2019-2020 Lower School Convocation Speech

Good morning. If you are new to St. Andrew’s or we haven’t met, I’m Mr. Sheppard and I’m the Head of School which means nothing other than I get to spend my days watching you and your teachers do amazing things.

Let me start by saying welcome to the official start of the new school year.

Wait a second you say, we’ve already had two days of classes. How can today be the “official” start? Well, as you can see some of us are wearing these silly robes for this special moment which let’s us celebrate the start of a new year. More importantly, it lets us take a moment to think about the adventures which await us over the next nine months and, as I experienced last year during my first year at St. Andrew’s, there are many adventures ahead. Of course, we’ll spend a lot of time studying math, science, history, languages, art, music and many other things, but even that time will be adventurous thanks to your remarkable teachers who will be there for you every step of the way.

We’ll put on plays and take field trips. We’ll have special visitors come to share with us some amazing things that help us learn even more. At the end of the year we’ll spend weeks preparing for the May Day celebration, hoping it won’t rain, so we can show your families how hard you’ve worked, probably leaving them with a happy tear in their eye because they are so proud of you. Each Friday we’ll gather right here for Big Chapel to sing songs that will become very familiar, celebrate birthdays, and remind ourselves how lucky we are to be a part of this community of Saints.

As we move forward, our fourth graders will lead the way, looking out for the younger students and modeling service and leadership whether it’s through safety patrol, serving as acolytes in Big Chapel, or showing us all how to wrap the May Pole. They’ll also model for all of us some very important values here at St. Andrew’s like kindness and our Honor Code.

If I’m really lucky, you might invite me to join in the fun and learn along with you by joining your morning circle or reading The Polar Express, Blueberries for Sal or any one of your favorite books to your class.

Based upon what I witnessed last year, I feel confident in saying that matter where our journey leads us, you have come to a special place where you will feel more love than at any other point in the many years to come in your lives.