

GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Home of the Patriots

FEBRUARY 2026

IMPACT

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



THIS EDITION:

- “The Institution or Family”
- Athletics
- Student Highlights
- Parents
- GCEA
- GCS Alumni
- Upcoming Events
- Prayer & Praise
- Ways to Support our School
- Calendar

THE INSTITUTION OR THE FAMILY

Grace Christian, from its inception, has sought to work alongside families; it's in our founding documents, **The Primacy of the Parent-Child Relationship**. And yet, in that context, parents trust the school with authority to give their child a Christian education. Grace has always been small and intimate. Our school feels more like a family than it does an institutional school. There are challenges walking the line of familial flexibility and institutional professionalism.

The month of February is often associated with love as our culture recognizes Valentine's Day. The Scripture has much to say about love, and love is the means by which there is unity in the Christian church (Romans 14 & Philippians 2).

The Bible is not an exhaustive rulebook. Jesus and the apostles laid out principles by which we are to live. A lot of times we look for the will of God in the Scripture and hope to see God say, "You are to live here, you are to marry this person, you are to work there," and we are disappointed when we do not find it. We often find ourselves crying out, "Oh Lord, send me an email or text message!" when we seek direction from Him.

The early church hotly debated significant spiritual issues. What is interesting is that Paul addresses them in Romans 14 and he **does not** pick a side. He lays out principles for unity even in the context of significant well-argued disagreements from both sides. **To be a Christian does not mean that we always agree**, but that we always have the freedom to lay aside our rights for the benefit of others. We *"pursue the things that make for peace."* Romans 14:19

Grace Christian is an expression of many churches and families coming together to provide a Christian education. As a likeminded and yet diverse group, we have had to establish norms for all of us to operate under to provide a legitimate education. We have always tried to walk the line between Christian freedom and legalism. Our school has established rules for behavior, dress code, acceptable music, attendance, snow days, and many more - of which, few are expressed in scripture. If we would ask each family how they would write these norms we would find that we would have as many different norms as we have families.

Our history has included legalism and with little antinomianism (without rule). Each year we evaluate what we do and ask in the current time and culture, "Do our norms help us with our mission to inspire students to impact the world for Jesus?" That's why handbooks change. The problems we encounter change. Our families come with varying degrees of embracing Christian liberty.

It is good to be reminded that the administration and staff at Grace are sinners saved and redeemed by the grace of God. We have not finished the process of sanctification. It is also good to remember regardless of how cute they are or how much you love your children, they too are sinful little creatures that need the redeeming work of God, as well as their parents. Well, let's say **we all do** and sing the children's song, "He's Still Working on Me" together!

Just so you know, nowhere in the Scripture does it say that life is easy. Jesus said to his disciples, and as an extension to us, that *"You will have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world,"* John 16:33

Benjamin Williamson

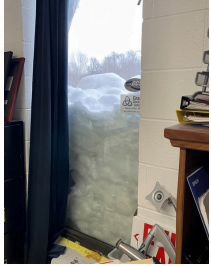
Benjamin Williamson
Administrator



SO THEN WE PURSUE THE THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR
PEACE AND THE BUILDING UP OF ONE ANOTHER.

GYM ROOF STATUS

Our gym has been with us for about 30 years and we have had trouble on the South side building up ice and causing melt to back-up and leak into our gym. Over the course of these three decades many solutions have been applied to the system. Each one with its own merit and improvement. With the excessive amount of snow and perpetual cold our roof developed a healthy ice dam that was not healthy for our roof. Once water began to leak into the gym we were on the roof removing future melt and began to address the ice itself should another snow fall come. This is not good for any roof. Our roof is about 20 years old and it looks much older.



We will not shingle the roof again. We look to install metal and our bid from last year was about \$163,000. We are open to creative solutions; doing it in sections. We are open to doing the work ourselves. I know that we have missing shingle fragments and exposed nails that will need to be addressed as soon as possible. If this is an area of interest or expertise and you want to help with the solution please let me know.

ATHLETICS



GCS WRESTLING TEAM

Catch our Jr. High wrestling team in action at 9:00 AM on Saturday, February 28 at the Coloma Invitational! (300 W. St. Joseph Street)

GO PATRIOTS!

BE SURE TO CHECK THE [ATHLETIC CALENDAR](#) FOR COMPLETE GAME SCHEDULES AS WE FINISH UP THE 2026 BASKETBALL SEASON!

PARENTS

MID-WINTER BREAK

There will be no school Friday, February 13 - Tuesday, February 17
Staff will report to school on Tuesday for an Inservice Day.



PROGRESS REPORTS

Quarter 3 Progress Reports are now ready to view in your FACTS Family Portal.

ILLNESS REMINDER

Parents, just a gentle reminder not to bring your child to school if they have experienced a fever, vomiting or diarrhea within the previous 24 hours. These symptoms must cease on their own, without the aid of fever-reducing or preventative medication, for a minimum of 24 hours, before the child returns to school. While the ability to completely control the spread of illness within our building is impossible, this is one step that we can take to help during the cold and flu season.



AUCTION DONATION

The Annual Benefit Auction is scheduled for March 21. As with every year, we are asking families to help by bringing in donation items for class auction baskets. Below, basket themes are listed by grade level. Thank you for your prayerful consideration to give toward our biggest fundraiser of the year!

