

# GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

*Home of the Patriots*

JANUARY 2026

## IMPACT



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



### THIS EDITION:

- "Happy New Year"
- Athletics
- Student Highlights
- Parents
- GCEA
- GCS Alumni
- Upcoming Events
- Prayer & Praise
- Ways to Support our School
- Calendar

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

Happy New Year! I love fresh starts. At the school, we have four fresh starts corresponding to the four quarters. Sundays, when we have communion, we are reminded that our sins are separated as far as the east is from the west, through faith. That:

*"If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*  
-1 John 1:9

We do not have to wait for communion Sunday to have that fresh start with our relationship with God. Every night we ought to reflect on the day and talk to God about our shortcomings and failures, resting confidently in the knowledge that He hears us and forgives us, not as a competitor keeping a tally, but as a father who yearns for the best for us and from us.

Our teaching staff is called to have that same attitude towards your children. We long for their success and celebrate it. Culturally and generally speaking the teacher-student relationship is adversarial; not here. The appearance of conflict between teachers and students at Grace stems from teachers wanting more from students who are capable of it, just as our Father in Heaven calls us to holiness. Just as God has blessed us with varying gifts and abilities, we recognize our students as uniquely gifted individuals. Our staff recognizes these variances as they apply a uniform Christian curriculum. The tension between unique individuals and standardized curriculum is where teachers live.

We are about halfway through our academic year it is good to be reminded of our school's mission; it's not primarily academic:

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

The surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ undergirds our mission statement. He is God in the flesh; the creator of the universe taking on human form. He is more than important. He is the One by which all things hold together. He is the source of wisdom and knowledge. We seek His kingdom first and the other things which we often confuse as top priority fall in line. He has called us to faith to trust in His way as opposed to following our own understanding. It is tough, but I am resolved to do at least one thing right.

So pray for us as we serve these young ones and their families. Pray that they may know the breadth, length, height, and depth of the love of Christ,



Benjamin Williamson  
Administrator



## BASKETBALL SEASON IS HERE!

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

**1.23 KALAMAZOO COUGARS @ 6:00 PM**

**1.26 HOWARDSVILLE @ 6:00 PM**

**1.27 OUR LADY OF THE LAKE @ 6:00 PM**

**1.30 COVERT @ 6:00 PM**

**2.6 COUNTRYSIDE ACADEMY @ 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.**

## PARENTS

### **NO SCHOOL ON MONDAY, JANUARY 19 - MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY.**

*"Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education."*

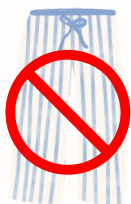
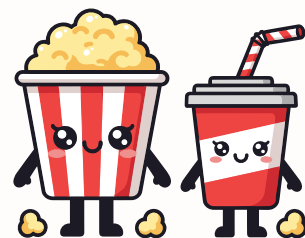
*"Every time I look at the cross I am reminded of the greatness of God and the redemptive power of Jesus Christ. I am reminded of the beauty of sacrificial love and the majesty of unswerving devotion to truth."*

*"Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness."*



### **SECONDARY PARENTS:**

If you'd like to help raise funds for your child's class, we are seeking volunteers to assist with selling concessions at home games. Class funds are used during junior year to host the Junior/Senior Banquet and during senior year for Senior Trip. If you're interested or would like more information, please contact [bcorwin@gcspatriots.com](mailto:bcorwin@gcspatriots.com).



### **DRESS CODE**

Reminder: Pajama pants are not a dress code appropriate option for PE and Strength classes.

GCS Dress Code can be found [here](#).

**THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR GENEROSITY AND  
KINDNESS TO OUR STAFF DURING THIS  
CHRISTMAS SEASON!**





# STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS



## BOARD

### 2025-26 GCEA BOARD MEMBERS

**Whitney Tinker** - President

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

**Nathan Hutchins** - Vice President

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

**Holly Crouch** - Treasurer

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

**Ruth Malaka** - Secretary

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

**Shirl Bontrager**

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



**Marshall Downs**

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

**Laraine Fox**

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

**Joel Layman**

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

**Trever Meachum**

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

**Brian Montgomery**

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

THE NEXT GCEA BOARD MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON  
MONDAY, JANUARY 26 @ 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](mailto:info@gcspatriots.com).

