

Good Morning, and happy mother's day!! For those who do not know me, my name is Grace Brandon I am currently a senior at Grosse Pointe South high school. I would just like to preface this speech with a fact about me, I am not a morning person. Ask anyone who has seen me when I wake up for school in the morning, it is not the most pleasant sight. (sorry mom) and yet here I am. With this You might be wondering right now, as I often do... "how is it then that for as long as I can remember I have woken up every Sunday morning and found myself here in this very building?". When I was young I would say something along the lines of "well my mom said I have to" or "all the cousins are doing it". But my reasons have changed, just as I have through the past years.

Growing up as a member of the Christ Church community, I have been blessed with a home away from home. I have been given a place where I am able to feel loved and cherished. And Where despite any craziness I may be feeling beyond these walls, I can feel at peace knowing I am in a safe space. I have grown here and have met people that I have made memories and lifelong bonds with. Over this past summer, I was so fortunate to be apart of a mission trip with a few of these amazing people, where we traveled to Italy discovering Rome Florence and Assisi. My J2A group (I guess we're called the old J2A now??) has seen me at my best and at some of my worst moments, and yet we *still* want to hang out with each other believe it or not. They have helped me through difficult times and moments in the past couple of years, and have supported me in the more exciting ones. (If I remember correctly they even urged me to take an Italian farm up on his offer to stay in Italy and rake hay for him ALL Year Long, instead of going off to college... I mean *that's* friendship right??). Saying that I consider them family at this point, would be an understatement.

Not only have I been blessed with my peers by my side through my years at Christ Church, but I have had a number of role models I have been lucky enough to look up too. My J2A leaders Susan Lamar and Aunt Laura, thank you for helping me to find myself through high school, and being there whenever I needed guidance. I have had My aunts and my uncles, and All of my cousins who I have grown up coming to Christ Church with, anticipating the mad house that would ensue every coffee hour when we took to Legard Hall, immediately following the services. And now, even though we are probably too old to play tag around the tables, I know they'll always catch me when I need them too. To my Situ, Evelyn Sanom, and my Gidu, Samuel Sanom: thank you for all of the love you have always given me, and thank you for giving me place that I can call a home away from home, where I know I will always be wanted and always be accepted. When I hear the bells ringing, I know a part of you will always live on here at Christ Church.

Christ Church has given me a community that is always on my side and that I will always make my way back too no matter where I go in the future.

This coming fall, I will be attending James Madison College at Michigan State University studying social relations and public policy along with comparative cultures and politics. I would like to thank my parents,

Katherine and Tim Brandon for their continuous love and support in all I have done in my life so far. You have both given me so much and I cannot thank you enough. Christ church and the community that stems from it has given me the basis to being someone who is strong, and who is able to stand up for what they believe in. Christ church has given me a confidence in myself to be the person i want to be. To go after my dreams, and still know everyone is rooting for me.

Christ Church is my rock, where I have made friends made memories and a community i can call home. And because of christ church, I've even began to enjoy the morning. Thank you.