

April 11, 2025

COMMUNIQUE

Monthly



*"I will come back
and take you with me."
-Jesus*

THIS EDITION

- ◆ "Changing Faces"
- ◆ Secondary Curriculum, 2025-26
- ◆ Thanksgiving Pages
- ◆ Music
- ◆ Athletics
- ◆ Intent to Return
- ◆ Blood Drive
- ◆ Cruise In
- ◆ Golf Outing
- ◆ Upcoming Events



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

CHANGING FACES

Happy Spring to our Grace Christian Community,

Grace and peace to you! Through your prayers and generosity, we have remained steadfast in our mission to nurture students in faith, wisdom, and service to Christ—a mission that has endured even as the faces who serve our students change year by year over these 51 years.

When we consider some of the great teachers and administrators our school has enjoyed the benefit of having, we cannot help but feel blessed by God. We can sabotage that time of blessing by reminding ourselves that every hello is eventually met with a goodbye. When we do this, we demonstrate a lack of faith in our God to provide when the time for change comes.

Human nature is to try to control things that are outside of our control. The serenity prayer is a means to remind us of who is in control of all things, and it is not us. I think the Lego Movie did a nice job describing (unintentionally) the tension of living a life by faith. The short version is that in the basement of their home a father built a Lego city where the father wanted to crazy glue the Legos together to create a perfect world while his son wanted to play daily (continuous change) with the Legos. It was a battle between control & order and freedom & creativity.

Let's transition this concept to being an administrator at Grace Christian. Which of the two Lego worldviews do you think an administrator would prefer to work with? Now consider, which of the two worldviews do we actually live with? As I reflect on the scripture about these things, the fact that God calls the believers His children, that we would be called the sons of God, and to come to Him as little children, it seems to make sense that our life, our home, our church or even our school is not crazy-glued together. Sometimes we say, what a mess!

Looking into the coming year of transition, I do not have enough crazy glue to impose an administrator's will or view of perfection. I, like you, will have to walk by faith in the coming months in the area of enrollment, funding, and staffing. We have a history of God providing excellent people who align with our mission to inspire our students to impact the world for Jesus Christ through the excellent education they get through a biblical worldview.

Walking by faith,



Benjamin Williamson

Administrator

God grant me the
Serenity to accept the
things I cannot change,
Courage to change
the things I can, and the
Wisdom to know
the difference.

The Grace Christian Podcast



www.gcspatriots.com

Visit [this link](#) to listen/watch our first podcast that discusses changes in the Jr./Sr. Highschool. In two weeks we will email out a link to another podcast where we discuss Safety and Security at Grace Christian.

SECONDARY CURRICULUM OPTIONS FOR THE 25-26 SCHOOL YEAR

Secondary Parents,

As you know, we have begun planning for the upcoming school year, and are excited to share with you the curriculum options that will be available to our families for virtual learning. We are committed to providing high-quality, faith-based education that supports both academic excellence and spiritual growth—while also offering flexibility to meet the needs of each student and family.

Junior High Curriculum (7th & 8th Grades)

BJU Press (Current Curriculum)

We will continue offering *BJU Press* curriculum, which our families are already familiar with. Through their Christian Classroom Online option, *BJU Press* provides the same solid academic foundation with a biblical worldview across all subjects. This option features video-based instruction and assignments that support a traditional classroom approach in a virtual format.

High School Curriculum (9th – 12th Grades)

Next year, high school families will be able to choose between two online curriculum options:

1. BJU Press (Current Curriculum)

We will continue offering *BJU Press* curriculum to our high school students, as this is a tried and true curriculum that has provided strong academic results for our students over many years of use. This option features video-based instruction and assignments that support a traditional classroom approach in a virtual format.

2. Ignitia by Alpha Omega Publications (New Option)

We are excited to introduce *Ignitia* as a second curriculum choice for next year. Developed by Alpha Omega Publications, *Ignitia* is a fully online, Christian-based program that offers a fresh, modern approach to virtual learning. It features interactive lessons, shorter video segments, and access to on-demand tutoring.

Next Steps

On May 15, we will hold informational sessions to help you understand each curriculum in more detail and field any questions you may have. Our goal is to ensure you have all the information you need to make the best decision for your student.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support as we walk through this transition together. We hope to see you all on May 15!

In Christ,



Leslie Colford
Principal



Thanksgiving Page

- ◆ Thank you to the many who donated to the auction!
- ◆ A 2002 20' Proline boat with cuddy cabin has been donated to the school for resale.
- ◆ 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.

