

February 13, 2025

# COMMUNIQUÉ

Monthly

## THIS EDITION

- ◆ The Sacrifice of Community
- ◆ Thanksgiving
- ◆ Mid-Winter Break
- ◆ Music
- ◆ Patriots
- ◆ Athletics
- ◆ Homecoming
- ◆ Auction
- ◆ Open House



@Romeo'sScenicViews



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

# ADMINISTRATION

## THE SACRIFICE OF COMMUNITY

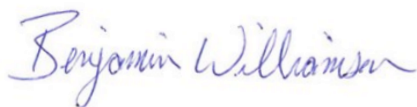
Since our last Communique our school has had 2 open meetings for our school community to come together and share the burden of shaping the plan for our school's future. In those two separate meetings a common theme emerged from these different groups of people. That theme is community. That is, we need to develop the connectedness of our school families and by extension those connected church families. This will be accomplished by setting aside time to be with each other and improve communication. Spending time together is more valuable than 20 newsletters.

The surpassing value of the commodity of time: As I work on different committees and boards the most difficult activity is scheduling a time when the group can meet. We are so busy. I often wonder what it is that we are all busy about. I still do not have an answer. As the discussion about building community developed in the GCEA meetings it was recognized that we will not be able to have community building events that accommodate everyone's schedule. The board and Administration will have to plan events that build school community and people are going to be left with choices. Is being part of the school community important to my family? Then we vote with our feet. Choosing to be part of the school community will take sacrifice. For some it maybe sacrificing a night home with a TV show and others it would be something more.

One of the growing points of leadership is recognizing that you cannot make choices for people, but you provide what the choices are and you do not get to choose what you have to work with, but you work with what you have. As we were considering our choices about the future of the school we recognized that there is/would be a committed remnant to keep the school open no matter what. That was certainly an encouragement as we discussed what the future looks like because we have something (committed parents & supporters) to work with.

In light of this support the School Board approved a plan for the 25-26 school year this Tuesday. We will continue to provide excellent Christian education for preschool through High School graduation. The big picture changes include a leaner administration, increased volunteer support during the school day, and a restructuring of the Middle & High School that will provide more pathways for our students. I look forward to sharing the details in the coming weeks.

Again, one of the biggest takeaways from the recent GCEA meetings is the need for community. The School Board meets February 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 where I expect them to set up quarterly GCEA meetings where our school can come together to discuss the events, needs, and progress the school is making. These quarterly meetings are only the spring board for us coming together and care for our school. It will require a sacrifice of time, but sitting on the couch is a sacrifice of time too. Jesus said, "Where the heart is, there will be your treasure also." For those who treasure Grace be encouraged: "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." II Kings 6:16 (read the context)



Benjamin Williamson  
GCS Administrator

# Thanksgiving Page

- ◆ Thank you Anchor Signs for updating our school banner! We really appreciate your support!
- ◆ Positive feedback to State of the School letter.
- ◆ 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.*



## MID-WINTER BREAK NO SCHOOL FEBRUARY 14 - 18

### MUSIC

#### **HS BAND STUDENTS AT MSBOA SOLO/ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL**

This past Saturday, ten members of the GCS High School Band attended the MSBOA (Michigan School Band & Orchestra Association) Solo & Ensemble Festival at Southwestern Michigan College. Students play a prepared solo or ensemble, are judged by an adjudicator and given a score of I, II, III, IV or V. A "I" rating is the best (a blue medal) and a "II" is second best etc... The following are the students who participated and the rating they received:

Woodwind Quintet: Anna Williamson and Dailee Strickland (flutes), Sara Rutgers (clarinet), Donovan Hooten (bass clarinet) and Alexa Schoetzow (french horn). Rating: II

Brass Quintet: Betty Romeo and Adam Skipper (trumpets), Alexa Schoetzow (french horn), Jaxon Dill (Euphonium) and Erika Romeo (trombone). Rating: II

Clarinet Solo: Sara Rutgers. Rating: I

Woodwind Quartet: Anna Williamson and Dailee Strickland (flutes), Sara Rutgers and Mason Green (clarinets). Rating: I

Those receiving a "I" rating qualify to participate at the State festival on March 15. Those students will play at Portage Northern High School.

