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## Commencement 2020, ceremony in 2021, 6:30 PM Invocation

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From sea to shining sea and beyond .... welcome home the Illinois Wesleyan University Class of 2020 to recapture this special moment, your graduation.

With today's commencement ceremony, we reclaim for you a milestone of achievement from this exhausting year. Yet today, we recapture so much more than a ceremony. We celebrate your first homecoming as alumni. We celebrate your strength and your growth - both during our time at IWU and in the past year. We honor our deep and enduring friendships with this community of Titans, in this joyful spirited in-person space. We cherish the family, educators, mentors, and experiences that prepared us for tackling the world's biggest problems that we've faced this year -- the COVID-19 pandemic, racial injustice, the effects of global warming, and deep political divides, just to name a few. We recapture our call to leadership.

In recapturing this moment, we also reclaim the words that have dominated our lives. We recognize that we are all "rapidly evolving" -- our liberal arts foundation prepared us for the flexibility and agility required in today's world. We know that the "pivoting" required will be enduring as dismantle systems of oppression and as Amanda Gorman said, "The notion of what just is isn't always justice." We are proud that YOU are "unprecedented" in this unique point in time where your leadership is needed more than ever. These words have power that we can reclaim to represent the best of our character, rather than the challenges of our time.

As we celebrate today, we recommit to hope for the future. We channel the strengths of this place to rejuvenate our spirits. We return our vision of hope, strength, power, wisdom, justice, peace, and love. We bring our experiences, our communities, our knowledge and our wisdom to a world that we inspire and inspires us in return. We recapture, reclaim, rejuvenate, and reimagine our future together. Welcome home, Class of 2020.