hard to believe that 4 years of high school have already gone by for our seniors. In those four years we've learned and gained much more than an education and social interaction.

We've learned things about ourselves and we've learned to grow stronger.

This year I've been following these stories of superheroes and it made me think what they all have in common. What I realized was that they all fight for a better tomorrow.

Whether the fight is for hope or for justice, the one thing that was similar was that, in all their struggles, they never gave up.

No matter how hard the battle or how dark the times, they always pushed on and overcame adversity. In the real-world, we will all have times where it will be dark, times that will be hard, but we cannot give up. We all have to be our own superhero and keep up the fight, for a better tomorrow.

And we're not in it alone. From Psalm 23:4: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

ALEXAKAY CHO

2014

Yuukikai Chapel Friday, May 16, 2014

Four years ago, if you were to tell me that graduation was coming quicker than you think, I would have laughed. But standing here and knowing it's literally around the corner is kind of a scary thought.

Four years ago, I wanted to be done with high school and wanted to live in the real world, but knowing it's almost happening is nerve-wracking.

High School is a great place. You have the luxury of being almost an adult but still being able to act like a kid sometimes.

But that's not all. You get that, plus the opportunity to attend a small, Lutheran school where you can have a more personal relationship with fellow students and teachers.

You can feel loved and cared for. We take going to Lutheran for granted sometimes and think we just deserve it, but God gave us this blessing of being able to learn or teach in an environment where we can be proud to glorify and thank him for all he's done. An environment where we don't have to be afraid of what others think and where we can be like a family.

The teachers here at Lutheran teach the basic subjects, but they take it one step further. They teach life lessons. Lessons such as, though life may be tough, with the love and support of your family, friends, the faculty and staff of LHS, and God's grace, life will be better.

Another is to trust God in every rough time, thank Him in every high time, and call to him in every low time. Remember, He will never put you through something He can't get you out of as He said in 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Now with all that being said, these four years have come and gone, but with the lessons learned and the memories kept, life outside of Lutheran will be a lot easier.

To the faculty, thank you for the love and support you give even though we take it for granted sometimes. Thank you for dealing with us even when we can be a handful. Thank you for teaching and guiding us to do what is right in the eyes of God.

To my fellow seniors, thank you for making the past four years interesting and fun-filled. I know God has great plans for all of us.

To the underclassmen, thank you for a memorable school year. Have fun next year with whatever God has planned for you and for Lutheran. Don't forget to thank Him for blessing you with the opportunity to attend LHS and for giving you the chance to have one-on-one relationships with everyone.

TYLER YOUNG VALEDICTORIAN 2014

Col. Iverson, Mr. Morinaga, Miss Utsumi, Dr. Mannion, members of the board, faculty and staff, family and friends.

I remember the first day of my freshman year. I missed the actual first day of school because I was on a trip, so I was worried that the teachers wouldn't like me. However, my fears were swept away when I caught up with old friends and made new ones.

Now we're here. Time has gone so quickly. I can't believe it. We're ready to move on, to graduate into adulthood. And as we go our separate ways, I have a feeling all of us will excel in whatever we do.

I know our class is destined for greatness. We're going to reach for the sky, and go to infinity and beyond. Those who know what they're

doing with their lives are going to succeed, I'm sure. For those who don't know what their career choice is, don't worry, you'll find your way. "For I have plans for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Life is going to get difficult. Life isn't supposed to be easy. If your life is easy, then you're doing something wrong.

You aren't going to be successful by doing nothing. I have an uncle who is intelligent, charismatic, and hardworking. Everyone said he was going to be amazing one day. He's still waiting to be amazing.

You're going to have to work for whatever you do, no matter what. So don't give up when life challenges you. Work harder and persevere. Don't ever think you can't do something. Never give up.

As Richard Bach said, "Argue your limitations, and sure enough, they're yours." If you think you can't do something, you won't.

Be positive; don't worry, be happy. Do this and positive people will come to you. Always remember our class verse in hard times: "I can do all things through Him who gives me strength."

If you get overwhelmed with school and/or work, remember that God is always there. Remember Him during your highs and your lows.

As I sat in front of my computer not knowing what else to write, my dad came home and looked over my speech. He thought I should include some tools that can help you in life. Here's some advice my dad gave me on finding success:

(1) Ask people who you think are successful how they got there. These people could be your family, your teachers, your doctor, anyone. They will give you the best advice on achieving your goals.

(2) Get to know your professors and teachers. If you have professors or teachers that have office hours or stick around after class, talk to them. They can give good life lessons.

(3) Richard Bach said in his book *Illusions*: "The simplest questions are the most profound. 'Where are you from, and where are you going?'" Open with one of these two questions when you talk to your professor or teacher, or when you want to strike up a conversation with a random stranger. People love talking about themselves.

I will add a fourth thing to this list. Don't procrastinate. If I could change one thing in my entire high school career, I wouldn't have procrastinated. I absolutely hated the nights when I had to stay up until 1 or 3 a.m. or not sleep at all because I struggled to stay awake in all my classes.

