

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."

-I 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



ATHLETICS

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:

- I.23 KALAMAZOO COUGARS @ 6:00 PM
- I.26 HOWARDSVILLE @ 6:00 PM
- I.27 OUR LADY OF THE LAKE @ 6:00 PM
- I.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:

I.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@gcpspatriots.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

High House Project
DECEMBER

Standout Student

Samuel Valenti

Teacher on Fire

Ms. Erickson



Student of the Month
DECEMBER

Jaxon Dill

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

Trevor Meachum
tmeachum@gcspatriots.com

Brian Montgomery
bmontgomery@gcspatriots.com



THE NEXT GCEA BOARD MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON
MONDAY, JANUARY 26 @ 6:30 PM.

JOIN THE GCEA!

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 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

HOMECOMING GAME DAY 2026



UD PATRIOTS: Watervliet Grace Christian's Conrad Brenneman and Grey Doorn (13) hold aloft the Class D district championship plaque against Michigan Lutheran of St. Joseph 77-69 at New Buffalo Friday. The Patriots coach, Dave Hill. The district title is a first for 55 students, which has entered the Michigan High School tournament for the past five years. Lutheran was runner-up. (Norma Payne photo)



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6

GCS - 325 N M140, WATERVLIET

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

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@gcpspatriots.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@gcpspatriots.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

AUCTION HELP NEEDED

HELP!

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.



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



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@frazeteam.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@frazeteam.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**
 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 GCS Patriots.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