

AUGUST 2026

CHAPLAIN'S LETTER

The Promise of the Morning

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FOR OUR STERLING TEACHERS, STAFF, STUDENTS, AND FAMILIES

A sunrise does not brighten the whole sky at once.

It begins quietly—a thin line of light appearing along the horizon. At first, the darkness may still seem stronger. The road ahead remains difficult to see, and the world has not yet fully awakened. But slowly and faithfully, the light spreads. Shapes become clearer, colors return, and what was hidden begins to take form.

Morning reminds us that new beginnings rarely arrive all at once. They unfold one moment, one decision, and one step at a time.

As August arrives, our Sterling community stands at the beginning of another school year. Classrooms are being prepared, schedules are taking shape, and hallways will soon be filled again with conversation, laughter, questions, and discovery.

For some, the beginning of school brings excitement. For others, it may bring uncertainty. A student may wonder whether new friendships will form or whether the work will feel too difficult. Teachers and staff may carry both hope and responsibility as they prepare to guide another group of students. Families may be adjusting to new routines, new expectations, and new stages in their children's lives.

We may not yet be able to see everything the coming year will hold. But we do not need to see the entire journey in order to take the first faithful step.

New Mercies for a New Year

The Bible offers this assurance in Lamentations 3:22–23:

Scripture — Lamentations 3:22–23

*“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.
They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.”*

These words were not written during an easy season. They were spoken in the midst of hardship and uncertainty. Yet even there, the writer recognized that God’s mercy had not disappeared. Each morning carried fresh evidence of God’s faithfulness.

That promise remains true for us.

A new school year does not require us to be perfect on the first day. Students do not need to have every answer. Teachers do not need to anticipate every challenge. Parents do not need to solve every problem before it appears.

We begin with what God has given us for today: enough grace to try, enough courage to learn, enough patience to listen, and enough light to take the next step.

This year, there will be moments of achievement worth celebrating. There may also be mistakes, disappointments, and unexpected changes. Yet even difficult moments can become places of growth. A wrong answer can lead to deeper understanding. A challenging conversation can lead to greater compassion. A setback can teach perseverance. A new beginning can remind us that our identity is not determined by one grade, one performance, or one difficult day.

Our deepest worth rests in the faithful love of God.

As we enter this new year together, may our classrooms be places where curiosity is welcomed, kindness is practiced, and every person is treated with dignity. May our teachers and staff be renewed in their calling. May our students discover not only what they are capable of doing, but also the kind of people they are becoming. May our families experience the strength that comes from encouraging one another through every season.

Like the morning light, growth may begin quietly. A new friendship, a courageous question, a patient response, or a small act of kindness may seem ordinary. Yet these simple moments can brighten an entire community.

My door remains open throughout the year. When you need a listening ear, encouragement, or a moment of prayer, I am here to walk alongside you.

We may not know everything that lies ahead, but we begin with hope. The morning has come, God's mercies are new, and a new journey is waiting to unfold.

May we step into this school year with faith, courage, and gratitude.

Sincerely,

Chaplain David Park