At the very beginning of the week, Mr. Baker was able to introduce the visiting Austrians from Bogenhofen to us. He did that in an excellent format as he had all of the group come up on stage and then those who were serving as host and hostress introduced the visitor who was staying with them. After the introductions we all felt more like family and were excited that they had come all the way to America to spend some time with us.

Elaine Kamvazaana along with Mr. Boward at the organ, Molly Thompson, Joyce Yoon and Vanna Giddings led us in four numbers from the hymnal – Onward Christian Soldiers, Marching to Zion, A Quiet Place, and Give Me Jesus. We were blessed by the group singing and the skit that followed when Livvy Knott, Grace Coburn, and Aaron Keiser played out a part of the message for the week that is being called Awake. Livvy was playing the role of the evil forces in life while Aaron was playing the role of good forces. Grace did not know what to do--she was confused and torn. On the one hand her boyfriend was calling her to a party where his parents were not there and on the other hand, her conscience was telling her that was not the best plan.

Jessica Yoong read two texts: Genesis 5:24, “Enoch walked with God . . .” and Matthew 7:14, “But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” After Givan Hinds had our opening prayer, Gaby Hamilton brought us the thought for the morning. She asked us what it meant to walk with God? Because of her uncertainty, she asked her father and he suggested that she google it. In that process she learned to walk with God was traveling or advancing in a correct direction. The next question she had regarded the meaning of a spiritual walk. Once again, she googled the query and as it turned out, she determined that it refers to reconciliation to God. Gaby told the story of how a lady was driving to work one day and saw a vehicle coming toward her. In an effort to avoid a crash she swerved to her right into the ditch and immediately noticed that a telephone pole was directly in front of her. She let go of the steering wheel, lowered her head and prepared to die. Five seconds later she noticed that she was driving down the road perfectly. The lady was ecstatic that God had given her an extension of life. God does that for a reason. He has a work for you and me to do and He expects us to be used by Him to finish that work.

Gaby closed by identifying the seven steps for spiritual growth: (1) Read the Bible, (2) Personal Prayer, (3) Meditation, (4) Knowing God’s providence, (5) Allowing God to give you guidance, (6) Obedience to God’s leading, and (7) Godly associations. She reminded us that as we pray, participate and persevere, we will prepare our hearts for the second coming of Christ. She gave us the challenge to work toward that goal.

After a great song service led by Elaine and her crew on Tuesday, we had a continuing saga brought to us by Livvy, Grace and Aaron. On this occasion, Grace informed us that she nearly gave in to the urge to attend the party at her boyfriend’s house. She went on to say that something told her that she should not attend. The next day she found out that the house was raided by police and everyone who was at the party was taken into custody as a direct result of activities in which they were involved or simply because of association with those who were involved. As a result, the parents and guardians were called to the police station to come pick up their son/daughter. She was so happy that she had made a decision not to attend that party. As the episode concluded, she opened up her treasure chest and found in it a cross that was a reminder to her of her importance and beauty. She then knelt down and prayed that she was ready to allow God to lead in her life once again. She had scarcely arisen from her knees when her parents came in and announced that they had had enough of living together and they were in the process of divorcing. This now sets Grace in a real tailspin (to be continued).

After that Joses Ngugi had the Scripture reading from John 14:15-19 which says that God will send the Comforter and Simone Weithers had our prayer, Dillon Zimmerman opened up a bag and pulled out a bottle and asked someone in the back of the room to identify the bottle. Obed Galla correctly stated that it was Bullfrog sunscreen. That brought back all kinds of memories for Dillon who had sparingly used that sun screen at the fall picnic. Unfortunately the next day when he came to school, he was burnt and did not feel good. He realized that in just a few short hours he was scheduled to attend the SA campout and that would continue to present many additional and varied physical challenges. So, he had been given advice from friends, parents, and others who sincerely wanted the very best for him. In the world there are a variety of counselors available who will counsel you from everything to nothing–but always for a fee. When will we learn that God has a counseling service and it is free for the asking? In his presentation Dillon reminded us of the story of Joseph and how he relied on God for advice.

