

January 20, 2025

# COMMUNIQUE

Monthly

## THIS EDITION

- ◆ “A Hope and a Future”
- ◆ “Thanksgiving”
- ◆ QuickBooks Charge
- ◆ Athletics
- ◆ Homecoming
- ◆ Open House
- ◆ Hearing/Vision
- ◆ Auction



@Romeo'sScenicViews



*“Inspiring students to impact the world for Jesus Christ through an excellent educational experience from a Biblical worldview.”*

# ADMINISTRATION

## “A HOPE AND A FUTURE”

Many Christian homes have art work that reference Jeremiah 29:11 *“For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the LORD, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a hope and a future.’”* What so many people do not know is the historical background around this promise. Israel is about to receive a divine spanking through Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian. Jerusalem and the temple are about to be leveled and the people deported to Babylon. Yet God promised a future and hope.

We ordered t-shirts early August for them to be available for back to school night. Administratively, we are optimistic about the future and want to instill optimism to our students and families. Instead of arriving in



August our shirts showed up early December. It was about the same time I sent out the State of the School letter. That is strong mixed messaging. And yet, this is the same pattern we see in Jeremiah 29:11. The present circumstances were not matching the message of hope. It was Jeremiah who wrote Lamentations where we draw this year's theme verse (3:21),

*“This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope.”* It continues, *“The Lord’s lovingkindness indeed never ceases, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is your faithfulness.”* Hope in the midst of difficulty.

I believe this for our school as well. I do believe the future is bright. I believe there is a future and a hope. I do not believe the school is closing, for there are too many good ways to restructure. There will be difficulty and we (administration & school board) are inviting you to share with us your thoughts as we seek the best path moving forward. I have no interest in dragging out uncertainty. I expect to have a plan to share by end of February, whatever that may be.

January 21 and February 4 are GCEA meetings where we (school board/administration) will share for 30 minutes some big picture principles and then it is listening to, answering, and clarifying concerns of our association members and school families. I have had very positive conversations with people who seek the welfare of our school. These conversations influence the direction we are headed. It is important to me and the school board to hear from you either by letter (email), phone call, or association meeting.

In John 15 we see that good branches are pruned to produce more fruit. Looking forward to what God will accomplish in this opportunity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Benjamin Williamson".

Benjamin Williamson  
GCS Administrator

A logo for GCEA Special Meetings. It features a circular emblem on the left with a profile of a person wearing a graduation cap, surrounded by the text "GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL" and "1974". To the right of the emblem, the letters "GCEA" are written in large, bold, blue font. Below "GCEA", the words "SPECIAL MEETINGS" are written in a smaller, bold, blue font. At the bottom, there are two white rectangular boxes with blue borders. The left box contains the text "JANUARY 21" and "6:30 PM" in bold black font. The right box contains the text "FEBRUARY 4" and "6:30 PM" in bold black font.

<b>JANUARY 21</b> <b>6:30 PM</b>	<b>FEBRUARY 4</b> <b>6:30 PM</b>
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# Thanksgiving Page

- ◆ Positive feedback to State of the School letter. We are looking forward to seeing as many people as possible at one of the special GCEA meetings, taking place on January 21 and February 4 at 6:30 pm.
- ◆ Sewer repairs made by volunteers that love GCS.
- ◆ \$40,000 year end gift!
- ◆ \$5,000 year end gift!
- ◆ UPDATE: The furnaces have been purchased and will be picked up this week..  
A donation of \$30,000 was given to the school for the purchase of 3 new furnaces.
- ◆ Efforts made by students, staff and guests working together to set up and tear down for the Christmas concert were a huge blessing!
- ◆ GCS received \$1,234 in grant money from the 2024 Nonpublic School Reimbursement Section 152b state grant.
- ◆ GCS has been awarded the Filter First grant for \$10,298 that will help us meet new state water filtering and testing requirements.
- ◆ The Chapel sent a work group that painted the elementary hallway.
- ◆ Patriots-In-Action raised \$10,871 for our school
- ◆ In October, we were able to hire a PE teacher with Watervliet through the Shared Time\* program.
- ◆ \$4,000 (half of the amount needed) was donated toward replacement gym doors. The \$4,000 given was intended to inspire a matching gift. Would you consider helping us get this significant need met?
- ◆ Title money was obtained to enable our teachers to benefit from professional development training last week at the Michigan Association of Christian Schools (MACS) Conference.
- ◆ An anonymous donor covered the fee for GCS student athletes to participate in Twin City Sharks football.
- ◆ In August, we were able to contract two teachers with Watervliet through the Shared Time\* program.
- ◆ Heart of Cook Grant \$5,000 for the purchase of a new commercial refrigerator.
- ◆ Anonymous donor gave \$2,000 toward student sponsorship.
- ◆ Mr. Clean's Cleaning and Restoration cleaned our carpets to prepare for the school year.
- ◆ Thank you to those who have brought in school supplies, paper, pencils, facial tissue and cleaning supplies for classrooms.
- ◆ School furniture was donated by a St. Joseph business man.
- ◆ The thrift store hit their first anniversary on August 12th and in this first year contributed about \$53,000 to the school scholarship fund.



