

July 23, 2025

COMMUNIQUE

Summer

THIS EDITION

- ♦ “Projects & Safety”
- ♦ Welcome, Mr. Jones!
- ♦ Now Hiring
- ♦ Student Sponsorship
- ♦ Missions
- ♦ Thanksgiving Pages
- ♦ Work Days
- ♦ Back to School Night
- ♦ Amazon Wishlists
- ♦ Community Service
- ♦ Calendar

GCS SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday

10:00am - 2:00pm



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

ADMINISTRATION

PROJECTS & SAFETY

Summer activities and building projects (which I prefer to sitting at a desk) have drawn me away from the keyboard. I would like to share a conversation I had with Brian Bradshaw, our point person for safety at the school (*see video link below*). The school has a very active Emergency Preparedness Committee, over which Brian is the chairman. Even this summer, we have made major improvements to our building that will enhance our safety. Thank you again to Church of Christ of South Haven for providing the \$5,000 to purchase and install our second set of Gym doors. Not only do they enhance the safety of the room, but with the windows they have totally changed the atmosphere of our gym. We are thankful to God for your generosity.

Here is a list of other projects that have been done so far this summer:

- Locker room exterior doors replaced
- Car donation processing
- Cleaning out the back barn
- Prepping for furnace install
- High school room modifications and teacher shuffles
- Gym and locker room refreshment
- Cleaning up the softball field (thanks to volunteers!)
- Adopting new school safety protocols (*see page 8*)
- Cleaning & Organization of the balcony



Anna Williamson, Ashlyn Teeters,
Hannah Hawley, Matthew Williamson

You're invited to join us for the next upcoming GCS Work Days on August 1-2 to get involved.

Please pray that God would continue to provide for the needs of our school,

Benjamin Williamson

Benjamin Williamson

Administrator

Please enjoy the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RheeAMt80Ok&t=37s>

WELCOME, MR. JONES!

We are very excited to announce that we have hired Mr. Brandon Jones as our new Jr. High Bible teacher. Brandon grew up in Three Rivers, Michigan. He earned a B.A. in Biblical Studies from Grace College and spent four years teaching Bible to students in grades 6 - 12 at Howardsville Christian School. Brandon is married to his high school sweetheart, Breanne.



They are active members of Midway Baptist Church in Watervliet and are blessed with two children, Eden and Roman.

In his free time, Brandon enjoys spending time outdoors - especially fishing, swimming, and golfing.

His favorite part of teaching is witnessing students discover the joy of living a life of purpose in Christ. A verse that continues to inspire him is Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

NOW HIRING: MUSIC TEACHER

Grace Christian School is seeking a passionate, Christ-centered Music Teacher to join our team starting in August. This full-time, school-year position includes teaching 5th - High School bands, general music (K-5), and possibly a secondary choir. Benefits and tuition discount available for eligible dependents. Part-time options may be considered.

Candidates must hold a valid Michigan Teacher Certification, have strong classroom management and collaboration skills, and be committed to ongoing professional learning. As a Christian school, we're looking for someone who models an active and growing faith in Jesus Christ and faithfully attends a like-minded evangelical church.

If you or someone you know would love to inspire students through music while living out their faith, please submit your resume to colford@gcspatriots.com. Applications accepted until filled.

NOW HIRING: PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

Grace Christian School is seeking a Christ-centered, experienced Preschool Director to lead our Early Childhood Education program starting in August. This full-time position offers tuition discounts and potential summer flexibility for school-year-only applicants.

Candidates must meet Michigan's licensing requirements for an Early Childhood Program Director ([Available Here](#)) and have strong leadership, supervisory, and communication skills. We're looking for someone with a deep love for young children who actively lives out their faith and models our mission: *to inspire students to impact the world for Jesus Christ through an excellent education from a biblical worldview.*

If you or someone you know would love to lead and grow a Christ-centered preschool community, please submit your resume to colford@gcspatriots.com. Applications accepted until filled.

SPREAD THE WORD! (see pg. 12)



VOLLEYBALL CAMP

Attention All Jr. High and High School* Girls & Boys!

Grace Christian School is hosting a summer volleyball camp.

Students from Grace and other schools are all welcome.

July 21-25

9:00 am - 12:00pm**

Cost: \$25

***time adjusted*



GCS is hoping to offer a boys volleyball team in the spring! This will be a great introduction to the sport.