Good Job High School Band Members!





# ACSI MUSIC FESTIVAL

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

The last deposit is due on **February 28** - \$50 per student

## FESTIVAL ASSISTANCE

A few of our families are struggling to afford music festival, which is an incredible learning opportunity for our young musicians, and costs \$170 per student. If you would like to donate to this cause, please contact the business office by February 28th. Thank you for your prayerful consideration.



## PATRIOTS

### FALL MIDDLE SCHOOL HOUSE WINNERS

#### Standout Student

*(earned the most House points)*

**November: CHARLOTTE MEACHUM**

**December: SAMUEL VALENTI**

**January: ZARA ROSE**

#### Teacher on Fire

*(for awarding the most House points)*

**November: BETHANY NELSON**

**December: SARAH ERICKSON**

**January: SARAH ERICKSON**



NOVEMBER



**ANNA WILLIAMSON**

### STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

NOVEMBER - JANUARY

JANUARY



**JOSHUA MELTON**

**BRYNN ROSE**

DECEMBER



# MARCH MENU

The March 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 FEBRUARY 21.**

MARCH 2025 GCS Menu				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
3 _Sub Sandwiches _Drink _Salad Bar	4 _Nacho Bar _Drink _Salad Bar	5 _Hamburger _Drink _Salad Bar	6 _Chicken Quesadilla _Drink _Salad Bar	7 _Pizza Bagel _Chs _Pep _Drink _Salad Bar
10 _Chili Dog _Drink _Salad Bar	11 _Tacos _Drink _Salad Bar	12 _Baked Potato Bar _Drink _Salad Bar	13 _Grilled Chicken _Mac & Cheese _Drink _Salad Bar	14 <b>NO SCHOOL</b> Teacher in service
17 _Sub Sandwiches _Drink _Salad Bar	18 _Nacho Bar _Drink _Salad Bar	19 _Ravioli _Drink _Salad Bar	20 _Stoppo Joe _Drink _Salad Bar	21 _Pizza Bagel _Chs _Pep _Drink _Salad Bar

**News**  
Please indicate by checking the line next to "chili dog" 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.  
Fruit and vegetables will be offered as usen, daily

## ATHLETICS



## THROWBACK SALE

In order to make room in our Athletic Department storage area, the Advancement Committee is having a throwback sale on GCS uniforms. Each item is available for purchase at just \$5 each, and is located in the main entrance hallway. Purchases may be made before school or after school from 3:00 - 4:00 pm on 19 - 21, just in time for Homecoming on February 21<sup>st</sup>! *Go Patriots!*



## [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>



**JV BOYS BASKETBALL**  
**VS**  
**OUR LADY OF THE LAKE**  
**@ 7:30 PM**

*followed by*

**GCS ALUMNI  
BASKETBALL GAME**

HEY,  
GCS ALUMNI:  
WANNA PLAY?

**SIGN UP TODAY!**  
[info@gcspatriots.com](mailto:info@gcspatriots.com)

## CHILI/SOUP COOK-OFF

The 11th grade is pleased to bring back the 3rd Annual Chili/Soup Cook-off on Friday, February 21, 2025. It will be a great night at GCS! Come and eat and attend the homecoming/alumni games!

Enter a chili (or soup) or dessert into our contest. Don't like to cook? That's all right, just come and taste. All samples are FREE! Vote for your favorites by donation. The winner of both the chili/soup and dessert categories, as determined by the donations, will receive a wooden utensil from Rutgers Wooden Spoon and Utensil Company.

If you plan to bring a chili/soup or dessert, please let Ms. Rutgers ([mrutgers@gcspatriots.com](mailto:mrutgers@gcspatriots.com)) know by Thursday, February 20th, so space can be planned out accordingly. Thank you for your support of the Class of 2026!



GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL 325 N. M-140 Watervliet, MI

# OPEN HOUSE

## PK - 12TH GRADE



With over 50 years of excellence in Christian Education, GCS invites prospective families to discover our family style community and Christ-centered academics. Join us to see the Grace difference in action!