- ◆ We received a \$15,000 gift to put toward student scholarships last year. This year we have many other sponsors who have picked families to support. Sponsorship for the 2024-25 school year is complete.
  - ◆ Roy's Computer Repair and the Nuismer family for their generosity in helping to update our network infrastructure.
  - ◆ Many hands came together to help get the building and grounds ready for students.
- \* *Watervliet is covering the salaries of these teachers through an elective program with the State.*

## BUSINESS

### QUICKBOOK'S NEW CHARGE

Quickbooks has just announced that starting February 13, 2025, the following change will take effect:

QuickBooks Desktop Payments ACH Bank Transfer rate will be 1% with a cap of \$15. This means that for transactions below \$1,500, you'll be charged a 1% fee. For example, you'll pay a \$2 ACH fee for a \$200 transaction. For transactions over \$1,500, you'll pay a \$15 flat rate fee per transaction.



If you would like to avoid paying these fees, you are welcome to drop off a check or cash in the Main Office, rather than paying on your invoice through Quickbooks.

## ATHLETICS



### [WWW.GCSPATRIOTS.ORG](http://WWW.GCSPATRIOTS.ORG)

Basketball season is in full swing at GCS! For details, be sure to check out our [Athletic Calendar](#) on the GCS website regularly as changes occur often.



### SIGN UP



Basketball season has begun and as with all home games, we will need volunteers to take money at the gate, run the concession stand, write down stats for the official scoring book and run the score clock. Sign up at <https://signup.com/go/KwKcOyD> today! Want to volunteer but need some training? Mr. Bradshaw is happy to help! Just send an email to him at [bbradshaw@gcspatriots.com](mailto:bbradshaw@gcspatriots.com).

### CONCESSIONS AT HOME GAMES



Hot food is available at GCS home games! Come hungry and support our high school classes as they prepare and serve hot foods from the kitchen service window. Items include hot dogs, popcorn, nachos and cookies!



# HOMECOMING

## FEBRUARY 21<sup>ST</sup>

Save the Date! Details coming soon!



### MUSIC



#### ACSI MUSIC FESTIVAL

The GCS 7th - 11th grade band members are planning to attend the ACSI music festival on March 7-8th.

The next two deposits are due as follows:

**February 3** - \$60 per student

**February 28** - \$50 per student

#### ELEMENTARY SPRING MUSICAL

Mrs. McBride is looking for a set crew and drama coaches for the upcoming elementary spring musical. Whether you have experience with this, or just an interest in helping, please reach out to Mrs. McBride at [rmcbride@gcspatriots.com](mailto:rmcbride@gcspatriots.com) to let her know!



### COMMUNITY EVENTS

## ***GCS OPEN HOUSE IS COMING SOON!***

***SAVE THE DATE!***

***SATURDAY, MARCH 8TH  
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM***



Name & phone				
 <b>FEBRUARY   2025</b> <b>GCS MENU</b>				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
3 Hotdog (With a side of Mac & Cheese) _Drink _Salad Bar	4 _Beef Tacos _Drink _Salad Bar	5 _Pencakes & Sausage _Drink _Salad Bar	6 _Baked Potato Bar _Drink _Salad Bar	7 _Pizza Bagels _Drink _Salad Bar
10 _Spaghetti & Meatballs _Drink _Salad Bar	11 _Nacho Bar _Drink _Salad Bar	12 _Sloppy Joes _Drink _Salad Bar	13 _GCS Bowl _Drink _Salad Bar	14 _Pizza Bread _Drink _Salad Bar
17 NO SCHOOL MID WINTER BREAK	18 NO SCHOOL MID WINTER BREAK	19 _Quesadillas Rice & Refried Beans _Drink _Salad Bar	20 _Chili Dog _Drink _Salad Bar	21 _Pizza Bagels _Drink _Salad Bar

**News**

Please indicate by checking the line next to "baked bar" option if your student would prefer to have salad bar for lunch. If your student takes both entree and salad bar, the cost will be double.