Our School Board is accessible to you through 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](mailto:info@gcspatriots.com). Photos are appreciated.





# HOMECOMING

## GAME DAY 2026



**OLD PATRIOTS:** Watervliet Grace Christian's Conrad Brenneman (left) and Corey Doorn (13) hold aloft the Class D district championship plaque after defeating Michigan Lutheran of St. Joseph 77-69 at New Buffalo Friday night. The Patriots coach, Dave Hill, is also present. The district title is a first for the Patriots, which has entered the Michigan High School Athletic Association tournament for the past five years. Lutheran was rated No. 1 in the state last year. (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

**ALL ARE  
WELCOME**

FOR MORE INFO: [info@gcspatriots.com](mailto:info@gcspatriots.com)

## GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

*Home of the Patriots*

# IMPACT

### 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? Share the link or ask for our postcard-sized handouts.

# **⚡ 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  
**G1347** 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**



# PARTNER WITH OUR STUDENTS!

Our Guatemala Mission Trip is quickly approaching, and we are seeking faithful donors to walk alongside our students through prayer and generous support.

This March, our juniors and seniors, along with dedicated staff and parents, will travel to San Raymundo, Guatemala for our biannual international mission trip. This is more than a trip; it is a cornerstone of our school's ministry and a life-shaping opportunity that ensures every GCS student can graduate having served Christ beyond our borders.

Once again, we are partnering with Casas por Cristo, a Christ-centered organization devoted to serving families in need through home-building projects. Our team will work side-by-side with a local family, their pastor, and Casas staff to build a safe, permanent home, meeting physical needs while sharing the hope of the Gospel in a powerful, tangible way.

The trip is becoming very real! Passports are in hand, flights are booked, and the team's excitement is growing as we prepare to serve in Christ's name. With departure approaching, we urgently need financial partners to help fully support each team member.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Each participant is actively raising funds, and we are seeking donors who will help make this mission possible. Whether you feel led to support a specific student, a staff member, or the team as a whole, your generosity directly enables students to serve, build, and share Christ's love.

If you are willing to partner with us through financial support, please contact [lcolford@gcspatriots.com](mailto:lcolford@gcspatriots.com). Every gift, large or small, makes an eternal impact.

A full team list is included below. Please continue to watch for updates and prayer requests in upcoming Impact editions.

### 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. If you'd like to find out if you could be a donor, please send an email to [info@gcspatriots.com](mailto:info@gcspatriots.com).
- 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

- Year End Giving donations
- The generous giving of parents and students to our staff during the Christmas season
- 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



## SUPPORTING GCS

HELP!

### 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](mailto: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.



### 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, 1<sup>st</sup>](#)   [Mrs. Tavernier, 2<sup>nd</sup>](#)   [Mrs. Wilkerson, 3<sup>rd</sup>](#)   [Mrs. Grey, 4<sup>th</sup>](#)  
[Mr. Dill, 5<sup>th</sup>](#)   [Miss Erickson, Jr. High](#)   [Mr. Bradshaw, Strength](#)

amazon  
wishlist



# 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



## BUSINESS BOOSTERS

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



### Town & Country (10/5%)

(10% for residential services, 5% for commercial services)  
2179 Plaza Dr.  
(269)934-8155  
cheyenne@frazeeeam.com



### 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%)

(110% for salt and parts, 5% for softener systems)  
Softeners & water conditioning. Salt sales and delivery.  
2179 Plaza Dr., Benton Harbor  
(269)983-8156



### Tyler Automotive in Niles and Stevensville

New Honda, Chevrolet, Kia, Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram, as well as pre-owned vehicles at each store. When customers contact Brandon Dockham directly and mention Grace Christian, \$100 plus 25% of my commission will be donated back to the school. Use QR code to see current inventory, calculate payments and contact information for Brandon Dockham.



# 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](http://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