**Grades 6 - 12 are welcome*

Thank you to Jody Galens
for leading volleyball camp again this year!

STUDENT SPONSORSHIP NEEDS

We are thankful for many who have contributed to sponsor a student or family this last year. We have new opportunities for you to build the Kingdom of God. Below are the families that need financial help for the coming school year. Would you consider helping in whole or in part? Please pray that God would remember us and our need. Please pray that the needs of our coming year would be met. God is sovereign and He is able; pray that those He chooses to use will be willing.

Family #1

- Single parent
- Family of three
- 2 elementary students
- Total tuition: \$13,900

Need: \$3600

Family #2

- Family of six
- 2 elementary students
- Total tuition: \$13,900

Need: \$4100

Family #3

- Family of six
- 2 elementary students
- Total tuition: \$12,900

Need: \$2400

Family #4

- Family of six
- 3 elementary students
- Total tuition: \$20,850

Need: \$7100

Family #5

- Family of five
- 1 elementary student
- Total tuition: \$6950

Need: \$2150

Family #7

- Grandparents
- Family of five
- 2 elementary students
- Total tuition: \$13,900

Need: \$3600

Family #6

- Family of three
- 1 secondary student
- Total tuition: \$7450

Need: \$1000

Family #8

- Family of five
- 3 elementary students
- Total tuition: \$20,850

Need: \$4400

Family #9

- Single parent
- Family of two
- 1 secondary student
- Total tuition: \$7450

Need: \$1500

Family #10

- Family of four
- 2 elementary students
- Total tuition \$12,900

Need: \$2100

MISSION TRIP NEWS: Classes of 2026 & 2027



If you plan to go on next year's mission trip I need to hear from you! Please email icolford@gcspatriots.com letting me know whether or not you plan to be part of the team. Make sure you have viewed the video and attachments sent out on May 27. Planning starts now and there is work to be done over the summer! If you have questions I'm happy to answer them; just reach out! -Mrs. Colford

Thanksgiving Page

- ◆ Those who have devoted many hours to our building and grounds in June/July: Vern Holford, Tim Conwell, Trever Meachum, and students Matthew & Anna Williamson, and Hannah & Ashlyn Teeters.
- ◆ Volunteers that are cleaning up the softball field: John Jewell, Marissa Schoetzow, Brandon & April Shindeldecker, Rodney Hutsell
- ◆ Our amazing PTF provided our staff with breakfast and lunch for Teacher Appreciation Week!
- ◆ We had several people come and donate 21 units of blood on May 5th.
- ◆ 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 and \$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.
- ◆ \$8,000 was donated toward replacement gym doors, which have been installed!
- ◆ 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.

Thank
you!

- ◆ 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.

GCS JULY WORK DAYS

Friday, August 1st, 11-5 & Saturday, August 2nd, 9-5

We need your help! Join us in accomplishing the following tasks:

(Priority from top to bottom)

- ⇒ **Get the school cleaned and ready for students**, including vacuuming every square inch!
- ⇒ **Clean out the locker rooms:** Empty, Scrub, Repair from floor to ceiling.
 - * Paint the locker rooms
 - * Replace the ceiling tiles
 - * Repair the broken wall trim floor tiles or replace with mop boards.
 - * Put back and organize the items in the locker rooms
- ⇒ **Finish painting the gym:** the white sections
- ⇒ **Clean up the paint left on the mop board in the cafeteria**
- ⇒ **Begin Woodshop Overhaul**



Reach out to Rebecca Dill at rdill@gcspatriots.com or Benjamin Williamson at

bwilliamson@gcspatriots.com if you have questions or would like to let us know you're coming. You *do not* have to sign-up in advance; it is helpful to know what to plan for. Thanks!

ATTENTION STUDENT ATHLETES!

Schedule your sports physicals for the 25-26 school year today! Students must have a valid sports physical to be ready to play on the first day of practice for the season. The official MHSAA sport physical form for your doctor can be obtained from our website, at the school or by using [this link](#).



BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT

Thursday, August 21, 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Parents and students of all grades, Preschool - 12, should plan on attending this year's Back to School Night. Bring in your child's school supplies, see the classrooms, visit with teachers and get ready for the upcoming school year!



SUPPLY LIST UPDATES

Check the website for the 2025-26 School Supply Lists at [GCSPatriots.org](https://www.gcspatriots.org).