Check the line next to the entree your student will be having, as well as the drink line if they are taking a drink as well.

Fresh fruit and vegetables will be offered as sides daily.

MEAL  
Preschool & TK \$2.50 (no drink)  
K-12  
Main Menu or Salad Bar

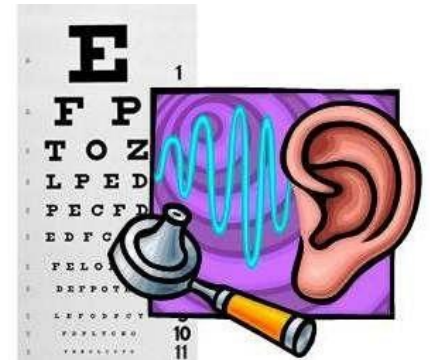
## FEBRUARY MENU

The February menu is now available on our [website](#). Please email one completed menu for each child to [info@gcspatriots.com](mailto:info@gcspatriots.com) at your earliest convenience. **MENUS ARE DUE JANUARY 23.**

## HEARING AND VISION SCREENING

The Berrien County Health Department will be at GCS to screen students in grades K, 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 on February 11<sup>th</sup> and students in grade Preschool and TK on March 6<sup>th</sup>. If your student is not scheduled for screening this year, and you have reason to believe that your student may have a problem with hearing or vision, please let us know and we will add them to the list to be screened. If you would prefer that your student not be screened, let us know that as well.

A form should have been brought home by your student over the last few weeks. Please be sure to send these back to school prior to the dates mentioned above.



## AMAZON WISH LISTS

If you are looking for ways to bless our staff, check out the links below:

- [Mrs. Colford, Principal](#)  
 [Miss Erickson, Middle School](#)  
 [Mrs. Corwin, Preschool](#)  
 [Mrs. Tavernier, 2nd](#)  
[Miss Newell, Kindergarten](#)  
 [Mrs. McBride, Music](#)  
 [Mrs. Wilkerson, 3rd](#)  
 [Mrs. Grey, 4th](#)

# 2024-25 Business & Industry Partners

If you are interested in partnering with Grace Christian School's Business & Industry Program, please contact [info@gcspatriots.com](mailto:info@gcspatriots.com) for details.



Signs & Custom Graphics

## SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars and circle it in red! The GCS Annual Benefit Auction is scheduled for Saturday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> this year.

This will be an afternoon filled with fun, including a silent auction, live auction, delicious food and fun in a family-friendly environment

Tell your friends and families! Get the word out to the community!

As we get closer to the date, you will be able to see all the items available at the auction using [this link](#)! You can also use the QR code on the poster or text G1347 to 8889909876 to receive a link to sign up on your mobile device!

Many volunteers are needed to make this a successful fundraising event, so please contact Rebecca Dill today to find out how you can "Spring into Auction" with us!

[rdill@gcspatriots.com](mailto:rdill@gcspatriots.com)

More information will be coming soon, so be on the lookout for updates!



# ANNUAL BENEFIT AUCTION

## Saturday, March 22, 2025

### DOORS OPEN 2:30 P.M.

**SILENT AUCTION  
BEGINS  
4:00 P.M.**

**LIVE AUCTION  
BEGINS  
5:30 P.M.**

**REGISTER TODAY!**  
[www.silentauctionpro.com](http://www.silentauctionpro.com)



**SPRING  
into  
AUCTION**

TEXT G1347 TO 8889909876 TO RECEIVE A LINK TO SIGN UP ON YOUR MOBILE DEVICE.

**BBQ pulled pork, chips, a pickle, a cookie and a drink available for purchase at just \$8.50!**

Grace Christian School  
325 N. M-140  
Watervliet, MI 49098

## AMERIGAS

Amerigas Customers can support GCS without paying anything extra!

Simply visit [this link](#) and enter your account information and the **School ID# 680389884** and AMERIGAS will send \$0.02 on every gallon of propane you purchase to benefit Grace Christian School!



# GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

## 2024-2025 School Year\*

### AUGUST

- 12 Secondary Info Night, 6:00 pm
- 22 Back to School Night, 5:30-7:30 pm
- 26 **First Day of School**  
Quarter 1 Begins
- 30 **NO SCHOOL - Labor Day Wknd.**

### SEPTEMBER

- 2 **NO SCHOOL - Labor Day Wknd.**
- 4-6 SEW Retreat (Grades 9-12)
- 20 Picture Day

### OCTOBER

- 2 **HALF DAY**
- 3-4 **NO SCHOOL - Teacher Conference**
- 9 NMSQT Testing (Grades 10-11)
- 16 **Patriots-In-Action Day**
- 18 **Grandparents Day, Half Day, No Aftercare**  
End of Quarter 1
- 21 **NO SCHOOL - Teacher Record Day**
- 22 Quarter 2 Begins

### NOVEMBER

- 5 **NO SCHOOL -Parent/Teacher Conferences, 12:00 - 7:00pm**
- 14 Picture Retakes
- 16 Apple Pie Making Day
- 27-29 **NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Break**

### DECEMBER

- 6 Christmas Concert, 7:00 pm
- 18-19 **Exams/HALF DAY (Grades 6-12)**
- 19 End of Quarter 2
- 20-1/5 **NO SCHOOL - Christmas Break**

### JANUARY

- 6 **NO SCHOOL - Teacher Record Day**
- 7 Quarter 3 Begins
- 20 **NO SCHOOL- MLK Jr. Day**

### FEBRUARY

- 14-17 **NO SCHOOL - Mid-Winter Break**
- 18 **NO SCHOOL Teacher In-Service**
- 21 Homecoming/Alumni Game

### MARCH

- 7 Kindergarten Program/Round Up
- 7-8 ACSI Music Festival  
History Fair
- 8 Open House, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
- 13 End of Quarter 3
- 14 **NO SCHOOL - Teacher In-Service**
- 17 Quarter 4 Begins
- 22 Annual Benefit Auction
- 31-4/4 **NO SCHOOL - Spring Break**

### APRIL

- 7 M-Step Testing Begins
- 15 GCEA Meeting, 6:30pm
- 18 **NO SCHOOL- Good Friday**
- 21 **NO SCHOOL - Easter Monday**
- 24 Spring Concert, 7:00 pm
- 25 Jr/Sr Banquet

### MAY

- 2 Elementary Musical
- 8 Secondary Awards Night
- 15 Elementary Field Day
- 23-26 **NO SCHOOL, Memorial Day**
- 28-29 **Final Exams/HALF DAY (6th-12th only)**
- 30 Moving Up Ceremony (TK-5th), **HALF DAY, NO AFTERCARE**  
End of Quarter 4  
Cruise-In, 5:00-8:00 pm
- 31 Golf Outing, tee-off 8:30 am

<b>EARLY CARE</b>	7:00 - 7:30 am
<b>PLEDGES/PRAYER</b>	7:50 am
<b>SCHOOL DAY</b>	8:00 - 3:00 pm
<b>AFTER CARE</b>	3:15 - 5:30 pm
<b>HALF DAYS</b>	Dismissal: 12:00 pm

**OFFICE HOURS** 7:30-3:30 pm



\*This calendar is subject to change. Please visit [GCSPatriots.org](http://GCSPatriots.org) for current calendar.



# BUSINESS BOOSTERS

When you buy from or use the services of one of these businesses, they give a portion of your purchase as a gift to GCS (but only if the receipt is turned into the GCS office).

## *Featured Boosters of the Month:*



### **T & C Water Treatments (10 or 15%)**

(10% for salt and parts, 5% for softener systems)  
Softeners & water conditioning. Salt sales and delivery.  
2179 Plaza Dr., Benton Harbor  
(269)983-8156



### **Zbattery.com (5%)**

Batteries, flashlights, chargers  
1826 Hilltop Rd., St. Joseph  
(269) 983-7155



### **Peerless Canvas Products, Inc. (5%)**

Custom canvas products (boat covers, awnings, tarps)  
2355 Niles Road, St. Joseph  
269.429.0600



### **Cheyenne Chernugel, Realtor (10%)**

10% of any commission proceeds will go to Grace Christian School when this ad is mentioned.

269.252.6595

[cheyenne@frazeeeam.com](mailto:cheyenne@frazeeeam.com)

**THE NEXT GCEA BOARD MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON  
MONDAY, JANUARY 27 AT 6:30 PM.**

## **2024-25 GCEA SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:**

Mrs. Whitney Tinker, *President*

Mr. Marshall Downs

Mr. Joel Layman, *Vice President*

Mrs. Laraine Fox

Mr. Trever Meachum, *Treasurer*

Mr. Nathan Hutchins

Mrs. Holly Crouch, *Secretary*

Mrs. Ruth Malaka

Mrs. Shirl Bontrager