Thank
you

- ◆ 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.*



THE GCEA ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting for Grace Christian Education Association members will take place
on Tuesday, April 15th at 6:30 PM.

We look forward to seeing each of our members again and presenting the annual reports to you all, as well as giving you an opportunity to vote on GCEA Board Members.

MUSIC

UPCOMING MUSICAL EVENTS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS

April 24—Spring Concert at 7:00 pm, featuring performances by 5th—11th grade bands and choirs.

May 9—Elementary Musical, “A Not-So-Terrible Parable,” performed by students in TK-5th grade with two shows: 9:00 am & 7:00 pm

ADDITIONAL MUSIC NEWS

8th – 11th grade band members are traveling to Lansing on May 20 to play for visitors to the Capitol building.

Select high school band members will participate in the Cornerstone Honors Band Festival on May 2.



ATHLETICS

WWW.GCSPATRIOTS.ORG



Some of our high school students have joined co-op teams for soccer and baseball this spring! For details, be sure to check out our [Athletic Calendar](#) on the GCS website.

2025-26 ENROLLMENT

GCS will be transitioning to
FACTS Management
for the 2025-26 school year.

To secure your child's seat,
please complete the
[Student Intent to Return Form](#)

Once FACTS is ready to go, we will send you an
invitation to complete enrollment.



Elevating the Education Experience



AMBASSADORS MEETING

Attention Ambassadors!
There will be an Ambassadors Meeting at GCS on
Tuesday, April 29 from 5:00-6:00 pm.

See you then!

PLAY BALL!

GCS is going to a ball game! Students in all grades will leave school on Wednesday, May 7th at 9:45AM and head to Four Winds Field at Coveleski Stadium in South Bend. The cost is \$12 per person, which covers a ticket, a hotdog and a drink. Be sure to send in your child's permission slip and money as soon as possible, and keep in mind that we will need lots of parent drivers to get us there!



SECONDARY AWARDS NIGHT

On Thursday, May 8 at 7:00 pm, GCS will honor its secondary students for a job well done this school year. Acknowledgements will include recognition for academic excellence, greatest improvement, hard work, leadership, Christian service and more. You won't want to miss it!

MISSION TRIP

Save the Date! GCS is sending next year's juniors and seniors to Guatemala with Casas Por Cristo for the biennial mission trip. They will leave on Sunday, March 22 and return on Saturday, March 28. A parent and student meeting will take place sometime in May. More information is coming soon!



FEBRUARY



STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

FEBRUARY & MARCH

JAXON DILL

SARA RUTGERS



MARCH

Thank you to our amazing PTF for hosting
Donuts with Dudes & Muffins with Misses!



**EARLY REGISTRATION
ENDS MONDAY!**

Created

SUMMER STUDY
June 9 - August 15

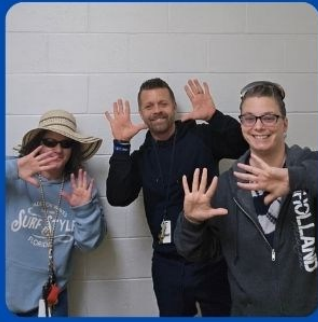
GCS presents the National Bible Bee Summer Camp offering you a powerfully productive summer anchored in Knowing God's WORD and Making HIM Known.

4 AGE DIVISIONS:
BEGINNER (5-6), PRIMARY (7-10), JUNIOR (11-14), & SENIOR (15-18)

REGISTER NOW:	RECEIVE ACCESS:	MEET UP 4 TIMES:
<p> bit.ly/GCSbiblebee</p> <p>Early Registration: April 1-14 Regular Registration: April 28- May 31</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discovery Journal Official Memory Passage Cards Local Host Group Opportunity to Qualify for National Competition at the Kalahari Resort in Sandusky, Ohio 	<p> THURSDAYS 1-2:30 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 19 • July 17 • July 31 • August 14 <p> GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL 325 N M-140, Watervliet, MI</p> <p> 269-287-0333 rmalaka@gcspatriots.com</p>

EXPLORE GOD'S WORD • UNLOCK THE TRUTH • DISCOVER ETERNAL TREASURE

SUPER SECRET



STAFF SPIRIT WEEK

MONDAY: STILL ON SPRING BREAK



TUESDAY: ZOOM MEETING



WEDNESDAY: BLACK OUT



THURSDAY: SURPRISE MR. WILLIAMSON



FRIDAY: ANYTHING BUT A CUP





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 for details.



