

GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Home of the Patriots

DECEMBER 2025

IMPACT



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



**“Thanks be to
God for His
incredible
gift!”**

2 Corinthians 9:15



THIS EDITION:

- “The Season of Thanksgiving & Blessings”
- Athletics
- Student Highlights
- Parents
- GCEA
- GCS Alumni
- Upcoming Events
- Prayer & Praise
- Ways to Support our School
- Calendar

THE SEASON OF THANKSGIVING AND BLESSINGS

I love the Thanksgiving holiday the most. Getting together with your people and eating, drinking and being merry, even when the people you gather with may bug you from time to time. Then, you get to go home or they leave. Thanksgiving does not bear the Christmas performance or expectation stress that our materialistic culture has contaminated Christmas with. On top of that, Christmas stress is most felt by those closest to us in our home. So if there is some disappointment, it is not going home when the party is done. Christmas should be a time of rejoicing over God becoming man to save us from our sins. Yet, that is maybe 10% of our focus during the Christmas season when considering all of our 'Christmas responsibilities'.

The season of Thanksgiving is really simple. We become mindful of the blessings in our lives. The Bible says to give thanks in everything knowing this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (I Thessalonians 5:18). This verse assumes a high view of God: a God that can take even the bad things and work them out for good (Romans 8:28). Many Psalms pour out praises of thanksgiving to God for his attributes and provisions. As Americans in the year 2025, we have King Solomon experiences daily. What do I mean by "King Solomon experiences"? Do you think the richest man to live enjoyed ice cream, hot showers on demand, refrigeration, air conditioning, music from a thousand bands at the push of a button? What about traveling in a car? Even the greatest beater of a car among the Grace Christian population would be a spaceship experience for Solomon. We take these things and our space age comforts for granted.

Jesus talked about sharing a cloak with another if you had two, or returning a cloak to the one who was putting his up for a pledge, knowing he would need it. How many sets of clothes do you have falling out of your closet and drawers? We live like no nation before, and yet, do you see a society satisfied with what we have or one demanding more? Paul reminds us that 'Godliness with contentment is great gain' (I Timothy 6:6). How do we take the materialistic contamination out of Christmas? It starts by being thankful with or recognizing the blessings you already have.

When our kids were young, my wife and I told them that we do not buy toys for under the Christmas tree, but rather, throughout the year as the need arises, we provide for them. There are moments throughout the year where there is a special item that is the right fit and right time for that child. We would give that gift without fanfare and simply say, "This is why we do not pile things under the tree." To buy something for one kid and not the other two took some tact (training), but it has worked well for our family. Does that make Christmas a dud of a day? Not really, we still use this time to give small and practical gifts. Sometime we will compare the patterns of the underwear/socks/lunch pail we received and enjoy the special snacks we enjoy. Besides, grandmas break the rules! Taking the pressure, greed, and envy out of Christmas in our home has been one of the better parenting moves we have made. Christmas becomes about time together and people we'll see.

The biggest blessing of Christmas is realizing it is not the stuff but the people you share life with. Please take inventory of who you love and enjoy them.

Benjamin Williamson

Benjamin Williamson
Administrator



ATHLETICS



ATHLETIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Zoey received her varsity letter for her participation in Cross Country with Our Lady of the Lake.

Matthew and Jaxon both received pins for their participation in Football with the Twin City Sharks, as they already received their letters last year.

BASKETBALL SEASON IS HERE!

For the first time in 10 years, GCS has a varsity boys basketball team! Come out and support our Patriots at one of their upcoming HOME games this season:

12.16 NEW BUFFALO @ 6:00 PM

1.23 KALAMAZOO COUGARS @ 6:00 PM

1.30 COVERT @ 6:00 PM

1.9 EAU CLAIRE @ 6:00 PM

1.26 HOWARDSVILLE @ 6:00 PM

2.6 COUNTRYSIDE @ 6:00 PM

1.13 RIVER VALLEY @ 6:00 PM

1.27 OUR LADY @ 6:00 PM

2.17 MICHIGAN LUTHERAN @ 6:00 PM

Our Middle School Girls Basketball will begin competing soon as well. Home games are listed below:

1.26 ML/EC @ 5:00 PM

2.9 COVERT/CS/EC @ 5:00 PM

2.11 OLL/COVERT @ 5:00 PM

Our high school Lady Patriots are playing with the Our Lady of the Lake Lakers JV and Varsity teams.

