

January 12, 2021

Good morning, Exeter.

I would like to take a few minutes this morning to speak about the events in Washington, D.C., this past week.

The events of last week and the actions that we witnessed are absolutely abhorrent and contrary to everything we believe in at Exeter. We are shocked, but realize that that word rings a bit hollow, because the signs were there, for all to see, warning us that something like this was possible.

Nevertheless, the utter lawlessness, the pervasive images and expressions of white supremacy, and of hatred of Jews, and the violent attacks on fellow human beings that resulted in death – all this is shocking, utterly appalling, and very difficult to process or comprehend. As is the behavior of our sitting president, behavior that encouraged a violent assault on our democracy. We are shaken not just by what happened, but by the implications for this country and our future.

We are encouraged to hear President-elect Biden say, “That is not America; that is not who we are.” But the problem is that the images we saw on TV are real, the hatred we saw exists, and we must confront that what we saw is part of who we are as a nation.

We must do all we can, as individuals, as a school, and in our respective communities, to change that.

We have committed ourselves this year to understanding and *acting* on what it means to be an anti-racist school. In the coming week, we will celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The events of the past week add urgency to our celebration of Dr. King’s legacy; to our acknowledgement that the hatred and oppression against which he fought, and which took his life, still exist today; and to our commitment at Exeter to becoming and being an anti-racist school.

As I deliver these remarks, we are spread across the globe. But I urge us all to come together, to support one another during this difficult period and in the weeks ahead, and to commit to the work that we are doing at Exeter to become an anti-racist, inclusive, equitable and just school and community, work that we do together every moment of every day.

Thank you.

Principal Rawson