2024-25 GCEA SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

Whitney Tinker, President
wtinker@gcspatriots.com

Joel Layman, Vice President
jlayman@gcspatriots.com

Trever Meachum, Treasurer
tmeachum@gcspatriots.com

Holly Crouch, Secretary
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Shirl Bontrager
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Marshall Downs
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Laraine Fox
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Nathan Hutchins
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Ruth Malaka
rmalaka@gcspatriots.com

THE NEXT GCEA BOARD MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON
MONDAY, APRIL 28 @ 6:30 PM.



CELEBRATE OUR RISEN SAVIOR

NO SCHOOL: APRIL 18-21

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:



Colbert/Ball Tax Service (10%)

Jerry & Tashama Brown
Orchards Mall
1800 Pipestone Rd., Benton Harbor
269.927.8888 or 269.927.8886



Wil-O-Paw Animal Hospital (10%)

Veterinary services and products.
Drs. Alan and Christy Stockdale
4809 Paw Paw Lake Road, Coloma
269.468.7297



Parable Christian Bookstore (10%)

Bibles, Christian books, music, gifts and church supplies
2913 Niles Avenue, St. Joseph
269.983.7889

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



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

MAY

- 5 Blood Drive
- 8 Secondary Awards Night
- 9 Elementary Musical
- 13 TK-2nd Grade Field Day
- 15 3rd-5th Grade 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

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

OFFICE HOURS 7:30-3:30 pm

*This calendar is subject to change. Please visit GCSPatriots.org for current calendar.



HOPE.

It's in our blood.

BLOOD DRIVE

Monday

May

05

2:00PM - 6:00PM

Helpful tip:

Make sure to eat a healthy meal and drink plenty of water before donating.



GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVE

325 N M-140
WATERVLIET, MI 49098

APPOINTMENTS PREFERRED

Call 866-642-5663, visit versiti.org/mi,
-OR- scan the QR code below.

If you are 16 please turn in a parent consent form before making an appointment.

Walk ins welcome, as schedule allows.

Donate and receive a Just Donate It hat, while supplies last.



versiti™
Blood Center of Michigan

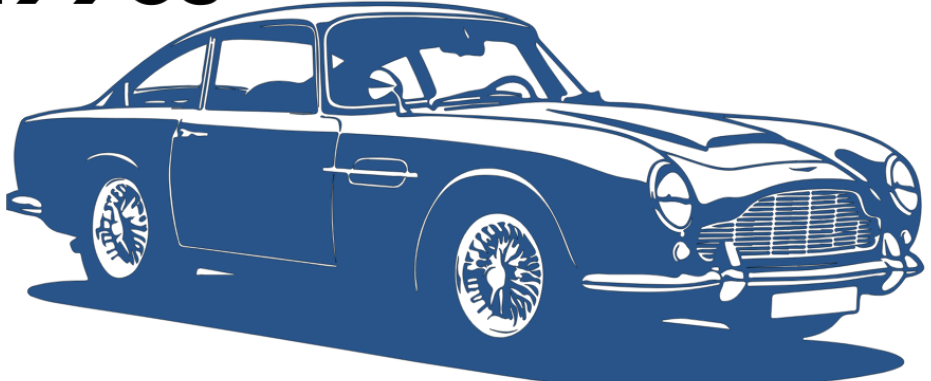
For eligibility questions call
866-642-5663

GCS STUDENT COUNCIL PRESENTS THE SECOND ANNUAL

CLASSIC *Cruise-In* Pre-1990s

50/50
RAFFLE

T-SHIRTS



FREE ENTRY
&
ADMISSION

FRIDAY
May 30
5-8 PM

FOOD
TRUCKS
crumbl Cookies
Ben's soft pretzels
Wood, Stock
& Grill

CALLING ALL CAR ENTHUSIASTS!

Join us as we kick off summer with our second annual Classic Car Show! No entry fee for vehicles and free admission for spectators. Donations will be accepted and will go towards maintenance of our gym floor.

GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

325 M-140 WATERVLIT, MI

MORE INFO:

cruise-in@gcspatriots.com



\$90/golfer includes:
Snacks & Lunch,
Fellowship, Door Prizes

ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

Sponsored by:



**PRIZES FOR: Long Drive, Closest to Hole, Longest Putt &
Best Approach Shot**

Saturday, May 31st
Indian Lake Hills Golf Course
7:30 A.M. Check-In / 8:30 A.M. Tee Off



[REGISTER YOUR TEAM TODAY!](#)

Questions?

info@gcspatriots.com

269.463.5545