CLASS AUCTION BASKETS

Preschool 3 & 4	SPA DAY
TK	ART
Kindergarten	GARDENING
1 st Grade	GAME NIGHT
2 nd Grade	FAMILY SUNDAE KIT
3 rd Grade	BEACH
4 th - 6 th Grade	CAMPING & GRILLING
7 th & 8 th Grade	GIFT CARDS
High School 1	MOVIE NIGHT
High School 2	SPORTS

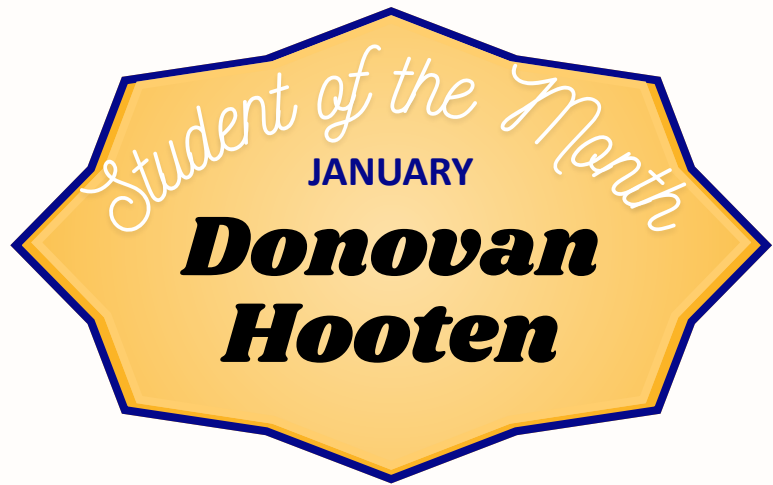


OTHER WAYS TO HELP WITH AUCTION

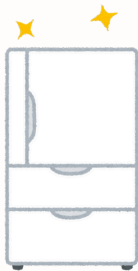
We could use some people to call businesses, pick up valuable donations and more. Contact Rebecca Dill today at

rdill@gcspatriots.com!

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS



STAFF HIGHLIGHTS



MRS. TEETERS

A recent kitchen inspection was conducted by the Berrien County Health Department and our GCS kitchen passed with flying colors! Congratulations to Mrs. Teeters for a job well done in maintaining a clean and safe kitchen for students and staff!

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, FEBRUARY 23 @ 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 email as well as open board meetings.



DEADLINE

If you wish to vote at the annual GCEA meeting on April 14, you must submit your GCEA Membership Application no later than Tuesday, March 31.

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.



HOMECOMING 2026

The Patriots gym was rocking on Friday, February 6th as we welcomed alumni, cheered with cheerleaders, honored 1989 championship coach, Dale Hill, crowned the 2026 Homecoming King and Queen, hosted the varsity boys vs Countryside and held competitive basketball games for our elementary teams as well as alumni vs current GCS players! Thank you to all the staff, students, parents and alumni who showed up and worked hard to make this night possible! We had a blast!



UPCOMING EVENTS

SPRING TIME AT GCS

Spring is always a very busy time as we wrap up one year and begin to prepare for the next! There are many events coming up including the Auction, ACSI Music Festival for our band students, a mission trip to Guatemala for our juniors and seniors, Kindergarten Program, Open House, Science Fair, Graduation, awards nights, enrollment and more! Please consider sharing the images below with friends and family!

**Grace Christian School**

KINDERGARTEN ROUNDUP & PROGRAM

Friday, March 6, 2026

Interested in Kindergarten programs available at GCS? Join us for our Kindergarten Program and Kindergarten Roundup.

SCHEDULE:

OPEN HOUSE 5:00 – 6:00

- ✓ Kindergarten classrooms open
- ✓ Meet our teachers
- ✓ Enrollment information available

PROGRAM 6:15 – 7:15

- ✓ Join us in the commons as our students present a short program highlighting what they've been learning this year.

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Website
www.gcspatriots.org

Email
info@gcspatriots.com

Phone
269-463-5545

PS - 12TH GRADE

GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

OPEN HOUSE

For over 50 years, GCS has partnered with families to shape hearts and minds through Christ-centered education. Experience our family-style community, small class sizes, and strong academics guided by a faithful, dedicated staff. We invite you to come experience the Grace difference!

Saturday, March 7, 2026

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

325 N. M-140
Watervliet, MI 49098

- ✓ Meet our staff
- ✓ Visit classrooms
- ✓ Ask questions
- ✓ View our Science Fair displays

For more info:
269-463-5545

Visit us:
www.GCSPatriots.org

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

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, direct people to our GCSPatriots.org website, or ask for our postcard-sized handouts to share with your church, friends and neighbors.

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.
- 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.

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. 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

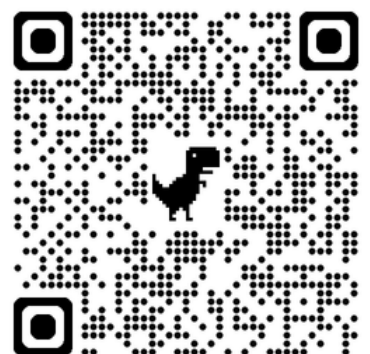
Mike Dill
Jessica Flagel
Benjamin Williamson

Parents

Jimmy Green
Tasha Strickland
Keri Williamson
Apryll Wilson

12th Grade

Dailee Strickland
Anna Williamson
Jenna Wilson



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.

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](#)

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**

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
- 21 Annual Benefit Auction
- 22-28 Mission Trip - Guatemala
- 30-4/6 **NO SCHOOL - Spring Break**

APRIL

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

MAY

- 8 Elementary Musical
- 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