BE SURE TO CHECK THE [ATHLETIC CALENDAR](#) FOR COMPLETE GAME SCHEDULES!

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

PATRIOT-IN-ACTION

Drawing Winners

Lyra - 1st place, \$250 Amazon Gift Card

Ellie - 2nd place, \$125 Amazon Gift Card

Wyatt - 3rd place, \$50 Amazon Gift Card

PIA total raised: \$10,545.22

Participating families: 30



High House Project

NOVEMBER

Standout Student

Jordynn Redman

Teacher on Fire

Ms. Erickson



Student of the Month

NOVEMBER

Alexander Hartman



SENIOR PARENT MEETING

Seniors and parents: Mark your calendars for Thursday, January 8, 2026. Administration would like to meet with you at 6:00pm to discuss your child's last semester of high school and their upcoming commencement ceremony.

QUARTER 2 REPORT CARDS

Be sure to check in to your FACTS Family Portal regularly for up-to-date information on your student's academic progress! Quarter 2 Report Cards will be ready to view on Friday, January 9th.



BOARD

2025-26 GCEA BOARD MEMBERS

Whitney Tinker - President
wtinker@gcspatriots.com

Nathan Hutchins - Vice President
nhutchins@gcspatriots.com

Holly Crouch - Treasurer
hcrouch@gcspatriots.com

Ruth Malaka - Secretary
rmalaka@gcspatriots.com

Shirl Bontrager
sbontrager@gcspatriots.com



Marshall Downs
mdowns@gcspatriots.com

Laraine Fox
lfox@gcspatriots.com

Joel Layman
jlayman@gcspatriots.com

Trever Meachum
tmeachum@gcspatriots.com

Brian Montgomery
bmontgomery@gcspatriots.com

THE NEXT GCEA BOARD MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON
MONDAY, DECEMBER 15 @ 6:30 PM.

JOIN THE GCEA!

You're invited to be part of the GCEA (Grace Christian Educational Association), the governing body of our school. The fiscal year for the GCEA runs July 1 to June 30. Membership requires agreement with our organization's doctrinal statement and \$10 membership fee. The membership fee is waived for parents of students at GCS. Each year we have an annual meeting where the School Board is elected and an annual report is presented to the membership. Membership allows you the right to vote at our annual GCEA meeting and at special/extra meetings throughout the year. Join TODAY by completing the [GCEA Membership Application Form](#) on our website and emailing it to info@gcspatriots.com.

Our School Board is accessible to you through their email as well as open board meetings.



ALUMNI NEWS

We love to share what God is doing in the lives of our Alumni! Please share births, graduations, marriages, moves, and other announcements with us at info@gcspatriots.com. Photos are appreciated.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**“Thanks be to
God for His
indefinable
gift!”**

2 Corinthians 9:15

CHRISTMAS BREAK

GCS kicks off Christmas Break on Thursday, December 18th with a HALF DAY of school! Students will be dismissed at 11:30. There will be no Aftercare services provided on this day. Students will resume on Tuesday, January 6th.

“Thanks be to God for His indefinable gift!”

- 2 Corinthians 9:15

FOR MORE INFO: info@gcspatriots.com

HOMECOMING GAME DAY 2026



OLD PATRIOTS: Watervliet Grace Christian's Conrad Brenneman (left), Dave Hill (middle) and Normie Payne (right) hold aloft the Class D district championship plaque after the Patriots defeated St. Joseph 77-69 at New Buffalo Friday night. Hill is the Patriots coach. The district title is a first for the Patriots in 55 years. Hill has entered the Michigan High School Athletic Association tournament for the past five years. Hill was named MVP of the tournament. photo on page 13. (Norma Payne photo)



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6
GCS - 325 N M140, WATERVLIT

- ### HIGHLIGHTS
- 1989 Championship Coach Dale Hill will be in attendance
 - Varsity Boys vs Countryside Academy, 6:00pm
 - Followed by Alumni vs current Varsity Basketball Team