Please revisit this throughout the summer for possible updates.

amazon
wishlist

Looking for a way to bless GCS staff?
Check out the links below:

[Mrs. Colford, Principal](#) [Mrs. Corwin, High School](#)
[Mrs. Tavernier, 2nd](#) [Mrs. Vogel, P4](#)
[Miss Newell, Kindergarten](#) [Mrs. Litten, 1st Grade](#)
[Mrs. Wilkerson, 3rd](#) [Mrs. Grey, 4th](#) [Mr. Dill, 5th](#)

COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS FOR SECONDARY

A few notes about how to get a head start on next year's hours:

- Hours completed after May 30 will be credited towards next school year.
- Students can "bank" hours for the entire school year; however, all summer hours MUST be turned in during the first quarter of the school year in order to count.
- KEEP TRACK! It isn't that difficult to log hours. Start a list on your "notes" app; snap a picture in your photo album; fill out the form and keep it on your fridge; etc. Get signatures at the time of service so you don't have to backtrack later.
- Incomplete forms will not be accepted. Please fill out both sides thoroughly before turning in.
- Reminder: Service projects are to be free of compensation, financial or otherwise, and should benefit others in need, excluding family members.

Finally, students are encouraged to get out of their comfort zones! Don't just take the easy route and write down service you would already be doing anyway (helping at your church, etc.). Some of our students are doing great things! Look for ways to make a meaningful impact with your volunteer hours! We'd like to highlight some of these throughout the school year next year - send us your pictures!

More info about Community Service requirements can be found in your Parent/Student Handbook.



SCHOOL SAFETY

At Grace Christian School, the safety of our students, staff, and community is one of our highest priorities, rooted in our Christian mission to protect and nurture those entrusted to our care. We are excited to share that our Emergency Preparedness Committee is updating our Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) to incorporate the **Standard Response Protocol (SRP)** from the I Love U Guys Foundation. Though we already implement these practices through regular drills and emergency planning, this update aligns our emergency response language with Berrien County schools, ensuring clarity and consistency in keeping our students safe.

The SRP provides five clear actions for emergencies:

- **Secure:** Get inside and lock outside doors to protect from external threats.
- **Lockdown:** Lock doors, turn off lights, and stay out of sight for immediate safety.
- **Evacuate:** Move to a designated safe location.
- **Shelter:** Use specific safety strategies for hazards like severe weather.
- **Hold:** Clear hallways and remain in place until instructed.



By adopting the SRP, GCS joins Berrien County schools in using standardized terms, making communication seamless during drills or emergencies. This alignment strengthens our partnership with local authorities and ensures our responses are clear and effective.

Please email bbradshaw@gcspatriots.com for additional information.

2025-26 Business & Industry Partners

We want to promote your business!

If you own a business and you are interested in partnering with Grace Christian School's Business & Industry Program for the 2025-26 school year, please contact info@gcspatriots.com for details!

2025-26 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

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

Brian Montgomery

bmontgomery@gcspatriots.com

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

GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

2025-2026 School Year*



AUGUST

- 21 Back to School Night, 5-7:00 PM
- 25 **First Day of School**
Quarter 1 Begins
- 29 **NO SCHOOL - Labor Day Wknd.**

SEPTEMBER

- 1 **NO SCHOOL - Labor Day Wknd.**
- 3-5 SEW Retreat (Grades 9-12)
- 26 Picture Day

OCTOBER

- 2-3 **NO SCHOOL - Inservice**
- 17 **Grandparents Day, Half Day,**
No Aftercare
End of Quarter 1
- 20 **NO SCHOOL - Inservice**
- 21 Quarter 2 Begins

NOVEMBER

- 3 Picture Retakes
- 4 **NO SCHOOL - ELEMENTARY**
Parent/Teacher Conferences,
11:00 - 6:00pm
- 24-25 **NO SCHOOL - Fall Break**
- 26-28 **NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Break**

DECEMBER

- 10 Pastor Appreciation
- 18 **HALF DAY**
End of Quarter 2
- 19-1/5 **NO SCHOOL - Christmas Break**