**SATURDAY, MARCH 8 10 AM - 1 PM**

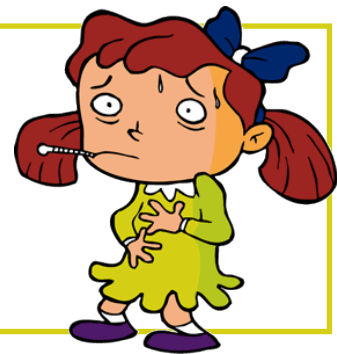
[WWW.GCSPATRIOTS.ORG](http://WWW.GCSPATRIOTS.ORG)

## OPEN HOUSE

GCS is hosting the spring Open House on Saturday, March 8. Post cards were sent home with elementary students today, and were also made available to secondary students. Please pass along the post card to a family with school aged children that may be looking to enroll their children in Grace Christian School. If you would like more post cards, they will be available on the table outside of the Main Office. An Open House flyer is located on page 12 and can also be found on our website: [gcspatriots.org](http://gcspatriots.org)

## STUDENT ILLNESS

Just a reminder that students need to stay home until they have recovered from fever (100.4+), vomiting and diarrhea for at least 24 hours without the help of medication before returning to school. This will limit the spread of sickness in our building and get our students back to good health. Thank you!



## 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

## CLASSROOM AUCTION BASKET THEMES

Each year, one of the highlights of the auction is the classroom baskets. Parents are asked to donate items to their child’s basket. Please give as you are able, and be sure to leave the price tags on the items so that the total value of the basket can be easily determined. Class basket themes are listed below:

Preschool “Spa Day”	1st “Baking”	4th/5th “Gift Card”
TK “Art”	2nd “Outdoor/Sports”	MS (6-8th) “Nerf War”
K “Pets” (treats, toys, supplies)	3rd “Family Fun Night”	HS (9-12th) “Gas N’ Go”

# 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:*



### **Perennial Accents**

Every purchase made at Perennial Accents can earn 3%. Just mention at the register that you want your purchase to go toward the Grace Christian School of Watervliet!

220 State Street  
(269)983-5791



### **M&W Tire**

Every time you make a purchase and mention Grace Christian School of Watervliet, 5% comes back to our school.

2216 M-139 Benton Harbor  
(269) 983-7155



### **Great Lakes Truck & Auto Repair (10%)**

Full Truck and auto repair facility

2159 Plaza Dr., Benton Harbor  
(269) 983-7155



### **Dewitt Computer Technologies (5%)**

Computer IT services

1826 Hilltop Rd  
St. Joseph  
(269)983-4011

## **2024-25 SUPPORTING CHURCHES**

We are very grateful to the churches that not only pray for us, but financially support GCS as well.

- Bright Star Tabernacle
- Decatur Bible Church
- Hartford Bible Church
- New Life Baptist Church
- New Life Christian Church
- North Wayne Mennonite Church
- Sister Lakes Community Church
- South Haven Church of Christ
- The Chapel, EFC
- Watervliet Free Methodist Church



## 2024-25 GCEA SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

**Whitney Tinker, President**  
*wtinker@gcspatriots.com*

**Joel Layman, Vice President**  
*jlayman@gcspatriots.com*

**Trevor Meachum, Treasurer**  
*tmeachum@gcspatriots.com*

**Holly Crouch, Secretary**  
*hcrouch@gcspatriots.com*

**Shirl Bontrager**  
*shirlbontrager@gcspatriots.com*

**Marshall Downs**  
*mdowns@gcspatriots.com*

**Laraine Fox**  
*lfox@gcspatriots.com*

**Nathan Hutchins**  
*nhutchins@gcspatriots.com*

**Ruth Malaka**  
*rmalaka@gcspatriots.com*

**THE NEXT GCEA BOARD MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24 AT 6:30 PM.**



## GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

# OPEN HOUSE

## PK - 12TH GRADE



*With over 50 years of excellence in Christian education, GCS invites prospective families to discover our family style community and Christ-centered academics. Join us to see the Grace difference in action!*

**SATURDAY, MARCH 8**

- ✓ Take a tour and visit classrooms
- ✓ Meet our staff
- ✓ Visit our History Fair displays
- ✓ Learn about new secondary options

**10 AM - 1 PM**

- 🌐 [www.GCSPatriots.org](http://www.GCSPatriots.org)
- 📍 325 M-140 Watervliet, MI