AUCTION **ACTION** **with 80's** **SATISFACTION**

MARCH 21, 2026

2:30 PM DOORS OPEN
4:00 PM SILENT AUCTION
5:30 PM LIVE AUCTION



To receive a link to sign in on your mobile device, text **61347** to **888.990.9876**

Purchase a Walking Taco Meal with a cookie & a drink for **Only \$8.50**

GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
325 N M-140 WATERVLIET, MI 49098

GCS STUDENTS PREPARING FOR MISSION TRIP TO GUATEMALA

MARCH 2026

Each mission trip team member is currently raising financial support for their participation. If you would like to contribute toward an individual student, staff member, or the team as a whole, please reach out to icolford@gcspatriots.com for more information. Your prayers and financial support are a vital part of this ministry, and we are deeply grateful for your partnership.

A full team list is included below. Watch for updates and prayer requests in future Impact editions as the team prepares for this exciting opportunity.

11th Grade

Jaxon Dill
Mason Green
Sara Rutgers
Matthew Williamson

Staff

Mike Dill
Jessica Flagel
Benjamin Williamson

12th Grade

Dailee Strickland
Anna Williamson
Jenna Wilson

Parents

Jimmy Green
Tasha Strickland
Keri Williamson
Apryll Wilson



PRAYER & PRAISE



PRAYER REQUESTS

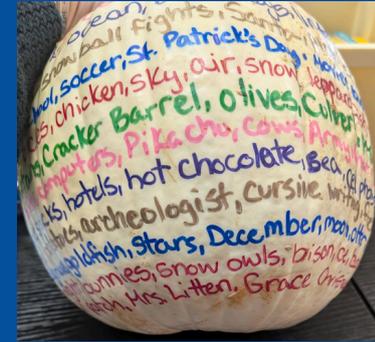
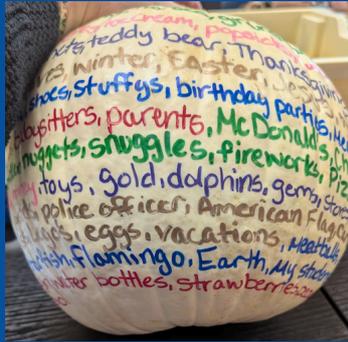
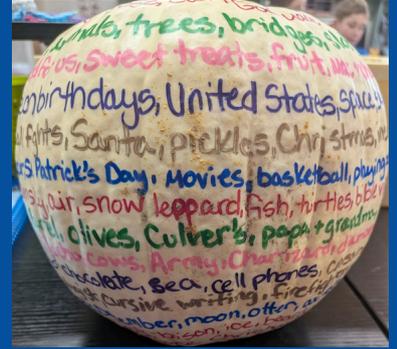
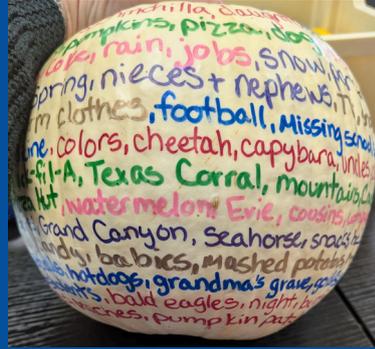
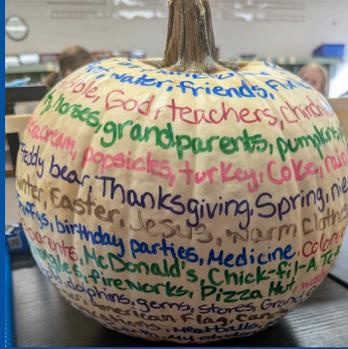
- A GCS teacher is on dialysis and is in great need of a kidney transplant from a living donor. Please join us in praying for God's provision in His perfect time.
- Please also join us in prayer for GCS Parent, Jade Dockham, who is recovering from open heart surgery and expecting a child to be born early.