JANUARY

- 5 Inservice
- 6 Quarter 3 Begins
- 19 **NO SCHOOL- MLK Jr. Day**

FEBRUARY

- 13-17 **NO SCHOOL - Mid-Winter Break**
- 17 InService
- 20 Homecoming

MARCH

- 2-6 Science Fair
- 6 Kindergarten Program/Round Up
- 7 Open House, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
- 13 End of Quarter 3
- 16 **NO SCHOOL - Inservice**
- 17 Quarter 4 Begins
- 22-28 Mission Trip - Guatemala
- 30-4/6 **NO SCHOOL - Spring Break**

APRIL

- 6 **NO SCHOOL - Spring Break**
- 14 GCEA Meeting

MAY

- 21 Graduation
- 22-25 **NO SCHOOL, Memorial Day**
- 29 Moving Up Ceremony
(TK-5th), **HALF DAY,**
NO AFTERCARE
End of Quarter 4
Cruise-In, 5:00-8:00 pm
- 30 Golf Outing, tee-off 8:30 am

**This calendar is subject to change.*

Please visit GCSPatriots.org for current calendar.

SCHOOL HOURS

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

OFFICE HOURS 7:30-3:30 pm

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:



Town & Country Electric Service (10/5%)

(10% for residential services, 5% for commercial services)
2179 Plaza Dr.
Benton Harbor
(269) 934-8155



Roseland Organic Farms & Market (10%)

Organic beef, chicken, pork, dairy and other organic items
60200 Daily Rd., Dowagiac
(269) 445-8769



Oxi-Fresh Carpet Cleaning (10%)

Bryan Bailey
bryan@oxifreshswmi.com
Commercial Sales: (269)206-2149 Cell: (269)277-0357

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





**BERRIEN COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**
better health. stronger communities.



michigan
HEARING & VISION
screening programs

BACK-TO-SCHOOL BASH

The Berrien County Health Department will host a Back-to-School Bash in both Benton Harbor and Niles this summer.

Each event will offer:

- School-required hearing, vision and dental screenings
- School-required immunizations
- Fun activities

Simply stop by for screenings and immunizations – no appointment needed.

Aug. 21, BENTON HARBOR

8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. at BCHD
2149 E. Napier Ave.

DETAILS TBD, NILES

Watch bchdmi.org
or Facebook for details.

Summer clinics – by appointment

Can't make it to a Back-to-School Bash? Visit one of our summer clinics for school-required hearing, vision and dental screenings. The schedule is:

COLOMA

- June 18 – Coloma
Community Schools
Administration

EAU CLAIRE

- July 29 – Lybrook Elementary

NILES

- June 9-10 – Merritt Elementary
- Aug. 5 – Northside Child Development Center

STEVENSVILLE

- June 12 – Hollywood Elementary
- June 17 – Roosevelt Elementary
- Aug. 12 – Stewart Elementary

WATERVLIET

- June 24 – South Elementary

Scan the QR code to schedule your appointment.

Questions? Call Melisa Jordan at 269.926.7121, ext. 5293.



**SHARE
THESE
IMAGES
ON SOCIAL
MEDIA TO
HELP US
GET THE
WORD
OUT!**

WE'RE HIRING!



Music/Band Teacher



Grace Christian School is seeking a passionate, Christ-centered Music Teacher to join our team starting in August. This full-time, school-year position includes teaching 5th - High School bands, general music (K-5), and possibly a secondary choir. Benefits and tuition discount available for eligible dependents. Part-time options may be considered.

Candidates must hold a valid Michigan Teacher Certification, have strong classroom management and collaboration skills, and be committed to ongoing professional learning. As a Christian school, we're looking for someone who models an active and growing faith in Jesus Christ and faithfully attends a like-minded evangelical church.

If you or someone you know would love to inspire students through music while living out their faith, please submit your resume to lcolford@gcspatriots.com. Applications accepted until filled.

send your resume to: lcolford@gcspatriots.com

WE ARE HIRING!



PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

Grace Christian School is seeking a Christ-centered, experienced Preschool Director to lead our Early Childhood Education program starting August 1. This full-time position offers tuition discounts and potential summer flexibility for school-year-only applicants.

Candidates must meet Michigan's licensing *requirements for an Early Childhood Program Director and have strong leadership, supervisory, and communication skills. We're looking for someone with a deep love for young children who actively lives out their faith and models our mission: *to inspire students to impact the world for Jesus Christ through an excellent education from a biblical worldview.*

If you or someone you know would love to lead and grow a Christ-centered preschool community, please submit your resume to lcolford@gcspatriots.com. Applications accepted until filled.