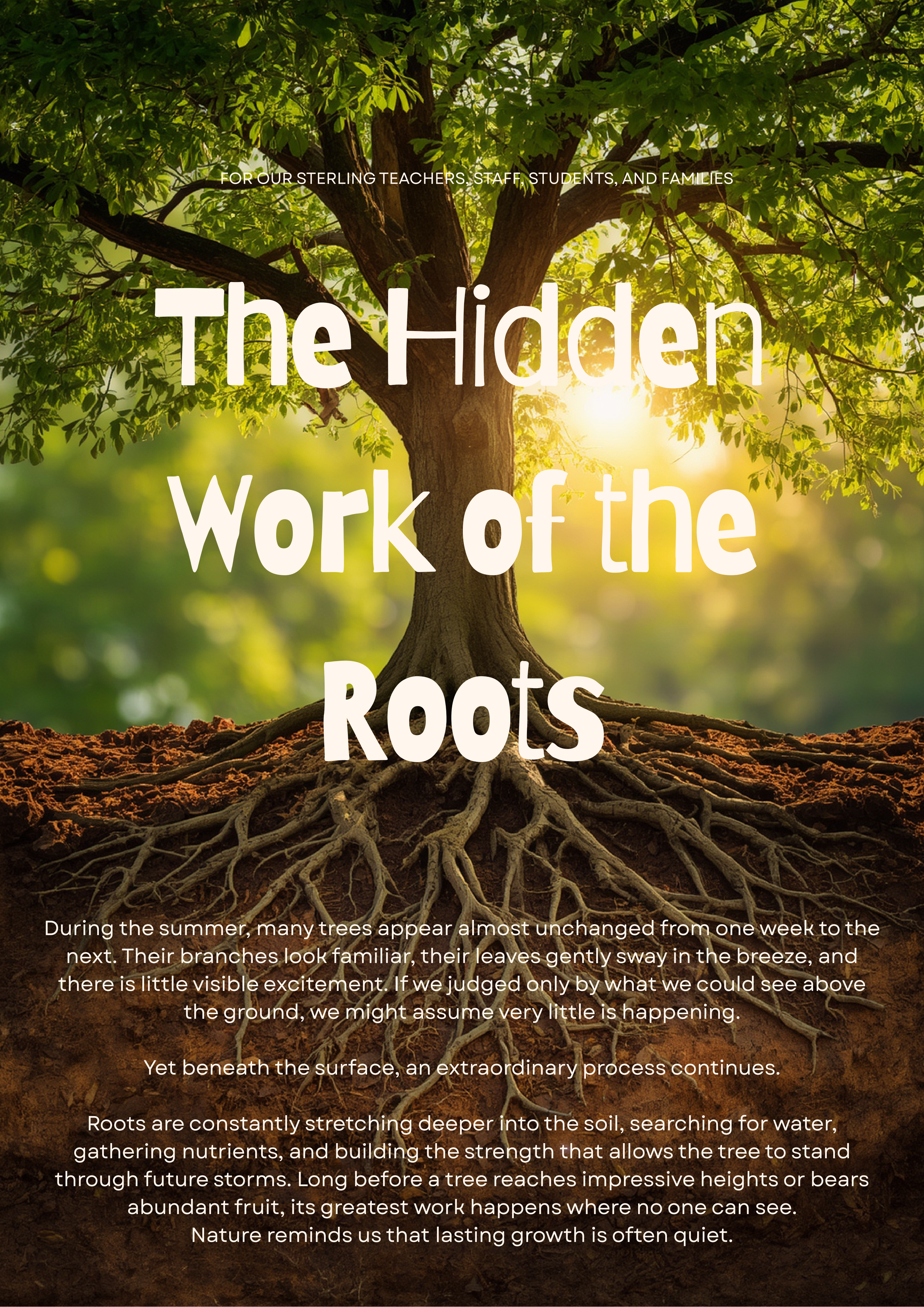


A large, mature tree with a thick trunk and sprawling branches. The roots are exposed and spread out over a mound of reddish-brown soil. Sunlight filters through the dense green foliage, creating a warm, golden glow. The background is a soft-focus green landscape.

FOR OUR STERLING TEACHERS, STAFF, STUDENTS, AND FAMILIES

The Hidden Work of the Roots

During the summer, many trees appear almost unchanged from one week to the next. Their branches look familiar, their leaves gently sway in the breeze, and there is little visible excitement. If we judged only by what we could see above the ground, we might assume very little is happening.

Yet beneath the surface, an extraordinary process continues.

Roots are constantly stretching deeper into the soil, searching for water, gathering nutrients, and building the strength that allows the tree to stand through future storms. Long before a tree reaches impressive heights or bears abundant fruit, its greatest work happens where no one can see.

Nature reminds us that lasting growth is often quiet.

Quiet Growth, Lasting Strength

We naturally celebrate visible accomplishments—a diploma earned, a championship won, a new skill mastered, or a goal achieved. Yet some of life's most meaningful growth happens in less noticeable ways: learning patience, rebuilding confidence, strengthening relationships, discovering purpose, or simply becoming a little kinder than we were yesterday.

These quiet moments rarely receive applause, but they often become the foundation for everything that follows.

The Bible offers a similar picture in Jeremiah 17:7–8:

"Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord... They will be like a tree planted by water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green."

Its strength does not come from favorable weather but from roots that reach a dependable source.

As our Sterling community continues through the summer months, each of us is growing in different ways. Students are discovering new interests and experiences. Teachers and staff are renewing their creativity and preparing for another year of serving. Families are making memories that often become the strongest roots of all.

Whether your growth feels exciting or almost invisible, trust that meaningful work is taking place beneath the surface.

The strongest lives are not built overnight. They are formed one quiet day, one faithful decision, and one steady step at a time.

May this summer continue to deepen the roots that will sustain us in every season ahead.
Sincerely,

Chaplain David Park