Worldly counsel is self-serving. As long as Satan can keep you in worldly counsel he will do that because he knows the end and the outcome. Worldly counsel would say “Go–do it your way!” That counsel is always for the here and now. When we listen to Godly counsel, it might take longer, seem harder and more difficult, seems not to work, but in the end you are better off. Often times in worldly counsel you will get a list of what to do and what not to do. With God, the answer is to have a relationship. Satan says you are the fault and that God is not perfect. Yet scripture does not bear that out! In I John 4:10, it exclaims “This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and
sent His son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” Dillon went on to say that “God wants you! Without you God is not complete.” Dillon concluded by reading Ezekiel 36:26, “And I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”

On Wednesday, after the time spent together in singing, the skit played out by Livvy, Grace and Aaron continued. On that day Grace simply poured out her heart to God and let Him know what she thought of the entire “mess.” She was very bitter, confused, and felt that life was quite ridiculous. She could not understand why she had been dealt these blows in spite of the efforts that she was making to turn it around. There were two students who had scripture reading for us that morning including Chelsey Coleman who read Jeremiah 17:14 and Julia Westfall who delivered Psalms 23:1-3. Jessica Yoong then had our prayer and held a paper heart in front of us for all to see. Methodically, she tore the heart in half from top to bottom. She then took some scotch tape and put it back together. However, even those who sat in the back realized that it was not as good as new. There was strong evidence of a scar.

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Jessica went on to cite the time when she was a little girl and went to the kitchen counter and stood on it so that she could reach a bowl at the very top. In the process, the bowl slipped out of her control and crashed to the floor breaking into a multitude of pieces. She reasoned that she could have taken the bowl and glued it together with super glue or some similar liquid, but it would always have that scar and besides that it would not really look very nice ever again. On another occasion she fell on the steps leading to her house and injured her forehead—which still retains the scar from that occasion. That emptiness that we feel when our heart breaks needs filling with something positive. Once we allow God into our lives, He will make the changes our heart breaks needs filling with something positive. Once we allow God into our lives, He will make the changes necessary for us to feel filled and complete. It is vital that we follow God’s bidding to heal those scars just as quickly as possible. When natural disaster strikes, we immediately begin reconstruction so that the new landscape will reflect it can be applied both in and out of school.

That is why we emphasize the importance of getting a broad education at the high school level. It is vital that students are encouraged to take all of the subjects that they possibly can at this level. In general, this is not the time nor the place to specialize. Once they graduate from high school, then they have the opportunity to take things that are specific to their chosen career. Until that time, they should be here to strengthen their weaknesses and study things that will enlarge and broaden their general education.

“The blessedness of life depends more upon its interests than upon its comforts.” – Anonymous

On May 13, each class will have their own regularly scheduled Class Devotions and meetings for the last time this year. However, there will be another time set aside just two weeks later on the 27th at 10 am in the morning when the junior class will meet to begin their planning for their senior class trip and other senior class activities.

The week of May 16-20 has been designated moratorium week. During this time there are a minimum of outside activities that occur to interrupt the routine academic schedule of the academy. No assembly is planned as we conclude our studies in preparation for final exams.

The annual constituency meeting is planned to occur on Monday, May 16, 5:30 - 8:00 pm. At this time reports will be given regarding the old year and visioning will take place that will launch the academy into the beginning of a new school year.

All choral groups will rehearse at the HPAC from 6:30 pm to 9:15 pm on Wednesday just preceding their spring concert on the 19th of May.

The spring concert will take place at the Howard Performing Arts Center beginning at 7:00 pm on Thursday, the 19th of May. This is the final concert of the year for orchestra, bells, band and all choral groups. It will also be the final concert for which Mr. Boward is responsible in his long 40-year career. Please plan to attend this festive occasion.

Some classes are prepared for a final class vespers time together on the 20th of May. We will try to give a complete schedule of all classes at the next printing of the AA Weekly.

The Sabbath that all look forward to each year is the SA week which concludes with a vespers and yearbook signing at 8:45 pm that evening. Please encourage your son or daughter to join in the festivities of the day.