THANKSGIVING

- Thank you to the donor that provided Thanksgiving turkeys to our staff.
- Those who organized pie making, sold pies, bought pies and showed up to assemble pies for the fundraiser.
- PTF Christmas decorating
- PTF Meal provision for Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Volunteers that made Shemmy's Fish Fry possible
- Parents, staff and students that participated in Patriots-In-Action Day
- Consistent volunteer for gate at home games
- Mrs. Leach repaired and recovered our basketball panels. They look great!
- Workers from the Chapel, EFC volunteered on Saturday, October 4.
 - 23 light units were updated and bleachers secured
- Stairs to the ball field finished
- Water to the ball field/well house plumbing updated
- \$30,000 pledged donation to sponsor a teacher
- \$31,950 came in to meet our student sponsorship needs
- New volleyball cart donated
- Waxing our floors and carpet cleaning donated in August by Mr. Clean's Cleaning & Restoration
- We received over \$20,000 in electrical supplies from a vendor with All-Phase electrical in Benton Harbor. We will be able to completely update our building to LED from fluorescent.
- We were able to secure a shared time partnership with Southgate Community Schools



- Softball field's Summer/Fall refreshing work (looking great)
- New and consistent volunteer keeping the grounds beautiful
- Gym and Locker Room refurbishment
- 1949 Cadillac (open to ideas of what to do with it)
- A lot of furniture & professional displays donated in July/August



THANKFUL PUMPKIN

Mrs. Litten and our thankful 1st grade class have a lot to be thankful for this year. Check out these Thankful Pumpkin pictures!

SUPPORTING GCS



AUCTION HELP NEEDED

At this time, we are in need of volunteers to make calls to get donations and pick up donations. Please contact Rebecca Dill rdill@gcspatriots.com.

HISTORIAN NEEDED

We are looking for a Grace Christian Historian! We have shoe boxes of photos and such that need the attention of someone who enjoys compiling history.



CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS



The Staff Wish Tree is now set up at the front entrance of the school. Please consider grabbing an ornament and blessing the staff this Christmas season! Stockings are also set up now if anyone would like to send in something for students or staff members. Thank you!

- The PTF (Parent Teacher Fellowship)



GCS STAFF WISHLISTS



- [Mrs. Colford, Principal](#) [Mrs. Corwin, High School](#) [Mrs. Compton, PE/Music](#)
- [Mrs. Vogel, P4](#) [Miss Hemingway, TK](#) [Miss Newell, Kindergarten](#)
- [Mrs. Litten, 1st](#) [Mrs. Tavernier, 2nd](#) [Mrs. Wilkerson, 3rd](#) [Mrs. Grey, 4th](#)
- [Mr. Dill, 5th](#) [Miss Erickson, Jr. High](#) [Mr. Bradshaw, Strength](#)



2025-26 SUPPORTING CHURCHES

Below is a list of churches that are attended by GCS families. We are very grateful to the churches that support GCS through both prayer and financial gifts (*indicated in bold*).

- Apostolic Lighthouse Church
- Berrien Center Bible
- Blue Roof Church
- **Bright Star Tabernacle**
- Calvary Bible Church
- Calvary Missionary Baptist Church
- Coloma United Methodist Church
- **Decatur Bible Church**
- Deeper Life Bible Church
- First Baptist Church
- First Church of God
- Freshwater Church
- Full Gospel Assembly
- **Hartford Bible Church**
- Hartford Church of God
- Lakeshore Christian Church
- Latter Day Worship
- LifeBridge Church
- Midway Baptist Church
- New Covenant Church
- New Day Church
- New Freedom Church
- New Hope Community Church
- New Jerusalem COGIC
- **New Life Baptist Church**
- **New Life Christian Center**
- **North Wayne Mennonite Church**
- Overflow Church
- Pioneer Memorial Church
- **Sister Lakes Community Church**
- **South Haven Church of Christ**
- St. Mary Catholic Church
- St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church - Niles
- **The Chapel, EFC**
- The River
- The Well Ministries
- Victory Life Church
- Volinia Baptist Church
- Watervliet Free Methodist Church
- Woodside
- Yore Community Church



GOD IS AT WORK AT GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

To receive our monthly newsletter, *IMPACT*, email your address to info@gcspatriots.com and type "IMPACT" in the subject line.

SHARE THE IMPACT

Do you have people in your community and church family that would like to keep up on what's happening at GCS? We have postcard-sized handouts available, if you'd like to take them to church or give them to family members during get-togethers and holidays. Please request as many as you'd like and we'll be sure to get them to you!

BUSINESS BOOSTERS

When you buy from or use the services of one of these businesses, they support GCS:



Town & Country Electric Service (10/5%)

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

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

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

CHRISTMAS WEEK STARTS MONDAY!