I would very much like everyone to remember my advice, but if you forgot already, at least remember this: Thank God every day for everything He has given you. As one of our teachers always say to us, "Count your blessings every morning and be thankful for everything you have."

To this end, I would like to thank everyone for coming. Thank you to all my family in attendance, especially my mom, dad, and Spencer. You're the best family I could ever have.

Thank you to my teachers. You have taught me very well. No one held it against me that I wasn't there on the first day of school my freshman year.

And last, but most certainly not least, thank you to my classmates for making my experience here at LHS unique. I love each and every one of you.

DR. JOSEPH C. MANNION GRADUATION 2014

Class motto: I can do all things through Christ Jesus who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13) Class song: Oceans

Opening comments: Special mahalo's to Principal Daryl Utsumi for the honor of the invitation and to the class of '14 for allowing me to share this very special celebration with each of them.

Intro

1. I remember sailing in John Katt's Styrofoam Kool boat off the beach at Lanikai during my very first year of teaching at Lutheran High.

2. A gale blew up from nowhere and nearly capsized the boat; a short while later a Coastguard helicopter hovered over us and ordered us out of the water – there were sharks! To say I was frightened would be an understatement!!

3. I don't think it was purely coincidental that the powerful words to your class song, Oceans, encapsulated my fearful encounter off the beach at Lanikai that afternoon:

And I will call upon your name when oceans rise (God help me!)

Your sovereign hand will be my guide

Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me (my feet almost got bitten off)

My soul will rest in your embrace, and my faith will be made stronger

Transition

- Commencement is like that- beginning a journey into the great unknown and never knowing what to expect; no matter how we plan, our future remains full of unknowns
- Life has taught me that there are two ways we can choose to approach the future: fearful or fearless

Encounters of a fearful kind

1. My first encounter with fear: Mrs. Fisk and my first grade experience

2. Getting asked to leave class and go to the basement chapel and sit by myself (the old school equivalent of time out) because I was talking too loudly (can you believe that?)

3. Confessing to her and the class that I was afraid of the dark- as a result, to my eternal embarrassment, hearing raucous laughter and receiving little sympathy from my classmates

4. Mrs. Fisk taking the time to walk me downstairs to the darkened chapel and tell me "You never need fear the dark or anything for that matter because God is always with you"

5. She taught me many things, but these two I will never forget:

- a. God is always with you; I don't ever need to be afraid
- b. Teachers are loving and caring and critical to the development of children and youth (let's thank your teachers right now:
APPLAUD TEACHERS)

c. She's one of the key reasons why I became a teacher

Fears tonight?

1. Fear hangs around us, and I wonder what you may be afraid of this evening

2. Will his speech be too long? Will they read my name correctly? But seriously,

3. Graduates- what's next for me? What will life be like after Lutheran

High?

- a. How much education should I have? How expensive will it be? Will the investment be worth it?
- b. Can I really move out of the house and be independent?
- c. How will I measure success in my life? By how fat my bank account is or by how much I help and serve?
- d. It can be scary. Plans don't always work out the way we wanted them to.
 - i. I wanted to be a cowboy and look what happened to me

4. For Mom's and Dad's and Aunties and Uncles

- a. Time is passing by, our children are growing older and so are we
- b. What will our children do? What will they become in a 21st century world very different than the one in which we grew up
- c. Will they be safe? Will they choose wisely in marriage?
- d. Will my son or daughter always honor family?

5. There'll always be an unknown

- a. Like the song Oceans states, the "Great unknown where feet may fail."

BUT did you know...

1. BUT! The words "fear not" appear at least 365 times in scripture

- a. THAT fact tells me that God doesn't want us to go a single day without hearing his word of comfort. "Fear not!" He does not want us to ever be afraid
- b. Sharing my three favorite fear nots is most appropriate for tonight as you, graduates, begin a new journey with destinations still unknown
 - i. Fear not, for behold I tell you great tidings of great joy (Luke 2; the Christmas story)
 1. Christ walked among us to show us how to live and love each other
 - ii. Don't be afraid! I know you seek Jesus. But he isn't here; for he has risen from the dead! (Matthew 28:5-6)
 1. The Easter story, the guarantee of never having to fear death
 - iii. Fear not, for I shall be with you always, even unto the end of time (Matthew 28:20)
 1. The guarantee of never being alone nor having to face any fear alone

2. We can live our lives FEARLESS not fearful because God said FEAR NOT!

Closure

1. We KNOW this is true because St. Paul tells us (Romans 8:15) that God has adopted us to be his sons and daughters; he loves us as his own

- a. I knew that truth as a fact, but never really understood or felt the depth of God's love as His adopted son until I adopted my son- then I understood what adoption means and the great love behind it.

2. As your class song states,

- a. "Your grace- God's grace- abounds in deepest waters, where my feet fail and fear surrounds me, you've never failed and you won't start now"

3. So FEAR NOT!

- a. Your family loves and supports you
- b. Lutheran High loves and supports you
- c. And you will be able to do all the things through Christ Jesus who will give you strength and keep you fearless

Mahalo Nui Loa for inviting me; being with you tonight to celebrate this most special moment has been a gift and one of the greatest honors of my life. God bless and keep you!