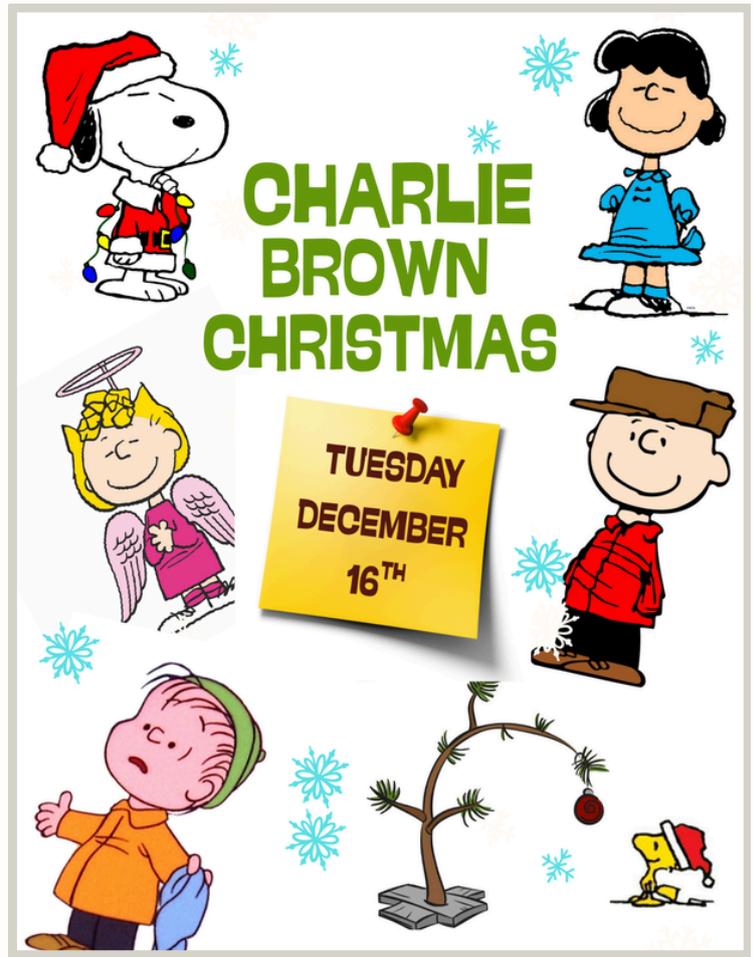


UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATERS

**MONDAY
DECEMBER
15TH**

RECOGNITION FOR THE UGLIEST SWEATER!
Dress code: Ugly Christmas Sweater

This panel features several colorful and patterned Christmas sweaters, including one with a Santa Claus design, one with a reindeer, and one with a snowflake pattern. A yellow sticky note is pinned to the center, and the background is decorated with white snowflakes.



CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS

**TUESDAY
DECEMBER
16TH**

This panel features characters from the Peanuts comic strip: Snoopy in a Santa hat, Lucy in a blue dress, an angel, Charlie Brown in a red jacket and brown hat, Linus in an orange jacket and green hat, and Woodstock. A yellow sticky note is pinned to the center, and the background is decorated with white snowflakes.



WEAR ONE COLOR FROM HEAD TO TOE THAT REPRESENTS SOMETHING FROM THE NATIVITY - BE CREATIVE!

MONOCHROMATIC NATIVITY

**WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER
17TH**

This panel features a yellow star, an angel, a donkey, a sheep, a nativity scene with Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus, and three wise men on camels. A yellow sticky note is pinned to the center, and the background is decorated with white snowflakes.



COMFY COZY CHRISTMAS

**THURSDAY
DECEMBER
18TH**

This panel features various winter clothing items: green mittens, a green beanie, a green and red Santa sweater, a blue sweater with a snowflake, a colorful scarf with gingerbread men, blue pants, and patterned socks. A yellow sticky note is pinned to the center, and the background is decorated with white snowflakes.

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—Parent/Teacher**
Conferences, 11:00 - 6:00pm
- 24-25 **NO SCHOOL - Fall Break**
- 26-28 **NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Break**

DECEMBER

- 5 Christmas Worship Concert, 7pm
- 17 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
HALF DAYS	Dismissal: 11:30 am
OFFICE HOURS	7:30-3:30 pm